



Managing GOD's Money

Theme for the October: Satan Is Active

Church folks are growing more “religious” and further away from Jesus. In a June 2000 study, “Church Lay Leaders Are Different From Followers,” Barna Research Group Ltd., of Ventura, California reported 39% of lay church leaders in the USA said there is no Satan. And a 2010 PewResearch “U.S. Religious Knowledge Survey” shows even more ignorance of the Bible. It states, “on questions about Christianity – including a battery of questions about the Bible – Mormons ... show the highest levels of knowledge.”

Preachers push easy believe-ism to grow congregations so we have scores of people ignorant of the Bible in churches. This month we try to shed some light in the following areas:



October 1-7: The god of this age

October 8-14: Dress suitably

October 15-21: Wear your helmet – use your sword

October 22-31: Walk in the light

October 8-14: Dress suitably



Ephesians 6:11-15

Put on the full armor of God so that you can take your stand against the devil's schemes. For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the powers of this dark world and against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly realms. Therefore put on the full armor of God, so that when the day of evil comes, you may be able to stand your ground, and after you have done everything, to stand. Stand firm then, with the belt of truth buckled around your waist, with the breastplate of righteousness in place, and with your feet fitted with the readiness that comes from the gospel of peace.

Apostle Paul is writing to encourage believers in Ephesus in their Christian walk. He knows the *god of this age*, Satan, engages believers in a continuing battle. So, before he ends his letter, in chapter six he warns about the war Satan has been waging against God's people. Most important, knowing believers won the war (**2 Timothy 2:1-13**), Paul provides guidelines to fight daily battles.

Using imagery of Roman soldiers' battle gear of the era, he describes needed daily weaponry. Soldiers wore belts, breastplates, and special shoes while on the battlefield. Similarly, we should wear these permanently.

1. Truth as a belt
2. Righteousness as a breastplate
3. The Gospel of peace as shoes for the feet

The Belt of Truth

Paul's reference to the belt of truth represents God's truth (**John 8:31-32**). Jesus is truth. He is the standard for what is right. His truth frees us to be all we can be. Only He frees us from the penalty of sin, from Satan's lies, and from self-delusions. For this Truth to take hold in us, we must surrender our lives to Jesus. Then He will be our belt of Truth to *hold our armor together* like the Roman soldier's belt held his armor in place.

Surrender to Jesus' Lordship so you may live truth. Be honest in all your dealings. Be transparent; show God's love always. Become so absorbed with Jesus that you hear and respond to His voice and repel Satan's lies. Dear believer, today, despite overzealous lawmakers, we still have the Bible available as our

instruction manual for life. Invest time in it to grow closer to Jesus.

Watch out; Satan attacks truth. He goes after the foundation of our beliefs by targeting our minds. How often have you doubted some biblical truth? As a follower of Jesus, you know Jesus answers your prayers in His time and in His way (**Jeremiah 33:3**). Yet, when you don't see a specific solution to *your* problem, you start doubting this truth. Instead of trusting God to supply your needs as He promised, you act on your own. You buy a couple lottery tickets; take an advance on your credit cards, or take a second mortgage. In essence, you do everything but go before God to see what He prepared for you. Yes, *you choose* not to trust Him, not to wait on Him, and you ignore prophet Isaiah's words:

But those who hope in the LORD will renew their strength. They will soar on wings like eagles; they will run and not grow weary, they will walk and not be faint (Isaiah 40:31).

Why do we lose hope? Satan plants lies so close to the truth we believe them. The media and society bombards us with these lies, we doubt, become impatient, and act on our own. Besides, Satan appeals to our egos, our human crutches, or other areas of pride. Have you noticed? Not one of us is immune. *Even the man after God's own heart*, King David, succumbed to Satan. Read this account in **1 Chronicles 21: 1-7**

Satan rose up against Israel and incited David to take a



Memory Verse

James 1:22

Do not merely listen to the word, and so deceive yourselves. Do what it says.

census of Israel. So David said to Joab and the commanders of the troops, "Go and count the Israelites from Beersheba to Dan. Then report back to me so that I may know how many there are." But Joab replied, ... my lord the king, are they not all my lord's subjects? Why does my lord want to do this? Why should he bring guilt on Israel?" ... But Joab did not include Levi and Benjamin in the numbering, because the king's command was repulsive to him. This command was also evil in the sight of God; so he punished Israel.

