

**Eph 6:11b-12 Our struggle is not against flesh and blood
in order that you might be able to stand against the schemes of the devil.**

The armor of God is God's armor. He has the power, we don't. Our salvation rests on the finished work of Jesus Christ on the cross, paying for atoning for our sins with His blood, so that we could be justified before God, and at peace with Him instead of war. The armor of God was worn by God first and foremost—Jesus is our model who lived the perfect life, and only by emulating Him can this armor of light really fit us, and protect us against Satan's onslaught. He didn't resort to using worldly methods, and neither can we. We must fight and stand firm against Satan only in the strength that comes from the victory that Christ has already won for us.

Each of the various pieces of armor points us to Christ. The belt of truth is the belt that girds the messianic king in Isaiah 11:5, speaking of Jesus **Also righteousness will be the belt around His hips, And faithfulness the belt around His waist.** The breastplate of righteousness and the helmet of salvation come from the divine warrior's arsenal in Isaiah 59:16-17. **And He saw that there was no one, And was amazed that there was not one to intercede; Then His own arm brought salvation to Him, And His righteousness upheld Him. 17 He put on righteousness like a breastplate, And a helmet of salvation on His head; And He put on garments of vengeance for clothing And wrapped Himself with zeal as a cloak.** The feet shod with gospel readiness are the feet of those who proclaim the arrival of Messiah's kingdom in Isaiah 52:7 **How delightful on the mountains Are the feet of one who brings good news, Who announces peace And brings good news of happiness, Who announces salvation,** . God himself is the shield of faith, as he describes himself in Genesis 15 **After these things the word of the Lord came to Abram in a vision, saying, "Do not fear, Abram, I am a shield to you; Your reward shall be very great."** And, this makes sense; only faith in God's ability to take care of us, only trust in Him can defend us from the fiery darts of the enemy. The sword of the Spirit, the Word of God, is the weapon wielded by the promised servant of the Lord in Isaiah 49:2a **He has made My mouth like a sharp sword, In the shadow of His hand He has concealed Me; And He has also made Me a sharpened arrow, He has hidden Me in His quiver.** We see Jesus pictured exactly like this in Revelation 1:16 **In His right hand He held seven stars, and out of His mouth came a sharp two-edged sword; and His face was like the sun shining in its strength.** The sword from His mouth is a metaphor for the truth and justice that He proclaims, aligning with Isaiah 11:4, where the Messiah strikes the earth with the rod of His mouth. This indicates the universal scope of Christ's judgment. We see these again at the battle of Armageddon in Rev 19:15 **15 From His mouth comes a sharp sword, so that with it He may strike down the nations, and He will rule them with a rod of iron; and He treads the wine press of the fierce wrath of God, the Almighty.** So, as Jesus overcomes with the truth, justice, and righteousness that comes from His mouth, so can we. Each of those specific temptations that may seek to derail you—greed, lust, gossip, anger, pride, self-exaltation, lying, coveting—are temptations he faced down and overcame in your place, so that you could have the victory, emulating Him. What is more, Jesus laid his life down for you in winning the victory that lets loose God's sanctifying Spirit in your life. Because of his victorious life, death, and resurrection, the same power that raised Christ up from the dead is now at work inside you and me through the ongoing work of the Spirit, raising us from spiritual death to new life. In the same way, God chooses the life-experiences that we need to grow us, He chooses the battles that we fight in, He chooses the lessons that we learn, He chooses the difference that we make for the Kingdom of God. We are not in control of the process of our spiritual growth. Eph 2:10 **For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand so that we would walk in them.** The God who **has started a good work in us will bring it to completion on the day of Christ Jesus** (Phil. 1:6). But we do have to cooperate with the Lord's mission for our lives—the ministries that He gives each one of us. We have to walk in them, but they are good works that God has prepared.

