

BE STRONG IN THE LORD

Ephesians 6:10-13

1/Be strong in the Lord

- In the Lord = not in ourselves
- All we have and are is in Christ (Ephesians chapters 1, 2)
- See also Joshua 1:7-9; Psalm 27:1,2; Ephesians 3:16; Philippians 4:13

*Stand up, stand up for Jesus
Stand in his strength alone
The arm of flesh will fail you
Ye dare not trust your own.
(George Duffield Jr)*

Be strong (empowered) = continuous tense. Such strength is an ongoing experience.

Threefold description—

- Power (*dunamis*) = ability
- Strength = effective in gaining a desired end
- Might = inner strength

Note: could also translate this as ‘might of his strength.’ These same three terms are used about the resurrection of Jesus in 1:19, 20.

*Stand up, stand up for Jesus
The strife will not be long
This day the noise of battle
The next the victor’s song!*

2/The armour of God

Put on (ie dress yourself). Original grammar implies putting on the armour once only. Once on, it should never come off!

The armour is complete (‘splendid’). Greek term = *panoplia* from which we derive ‘panoply’ = impressive array or collection. No part is missing—

- Belt of truth
- Breastplate of righteousness
- Shoes of peace
- Shield of faith
- Helmet of salvation
- Sword of Spirit

*Put on the gospel armour
Each piece put on with prayer*

*Were duty calls or danger,
Be never wanting there.*

3/Stand firm (11)

- When we put on the whole armour we can stand firm. There is none for the back!
- Stand = ‘hold a critical position’ (Barth)

4/The schemes of the devil (11)

Satan is a deceiver. He will trick us if possible! Biblical terms used—

- Schemes (Eph 6:11)
- Outwit, cheat (2 Cor 2:11)
- Device, design, thought, method (2 Cor 2:11)
- Snare, trap (1 Timothy 3:6-7)
- Deceiving, deceitful, acting as an impostor (1 Tim 4:1)

Eg in *The Merchant of Venice*, Antonio says—

Mark you this, Bassanio,

‘The devil can cite Scripture for his purpose.

An evil soul, producing holy witness,

Is like a villain with a smiling cheek;

A goodly apple rotten at the heart;

O, what a goodly outside falsehood hath!’

(*Merchant of Venice*, I, iii)

Satan’s foremost scheme is to tempt us to sin. He tried this with Jesus

(Matt 4:1ff; Luke 4:1ff; 22:40). He will try it with us. See 1 Corinthians 10:13; Galatians 6:1; 1 Timothy 6:9; Hebrews 2:18; 4:15; James 1:12, 13.

Sin can destroy us. It was sin from which Jesus died to save us. We do not want Satan to outwit us (2 Corinthians 2:11). We need to be aware of what he is up to!

A generation ago, Christians were very clear about the distinction between the kingdom of God and the kingdom of this world. There now seems to be a blurring of this distinction. We need to ensure there is not even the suggestion of sin in our lives.

5/Wrestling our enemies (12)

- Wrestle = hand-to-hand fighting
- Wrestling = a fight characterised by trickery, cunning and strategy (Barth)
- We must be alert and aware

6/Our real enemies (12)

Not flesh and blood. Our real enemies are spiritual. See Ephesians 1:21 and 6:12. In modern terms, we might draw the following analogies—

- Rule (*arche*, first) = Field-marshals

- Authority (high-ranking) = Generals
- Power (*dunamis*) = Field Commanders
- Dominion (lordship) = Commissioned officers
- Title (name) = Governors
- Powers of this dark world (secretive, sinister) = secret police
- Spiritual forces of evil = infantry

*Ye that are men now serve him
Against un-numbered foes
Let courage rise with danger
And strength to strength oppose!*

7/Heavenly places (12)

Heavenly places = heavenly *in nature*, not location i.e. the spiritual realm which is all around us. Both good and evil powers dwell in heavenly places. Satan = ‘Prince of the power of the air’ (Ephesians 2:2)

‘From these passages the startling conclusion must be drawn that not only God, Christ and believers who are “in him” dwell in the “heavenly places” but that evil cosmic powers also dwell there...’ (C R Schoonhoven in G. Bromiley (ed), *International Standard Bible Encyclopaedia*, Vol 2, 1982:655).

See Ephesians 1:3; 1:20; 2:6; 3:10; 6:12

Spiritual warfare is an ongoing spiritual engagement with a spiritual enemy. To engage in a spiritual battle, we need to be—

- filled with the Spirit (5:18)
- walking in the Spirit (Gal 5:16)
- wielding the sword of the Spirit (6:17)

8/The victory is ours (12)

Satan and his hosts are powerful. Christ is more powerful!

- 2 Corinthians 2:14 – He always leads us in triumph
- Romans 8:37 – we are more than conquerors

*From victory unto victory
His army shall he lead
Till every foe is vanquished
And Christ is Lord indeed!*

9/The whole armour of God (13)

- ‘Take up’ = final preparation for battle
- Whole armour = none missing
- Having done all = everything ready
- ‘Withstand’ = stand against
- ‘Stand’ = stand firm

- See James 4:7

*To him that overcometh
A crown of life shall be
He with the King of Glory
Shall reign eternally*

Read: Ephesians 6:10-13

1. On a scale of one (little) to ten (much) how would you describe your strength in the Lord at this time? What should you do about it?
2. What does it mean in practical terms to you to be strong in the Lord? (10)
3. What would be modern equivalents of the whole armour of God? (eg sword = automatic weapon; night vision glasses = helmet etc. You will probably have more creative ideas). Which Christian qualities would go with each piece?
4. What are some of the 'schemes of the devil' that you have encountered personally? How have you dealt with them? (11)
5. What are some examples from history or from your experience of Christians fighting against 'flesh and blood'? (12) What has been the outcome?
6. In the light of this passage, how should we respond when people of the world attack us and criticise us?
7. Given the list of foes we face (12) what should our attitude be to spiritual warfare? How seriously should we regard it?
8. What do you think are the implications or dangers if we don't put on the whole armour of God? (13)
9. What do you think is meant by 'the evil day'? (13) What would be an 'evil day' for you?
10. What does it mean in practical terms to stand firm in such a day?

Want to read more by Barry Chant? Easy. Just go to www.barrychant.com and browse around. There is something for everyone – Bible studies, children's stories, articles, devotional materials, poems, short stories, Christian resources, pioneer Pentecostal research and more. And lots of it is free. Dr Barry Chant is a regular speaker at church services, seminars, conferences and conventions. Hundreds of thousands of his books have been sold around the world. He has degrees in arts, theology and ministry, a diploma in education and a PhD in history. He is Senior Pastor of the Wesley International Congregation in Sydney, Australia. He is an ordained minister in the CRC Churches International and was the founding president of Tabor College, Australia. He is married (to Vanessa) and they have three adult children and twelve grand-children.