

FIGHTING SATAN

By Tom Kelton

In any study about Satan, it is necessary that we recognize the reality of the warfare that is currently in progress.

In *Ephesians 6.10-12*, we read: "*Finally, my brethren, be strong in the Lord, and in the power of his might. Put on the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil. For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places.*"

These and other verses show us that we are involved in a real, and very fierce battle against Satan and his army.

As Christians, we need to know the character, power and methods of the Enemy in order to fight the battle.

Our enemy is not a mythical character, but a person with great evil power.

The New Testament makes it plain that this Enemy does exist. In *Mark 3.22-26*, our Savior acknowledged that Satan is a person and that he has a kingdom under his control. In *Revelation 12.7-9*, the scriptures declare that Satan is a real person who is the leader of the evil angels.

In the Bible, the pronoun "it" is never used in reference to Satan. Instead, "he," "him," "thee" and "thou" are always used when speaking to him or about him. (*Job 1.8; Matthew 4.10; John 8.44*). In addition, the Scriptures attribute many deeds to Satan that could only be done by a living person. (*Job 1.9-12; Matthew 4.1-11; I John 3.8; Jude 1.9*).

The Bible speaks of Satan about 175 times. In each case, pronouns and names are given him and deeds attributed to him - all signifying that he is a person with great powers. While we have proof that Satan is a real person with real power, we need to remember that "*greater is he that is in you, than he that is in the world.*" (*I John 4.4*).

The fact that Satan is a person is further indicated by the names given to him. He is known as Satan in *I Chronicles 21.1* and *I Timothy 1.20*. His other common name, "Devil," is found in the New Testament but not the Old (*Matthew 13.29; John 13.2; James 4.7*). He is also known as the "dragon" (*Revelation 12.3,4,7,9; 13.2,4; 20*); "serpent" (*Genesis 3.1; Revelation 12.9; 20.2*); "Beelzebub" (*Matthew 10.25; Mark 3.33; Luke 11.15,18,19*); "Lucifer" (*Isaiah 14.12*); "the wicked one" (*Matthew 13.19,38; Ephesians 6.16*); "the tempter" (*Matthew 4.3; I Thessalonians 3.5*); "the god of this world" (*2 Corinthians 4.4*); "the prince of the power of the air" (*Ephesians 2.2*); "the prince of this world" (*John 12.31*).

This wicked person has a kingdom, and *Ephesians 6.12* makes it plain that his kingdom is comprised of four major divisions.

The first of these divisions is called the principalities. The word "principalities" has special reference to the political realm in which the devil works to influence earthly rulers. He seeks to manipulate and influence people who are in office.

As Christians, we are to pray for those in government. (*I Timothy 2.1-4*). When we do this, we resist and thwart the efforts of Satan.

The second division in Satan's kingdom is referred to as powers. This method of operation is to attack the feelings and thoughts of Christians. Defaming a person's character is a trait of Satan. He tries to get us to speak evil of one another. Christians must realize that Satan's powers are working to destroy unity and peace in the church. To combat this, we must love one another.

The third division in Satan's kingdom is known as the rulers of darkness in the world.

The rulers of the darkness are those who foster superstition, fortune-telling and false teaching of various kinds. The work of these Satanic forces is evident in astrology, witchcraft and religious cults. These rulers of darkness are not new. Satan has been using them in his kingdom since the beginning of time, and the Bible warns us to beware of these practices.

Today, we possess God's complete revelation to man in His Word (*2 Timothy 3.16-17*). Therefore, Christians should avoid any other way of discovering the will of God. (*2 John 9*).

The fourth group of Satan's kingdom is the wicked spirits in heavenly places, which is an accurate translation of the expression "spiritual wickedness in high places."

The devil comes as angels of light speaking through preachers who preach false doctrines that lead many astray. Their handiwork is seen in Jehovah's Witnesses and other cults who twist the Bible to support their unscriptural teachings.

Many sincere people have been drawn into such movements through ignorance and have been exposed to the worst types of demonism.