The schemes of the Devil--His Spirit is at work within you growing you at the rate that he intends toward his goal of your complete purity. Your sanctification has been planned, just as your salvation

was. Psalm 37:23 **The steps of a man are established by the Lord, And He delights in his way.** That doesn't mean that we'll never have to struggle with sin, of course. Paul clearly expects us to be engaged in a daily life-and-death struggle with Satan in all of his awesome power. The imagery of armor and battle shows us that the fight against sin must involve blood, sweat, and tears. Philippians 2:12–13 **12 So then, my beloved, just as you have always obeyed, not as in my presence only, but now much more in my absence, work out your own salvation with fear and trembling; 13 for it is God who is at work in you, both to desire and to work for His good pleasure.** The word stand here *histimi ἵστημι*, means “to stand” or “to offer resistance to.” The term is used “to denote that which lasts and is stable, not subject to change or decay.” The one who stands is not pushed around but firmly holds his or her position. 1 Cor 16:13 **13-14 Be on the alert, stand firm in the faith, act like men, be strong. 14 All that you do must be done in love.** We each must hold our ground, hold fast, stand “against the schemes of the devil” whose name means “slanderer,” one who desires to ruin your reputation, and your life; to cut you off from the good work that God wants for you to do.

because our struggle is not against flesh and blood.—Paul now explains the nature of the warfare for which the believers are to prepare. The struggle is not physical but supernatural. It is a spiritual battle against spiritual agents of evils. The word for struggle normally refers to wrestling, but it can also have the more general idea of “conflict, struggle”—the idea is hand to hand combat. The struggle is a fight, and involves close-quarter combat against a cunning opponent. It is a face-to-face encounter.

but against the rulers, against authorities.—We are instead against the *arche ἀρχή*, rulers, those enemies of highest power, hence, “leader, ruler”. *Exousia ἐξουσία* denotes the freedom to act, from which we get the words executor and executive, and so means “authority.” Paul warns believers of the evil powers that presently war against God and His servants, and urges us to put on the armor of God. On the Earth now, the dominion of these powers is self-evident, for there are many evils, horrors, inequities, injustices, disasters, unholy actions, and evidences of outright defiance against Jesus Christ and God the Father.

against the cosmic potentates of this darkness.—The third foe is called *κοσμοκράτωρ* or world-ruler. It may well have been a term used in the first or second century A.D. of magical or astrological traditions. In fourth-century magical papyri it is used as one of the magical titles of deities like Helios, Hermes, and Sarapis who were thought to be in the pantheon of gods that aided the pagan petitioner. In astrology it is used of the sun (Helios) as master of all the planets in the universe, which determined the fate of the impersonal and personal universe. It appears in Jewish literature in the second century A.D. as “world rulers of the darkness”

against the spiritual beings of wickedness in the heavenly realms.—This phrase describes the overall status of the hostile rulers mentioned earlier. These “spiritual armies or hosts” are those who directly oppose God in the spiritual realm. “Wickedness”, is descriptive of those spiritual beings. In classical times it was used of physical defect or sickness in people and animals or of a moral sense of “depravity, wickedness.”

“in the heavenlies” --This refers to the seat or place of evil spirits or hosts. In fact, earlier in the epistle (Eph 3:10) the church is told to demonstrate the manifold wisdom of God to both good and evil spiritual leaders in the heavenlies. Paul did not originate this idea. In the OT God and Satan converse with one another in heaven (Job 1:6–12). Also, good and evil angels struggle with each other in heaven and on earth (Dan 10:13, 20). Back in Eph 2:2, the enemy was referred to as **the ruler over the realm of the air**. *ἀήρ*, “air,” was thought in ancient times to be that which filled the space between the earth and moon. The Greeks thought this term referred to the lower impure air, the home of the spirits, as opposed to the higher pure air, the ether. The unregenerate not only walk according to the values of the present age but also under the control of the leader who rules over this evil world. Job (1:7) speaks of Satan going to and fro on the earth with a purpose. And we know that that purpose is to kill, steal, and destroy. He is working in people's lives, and NOT for their good.