

Armor of God—Sword of the Word of God

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BIG SANDY, Texas—One of the most encouraging sections of Scripture is found in the book of Ephesians. In that letter, the apostle Paul described a spiritual battle (Ephesians 6:10-13) and the spiritual weapons (verses 14-17) available for the children of God to use.

In this article, we will discuss the sixth weapon—the sword of the Spirit, which is the Word of God.

Listening for the voice of God

Notice how three other Bible translations describe the end of Ephesians 6:17.

- The Emphasized New Testament: A New Translation (J.B. Rotherham) translates the end of verse 17 as “which is what God hath spoken.”
- The Twentieth Century New Testament translates the end of verse 17 as “which is the Message of God.”
- The New Testament: An American Translation (Edgar J. Goodspeed) translates the end of verse 17 as “which is the voice of God.”

Old Testament examples

There are many verses in the Old Testament that discuss God communicating with the people.

- There were dreams and visions.

Numbers 12:6—“Then He said, ‘Hear now My words: If there is a prophet among you, I, the LORD, make Myself known to him in a vision; I speak to him in a dream.’ ”

- There was direct communication.

Numbers 12:7-8—“Not so with My servant Moses; He is faithful in all My house. I speak with him face to face, even plainly, and not in dark sayings; and he sees the form of the LORD. Why then were you not afraid to speak against My servant Moses?”

Jeremiah 23:16—“Thus says the LORD of hosts: ‘Do not listen to the words of the prophets who prophesy to you. They make you worthless; they speak a vision of their own heart, not from the mouth of the LORD.’ ”

Jeremiah 23:21—“I have not sent these prophets, yet they ran. I have not spoken to them, yet they prophesied.”

- Sometimes the communication was loud.

Exodus 19:16-19—"Then it came to pass on the third day, in the morning, that there were thunderings and lightnings, and a thick cloud on the mountain; and the sound of the trumpet was very loud, so that all the people who were in the camp trembled. And Moses brought the people out of the camp to meet with God, and they stood at the foot of the mountain. Now Mount Sinai was completely in smoke, because the LORD descended upon it in fire. Its smoke ascended like the smoke of a furnace, and the whole mountain quaked greatly. And when the blast of the trumpet sounded long and became louder and louder, Moses spoke, and God answered him by voice."

- Sometimes the communication was a small voice.

1 Kings 19:11-12—"Then He said, 'Go out, and stand on the mountain before the LORD.' And behold, the LORD passed by, and a great and strong wind tore into the mountains and broke the rocks in pieces before the LORD, but the LORD was not in the wind; and after the wind an earthquake, but the LORD was not in the earthquake; and after the earthquake a fire, but the LORD was not in the fire; and after the fire a still small voice."

Two reminders

For this article, I want to stress two concepts in the New Testament.

- Search the Scriptures.
- Recognize that people can be restricted and compelled by the Spirit.

Search the Scriptures

Here are a few verses that show the show the Bible giving the voice of God.

John 5:39—Search the Scriptures.

John 5:45-47—The Son of God endorsed the writings of Moses.

Luke 24:44—The Son of God endorsed the Old Testament scriptures—the Law of Moses, the Prophets and the Psalms (the writings).

2 Timothy 3:15—Paul endorsed the scriptures that Timothy read in his childhood.

Restricted by the Spirit

Have you ever been restricted by the Holy Spirit?

- Acts 16:6—They were forbidden by the Holy Spirit.
- Acts 16:7—The Spirit did not permit them.

Compelled by the Spirit

Have you ever been compelled by the Holy Spirit?

- Acts 18:5—Paul was compelled by the Spirit.
- Acts 18:9-10—The Lord spoke to Paul in the night by a vision.

Personification of the Spirit

Many Bible students correctly view the Holy Spirit as a power from God the Father. Those same people are aware that many religious people view the Holy Spirit as a separate entity from the Father—and they understand the reason why people come to that particular conclusion. There is a writing style in the Bible that is called the “personification” of the Spirit.

Notice some examples.

Acts 8:29—The Spirit said to Philip.

Acts 10:19-20—The Spirit said to Peter.

Acts 11:12—The Spirit told Peter.

Acts 13:2—The Holy Spirit said to the church in Antioch.

Acts 13:4—Barnabas and Paul were sent out by the Holy Spirit.

Acts 20:23—The Holy Spirit testified in every city, saying that chains and tribulations awaited Paul.

Acts 20:28—The Holy Spirit made them overseers.

Acts 21:4—They told Paul through the Spirit not to go up to Jerusalem.

Acts 21:11—Agabus said to Paul, “Thus says the Holy Spirit.”

Hebrews 9:8—The Holy Spirit indicated.

Hebrews 10:15—The Holy Spirit also witnessed to us.

Angels in the Gospels

Matthew 1:20—An angel appeared to Joseph in a dream.

Matthew 1:24—An angel told Joseph to take Mary as his wife.

Matthew 2:13—An angel told Joseph to flee to Egypt.

Matthew 2:19-20—An angel told Joseph to return to Israel.

Matthew 4:11—Angels ministered to the Son of God.

Luke 1:11-20—The angel Gabriel appeared to Zacharias.

Luke 1:26-38—The angel Gabriel appeared to Mary.

Luke 2:9-12—An angel appeared to shepherds.

Luke 2:13-14—An angel and a multitude of the heavenly host praised God.

John 1:51—You shall see angels of God ascending and descending upon the Son of God.

Luke 22:43—An angel appeared to the Son of God to strengthen Him.

Matthew 28:2—An angel rolled back the stone.

John 20:12—Mary saw two angels at the tomb.

Angels in book of Acts

Acts 5:19—An angel opened the prison doors.

Acts 8:26—An angel spoke to Philip.

Acts 10:3-7—A vision of an angel appeared unto Cornelius.

Acts 12:7-11—An angel helped Peter to escape.

Acts 12:23—An angel of the Lord struck Herod.

Acts 27:23—An angel helped Paul.

Beware of fallen angels

2 Corinthians 11:14—Satan transforms himself into an angel of light.

2 Peter 2:4—God did not spare the angels who sinned.

Jude 6—There are consequences for the angels who sinned.

Revelation 12:4—The dragon's tail drew off a third of the angels and threw them to the earth.

Revelation 12:7-9—The dragon and his angels were cast to the earth.

Listening to the Word of God

- Search the Scriptures.
- Recognize that people can be restricted and compelled by the Spirit.

Study the Bible

Acts 17:11—"These were more fair-minded than those in Thessalonica, in that they received the word with all readiness, and searched the Scriptures daily to find out whether these things were so."

2 Timothy 2:15—"Be diligent to present yourself approved to God, a worker who does not need to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth."

Test the spirits

1 John 4:1—"Beloved, do not believe every spirit, but test the spirits, whether they are of God; because many false prophets have gone out into the world."

Avoid instability

Ephesians 4:14—"We should no longer be children, tossed to and fro and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the trickery of men, in the cunning craftiness of deceitful plotting,"

1 Thessalonians 5:19-21—"Do not quench the Spirit. Do not despise prophecies. Test all things; hold fast what is good."