

WHY BAPTISTS BELIEVE WHAT BAPTISTS BELIEVE, PART 30

THE CHRISTIAN ARMOR AND SPIRITUAL WARFARE

Did you know that we are at war? I'm not talking about a war against Iraq or Afghanistan or Syria or ISIS or the Democrats or the Liberal Left. We Christians are engaged in warfare right here in Rockwall, Texas. We have enemies. Did you know that?

[Question 9] Who are our enemies? Let's see what the Bible says.

"You adulterous people! Do you not know that friendship with the world is enmity [hatred] with God? Therefore, whoever wishes to be a friend of the world makes himself an enemy of God" (James 4:4).

The first enemy is the **World**. By "world" I mean the anti-God, anti-Christ world order, human reasoning, ever-shifting philosophies that dominate the headlines. That's the world we live in, like it or not.

"For the desires of the flesh are against the Spirit, and the desires of the Spirit are against the flesh, for these are opposed to each other, to keep you from doing the things you want to do" (Galatians 5:17).

The second enemy we have is the **Flesh**. By "flesh" we are not talking about our human skin material. By "flesh" we are speaking of our bent toward sinful passions that all fallen human beings possess. In Paul's day there was a concept known as Gnosticism which said that the human spirit is naturally good, but it is imprisoned in the body which is naturally evil. That was not the biblical idea of "flesh" either. Sin generally begins in the mind and then gets expressed through some sort of physical action.

“Be sober-minded; be watchful. Your adversary the devil prowls around like a roaring lion, seeking someone to devour” (1 Peter 5:8).

Our third enemy is the **Devil**. Dwight Pentecost wrote a book which I have in my library entitled, “Your Adversary the Devil.” Pentecost says, “Our adversary is so cleverly and subtly camouflaged many do not even recognize his existence... though he is unseen, he is powerful and formidable.”

So, what’s the point of all this? If we are going to fight against our enemies – the world, the flesh and the devil – we need to be sure we are armed appropriately. Every good soldier knows they must be fully and properly equipped for the battle. They are about to go against their enemy. You have to know your enemy. Let’s look at a familiar passage that deals with this subject...

“Therefore, take up the whole armor of God, that you may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand firm. Stand therefore, having fastened on the belt of truth, and having put on the breastplate of righteousness, and, as shoes for your feet, having put on the readiness given by the gospel of peace. In all circumstances take up the shield of faith, with which you can extinguish all the flaming darts of the evil one; and take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God” (Ephesians 6:13-17).

So, there you have the fill-ins for *[Question 10]* where Paul draws upon the analogy of a well-equipped Roman soldier in his day. In the same way Christians must arm themselves for their spiritual conflict. The military has a term for this – “readiness.” Go ahead and complete this on your own.

An interesting side note I want to point out: The only offensive weapon listed is the “sword of the Spirit.” Paul tells that the sword of the Spirit represents the Word of God. Hebrews 4:12 tells us, “The word of God is alive and powerful. It is sharper than the

sharpest two-edged sword, cutting between soul and spirit, between joint and marrow. It exposes our innermost thoughts and desires.” There is power in the Word. Which takes us to our next passage that speaks about the word of God...

“All Scripture is breathed out by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness, that the man [or woman] of God may be complete, equipped for every good work” (2 Timothy 3:16-17).

[Question 11] So, how can we use that sword in an offensive action? By “offensive” I don’t mean it in the sense of being offensive toward others, I mean it in the context described here, as a weapon of attack against the enemy. Go ahead and **check them all**. It can be used for teaching God’s truth. It can be used to point out the sin in our lives. It can be used for correcting our sinful behavior. It can be used to show us how to live in a way that pleases God. And much, much more! It helps us to deal with depression, to deal with things that happen to us that are unfair or that we don’t understand. We live in a fallen world ruled by Satan (Jesus referred to him in John 12:31 and 16:11 as “the ruler of this world”).

“Praying at all times in the Spirit, with all prayer and supplication. To that end, keep alert with all perseverance, making supplication for all the saints (Ephesians 6:18). “Continue steadfastly in prayer, being watchful in it with thanksgiving” (Colossians 4:2)

[Question 12] The successful Christian warrior, one who wants to be victorious in their spiritual battles, must always stay **alert** and is always **praying**.

Prayer: The soldier in the field knows what his orders are. He knows what his objective is. He remains in touch with the high command. They tell him what to do and he is keeps them

informed. There's communication going on back and forth. That is what prayer is. It's our communication with the Commander.

Alert: We always know where our enemy is. We are always ready. We are on the alert. We have to be always praying. We have to be ready. Let's go back to Ephesians...

"Finally, be strong in the Lord and in the strength of His might. Put on the whole armor of God, that you may be able to stand against the schemes of the devil. For we do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the cosmic powers over this present darkness, against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly places. Therefore, take up the whole armor of God, that you may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand firm" (Ephesians 6:10-13).

[Question 13] Match the person on the left with the truth about them from that Ephesians passage.

Believers, you and me, are instructed to put on the armor (**D**).

Satan is the one who schemes against us (**A**).

It is God who gives us the power and strength we need to win (**C**).

Finally, our struggle is against the demonic forces (**B**) unleashed against us - "the rulers, the authorities, the cosmic powers over this present darkness, the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly places." That is who your battle is against.

You might say, "Well, what about Satan?" Satan is not omnipresent. Did you know that? God is omnipresent and omniscient. But Satan is not like that. He is limited to where he can be and what he can know. So, our battle is normally not against Satan himself but against the demonic forces that are under his control. We are in a spiritual battle!

I already gave you the answer to *[Question 14]* but it's worth repeating. The New American Standard Bible says it like this: "You are from God, little children, and have overcome them; because greater is He [God] who is in you than he [Satan] who is in the world" (1 John 4:4).

"Greater is He (God) who is in **you** than he (Satan) who is in the **world**.

To use a sports analogy, we are heavily favored to win. We have a better team! And we WILL win if we follow the playbook and our Coach. We should win, but it is not going to be an easy battle, is it?