



MESSAGE

STUDY GUIDE

GROUP MATERIAL

SONGS

# Are You Armed Against Satanic Attacks?

Bible Reading: Ephesians 6:11-18; 2 Cor. 10:3-5

[Watch LIVESTREAM here at 10am](#)

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**SUMMARY:** This letter alerts us that we're under satanic attack. We need weapons to survive and prevail. The good news is that God—the Divine Warrior—provides his own battle-tested armor. The Armor of God is given us to complete the Mission of God. The first piece is the 'belt of truth;' a 'belt' restricts, stabilizes & fortifies us. 'Truth' here is not 'my truth,' or yours; it's God's truth embodied in Christ, witnessed by the Spirit, attested in God's Word. Truth becomes our 'weapon,' not merely by affirming doctrines, but by being applied—Paul calls it "truth-ing"—so that it governs our personal life & church-life. So let's ask: will we as a church be fortified & restricted by God's truth as we 'fight the good fight'? Popular spiritual warfare strategies—'territorial spirits/defilement,' 'spiritual mapping,' 'interrogating demons,' 'generational curses,' etc.—should be subjected to the 'truth-test' prior to implementation.

## Armor Needed to Resist Satanic Attacks (1 Pet. 5:8-9; Rev. 12:17; 13:7 cf. Rev. 20:2)

A. The Predator, Satan, is at War with God's People (1 Pet. 5:8-9; Rev. 12:17; 13:7)

- "The metaphor...is of *warfare*, not of a school debate or of a business enterprise."—John Barton

B. Believers called to Stand, resist Satanic Attack (Eph. 6:11, 13-14)

- "In Eph. 6...Although the victory is sure, believers *must still defend the position* that Christ has won for them against the last desperate attacks of the devil and his [evil] allies." —Frank Thielman

## The ‘Armor of God’ is God’s own Armor in Isaiah (Isaiah. 11:5; 52:7; 59:17)

- ‘The believers are called upon to *put on God’s own armor*...not simply one that God supplies.”—Tom Neufeld
- “Paul speaks not of God or the Messiah, but of *God’s people wearing the armor*...Paul transfers the ‘whole armor of God’ from God himself, or...his Messiah, to God’s people...He knows...the victory of God’s people over the devil is not yet complete.” —Frank Thielman

### Given God’s Armor to carry out God’s Mission

- A. *Eph. 6:15-19 call believers to actively participate in...the missio Dei [mission of God].*—Mark Simon
- B. “The *armor...is...meant to highlight the missional vocation of the church...living out the mission of God.*”—John Frederick

### The Church: a Corporate Warrior composed of Individual Warriors

- A. “Eph. 6...is commonly read as an exhortation to individual Christians...to engage in the daily battle of the Christian life ...[But,] Paul is *not merely addressing individuals but the entire gathered church*...The Church now battles...the powers... arrayed against God’s purposes in the world.” —Tim. Gombis

### Items of Armor—God’s Attributes (Is. 59:17)

- A. “The elements of the believers’ armor are:
  - [1.] belt = truth (6:14),
  - [2.] breastplate = righteousness (6:14),
  - [3.] shoes = prepared...to proclaim the gospel of peace (6:15),
  - [4.] shield = faith (6:16),
  - [5.] helmet = salvation (6:17),
  - [6.] sword [of the Spirit] = the word of God (6:17),
  - {[7.] by prayer (6:18)} [Michael J. Gorman, *Apostle of the Crucified Lord*, pp. 606-7]

### “Belt of Truth” (Eph. 6:14a; Is. 11:5)

- A. “Truth”—the First Item of Armor—foundational, stabilizes, & fortifies
  - 1. “What is the *first piece of the armor* to be mentioned? It is *the belt of truth!*” —Peter Gentry
- B. Jesus’ defeated Satan using the ‘Word of Truth’ (Mt. 4; Lk. 4)
- C. Is ‘Truth’ here Objective or Subjective?
  - 1. Truth is “an objective standard by which reality is measured.” [Tony Evans, *Prayers for Victory in Spiritual Warfare*, p. 11]
  - 2. “Just knowing what the Bible teaches is not enough...we must also believe the truth and love the truth.” [Jack Cottrell, *Faith Once for All*, ]
- D. Truth in the NT—Key Texts: (Ps. 31:5; Jn. 14:6; 17:17; Eph. 1:13; 1 Tim. 3:15; 3 Jn. 1:3; Eph. 4:14-15)
  - 1. “*Truth-ing*”—“That we may no longer be children, tossed to & fro by the waves & carried about by every wind of doctrine, by human cunning, by craftiness in deceitful schemes. <sup>15</sup> Rather, speaking the *truth* [lit.: ‘*truth-ing*’] in love” (Eph. 4:14-15) Take up/put on’—Addressed to the church—*Can we, at CIT, take up the ‘Belt of Truth’?*

