

Exegesis of Ephesians 6:10

- be strengthened - combination of "in" and "power" - to be inpowered
- divine might, rule, power - The verb form means, I lay hold of, take possession of, obtain.
- strength (absolutely)

- (1) The Christian's spiritual strength must be a sharing in the power of God as He imparts it to His people. Col. 1:11 is a noteworthy parallel.

"In the strength of his might" means in his mighty strength, as previously mentioned in Ephe. 1:19, where the reference is to the power of God exerted in the raising of Christ. It is the same resurrection power that is put at the believer's disposal. (Bruce)

- (2) If all be well within, there is yet an outside foe to be continually faced.

This note of strength was sounded at the outset - (1:19f). The apostle prayed that they might know "the exceeding greatness of His power to usward who believe."

There the triumph of Christ occupied the apostle's mind: Christ's exaltation in the heavenly sphere above all forces, good or evil, of the spiritual world.

Here he has in view the need of the same mighty strength, in order that the church may realize and consummate that triumph. A comparison of the two passages will show how much of the earlier language is repeated in this final charge. (Robinson)

"Ambrosius" = all we have in X
"Put on" = appropriate

Eph. 6:10 cont'd

- page 2 -

(3) The _____ defines the strengthening as Christian strengthening, such as can take effect only in union with Christ.

In the power of his might - The phrase has the full force of "in the active efficacy of the might that is inherent in him."

It has its proper force of "in," the efficient, energetic power of the Lord's inherent might. being the principle or element in which the increase of strength which is possible only where there is union with Christ is to realize itself.

By the _____, this clause adds something to the preceding and does more than merely explain it.
(EGT)

(4) Between the beginning and the consummation of salvation there is a protracted conflict. This isn't a figure of speech.

The Christian conflict isn't only real, it is difficult and dangerous. It is one in which great mistakes are often committed and serious loss incurred from ignorance of its nature, and of the appropriate means for carrying it on. Men are apt to regard it as a mere moral conflict between reason and conscience on the one side, and evil passions on the other. They therefore rely on their own strength, and upon the resources of nature for success.

Everything pertaining to the conflict is supernatural. The conflict isn't between the good and the bad principles of our nature. He shows that we belong to a spiritual as well as to a natural world, and are engaged in a combat in which the higher powers of the universe are involved:

This conflict isn't to be carried on with straws picked up by the wayside.

Eph. 6:10 cont'd

- page 3-

Strong in the Lord - as a branch separated from the vine, or as a limb severed from the body, so is a Christian separated from Christ.

In the power of his might - in the vigour derived from his strength. The vigour of a man's arm is derived from the strength of the body.
(Hodge)

(5) Basic Christianity inevitably comes into conflict with all the forces of evil, because it is diametrically opposed to all those forces.

And in the power of his sufficiency.

Paul begins at the most encouraging point by indicating that the ally of the fighting Christian is the Lord and himself.

This is the passive imperative of the verb from which we derive our english word endue. In the passive sense the verb meant to receive strength or to be strengthened by. It is in union with the Lord Himself that this strength is realized. (Summers)

(6) "Be endued with strength in the Lord and in the (consciousness of) the grip of his strength. You are in the Lord - that consciousness arouses all your strength and courage. You are in the grip of the supreme strength which the infinite Lord puts forth in his soldiers. (Carver)

(7) His resources must be produced from headquarters
(NIC)

(8) Strengthen - The verb is in the present tense and suggests a continuous "strengthening".

For the thought of "making it your own" by consciously using the promises, cf Rom. 13:12, 14; I Thess. 5:8. We are to "possess our possessions" (Obad 18) with the promptitude and certainty of the simplest recollection and acceptance.

Eph. 6:10 cont'd

- page 4 -

This resource is to be drawn upon by obedient trust.

(9) Strengthened - the word used, a particularly strong one suggesting the pouring of power into one, occurs also in Phil 4:13.

The source of the strength is brought out by "in the Lord," the idea being that by virtue of our union with him the power that is inherently his may be drawn upon by us.

In the power of his might - to be strong in the Lord is to be joined to the strength which belongs to his might.

Observe the two leading words - "ower" and "might". The former, used only of supernatural power in N.T. - whether Satanic (Heb. 2:14) or divine (everywhere else) - denotes power as an active force, power exercised.

The latter, more passive in meaning, speaks of strength inherently possessed, whether exercised or not. (Vaughn)

Ephesians 6:11

- put on, clothe, hence, metaphorically, of acquiring qualities.
- armour
- you may be powerful, able
- stand, remain standing, stand firm
- (from _____, a way of search after something, an inquiry, a method,) scheming, craftiness.
- denotes craft, deceit, a cunning device.

