



THE INVISIBLE WAR AGAINST SATAN

A string of warm white light bulbs hangs across the top of the frame against a dark blue background. The bulbs are illuminated, creating a soft glow and starburst effect. The title 'The Invisible War: A Review' is centered below the lights in a white, sans-serif font.

The Invisible War: A Review

- Part 1: The Origin and Fall of Satan
- Part 2: A Portrait of Satan
- Part 3: Satan's Activities and Power
- Part 4: The Power of Death and Satan's Defeat
- Part 5: The Unrelenting War With Satan's Malevolent Operatives
- Part 6: How Satan Seeks to Destroy You



Part 7: Finding Strength and Protection in the Invisible War

Introduction

Not everyone possesses strength. Some have it; others have lost it. I am speaking, of course, about a common and frequently-used word to which we have attached many descriptive and modifying adjectives, each of which differentiate one kind of strength from another: muscular, physical, moral, military, sound, mental, character, athletic, will, political, commercial, mechanical, chemical, market, legal, educational, spiritual, animal, and strength to “go on.” We can waste our strength, lose it, increase it, recover it, use it, and long for what we once possessed. In some instances, once it is in decline or lost, it can never be recovered fully, if at all. In other cases, it returns to our delight and gratitude.

Introduction

As we engage in *The Invisible War*, we all long to have assurances that we are being protected from the Evil One and the demons who fell with him in their rebellion against God. Realizing how very powerful they are as their hate-filled schemes are launched against us, what, we may ask, is the very first thing we should learn about engaging in spiritual warfare so that we remain faithful to the Lord and go from strength to strength (Ps. 84:7) as we make our journeys through this life?

The answer is found in 12 Greek words written in the first century by the Apostle Paul in his letter to the Ephesians. It should be stated strongly, that without an understanding and application of this text, any believer would be open and subject to spiritual injury or failure.



OUR CALL TO ACTION: EPHESIANS 6:10

“Finally, be strong in the Lord, and in the strength of His might” (NASV).

“For the remaining time, become strong in the Lord, that is,
by the strength of his power.”

- Markus Barth



The First Word: *Be Strong in the Lord*

- “Finally, **be strong** in the Lord and in the **strength** of His **might**” (Eph. 6:10).
- There are three Greek words related to power used in this text:
 - **Be strong**
 - **Strength**
 - **Might**
- The first word, ***be strong*** (from the Greek word from which we get our English word *dynamite*) means “to endue with power, to make strong, to strengthen” (Kittel). Let God make us powerful – “be strong in the Lord” (and not in ourselves).



The God of Strength

- Moses: “O Lord God, you have only begun to show your servant your greatness and your **mighty hand**. For what god is there in heaven or on earth who can do such works and mighty acts as yours?” (Dt. 3:24).
- Isaiah speaks of the coming Messiah: “And the Spirit of the Lord shall rest upon him, the Spirit of wisdom and understanding, the Spirit of counsel and **might**, the Spirit of knowledge and the fear of the Lord” (Is. 11:2).
- “The picture of the Messiah is that of the King. The power granted to Him is victorious power to defeat His enemies” (Kittel).



God's Power: Definition by Stephen Charnock

- “The power of God is that ability and strength, whereby he can bring to pass whatsoever he please; whatsoever his infinite wisdom can direct, and whatsoever the infinite purity of his will can resolve.”
- “God can do whatsoever He pleases without difficulty, without resistance; it cannot be checked, restrained, frustrated.”



The God of Strength

- “And He (Jesus) said to them, ‘I was watching Satan fall from heaven like lightning. Behold, I have given you authority to tread upon serpents and scorpions, and over all the **power of the enemy**, and nothing shall injure you” (Lk. 10:18-19). Jesus’ power (*dynamis*) is superior to all demonic power.
- “Power is operative in the support given by the Dispenser of power” (Kittel).
- As we will see in the following verses, the Apostle Paul is fully aware that he is always sustained in his life as a Christian and an apostle by Christ and His power.

How the Word is Used in the N.T.

