

Eph 6:17 “As the sword was the soldier’s only weapon, so God’s Word is the only needed weapon, infinitely more powerful than any of Satan’s. The Gr. term refers to a small weapon (6–18 in. long). It was used both defensively to fend off Satan’s attacks, and offensively to help destroy the enemy’s strategies. It is the truth of Scripture” (MSB).

Eph 6:17 “The spiritual nature of the church’s resources is nowhere more plain than in its reliance upon God’s Word, which is the only offensive weapon mentioned in this list of spiritual armor. The Word of God is to be wielded like a sharp two-edged sword, in the mighty power of his Holy Spirit” (ESVSB).

SOURCES CITED

ESV Study Bible.

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Chuck Lowe, *Territorial Spirits and World Evangelisation*, Mentor/OMF, 1998.
MacArthur Study Bible.

NOTES ON SPIRITUAL WARFARE

“The Bible nowhere narrates, describes, or instructs us on how, or even whether, we are to engage these high-ranking territorial spirits....” Daniel never engages or prays against the spiritual enemies about which the celestial beings speak. He leaves those matters to God” (Longman 1999: 265-66).

“There is ‘no hint in the Old Testament of an alien order of spirits or demons with a rival realm outside the Lord’s dominion’” (Lowe 1998: 37).

“In so far as organisations or individuals oppose the people and work of God, they are serving as instruments of Satan. This much the Bible clearly affirms. More than this is speculation” (Lowe 1998: 43).

“The Bible shows little interest in the taxonomy of the demonic world. It merely affirms that opposition to the work and people of God is Satanic in origin. This is intended to serve as a counter to apostasy, and as motivation for perseverance, not as stimulus for ‘spiritual mapping’” (Lowe 1998: 43).

“The Old Testament provides little evidence of aggressive warfare against ruling spirits for the simple reason that God is always the one who subdues them (see, for example, Ps 82:6-8; Isa 24:21-22)” (Lowe 1998: 46).

“Daniel never seeks the names of the demons or the angels, nor does he ever use them in prayer. The names are given in an offhand fashion in the course of explaining the delay in answering his earlier prayer....Moreover, the only names he receives are those of Gabriel and Michael....The evil spirits are known only by generic titles, ‘prince of Persia’ and ‘prince of Greece’ (10:20)....Generic titles are sufficient for demons....Obtaining these requires neither special insight nor prolonged periods of prayer and fasting” (Lowe 1998: 47).

Of Jude 9-10, “The point is two-fold. For one, if the great archangel is so circumspect with the devil, how much more prudent should mere mortals be with demons. For the other, it is God alone who has the authority and power to rebuke Satan and the demons; mortal man does not” (Lowe 1998: 50).

Jude 8 condemns men who slander celestial beings (cf. 2 Pet 2:10-12). “A more explicit caution against aggressively confronting demons is hard to imagine” (Lowe 1998: 51).

“Paul does not exhort the Ephesian Church to launch an offensive against Satan; he urges them merely to stand firm in the face of attack. Four times in this paragraph [Eph 6:11ff], he exhorts them to hold their ground....The preoccupation with subordinate details of armour and demons often distracts from the main point: ‘Stand firm’” (Lowe 1998: 61).

“Notably, the armour is consistently defensive. Belts, breastplates, sandals, shields, and helmets protect the soldier; they do not enable him to inflict wounds on his opponent. The only possibly offensive weapon is the sword, and even this can be used for self-protection as much as for attacking. Given that the sword represents the word of God, which Jesus used to defend himself against Satan’s temptations (...), there is reason to believe that even this weapon is defensive” (Lowe 1998: 62).

“This portrait of the devil as the aggressive party is consistent with the other descriptions of him in the New Testament. James, for example, urges his readers ‘to resist’ the devil, not to attack him, with the promise that he will flee (Jas 4:7). The devil is on the prowl, like a hungry, roaring lion, Peter warns; he seeks someone to devour (1 Pet 5:8). Christians are not called to launch a pre-emptive strike. Instead, they are to resist and withstand him (1 Pet 5:9)” (Lowe 1998: 63).

“It is clear why Christians are not called to go on the offensive against Satan. The first reason is that God has already won the battle. The second is that demons are still a potent force. That is to say, there is no battle to win, and this is fortunate, for if there were, we could not win it” (Lowe 1998: 63).

Of Ephesians 6, “Not once does Paul pray against Artemis, the alleged territorial spirit of Ephesus. Never does he ask them to pray against the ruling spirit over Rome, from where he is likely to have written this letter. He asks merely that they pray for other Christians as he was praying for them, and that they pray for him to be bold in evangelism” (Lowe 1998: 65).

“So on all counts, warfare prayer stands at odds with Paul’s teaching on spiritual warfare. It minimises what Paul maximises: the victory which God has won over Satan. It counsels aggression whereas he exhorts to steadfastness. It relies on innovative technique, but Paul urges the practice of traditional spiritual disciplines. It promises great power to humans, while Paul warns concerning the abiding power of the demons. It invents a new form of prayer: aggression directed against demons; Paul practises the only sort of prayer found in Scripture: humble petition addressed to God” (Lowe 1998: 65).

“Along with “stand” in Eph. 6:11 and stand firm later in v. 13, Paul portrays Christians as soldiers in the battle line holding fast against the enemy’s charge” (ESVSB).

Eph 6:14 “For the third time (see vv. 11, 13), the apostle calls Christians to take a firm position in the spiritual battle against Satan and his minions. Whether confronting Satan’s efforts to distrust God, forsaking obedience, producing doctrinal confusion and falsehood, hindering service to God, bringing division, serving God in the flesh, living hypocritically, being worldly, or in any other way rejecting biblical obedience, this armor is our defense” (MSB).