(1) Clothe - personally accepting and appropriating the defence which is already yours in Him. See II (8) above - (Moule)

(2) Whole armour of God employs the imagery of the Roman man of arms fully equipped for heavy battle. It is the armor of God in the sense that it is provided by God. Each piece is furnished by Him.

Whole - the completeness of it.

Put On - God provides it, but it is we who, on our part, must faithfully accept it.

The tense of Put on denotes urgent and decisive action. When the enemy has already been engaged, it will be too late to arm ourselves.

To Stand - means not only to stand ready to fight but to hold one's ground.

Wiles - His stratagems, the many and subtle ways by which he assails God's people.
(Vaughn)

Ephesians 6:11, cont'd

- page 6 -

- (3) God's Armour implies that the armour required is of spiritual nature, and that it is of God's own making, and therefore proof against all weapons that can be brought against it.
(Moffatt)

- (4) Wiles are schemes laid for spiritual disaster.

Devil, from diaballo, to throw across, describes him and his work, for slander and false accusation are means employed by him to destroy reputation, influence, and life. He is deceptive, indeed when Christians come to deny his existence while they are being used as the instrument of his deceptive wiles.
(Moody)

- (5) Put on the entire armour - emphatic: repeated in v. 13: offensive, as well as defensive.
(Alford)

- (6) Lit Greek - to be able you to stand, facing the cunning methods of the devil.

(Summers)

- (7) The emphatic thing is the the idea being that we need not only a Divine equipment, but that equipment in its completeness, without the lack of any single part. The fact that, in order to meet our spiritual foe, we need to take to ourselves all that God provides for living and overcoming, is expressed in a telling figure drawn from the world of soldiery.

belongs to the soldier's language, being used for standing one's ground, in opposition to taking flight.

Wiles -The plural denotes the various forms which the craftiness takes, and is fitly rendered either stratagems (which brings out the fundamental idea of method or plan in the deceit) or wiles.

Ephesians 6:11 cont'd

- page 7 -

The Devil is mentioned here as the author and practitioner of all subtle, malicious scheming. The malign powers of which he is prince are noticed next. (EGT)

(8) The believer has not only to defend himself, but also to attack his spiritual foes; and the latter is as necessary to his safety as the former.

He must endeavor to subdue as well as to resist. How this is to be done, the following portion of the chapter teaches.

Instead of relying on the arms which God has provided, men have always been disposed to trust to those which they provide for themselves or which have been prescribed by others. (Hodge)

(9) Armour "Panoply" - In classical Greek of the full armour of a heavy-armed soldier.

Wiles - The armor is a defence against strategy as well as assault. (Vincent)

Ephesians 6:12

- page 8

- Wrestling, a wrestling bout; hence, a struggle, a conflict.

- rulers, magistrates

- powers, authorities, weights, especially moral authority, influence.

- rulers of this world, that is, of the world as asserting its independence of God; used of the angelic or demonic powers controlling the sublunary world.

- used of spirit beings, who have parts of the cosmos under their control -
In Eph 6:12 - The rulers of this sinful world - (A & G)

- heavenly, in heaven, in the heavenly sphere, the sphere of spiritual activities.

- (1) Spiritual wickedness - "spiritual hosts of wickedness." The phrase is collective, of the evil powers viewed as a body.

Wickedness is active evil, mischief. Hence Satan is called, The Wicked One.
(Vincent)

- (2) It isn't on the human plane that the Christian warfare is fought out, but in the spiritual realm, and in that realm only spiritual resources can avail.

Ephesians 6:12 cont'd

Principalities and powers rank among the highest angel-princes in the hierarchy of the heavenly places, yet all of them owe their existence to Christ, through whom they were created (Col. 1:16) and who is accordingly "the head of all principality and power" (Col. 2:10)

But at least some of these principalities and powers have embarked upon rebellion against God and not only seek to force men to pay them the worship that is due Him, but launched an assault upon the crucified Christ at a time when they thought they had Him at their mercy. But He, far from suffering their assault without resistance, grappled with them and overcame them, stripping them of their armour and driving them before Him in His triumphal procession (Col. 2:15). Thus the hostile powers of evil which Christians must encounter are already vanquished powers, but it is only through faith-union with Christ the victorious Christ that Christians can make His triumph theirs.

World-rulers - - - spiritual wickedness - an understanding of these may be obtained from a study of Daniel, where the affairs of the Persian and Greek empires are seen to be controlled by two angel-princes, who impede, although they can't ultimately prevent, the execution of divine commissions in the upper world (Dan. 10:13, 20.)

Each of these princes might well be called a kosmokrator. The leader of these hostile powers is referred to by Paul in 2 Cor. 4:4 as 'The god of this age,' who has blinded the minds of unbelievers to the light of the Gospel.

The present world-order as organized in rebellion against God remains under the domination of these powers; only in Christ can men gain the victory over them and be released from their grasp (Cf I John 5:19).