- “But Saul kept **increasing in strength** and confounding the Jews who lived at Damascus by proving that this Jesus is the Christ” (Acts 9:22).
- “With respect to the promise of God, he (Abraham) did not waver in unbelief, but **grew strong** in faith, giving glory to God...” (Rom. 4:20).
- “I can do all things (i.e., I am able) through Him who **strengthens** me” (Phil. 4:13).
- “You therefore, my son, **be strong** in the grace that is in Christ Jesus” (II Tim. 2:1).
- “But the Lord stood with me, and **strengthened** me” (II Tim. 4:17).
- By faith, the believers of old “from weakness were **made strong**” (Heb. 11:34).



The Assumption of Weakness

- “In the battle of prayer which raged around his personal destiny, Paul experienced the fact that the weakness and limitation of human existence are the **necessary presupposition for the operation of the divine power** which is made perfect in this weakness and limitation” (Kittel).
- “I am the vine, you are the branches; he who abides in Me, and I in him, he bears much fruit; for **apart from Me you can do nothing**” (Jn. 15:5).
- “With this picture, Jesus is showing the disciples how an ongoing, vital connection with Him will directly determine the amount of His supernatural power at work in their lives” (Bruce Wilkinson).



Blaise Pascal

“What amazes me most is to see that everyone is not amazed at his own weakness.”

Pascal's *Pensées*



The Apostle Paul

And He has said to me, ‘My grace is sufficient for you, for power (*dynamis*) is perfected in weakness.’ Most gladly, therefore, I will rather boast about my weaknesses, that the power (*dynamis*) of Christ may dwell in me” (II Cor. 12:9).



The Second Word: *Strength*

- The second word in our text is from the Greek word ***kratos***, which means “strength, might” (Liddell). Scholars Arndt and Gingrich define it as “power, might, strength, intensity.” **Pantocrator** means Almighty.
- Kittel clarifies the difference between “be strong” and “might”: Might “denotes the **presence and significance of force or strength** rather than its exercise.” It is never used in the N.T. to indicate that man can have or gain this might. Except in one passage (Heb. 2:14), *kratos* always refers to God or the Lord.
- Paul uses it in Ephesians 1 and describes God’s power as “the surpassing greatness of His power toward us who believe. These are in accordance with the working of the strength of His **might**” (vs. 19).

How the Word is Used in the Bible

- “Beware lest you say in your heart, ‘My power and the **might of my hand** have gotten me this wealth’” (Dt. 8:17).
- “You rule the **raging (might)** of the sea; when its waves rise, you still them” (Ps. 89:9).
- “If it is a contest of strength, behold he (God) is **mighty!**” (Job 9:19).
- “He has done **mighty** deeds with His arms; He has scattered those who were proud in the thoughts of their hearts” (Lk. 1:51; the *Magnificat*).
- “Strengthened with all power, according to His glorious **might**” (Col. 1:11).



The Third Word: *Might*

- The third word, ***ischus***, means “to be able, to be capable, capacity, power, strength” (Kittel). It overlaps with “strength” – the first word in Paul’s list in Ephesians 6:10.
- There is more emphasis on the **actual power implied in ability or capacity**.
- The addition of “strength” (*kratos*) to “might” (*ischus*) = “the strength of His might” expresses the **mightiness**.
- Think of a very strong, muscular man. The ***might*** is his inherent muscular strength and power – his potential power. ***Strength*** is the manifestation of his power, his actually doing something.

How the Word is Used in the Bible

- “Lift up your eyes on high and see: who created these? He who brings out their host by number, calling them by name, by the **greatness of his might**, and because he is **strong in power** not one is missing” (Is. 40:26).
- Moses: “O Lord God, destroy not your people and your heritage, whom you have redeemed through your greatness, whom you have brought out of Egypt with a **mighty hand**....For they are your people and your heritage, whom you brought out by your **great power** and by your **outstretched arm**” (Dt. 9:26,29).
- “Worthy is the Lamb that was slain to receive power and riches and wisdom and **might** and honor and glory and blessing” (Rev. 5:12).



