

Ephesians 6:12—For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the powers, against the world forces of this darkness, against the spiritual forces of wickedness in the heavenly places.

“*Struggle*” can also be interpreted “wrestling,” pointing to hand-to-hand combat rather than warring with bows and arrows, guns, etc. Believers enter this “*struggle*” the moment they submit to Christ, a “*struggle...not against flesh and blood.*” Hoping to deceive believers into warring on the wrong front, our foe (Satan) attempts to convince man that he (Satan) isn’t real.

The body of Christ faces a battle in the spiritual realm—not the physical. Therefore, so long as believers enter into spiritual battles with physical weaponry, their enemy makes a mockery out of their every move. Paul wisely reminded his readers that their battle was to be fought in the invisible realm against a highly organized foe. Satan and his demons, skilled in deception and trickery, coordinate all activity toward one well-defined goal—to come against God by coming against His people. Thus, our battle is “*against the rulers, against the powers, against the world forces of this darkness, against the spiritual forces of wickedness in the heavenly places*” (Ephesians 6:12), who desire that believers consider them non-existent.

Paul longed that his readers understand the reality of the demonic realm—not make it their main topic of study. Satan is never overcome through comprehending the details of his person and kingdom. Only God overcomes Satan, for He defeated him through the cross and Jesus’ subsequent resurrection. God will cast Satan into “*the lake of fire*” at the end of the Millennium, the one-thousand-year reign of Christ on the earth (Revelation 20:7-10).

“*Rulers*” (Ephesians 6:12) is from the Greek *arche* and probably points to high-ranking demons (also rendered “*principalities*” in Romans 8:38 and “*rulers*” in Colossians 2:15). “*Powers*” (Ephesians 6:12) probably refers to a different rank of demons (also rendered “*power*” in Ephesians 2:2, “*authorities*” in Colossians 2:15, and “*authorities*” in 1Peter 3:22), the demons who dwell in the atmospheric heavens and make up Satan’s kingdom “*of the air*” (Ephesians 2:2). The phrase, “*the world forces of this darkness*” (Ephesians 6:12), could point to those demons who rule over the individual nations, demons such as “*the prince of the kingdom of Persia*” in Daniel’s day (Daniel 10:13). This scenario is reasonable considering that Satan remains the small “*g*” “*god of this world*” (2Corinthians 4:4). And finally, “*the spiritual forces of wickedness in the heavenly places*” (Ephesians 6:12) may point to the combination of Satan’s activities, for his present abode is in the atmospheric heavens (Ephesians 2:2; 6:12; Revelation 12:7-12). From this location he periodically descends to earth in the form of “*a roaring lion*” (1Peter 5:8) or “*an angel of light*” (2Corinthians 11:14). He also enters into the highest heavens (into God’s presence) for the purpose of accusing the “*brethren*” (Job 1:6; 2:1; Revelation 12:10). But note that although Satan has access to the highest heavens (where God dwells), his abode is in the atmospheric heavens, beneath where we dwell “*in Christ*” (Ephesians 2:6) and Christ dwells in God (John 14:20). He is a defeated foe (Colossians 2:15). This means that we can take authority over anything he and his demons send our way so long as it is done in God’s strength, grace, and power. But we must continually be reminded that the conflict with these authorities and powers increases, rather than decreases, as the world progresses in sin (Revelation 12:12).

Ephesians 6:13—Therefore, take up the full armor of God, that you may be able to resist in the evil day, and having done everything, to stand firm.

Because Paul begins this verse with “*therefore,*” he desires that his readers take everything stated earlier and apply it to what follows. Consequently, Paul exhorts his readers to “*take up*” the “*armor*” he has encouraged them to “*put on*” in Ephesians 6:11. Since the verb “*take up*” is an

aorist imperative, this armor is to be taken up with suddenness and intensity, put on, and never removed. Only our “love” for Christ and His Word (2Corinthians 5:14; Galatians 5:6) prevents us from discarding this protective attire. In Ephesians 6:14 we will begin to discuss the details of this armor and how it is to be taken up.

“Resist” (Ephesians 6:13) means “to oppose or stand against.” We are to “resist the devil” (James 4:7) through standing “firm” in our “faith” (1Peter 5:9). The phrase, “in the evil day” (Ephesians 6:13), is perceived by Wuest as follows:

the definite article before “day,” marks it out as a particular day, probably, as Expositors says, “the day of violent temptation and assault, whenever that may come to us during the present time.” (Wuest, 1989)ⁱ

We are to “take up the full armor of God” so we might “oppose” or “stand against” (in God’s strength, of course) the evil one whenever he comes our way.

Believers who have “done everything” required to “take up” God’s “armor” will “stand firm” (Ephesians 6:13), for properly equipped saints never wilt in battle. The converse is true as well, for defeated saints have committed one common error—they have removed their spiritual armor.

Even Christ wears armor while battling the enemy (Isaiah 59:17). Thus we, as Christ’s body (Ephesians 4:12), are to “take up the full armor of God” (Ephesians 6:13). This armor, which fits perfectly in every way, prepares the warrior for spiritual confrontation. Hence, David rejected Saul’s armor prior to facing Goliath (1Samuel 17:38-39).

ⁱ Wuest, Kenneth S. (1989). *Word Studies in the Greek New Testament*. Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co. Grand Rapids, MI. www.eerdmans.com. Used by permission.