

Standing Fast in the Evil Day: Know the Truth or Believe the Lie; Wear the Panoply, Hold Your Ground, Oppose the Dark Side; Vegetius: Rome's Military Decline

34. Regardless, Paul identifies the circumstance where you are to stand fast and resist: "in the evil day." The key word is **πονηρός, ponēros**: "evil which corrupts others."
35. Two illustrations here. First, when you come into the knowledge that condemns others, you are challenged to decide if what is being told you is true. If you accept it at face value, speak of it to others, then you are involved in sowing discord in the congregation.
36. By not having all the facts and to believe the report without question is to set yourself up for divine discipline. This is your evil day and you failed to stand fast and resist.
37. On the other hand, if you perceive you are somehow the victim of another's actions and because of this you are tempted to relate your alleged mistreatment to others, then you have sown discord within the congregation and you have set yourself up for divine discipline. This is your evil day and you failed to stand fast and resist.
38. This is why the spiritual panoply is only effective in the life of the sophisticated believer. A seasoned warrior knows that life is not fair. Those that insist that it be fair live in a dreamworld of unrealistic expectations and iconoclastic arrogance.
39. No army can be successful, and no soldier can be safe when there is dissension in the ranks. No church can survive when members are distracted by petty disputes, especially when it involves the ministries of that church.
40. The evil day is upon us, both extrinsically from the culture and intrinsically from discord. Orientation to the reality of the situation is imperative if we are to survive as a country and as a church.
41. Those who have voted for chaos are getting their way, but the ramifications are only temporal – people come and people go and eventually the laws of divine establishment restore order.
42. Those who promote discord are getting their way, but the ramifications for this are eternal – this sin is the most grievous because the foundation of the spiritual life in the Church Age is the local church. To disrupt the harmony of a local church can only invite the wrath of God! Many of you have come face to face with your evil day and you have lost that battle.

Ephesians 6:13 - Because of the Angelic Conflict, pick up and put on the full armor of God, for the purpose that you might have the ability (power, intelligence, knowledge skill, and competence) and the capacity (to produce, perform, and deploy) to stand fast and resist in the evil day ...

43. But for the few of you left standing, congratulations, the next half of the verse is dedicated to you. It begins with the orist active infinitive of the verb **κατεργάζομαι, *katergazomai***: “to accomplish, to complete, to bring about, to perform, to achieve.”
44. The aorist tense is a culminative aorist: it indicates both the effort and progress of an action that is brought to a conclusion. The believer who can stand fast with doctrine and resist temptations associated with his “evil day” has fulfilled the imperative that introduces the verse: “Because of the angelic conflict, pick up and put on the full armor of God!”
45. The active voice of *katergazomai* means that the spiritually sophisticated believer has completed the task of putting on the full panoply of God. The idea here is that after having done this he continues to hold his ground.
46. The participle is temporal and answers the question of *when* the action was completed. Therefore, in this context the participle is “antecedent,” meaning that the “power and ability” to “stand fast and resist” occurs *after* having “picked up and put on the full panoply of God.”
47. Once the challenges and temptations of the “evil day” have subsided, the spiritual sophisticate who had dressed his soul in the “full panoply of God” remains standing, the aorist active infinitive of the verb **ἵστημι, *histēmi***: “to be in opposition.”
48. The constative aorist of being in opposition gathers into one entirety all the circumstances imposed by the Dark Side. No matter what you face, you stood fast in fellowship, using biblical problem-solving devices, and function under the royal law.
49. The active voice is produced by the sophisticated believer since the adolescent believer is constantly being distracted by over-emphasis on self and, as a result, often deceived by the allurements of extrinsic propaganda and the self-induced misery of intrinsic sin, human good, and evil.
50. The infinitive expresses the purpose that God has for believers to pick up and put on His armor: to oppose the temptations presented by extrinsic and intrinsic fifth columns.

Ephesians 6:13 - Because of the Angelic Conflict, pick up and put on the full armor of God, for the purpose that you might have the ability (power, intelligence, knowledge skill, and competence) and the capacity (to produce, perform, and deploy doctrine) to stand fast and resist in the evil day, even after having achieved everything, to oppose those things that are in conflict with the spiritual life.

51. It is impossible for a believer to advance to the sophisticated level of the spiritual life if they refuse to utilize the royal law, a doctrine that is desperately in need of review by this congregation.

52. Reason? Why go on with a description of the panoply if so many of you are not willing to pick it up and put it on? I remind you of the Roman legionaries during the decline of the Empire:

Vegetius says that down to the death of the Emperor Gratian (grā'-shē-an) (A.D. 383):

“footsoldiers wore breastplates and helmets. But when, because of negligence and laziness, parade ground drills were abandoned, the customary armour began to seem heavy since the soldiers rarely ever wore it. Therefore, they first asked the emperor to set aside the breastplates and mail and then the helmets. So our soldiers fought the Goths without any protection for chest and head and were often beaten by archers.

“Although there were many disasters, which led to the loss of great cities, no one tried to restore breastplates and helmets to the infantry. Thus it happens that troops in battle, exposed to wounds because they have no armour, think about running and not about fighting.”¹ (pp. 128-29)

53. This church is where parade-ground drills are conducted for Christian warriors yet so many of you have refused to pick up and put on the armor. It does no good to learn about the armor if you have no interest in wearing it.
54. You cannot pick it up and put it on out of fellowship and you cannot hold your ground without problem-solving devices, and you cannot oppose the enemy if you can't execute the royal law toward your fellow believer. Ergo: The Doctrine of the Royal Law.

¹ Arther Ferrell, *The Fall of the Roman Empire: The Military Explanation* (London: Thames and Hudson, 1986), 127-29.