

## Strength in Christ (6:10)

6:10 *Finally, be strong in the Lord and in the strength of His might.*

### Faith-Union with Christ

- While the exact phrase *“in the Lord”* occurs six times in this letter (1:15; 2:21; 5:8; 6:1,10,21), it is part of a larger group of phrases that describe our faith-union with Christ.<sup>1</sup>
- When we live by trusting Jesus alone for our salvation, the Holy Spirit binds us to Jesus in an eternal, inseparable union (1 Corinthians 12:13; 1 John 3:24; 4:13). We are bound to His death and resurrection (Romans 6:1-11; Colossians 3:1-4); all that is His is ours (1 Corinthians 1:30).
- The title *“Lord”* is specifically used to refer to the Son, Jesus.<sup>2</sup>
  - This title describes the Son’s divinity. It is used by Paul to distinguish the Persons of the Father and Son.
  - This title describes absolute political allegiance.
  - This title describes the believer’s submission to Jesus.

### Be Strong in His Strength

- Paul fully describes *“the strength of His might”* (1:19) in the prayer of 1:18-23.

## The Schemes of the Tempter (6:11)

6:11 *Put on the full armor of God, so that you will be able to stand firm against the schemes of the devil.*

### Armor

- The *“armor”* metaphor is taken from the O.T. (Isaiah 11:5; 59:17). Paul uses it several times in his other letters (Romans 13:12,14; 2 Corinthians 6:7;

<sup>1</sup> By my count, about 27 times in Ephesians alone (1:1,3-4,6-7,9-10,12-13,15,20; 2:6-7,10,13,21-22; 3:6,11-12,21; 4:21,32; 6:1,10,21)!

<sup>2</sup> 1:2,3,15,17; 3:11,14; 5:20; 6:23-24.

10:4; Galatians 3:27; Colossians 3:10,12;  
1 Thessalonians 5:8).

### Stand Firm

- Our standing must be with an awareness of our sin and weakness (1 Corinthians 10:12-14).
- We stand in the grace found in Christ (Romans 5:1-2; 1 Peter 5:12), in the apostolic Gospel (1 Corinthians 15:1), and in the will of God (Colossians 4:12).

### The Schemes of the Devil

- The devil’s *“schemes”* (μεθοδεΐα, from which we get our English word “method”) are mentioned in 4:14 – in that case coming through false teaching. A similar idea is expressed (with different language) in 2 Corinthians 2:11.

*“Devil”*  
means  
“slanderer.”

## Our Struggle (6:12)

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.*

### The Only Fight

- Unbelievers cannot engage in this *“struggle,”* since they are bound to the kingdom of spiritual darkness through their unbelief (2 Corinthians 4:3-4; 2 Timothy 2:26).
- If believers get caught up in a *“struggle...against flesh and blood,”* they will be ineffective, have no victory, and there will be no human resistance to the spiritual forces of darkness. In other words, if we don’t *“struggle,”* no one will, and the darkness will prevail in lives, families, churches, cities, etc.

The  
struggle’s  
root:  
Gen. 3:15.

### Our Opponents

- *“...the rulers...”*
  - This word can describe civil magistrates (Luke 12:11; 20:20; Titus 3:1). In this case, Paul is describing spiritual (invisible)

*“rulers,”* but **the Bible is clear that spiritual forces are at work in the civil/political structures of humanity.**

- Christ conquered them in His cross (Colossians 2:15), is seated in authority over this power (Ephesians 1:21; Colossians 2:10), and will ultimately subdue this power (1 Corinthians 15:24).
- God is proclaiming His victory over this power through the witness of the Church in this age (Ephesians 3:10).
- *“...the powers...”* This word (ἐξουσία) is sometimes translated “authority” in the N.T.
  - Christ is Creator of these *“powers”* (Colossians 2:10), and has conquered them in His cross (Colossians 2:15).
  - The risen Christ has been given *“all authority in heaven...and on earth”* (Matthew 28:18; see also John 17:2; Ephesians 1:21; 1 Peter 3:22). He is reigning from heaven until He subdues all these authorities (1 Corinthians 15:24; Revelation 12:10).
  - It can be identified with the power and authority of earthly kingdoms (Luke 4:6; 12:11; 20:20; 23:7; John 19:10-11; Romans 13:1-3; Titus 3:1).
  - The Gospel delivers people from the power of the devil (Acts 26:18; Ephesians 2:2; Colossians 1:10).
  - This word occurs most in the Revelation (19 times), where it describes the authority/power of God in Christ, the authority/power temporarily granted to the forces of darkness, and the authority/power of the saints in heaven.
- *“...the world forces of this darkness...”*
  - The word *“world”* (κόσμος) doesn’t describe the physical globe of the earth, but the order

READ  
 Acts 19:18-20,23,41.  
 Idolatry is demon-  
 worship  
 (1 Cor. 10:20).

and way of humanity, from the civil/political to economic to culture to worldview. There is a spiritual darkness that holds tight onto the world of humanity in this age. Believers live in this world, but are not to be bound by it, and are not identified with it.

- This is a spiritual darkness or blindness.<sup>3</sup>
- *“...the spiritual forces of wickedness in the heavenly places.”* We are now explicitly told that these are *“spiritual”* powers operating in an unseen realm (*“the heavenly”*).<sup>4</sup> Though unseen, these forces co-exist with the visible and affect it.
- At the end of this list, we need to remember Romans 8:38.

*“You”* is plural!!

## In the Evil Day (6:13)

<sup>6:13</sup> *Therefore, take up the full armor of God, so that you will be able to resist in the evil day, and having done everything, to stand firm.*

### The Resistance

- READ James 4:7.

### The Evil Day

- In Ephesians 5:16, the apostle told us *“the days are evil.”* He also describes this age as *“this present evil age”* (Galatians 1:4).
- God uses even spiritual battle to purify and refine our faith for His glory and our joy (1 Peter 1:6-9).

### Having Done Everything, Stand

- This is the third time in this section that Paul has urged the Ephesians to *“stand.”*

<sup>3</sup> Matthew 4:16; Luke 1:79; John 3:19; Acts 26:18; Romans 13:12; 2 Corinthians 6:14; Colossians 1:13; 1 Thessalonians 5:4-5; 1 Peter 2:9; 1 John 1:6.

<sup>4</sup> *“...the heavenly places”* describes the spiritual realm (1:3,20; 2:6; 3:10; 6:12).