

THE REAL ISSUE

EPHESIANS CHAPTER SIX AND VERSES THIRTEEN TO EIGHTEEN

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SPIRITUAL WARFARE - OVER-PLAYED, OVERRATED OR OVERLOOKED?

We can quickly become unbalanced whenever we take a teaching, philosophy, or biblical text out of context. Since the beginning of church history, contexts and situations have caused us to gravitate toward specific teachings or biblical concepts that create **DIVISIONS** and **CONFUSION** when believed outside of the balance of scripture.

In John the Baptists day it looked like this:



At this time John the Baptist was baptizing at Aenon, near Salim, because there was plenty of water there; and people kept coming to him for baptism. (This was before John was thrown into prison.) A debate broke out between John's disciples and a certain Jew over ceremonial cleansing. So John's disciples came to him and said, "Rabbi, the man you met on the other side of the Jordan River, the one you identified as the Messiah, is also baptizing people. And everybody is going to him instead of coming to us." **John 3:23-26 NLT**

In Adam and Eve's day, it looked like this:



The serpent was the shrewdest of all the wild animals the Lord God had made. One day he asked the woman, "Did God really say you must not eat the fruit from any of the trees in the garden?" "Of course we may eat fruit from the trees in the garden," the woman replied. "It's only the fruit from the tree in the middle of the garden that we are not allowed to eat. God said, 'You must not eat it or even touch it; if you do, you will die.'" "You won't die!" the serpent replied to the woman. "God knows that your eyes will be opened as soon as you eat it, and you will be like God, knowing both good and evil." **Genesis 3:1-5 NLT**

DOCTRINAL WAR - THE ATTACK ON THE CHURCH

Satan the Devil wants us to take things out of context and become unbalanced around spiritual matters because that creates his ultimate desire - confusion and division. It is why the Apostle Paul said these direct and harsh words:



And now I make one more appeal, my dear brothers and sisters. Watch out for people who cause divisions and upset people's faith by teaching things contrary to what you have been taught. Stay away from them. **Romans 16:7 NLT**

Spiritual warfare is not only about demons and spirits, it is more often than not our inability to guard ourselves and keep to the bond of peace, stay united with the promptings of the Holy Spirit, and avoid confusion around the basis of our relationship with God - Jesus.

Here are some doctrines/concepts that have incredible power at the time of the end but, when used out of context, have created the biggest schisms in the church (the most significant attacks against the body of Christ):

- Sin:** Once saved, always saved, or lose your salvation?
- Heaven and Hell:** Confusion results in Judgementalism or Universalism
- Prosperity:** Confusion results in Name it and Claim it Theologies or Gold Dust Peddlars.
- Grace:** Earned eternity or Get away with murder theology?
- Holy Spirit:** Conscience-free living or spiritually induced convulsions?
- Sovereignty:** Pawns on a chess board or free will?

All of the above is a spiritual attack against the very character of God, not our situation, circumstance, or person. The ultimate goal of a spiritual attack is to weaken or confuse our ability to relate to God. It's about life with God!

The book of Job defines how Satan attacked the righteous. He attacked the **PHYSICAL** to question Job's **SPIRITUAL** relationship with God. But the one space that Satan does not have control of is our minds (souls).



"Don't be afraid of those who want to kill your body; they cannot touch your soul. Fear only God, who can destroy both soul and body in hell. **Matthew 10:28 NLT**

HE ATTACKS YOU TO GET TO THE CHURCH

Satan is very aware of our contribution to the body of Christ. As such, he goes after the church doctrinally and individuals emotionally.

He can only attack us through depression, identity, and self-worth when we allow what we see, taste, hear, or smell to define us. He does not have the power to **CONVINCE** your Christ-oriented mind that you are a loser. Our identity **CONFUSION** gets us to do that!

He causes moral and value confusion. His most significant attacks result in our confusion and disunity. And he uses our physical and flesh-trained eyes to upset our identity and authority.

THE WEAPONS

Our job is not to attack Satan (that has been done and finished) but to defend ourselves against his fiery darts penetrating our souls. Our biggest weapons are:

1. PEACE OF MIND

PEACE involves your entire soul being at rest (2 Corinthians 2:13) because you're trusting God (Isaiah 26:3) and presenting your concerns in every situation to God in prayer (Philippians 4:6-7). True peace of mind comes from God rather than from anyone or anything in the world (John 14:27)

2. GOD-ORIENTED WISDOM

God gives us **WISDOM** from above and the Holy Spirit, who dwells within each Christian. The Holy Spirit reveals divine wisdom to us in a variety of ways. The Spirit grants wisdom through Scripture. The Spirit helps us to know Christ, who embodies divine wisdom. The Spirit also gives gifts of wisdom to guide us in the daily challenges of work and life. We have access to "wisdom from above" because we have the Spirit from above within us. Asking for wisdom is our submission to the Holy Spirit (James 1:5 NLT)

3. DIVINELY INSPIRED IDENTITY

God, however, is **UNCHANGING**. He is reliable. He is the same yesterday, today, and forever. If you find your identity in Him, you will never be trapped by confusion or disconnected from Him because He has proven time and time again to be trustworthy. Start here! Your identity is pivotal in being ready to go to war.

DELIVERED TO NOT FROM

deliverance - noun - de·liv·er·ance di·'li·v(ə-)rən(t)s dē-

Synonyms of deliverance

- 1: the act of delivering someone or something: the state of being delivered
especially: LIBERATION, RESCUE
- 2: something delivered or given to
especially: an opinion or decision (such as the verdict of a jury) expressed publicly

We are delivered TO peace, wisdom, and a God-given identity! This is His opinion or decision. Any other decision or opinion is an attack on you!



Therefore, put on every piece of God's armor so you will be able to resist the enemy in the time of evil. Then after the battle you will still be standing firm. Stand your ground, putting on the belt of truth and the body armor of God's righteousness. For shoes, put on the peace that comes from the Good News so that you will be fully prepared. In addition to all of these, hold up the shield of faith to stop the fiery arrows of the devil. Put on salvation as your helmet, and take the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God. Pray in the Spirit at all times and on every occasion. Stay alert and be persistent in your prayers for all believers everywhere. **Ephesians 6:13-18 NLT**

YOUR STUDY



Conduct an AIR Study of as many of the following identity scriptures as you need: Romans 8:29, Matthew 5:48, Romans 12:3, Psalm 139:13-14, Ephesians 2:10, Romans 12:4-5, Romans 12:6-8, Ephesians 3:19, Ephesians 4:13, Joshua 1:8

SUMMARY QUESTIONS

1. What's the difference between being delivered from or delivered to?
2. Our three most powerful weapons in spiritual warfare are...?
3. What is your understanding of spiritual warfare?
4. What do you think it means to "cast out"?
5. Why is preparation for war essential?