



Armor of God

Session 1 – Introduction

February 15, 2022

Because of the strong spiritual forces of evil in Ephesus, the Church there had a unique challenge in knowing how to defend themselves against these evil forces. That is why the entire letter to that Church (Ephesians) focuses on the strategies Satan uses to attack believers.

Acts 19 - This chapter gives an account of Paul's ministry in Ephesus.

Acts 19:1 – 12:

While Apollos was at Corinth, Paul took the road through the interior and arrived at Ephesus. There he found some disciples and asked them, "Did you receive the Holy Spirit when you believed?"

They answered, "No, we have not even heard that there is a Holy Spirit."

So Paul asked, "Then what baptism did you receive?"

"John's baptism," they replied.

Paul said, "John's baptism was a baptism of repentance. He told the people to believe in the one coming after him, that is, in Jesus." On hearing this, they were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus. When Paul placed his hands on them, the Holy Spirit came on them, and they spoke in tongues and prophesied. There were about twelve men in all.

Paul entered the synagogue and spoke boldly there for three months, arguing persuasively about the kingdom of God. But some of them became obstinate; they refused to believe and publicly maligned the Way. So Paul left them. He took the disciples with him and had discussions daily in the lecture hall of Tyrannus. This went on for two years, so that all the Jews and Greeks who lived in the province of Asia heard the word of the Lord.

God did extraordinary miracles through Paul, so that even handkerchiefs and aprons that had touched him were taken to the sick, and their illnesses were cured and the evil spirits left them.

Acts 19:13 – 17:

Some Jews who went around driving out evil spirits tried to invoke the name of the Lord Jesus over those who were demon-possessed. They would say, "In the name of the Jesus whom Paul preaches, I command you to come out." Seven sons of Sceva, a Jewish chief priest, were doing this. One day the evil spirit answered them, "Jesus I know, and Paul I know about, but who are you?" Then the man who had the evil spirit jumped on them and overpowered them all. He gave them such a beating that they ran out of the house naked and bleeding. When this became known to the Jews and Greeks living in Ephesus, they were all seized with fear, and the name of the Lord Jesus was held in high honor.

The seven sons of Sceva were exorcists, and they were held in high regard.

Acts 19:18 – 20:

Many of those who believed now came and openly confessed what they had done. A number who had practiced sorcery brought their scrolls together and burned them publicly. When they calculated the value of the scrolls, the total came to fifty thousand drachmas. In this way the word of the Lord spread widely and grew in power.

First Century View of the Spirit World

Back then most people were well aware that the spirit world is real and believed it to be occupied by a variety of spirits. They considered any spirit more likely to harm a person than help him.

Current Day View of the Spirit World

First-century people feared the spirits. Moderns assume the spirits are well disposed to humans and eager to help. The spirits that modern pagans seek to contact are what the Bible identifies as demons!

Because much of demonic influence is behind the scenes, the tendency today is to discount their influence.

The Role of Demons

Where do we first see demons operating in the Bible?

Genesis 3:1 – 5:

Now the serpent was more crafty than any of the wild animals the LORD God had made. He said to the woman, “Did God really say, ‘You must not eat from any tree in the garden?’” The woman said to the serpent, “We may eat fruit from the trees in the garden, but God did say, ‘You must not eat fruit from the tree that is in the middle of the garden, and you must not touch it, or you will die.’” “You will not certainly die,” the serpent said to the woman. “For God knows that when you eat from it your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God, knowing good and evil.”

Deuteronomy 32:16 – 17 (ESV):

They stirred him to jealousy with strange gods; with abominations they provoked him to anger. They sacrificed to demons that were no gods, to gods they had never known, to new gods that had come recently, whom your fathers had never dreaded.

The foreign gods all around Israel in every other nation were not gods at all; they were demons. The Old Testament refers to them as evil spirits, perverse spirits, lying spirits, unclean spirits, etc. In the New Testament the spiritual forces of evil are called demons or evil spirits.