Determined to get at believers continually, *Satan is active constantly*. When we listen to him, we act on our own forgetting we will bear the result. Even so, still we ask, *where is God?* Why doesn't He help us get out of this position? We refuse to accept we messed up, chose poorly, so we must bear the

results that often spread beyond our immediate families and us.

In **1 Chronicles 21:17** David recognized he needed to accept responsibility for his actions, but he wanted to contain the negative result to him:

David said to God, "Was it not I who ordered the fighting men to be counted? I am the one who has sinned and done wrong. These are but sheep. What have they done? O LORD my God, let your hand fall upon me and my family, but do not let this plague remain on your people."

Are you a pastor? An elder? A leader? Beware; Satan will attack you viciously. Heed Apostle Paul's words in **Acts 20:28-30** to the Ephesians' elders. They are true today as they were then. If you are not a leader, beware of leaders who act in this way:

Keep watch over yourselves and all the flock of which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers. Be shepherds of the church of God, which he bought with his own blood. I know that after I leave, savage wolves will come in among you and will not spare the flock. Even from your own number men will arise and distort the truth in order to draw away disciples after them.

Daily, be ready to ward off Satan's attacks. Paul uses the Greek word, *perizonnumi*, for

girded in **Ephesians 6:14**, which suggests dressed for readiness. The Roman soldier was always battle-ready, we too must be battle-ready so we do not conform to this world (**Romans 12:2**) — to Satan's lies.

Breastplate of Righteousness



The Roman soldier's breastplate protected his vital organs: heart, lungs, kidney, stomach. The believer's breastplate protects his vital organ, his heart — his emotions and self-worth. Satan tells us we are worthless: too fat, too tall, too short, too whatever

he knows will take us down. As we watch the television with *Ms. Perfect*, we get upset remembering how we hate our bodies.

So, we spend money on the latest diet fad, exercise machine, wrinkle remover, or whatever gadget grabs us. But we remain empty because we don't know Jesus who loves us and wants us to love Him just as we are. His Holy Spirit will change us from the inside into His image. However, we need to open our hearts to accept His love.

Folks, God created each of us in His image. That *Ms. Perfect* on the television isn't perfect; she doesn't have it together. God sent Jesus to die for us *while we were yet sinners*. That's right, while we were sinners. He commits to change us to the person He wants us to be, but

this is a journey with hills and valleys.

The breastplate symbolizes the believer's righteous life in Messiah (**Ephesians 4:20-24**). How do you get it? Give your heart to Jesus. He wants you to love Him with all your heart, soul, and mind. Stay in His Word, listen to His voice, and do what He asks. Once you devote your life to Jesus, everything else you *need* falls in place. Having done this, you become sensitive to His Spirit so you may know, then desire to do His will.

Satan appeals to our sin nature. He entices us, but Jesus shows us how to avoid sin. Without Messiah we will display our own righteousness, our self-centredness, which is like *filthy rags* (**Isaiah 64:6**), useless against the devil's attacks. But with Jesus the Messiah, the Spirit will guide us through all temptations.

Putting on the breastplate means doing what is right in God's eyes, not doing good works based on our views. It entails reaching out to the poor, and doing other good works motivated by Jesus' love. These acts of goodness flow from a heart devoted to Jesus. Such a heart protects us from the enemy because we will fix our eyes on the Lord continually.

Instead of deciding what you should do then asking God to sanction it, accept what He prepares for you. Often, we get this backwards and miss His best for us.

The Roman soldier wore his breastplate before entering the battlefield; he never removed it

once on the battlefield. Our battle with Satan will not end during our sojourn on earth, so we too must always wear our breastplates by fixing our eyes on Jesus and obeying Him. Apostle Paul reminds us in **2 Corinthians 5:21** that believers in Messiah have access to the righteousness of God. Do you believe this?