To combat this false teaching, all Christians must "*Preach the word; be instant in season, out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort with all longsuffering and doctrine*" (2 Timothy 4.2). We must also be willing to "*contend for the faith which was once delivered unto the saints*" (Jude 3).

Satan's kingdom is vast. He has millions of evil demons and men on earth assisting him. But while Satan's power and influence are great, our Savior's power is greater. Christ can help us overcome Satan's forces when we trust Him.

In our fight against the Devil, we must remember that Satan is a defeated foe. Christ won the war with Satan through his death and resurrection; thus, we are fighting a defeated foe. While Satan may win a few skirmishes now and then, he will lose in the end.

Throughout the Bible, we find God's promises of victory over Satan and his army. The first such promise was given after the fall of man (*Genesis 3.15*).

The basis of our victory lies in the fact that Satan was defeated by Christ at the cross. There He judged the Devil and overthrew him (*John 12.31,32; 16.11*). *Hebrews 2.14,15* and *Colossians 2.15* also stress this truth.

In our fight against Satan, he is attacking us with every weapon he has. If we enter the battle against him unarmed and unprotected, we are in danger of being destroyed. However, God does not send us into the battle with Satan unprepared. In *Ephesians 6.13-17*, we find a description of the spiritual armor that Christians have been given to protect them in this fierce combat with the Enemy and his armies.

In order to enjoy full victory against the Devil, we must put on the whole armor of God (*6.11*). The purpose for putting on the whole armor is that we might be able to stand our ground (*6.13*).

The first piece of armor we are to put on is the girdle, or belt, of truth. The word of God defines truth for us. In *John 14.6*, Jesus stated, "*I am the way, the truth, and the life.*" In *John 17.17*, we are given another definition of truth: "*Sanctify them through thy truth: Thy word is truth.*" Here we see that the Bible is truth. These two aspects of truth - the living Word and the written word - form the Christian's belt of truth.

The Christian's second piece of spiritual armor is the breastplate of righteousness. As Christians, we must live a righteous life. *Romans 6.18* makes it plain we are to be servants of righteousness to win the battle.

The third piece of armor described in *Ephesians 6* is the shoes of the gospel of peace. Regardless of how bad the circumstances may appear to be, we should go forth and proclaim the gospel of the peace of God.

The Christian's next piece of equipment is the shield of faith. With this shield, we are able to quench all the fiery darts of the Wicked One.

In *Romans 10.17*, we are told that "*faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God.*" Thus, we possess the shield of faith when the word of God is firmly implanted in our minds. We need to study the word, believe it and obey it so we know its promises when Satan throws his darts at us. He cannot touch us when we skillfully use our shield.

Another vital part of the Christian's armor is the helmet of salvation. In order for the rest of the armor to be effective, a person must first put on the helmet of salvation.

To do this, one must hear the gospel (*Romans 10.17*); believe that Jesus is the Christ (*Acts 16.31; Hebrews 11.6*); repent (*Luke 13.3; Acts 17.31*); confess Christ (*Matthew 10.32-33; Romans 10.9-10*); and be baptized for the remission of sins (*Mark 16.16; Acts 2.38; Acts 22.17; I Peter 3.21*).

To complete our armor, we are told to take the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God. Our Savior's testing in the wilderness is an illustration of the power of God's word in overcoming Satan's attacks (*Matthew 4.1-11*). Regardless of what kind of temptation the Devil used in testing the Lord, Christ's response always began with the words, "*It is written.*" We must do the same.

Satan cannot stand against the scriptures today any more than he could when our Savior used them so effectively almost 2,000 years ago. As the Christian puts on the armor of God and enters the battle against Satan, he has one additional resource that will sustain him in the fight - prayer. *Ephesians 6.18* tells us "*Praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit.*"

Satan's forces are powerless against us when we use the armor God has given us for the conflict.

The Lord intends for us to be victorious in our spiritual warfare with Satan. He has already won the war for us. In addition, He has given us the armor and weapons we need for the day-to-day battles. Therefore, we should not fear our fight with Satan, but should instead welcome the opportunity to strengthen our faith. We have the Lord on our side, and we can win the war against Satan when we boldly face the Enemy in the power of Christ.