What happens in the Gospels when Jesus encounters demons?

- **Luke 4:41** - Moreover, demons came out of many people, shouting, “You are the Son of God!” But he rebuked them and would not allow them to speak, because they knew he was the Messiah.
- **Luke 8:2** - ...and also some women who had been cured of evil spirits and diseases: Mary (called Magdalene) from whom seven demons had come out...

Demons can communicate and hold conversations.

Luke 8:28, 30:

When he saw Jesus, he cried out and fell at his feet, shouting at the top of his voice, “What do you want with me, Jesus, Son of the Most High God? I beg you, don’t torture me!” Jesus asked him, “What is your name?” “Legion,” he replied, because many demons had gone into him.

Demons are evil spirits, hostile to us and eager to gain some kind of access to our lives so they can make us as miserable and unproductive as possible.

NOTE: The word “possessed” is not found in the gospels. The Greek word simply means “demonized.” Demons do not “possess” their victims, in the sense of gaining control. Rather they influence us. They lie to us about our identity in Christ. They encourage bitterness and anger and destroy healthy relationship. They cause fears and panic and drown us in depression and despair.

Paul's Letter to the Ephesians

This letter was primarily written to help believers defeat the onslaught of demons. Paul draws an analogy between the pieces of the infantryman's armor and the spiritual armor God provides so that we can stand against demonic enemies.

Ephesians 6:14 – 17:

Stand firm then, with the belt of truth buckled around your waist, with the breastplate of righteousness in place, and with your feet fitted with the readiness that comes from the gospel of peace. In addition to all this, take up the shield of faith, with which you can extinguish all the flaming arrows of the evil one. Take the helmet of salvation and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God.

Each piece of armor stands for a spiritual truth or resource:

Belt = Truth
Breastplate = Righteousness
Sandals = Preparation that comes from Gospel of peace
Shield = Faith
Helmet = Salvation

Then Paul tells us to take up the one offensive weapon, the sword of the Spirit which is the Word of God. All the others are defensive armor.

Helmet of Salvation: Ephesians 1:1 – 23
Shield of Faith: Ephesians 2:1 – 10
Sandals of Peace: Ephesians 2:11 – 4:16
Breastplate of Righteousness: Ephesians 4:17 – 5:7
Belt of Truth: Ephesians 5:8 – 6:9
Sword of the Spirit and Summary: Ephesians 6:10 – 24

As we examine each piece of the armor, we will see how it protected the Roman soldiers, because that will give us a better understanding of how it will protect us spiritually.

We will not be overly focused on demonic activity so that we are fearful or that we blame them or give them credit for every difficulty or obstacle we face. But we also do not want to be ignorant of how Satan:

2 Corinthians 2:9 – 11:

Another reason I wrote you was to see if you would stand the test and be obedient in everything. Anyone you forgive, I also forgive. And what I have forgiven—if there was anything to forgive—I have forgiven in the sight of Christ for your sake, in order that Satan might not outwit us. For we are not unaware (ignorant) of his schemes.

1 John 4:4:

You, dear children, are from God and have overcome them, because the one who is in you is greater than the one who is in the world.

Don't ascribe the attributes of God to Satan. He is a murderer, a liar, a thief, and a chicken:

John 8:44:

You belong to your father, the devil, and you want to carry out your father's desires. He was a murderer from the beginning, not holding to the truth, for there is no truth in him. When he lies, he speaks his native language, for he is a liar and the father of lies.

John 10:10:

The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy; I have come that they may have life, and have it to the full.

James 4:7:

Submit yourselves, then, to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you.

The purpose of this study is that we will not be ignorant or unaware of our enemy, but instead we will be prepared and wise, and we'll know how to resist him so that he runs away like the coward that he is.

(*The Full Armor of God* by Larry Richards was a great resource for this lesson. I highly recommend it.)

The Full Armor Of God