God made Him who had no sin to be sin for us, so that in Him we might become the righteousness of God - **2 Corinthians 5:21**.

Gospel of Peace—Shoes for Feet

Continuing his imagery of the Roman soldier's battle gear, Paul refers to feet fitted with the readiness that comes from the gospel of peace. The Roman soldier wore special shoes with nails to give him a good balance during combat. We need to know Messiah as personal Lord and Savior, know His Word, so we may have *good balance* to withstand the onslaught from Satan.

The Good News of the Gospel, the gospel of peace, is the secure, reliable weapon we have to fight the devil (**Mark 16:15-17**). Jesus our Messiah overcame death and is alive today. This gives us a secure grip to stand firm against the devil's schemes. Jesus' followers know we have won the war — Messiah is with us; He will never leave or abandon us.

Jesus charged us to go on the offence and spread this Good News to every nation, making disciples and teaching them to

obey His Word. Spreading this Good News, the gospel of peace, to every nation is essential in the believer's weaponry against the schemes of the devil.

Believers have peace in and with Messiah. Through the Holy Spirit, we can withstand Satan's schemes (**Romans 5:1, Philipians 4:6-7**). But we must obey everything God commanded, so Satan will not be able to penetrate our defences.

The gospel of peace is the secure foundation, the confidence we have to step out in faith, knowing we won the war.

Application



Matthew 4:1-4

Then Jesus was led by the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted[a] by the devil.
2 After fasting forty days and forty nights, he was hungry.
3 The tempter came to him and said, "If you are the Son of God, tell these stones to become bread."

Jesus answered, "It is written: 'Man shall not live on bread alone, but on every word that comes from the mouth of God.'"

Satan is the expert imitator of God's truth. Often, we forget that to ferret out imitations we should study the original. That's why the key to resisting Satan is to know the Truth, the Source of truth, and



respond to the Holy Spirit's prompting. And like the Roman soldier, be ready for Satan's attack by wearing our battle gear—spending time in the Bible and with Messiah Jesus.

Satan will attack you; you can't resist on your own, you need the Holy Spirit's help.

Wear your armor daily. This week, note in your prayer journal instances when you succumbed to Satan's lies. Ask Jesus to give you insight to see His truth.

Start to study the Word systematically; ask a friend to hold you accountable to do this. Ask Jesus to show you how to love Him with all your heart, soul, and mind.

Be on guard against crediting all negatives to Satan.

When you *choose to sin*, you will bear negative outcomes. Let me repeat, when you choose to sin. Sin is a choice, and the Bible tells us in **1 Corinthians 10:13**, when Satan tempts you, God presents a way out; choose that way.

The god of This Age

The God of glory shines His mercy on you,
The God of mercy shines His glory on you.

The god of this time is not the god with whom to commune,
The god of this world is the evil against which you must become immune.

Know the One who has been revealed to you by His gracious majesty,
Discernment comes from Him to whom you must bow down.

Thank Jesus for His powerful unconditional everlasting love,
Messiah Jesus the King, the only God has delivered you from bondage.

Freedom gained from His deliverance gives access to His world.

Beware; the devil prowls enticing you to his kingdom, confident you will yield,

Stand firm; Jesus your Lord and Saviour never will desert you.

Eyes fixed on Him, take the path through His field.

Are you ready? The King is on His way to reclaim His land.

Will you get up and finally take a stand?

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Daily Reflections



<p>October 8: Ephesians 6:11-15; John 8:31-32</p>
<p>October 9: 2 Timothy 2:1-13; Jeremiah 33:3</p>
<p>October 10: Isaiah 40:31; Romans 12:2</p>
<p>October 11: 1 Chronicles 21:1-7, 17</p>
<p>October 12: Ephesians 4:20-24; Romans 5:1; Philippians 4:6-7</p>
<p>October 13: 1 Peter 1:3-9; Mark 16:15-17</p>
<p>October 14: James 1:22; Isaiah 64:6</p>

Considering the month's *theme*, and the period's *topic*, daily reflect on verses on the left. These questions might help your reflections:

1. Who is talking to whom, about what, and in what context?
2. How do these verses apply to me today?
3. What lessons from these verses can I start today?

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