Distinctions Between the Three Words

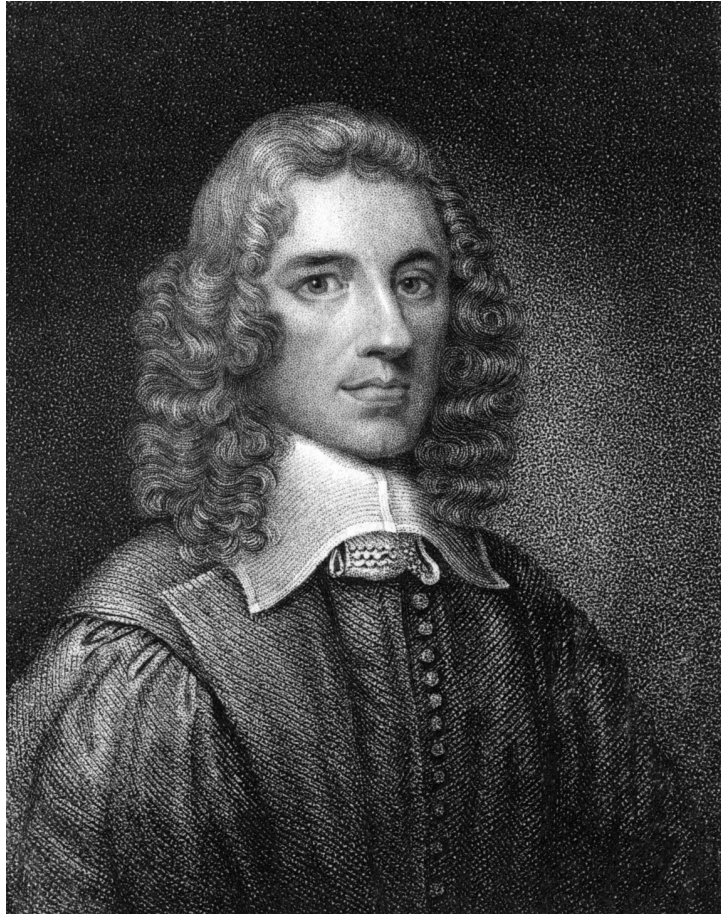
- ***Dunamis*** “denotes the ability to accomplish what is planned, promised, or started.” **Become strong in the Lord.** What is meant is “a power which comes to man from outside, rather than an increase in strength flowing from internal resources.” See Ephesians 3:16 – “that He would grant you, according to the riches of His glory, to be **strengthened with power (*dunamis*)** through His Spirit in the inner man.” This is a strength that is stronger than self-discipline.
- ***Kratos*** is “the (resurrection) power to resist and to overcome obstacles or opponents.” God is our power in person.
- ***Ischus*** is “the power which one possesses.”



John Calvin's Insights

- You lack the ability and power to engage in spiritual warfare.
- You have no reason to be irresolute (vacillate) in battle.
- Summon up courage and vigor.
- Be aware that the Lord is present with you.
- The Lord will stretch out His hand to give you help.
- Christ will supply the power for you.
- He only requires that you be strong in the Lord.
- Ask God for a supply of what you lack.

Satan's Power Restrained



Stephen Charnock
1628-1680

“Since Satan hath the power of an angel, and the malice of a devil, what safety would there be for our persons from destruction, what security for our goods from rifling (plundering), by this invisible, potent, and envious spirit, if his power were not restrained, and his malice curbed, by One more mighty than himself?”

- Stephen Charnock

Application

- Remind yourself of God's strength and love Him "with all your heart, and with all our soul, and with all your mind, and with all your **strength**" (Mk. 12:30) and meditate on His divine attribute of omnipotence. Human will-power is never enough.
- Never under-estimate the power of our enemy.
- Be strong in the Lord to avoid personal failure.
- Be strong in the Lord because you are representatives of Christ.
- Be strong in the Lord because of your own weaknesses.
- Realize His power is available for you every moment of every day.



Application

- You are standing “in the Lord.” This place is supplied with the overwhelming power which belongs to Christ. Thus, you are summoned to be strong in the Lord Jesus Christ.
- Christ’s overwhelming power is grounded in His resurrection and exaltation.
- The power of Christ protects and preserves you (“Who are protected by the power of God through faith for a salvation ready to be revealed in the last time” – I Pt. 1:5).

No Exemptions in Spiritual Warfare

“If he (Satan) has not exempted the patriarchs, the prophets, and the Prince of Prophets, Christ, he will not spare us.”

- Martin Luther, *Tabletalk*



Martin Luther
1483-1546



“But they who wait for the Lord shall renew their strength;
they shall mount up with wings like eagles;
they shall run and not be weary;
they shall walk and not faint” (Isaiah 40:31).