### New Notions of Spiritual Warfare, ‘Territorial Spirits,’ ‘Spiritual Mapping,’ Interrogating Demons

- “If spiritual warfare were really [about]... *‘taking back’ territory*...stolen by the devil [by]... *‘naming & claiming’*...we would be the saviors...There’s nothing [in Eph. 6] about *‘territorial spirits’* whose activity can actually be *‘mapped’* by specially-[Type text]
- gifted prophets—that has more to do with superstition...than with Christianity... *There’s not the slightest hint of such superstitious practices in this key passage* on spiritual warfare.” —Michael Horton

#### A. Territorial Spirits & Territorial Defilement

- The doctrine of *territorial spirits*...entails the belief that powerful demons control specific geographical territories & its human inhabitants. Through a variety of spiritual warfare techniques such demons can be overcome.
- The doctrine of *territorial defilement*. The assumption...that a territorial spirit can...hold people in a location in bondage if it has obtained the ‘legal right’ to do so because of sins & evils committed [there] in the past. Identification-al repentance ... removes the ‘legal right’ of the territorial spirits.”—Erwin van der Meer
- “Daniel simply prays & trusts God for the unseen things. [His] prayer...doesn’t depend on any...‘map’ of such realities... In Dan. 10... *Daniel does not ‘discern,’ ‘map,’ ‘bind,’ or ‘pray against’ a territorial spirit.*” —Robert Priest

#### B. ‘Spiritual Mapping’

- “Spiritual mapping [is] researching a city to discover...inroads Satan has made... *These elements, or demonic entrances, need to be discovered & mapped out, through historical, cultural & sociological research, charismatic inspiration, &...by questioning demons.*” —Erwin van der Meer

#### C. Interrogating Demons:

- “Satan shouldn’t be trusted...That Jesus, on a single occasion...asked a demon to give its name ([‘Legion’] Mk. 5:9) shouldn’t be used to justify...interrogating demons to discover new truths about demon.” —Robert Priest

#### D. Discerning the Spirits

- “Nothing can ever guarantee that one has correctly ‘discerned the spirits’: as one Nigerian believer told me, ‘people think they are speaking to God in the air, but they are really speaking to another power’. “—Ruth Marshall

#### E. ‘Strategic level spiritual warfare’ (SLSW) [a combination of the above techniques]

- “A thorough biblical study demonstrates that *SLSW is mostly unbiblical*. A study of...Church history demonstrates that *SLSW was never accepted in orthodox Christianity.*”—Erwin van der Meer

#### F. Power encounters

- Some people promote ‘power encounters,’ to battle hostile cosmic powers. But: “Whenever we seek to coerce God into doing our bidding through the use of a religious formula...we are in danger of yielding to that residue of fallen-ness in us that desires to control, rather than submit to God’s will.” —Arthur Glasser

#### QUESTIONS:

The phrase “*Armor of God*” could mean either ‘Armor supplied/provided by God’ or it could mean ‘God’s own personal armor (which has been worn/used by him).’ Based on the OT descriptions of Isaiah 59:17 & Isaiah 11:1, 5 which of these meanings do you think Paul had in mind? What difference (if any) might this meaning of “God’s armor” imply?

The first item of armor is the “belt of truth” implied in the phrase: “*having girded your loins with truth*” (Eph. 6:14 KJV) or having “*truth like a belt around your waist*” (Eph. 6:14 CSB). What implications could be drawn from the facts that:

- The “belt of truth” is the first item of armor?
- “Truth” is depicted like a “belt” (as opposed to some other item)?

Jesus talked about God's Word being the truth, when he said: Father, "*Sanctify them by the truth; your word is truth*" (Jn. 17:17). How did Jesus use the 'truth as a weapon' when he was tempted by Satan (Matt. 4; Luke 4)? Discuss. What lessons can we learn from this example? (Discuss)

In today's society we hear phrases such as "my truth," "your truth," "his/her/their truth." How would you compare "truth" in Eph. 6:14 with those contemporary concepts of "truth"? (Discuss) How would you define "truth" in Eph. 6:14?

Prior to Eph. 6:14 the term "truth" appears in Ephesians:

- A. 1:13;
- B. 4:15;
- C. 4:21;
- D. 4:24-25. Read these verses; what does each of them tell you (or imply) about "truth"?

We could understand "truth" in either of two ways— either:

- In an *objective sense* as 'propositions/doctrinal statements about God, Christ, Spirit, salvation, etc. which we affirm.' Or in a *subjective sense* as our being truthful in our words, actions, etc.

Which of these meanings do you think is most important in the context of the "belt of truth"? Why?