The appearance of Christ on earth was the signal for an unprecedented outburst of activity on the part of the realm of darkness controlled by these world-rulers, as though they knew that a mortal threat was being presented to their dominion.

Ephesians 6:12, cont'd

- page 10

And indeed His coming sealed their doom, although, during the present overlapping of the new age and the old, they continue to exercise control over those who haven't availed themselves of the way of release. (Bruce)

(3) Paul describes the world as subject to spiritual powers who have fallen from their first estate and are in rebellion against God. (Robinson)

(4) Wrestle - only here in N.T. why should Paul choose this word? - to bring out the hand-to-hand nature of the conflict, "the personal individualizing nature of the encounter." It is an individual encounter and one at close quarters. (EGT)

(5) This verse sets out clearly the nature of the battle and the nature of the enemy.

Wrestle - "hand-to-hand encounter" - of two wrestlers in hand-to-hand struggle or of two soldiers who in the midst of battle faced off one against the other for a very personal hand-to-hand combat.

The Christian's battle isn't against one who is only a man; it is a battle against one who exercises power which goes beyond human power.

Many times Christians would find it easier to engage in battle if they had an enemy who was merely human, one who could feel the weight of fists or clubs or knives. (Summers)

(6) It is astonishing to read where the powers of the enemy are located. In 1:3 heaven was the place of spiritual blessing, in 1:20 the realm of Christ's exaltation; in 2:6 the place where Christians sit with Christ.

Ephesians 6:12, cont'd

- page 11

This is a contest against cosmic powers that have become demonic. Four times pros (against) is used to emphasize the nature of this struggle.

Demonic powers are pictured as a political organization, and the first in rank are the principalities. At the end Christ will destroy them (I Cor. 15:24), and even now they are unable to separate those in Christ from the love of God.

As part of God's dynamic creation, which coheres in Christ, these powers, in their fallen state, need to be subdued so that the lost harmony of God's good creation can be restored.

These fallen cosmic powers are behind earthly politics. (Moody)

(7) In military strategy the failure to estimate properly the strength and capabilities of an enemy is a tragic mistake.

Paul isn't to be understood as enumerating four different classes of demonic beings. Each term simply views the forces arrayed against God and his people in a different manner.

Principalities refers to their rank and rule

Powers suggests their investment with authority

World-rulers of this darkness points up their control over a world in revolt against its Creator (Cf 2 Cor. 4:4)

Spiritual hosts of wickedness in the heavenlies depicts them as an army of wicked spirits inhabiting, or at least bringing their combat to, the heavenly sphere.

(Vaughn)

(8) Even when we have to meet hostility or actual cruelty from men, there are deeper and darker powers behind them. (Moule)

Ephesians 6:13

- take up, raise
- (to set against
take a stand against, oppose, resist.
- work out, produce accomplish

(1) With has the sense of against

Having done all -Everything which the crisis demands.

(2) Satan is so formidable in power that nothing less than the full armour of God will give ample protection.

Take up - The suggestion is that the divine armor lies at the believer's feet ready for use; it needs only to be appropriated by him. The tense is again such as to denote urgency. Arms must be taken up at once in order for the Christian to be ready for any emergency.

Withstand means to resist successfully

Evil Day refers to those critical days of special trial or resolute satanic assault known to every child of God.

Having done all - is a particularly strong expression meaning "having thoroughly done everything. The reference isn't to the preparation for conflict but to the end of the conflict, when the enemy has been thoroughly vanquished.

To stand speaks of the stance of victory. The thought is that the well-armed believer will be able to hold his ground. After the conflict is over, he doesn't lie prostrate in defeat but stands in complete possession of the field.

The spiritual warrior who has kept his position victorious and stood above his conquered foe in one "evil day" is to take his stand again ready to face another such critical day. (Vaughn))

Ephesians 6:13, cont'd

(3) Evil Day any day of or time of peculiar stress and difficulty.

Having Done All, Stand - Image of a warrior who at the close of the struggle holds the ground as victor. (Moffatt)

(4) Having Done All - this verb is classical for achievement either in war or in the Grecian games. (NIC)

(5) Whole Armor - complete equipment

(6) Terrible as is the foe, the apostle never doubts for a moment of the issue of the conflict. The battle has already been won by Christ Himself, who on His cross stripped off and flung aside the principalities and the powers and put them to open shame. His triumph has to be released in His body the church.

Hence the apostle never contemplates the possibility of defeat: he is but pointing the way to a victory which needs to be consummated. (Robinson)

(7) The evil day is the present age - cf Eph. 5:16. The age is evil because of the evil forces which, although vanquished by Christ, are still able to exercise control over a world which will not avail itself of the fruits of Christ's victory. (Bruce)