

# The Rulers, Authorities, and Powers

## ***Ephesians 6:10-12***

<sup>10</sup> Finally, be strong in the Lord and in his mighty power. <sup>11</sup> Put on the full armor of God so that you can take your stand against the devil's schemes. <sup>12</sup> 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.

### ***I. Afterthought or Climax?***

**Is this an afterthought or is this the climax of Paul's letter?**

**What is the function of the word "finally"?**

Let me give you three reasons from why I believe this section is the climax of Ephesians:

(1) From the perspective of rhetoric, you end with the thing you want your audience to hear most clearly and remember most strongly.

"This material occupies a highly significant place in the epistle... a crucial element to which the rest of the epistle has been pointing." (O'Brien, p. 457)

"Given the nature of ancient rhetoric, in coming to this final section of the letter we also most likely are coming to Paul's primary concern for his recipients. That is, Paul's placing this material in the emphatic final position suggests that he has been intentionally building the letter toward this climax right along." (Gordon Fee, *God's Empowering Presence*, p. 723)

(2) The recipients of this letter lived in a society that was full of false gods that were truly of a demonic nature. Here's what's in Acts 19, which describes Paul's time in Ephesus:

- Seven sons of a Jewish chief priest tried to cast out demons using the name of Jesus (without the relationship), and the demonized man beat them severely!
- People who had been practicing sorcery burned their scrolls...
- Ephesus was the home of the Temple to Artemis, and a riot was stirred up by one of the silversmiths idol makers who felt that Paul was bad for business!

(3) If we look back through Ephesians, we can see that "the rulers, authorities, powers" and "the heavenlies" have been themes that have been woven through Paul's letter.

- ***Ephesians 1:3*** "Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us in the heavenly realms with every spiritual blessing in Christ."
- ***Ephesians 1:20-23*** "That power is like the working of his mighty strength, which he exerted in Christ when he raised him from the dead and seated him at his right hand in the heavenly realms, far above all rule and authority, power and dominion, and every title that can be given, not only in the present age but also in the one to come. And God placed all things under his feet and appointed him to be head over everything for the church, which is his body, the fullness of him who fills everything in every way."
- ***Ephesians 2:1-6*** "As for you, you were dead in your transgressions and sins, in which you used to live when you followed the ways of this world and of the ruler of the kingdom of the air, the spirit who is now at work in those who are disobedient. All of us also lived among them at one time, gratifying the cravings of our sinful nature and following its desires and thoughts. Like the rest, we were by nature objects of wrath. But because of his great love for us, God, who is rich in mercy, made us alive with Christ even when we were dead in transgressions—it is by grace you

have been saved. And God raised us up with Christ and seated us with him in the heavenly realms in Christ Jesus.”

- **Ephesians 3:10-11** “His intent was that now, through the church, the manifold wisdom of God should be made known to the rulers and authorities in the heavenly realms, according to his eternal purpose which he accomplished in Christ Jesus our Lord.”
- **Ephesians 4:10** “He who descended is the very one who ascended higher than all the heavens, in order to fill the whole universe.”
- **Ephesians 4:27** “...do not give the devil a foothold.”

## **II. Economic/Social/Political Forces or Spirit Beings?**

## **III. What Can We Learn About the “Rulers, Authorities, and Powers”?**

**So what can we learn from these verses about the rulers, authorities, and powers of the spiritual realm?**

- (1) They are **powerful!**
- (2) They are **evil!**
- (3) They are **cunning!**

## **IV. What’s the Right Balance?**

“The ‘wiles of the devil’ take many forms, but he is at his wiliest when he succeeds in persuading people that he does not exist.” (Stott, p. 265)

“I am certain that one of the main causes of the ill state of the Church today is the fact that the devil is being forgotten. All is attributed to us; we have all become so psychological in our attitude and thinking. We are ignorant of this great objective fact, the being, the existence of the devil, the adversary, the accuser, and his ‘fiery darts’”. (Dr. Martin Lloyd-Jones)

## **V. The Devil Does Not Want Us to Know Who We Are!!**

### **Hierarchy of Authority**

Before Creation (Gen. 1:1)

1. God
2. Archangels
3. Angels

Just after Creation (Ps. 8:5)

1. God
2. Human beings
3. Archangels  
(including Satan)
4. Angels

After the Fall (Heb. 2:7-9)

1. God
2. Satan
3. Human beings
4. Archangels
5. Angels