



# What Does the Bible Say about Spiritual Warfare Really

*Dr. James Stone*

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What does the Bible say?

The secret of Paul being able to say, ". . . I have learned, in whatsoever state I am, therewith to be content" is found in the simple truth of the essence of life. Is the contented life determined by the flesh and blood reality of the physical world -- including the trying circumstances of the perils of Paul? Or, does the contented life originate in the spiritual realm of the heavenly domain -- regardless of the physical circumstances in which one might find himself?

In Ephesians 6:10-20, Paul used a very descriptive allegory of a soldier's armor to illustrate the successful life of the believer. He began his admonition with a definitive statement of the source of the contented life. He made it clear at the beginning who actually will do the fighting and the source of power for the victory. He also revealed exactly where the believer will have to fight the battle to be victorious.

He told the readers of his letter, "my brethren, be strong in the Lord, and in the power of his might." With the verb "be strong" being in the passive tense and not the active tense, he is not telling the believer to be strong within his own power and action. In the passive tense of a verb, the subject does not have the power to act but something acts upon the subject (the believer) that enables him to demonstrate strength. The more literal translation is "be made strong in the Lord." The strength will come "in the power of his might." The believer can be strong because he will be experiencing the strength, the power, and the might of the Lord.

Paul further told them that they needed to be strong and to "put on the whole armor of God, that [they might] be able to stand against the wiles of the devil." By looking at the original language of the New Testament, it can be seen that this putting on the armor of God is not something the believer does, but something that God does for him. The words put on, in the original language, means "(in the sense of sinking into a garment); to invest with clothing (literally or figuratively)." The believer can have on the whole armor of God because he finds himself invested with it, as if he has been let down into it.

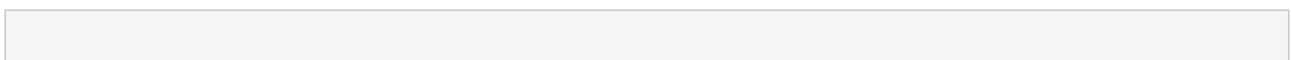
The reason why the believer should have on the whole armor of God is that he might be "be able to stand against the wiles of the devil." Paul gives the first clue for the spiritual warfare that all believers must face. With wiles meaning, "traveling over, i.e. travesty (trickery)," the heart of the battle will involve deception. This same word is also translated by the King James Version as "lie in wait."

The traveling over of the events of life will be used in such a way that will make a travesty out of the strength, the power, and the might the believer should be experiencing in the Lord. Nothing can limit God's strength, power, and might. God is always there in all of His power and in all of His might, but because of the trickery of the believer's own mind he often lives as if God is not there.

This trickery would be the "wiles of the devil." With devil being translated from a word meaning, "a traducer" with its root meaning, "to throw," the deception that has the possibility of overcoming the believer will be something that will be constantly thrown at the believer. With the King James Version translating this original word as "false accuser," "devil," and "slanderer," Paul is implying that the warfare of every believer will be fought in his mind.

Who has not raised the question, when coming face to face with devastating circumstances, "Why, God?" "How could you let this happen to me?" "Don't you love me?" Because we often do not understand the ways of life, we sometimes find it is our own mind which falsely accuses or slanders God. We often play out the "role of the devil" in our mind.

There is no mystery in spiritual warfare--the carnal mind is enmity against God. The mystery is in the gospel: how God conquers the adversary of His ways by conquering the mind of man.



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