

## Black slide

In case you have been out of touch with news media, at a little after midnight on Thursday this week, a gunman burst into a movie theater in Aurora, CO shooting 71 people and killing 12.

The theater was showing the new Batman movie, *The Dark Knight Rises*.

Our hearts break for the families of the dead and injured.

And our prayers are with and for them all.

It is impossible to make sense of such senseless violence and evil.

Pastor Keith and I have shared messages recently about:

- How to believe that God is still in control, even when others do things God would not choose.
- And how to keep faith in God in spite of difficult circumstances.
- And how God wants us to live life to its fullest even when life is far from easy or perfect.

If you could use some encouragement like that, check out our website for the last few messages.

Today, I am interrupting our regularly scheduled message to offer a biblical response of *another kind* to this tragic event.

## Title slide –



The name of the movie is *The Dark Knight Rises*.

The evil that was perpetrated by James Holmes, the gunman, reminds us that there is *another real* dark knight rising in our world today.

We have been discussing messages from the Major Prophet section of the Old Testament. I had been reading the book of Ezekiel this week and had a message prepared.

After the tragedy, God reminded me how there was a passage about the real dark knight in Ezekiel. **That is where I'd like to begin today.**

Please turn to Ezekiel 28:11 **(DO NOT SHOW PASSAGE SLIDE UNTIL I AM FINISHED SETTING IT UP).**

By *the real dark knight*, I mean satan or the devil. He has several other names in the Bible.

There is no one place in the Bible that gives us a full & complete explanation of Satan. But he is referred to many times in many ways.

Jesus even had a direct and personal encounter with Satan when he is tempted in the wilderness. So, if you believe in Jesus, it is only reasonable that you would accept that Satan is real.

Ezekiel 28 tells us some things about him.

**I want to talk about what this Major Prophet, Ezekiel, tells us about Satan**

**and then I want to offer God's directions for how we are to respond to him in our world.**

**Ezekiel 28:11-17**

<sup>11</sup> The word of the LORD came to me [Ezekiel]: <sup>12</sup> “Son of man, take up a lament concerning the king of Tyre and say to him: ‘This is what the Sovereign LORD says: “‘You were the model of perfection, full of wisdom and perfect in beauty. <sup>13</sup> You were in Eden, the garden of God; every precious stone adorned you: ruby, topaz and emerald, chrysolite, onyx and jasper, sapphire, turquoise and beryl. Your settings and mountings were made of gold; on the day you were created they were prepared. <sup>14</sup> You were anointed as a guardian cherub, for so I ordained you. You were on the holy mount of God; you walked among the fiery stones. <sup>15</sup> You were blameless in your ways from the day you were created till wickedness was found in you.... <sup>16</sup> So I drove you in disgrace from the mount of God, and I expelled you, O guardian cherub, from among the fiery stones. <sup>17</sup> Your heart became proud on account of your beauty, and you corrupted your wisdom because of your splendor. So I threw you to the earth; I made a spectacle of you before kings.

So, God tells Ezekiel to prophesy, take a message, to a king, the king of Tyre.

Tyre was a prosperous coastal city to the north of Israel in that day.

And while God is chastising this king of Tyre for his sins,

It is clear that he interchanges his descriptions of the king with descriptions of Satan.

It's as if he is saying, you king of Tyre are evil, because you take after the original king of evil.

Or maybe he is even saying, I can see *you*, Satan, working in this king.

Here's what this prophecy says about Satan

**1. Satan was perfect.**

God says,

**Ezekiel 28:12**

“‘You were the model of perfection, full of wisdom and perfect in beauty.

Satan was created the model of perfection, full of wisdom and perfect in beauty.

**2. Satan was in the Garden of Eden.**

**Ezekiel 28:13**

You were in Eden, the garden of God.

Here's how we know that God is talking about Satan.

**Could the human king of Tyre have been in the Garden of Eden?**

No. The Garden of Eden was at the beginning of creation where Adam and Eve were.

## **And, from the account of the Garden of Eden in Genesis we know that who was there tempting Adam and Eve?**

Satan! So, he could only be describing Satan here.  
Then Ezekiel says

### **3. Satan was a glorious servant of God.**

Verse 13

**Ezekiel 28:13**

... every precious stone adorned you: ruby, topaz and emerald, chrysolite, onyx and jasper, sapphire, turquoise and beryl. Your settings and mountings were made of gold; on the day you were created they were prepared.

What does this mean?

Well it could be that since these stones also adorned the garments of the High Priest Aaron in Exodus, they could represent one who ministers before God.

As in Satan had the uniform of one who ministered before God.

Or since these colors and jewels are also used to represent what God looks like in other places. God is light and that light has the colors of these jewels.

They could represent God's glory or appearance.

That could mean that Satan was created to represent God's glory.

The Hebrew for settings and mountings is difficult to translate here.

Instead of "Your settings and mountings were made of gold...",  
the King James Version of the Bible says,

**Ezekiel 28:13 NKJV**

**The workmanship of your timbrels and pipes was prepared for you on the day you were created.**

Timbrels are tambourines and drums in the OT.

In that context, pipes then means flutes.

This could be saying

### **4. Satan was a skilled musician.**

He sang or made music to praise God.

The idea of workmanship suggests that was his work.

### **5. Satan is an angel.**

Ezekiel tells us

**Ezekiel 28:14**

**You were anointed as a guardian cherub, for so I ordained you.**

A cherub is another word for angel.

**The human king of Tyre was not an angel.**

God is describing Satan here.

Satan is an angel.

1. Satan is an angel.
2. He was maybe a musician.
3. He was a glorious servant of God.
4. And He was a model of perfection, wisdom, and beauty.

But something happened.

Ezekiel tells us ...

**Satan became proud.**

**Ezekiel 28:17**

**Your heart became proud on account of your beauty, and you corrupted your wisdom because of your splendor.**

In his vanity, Satan became proud.

He thought *he* was great and glorious.

He confused the glory that God had given him, for glory of his own.

And his wisdom became corrupt.

The Dark Knight rose.

*Isaiah* tells us that in this pride, Satan said I will become like the most high.

He tried to take over heaven and to take God's place.

**So, God threw him out of heaven.**

**Ezekiel 28:17b**

**So I threw you to the earth; I made a spectacle of you before kings.**

The Dark Knight rose and the Dark Knight fell.

This is why Satan is called a fallen angel.

He is fallen from heaven – cast down from his former place in heaven.

In the book of Revelation we can read about the same event.

**Revelation 12:10, 12**

**For the accuser of our brothers and sisters, who accuses them before our God day and night, has been hurled down. ... Therefore rejoice, you heavens and you who dwell in them! But woe to the**

earth and the sea, because the devil has gone down to you! He is filled with fury, because he knows that his time is short.”

Satan was cast down from heaven and he is in the earth.  
And full of fury, he seeks to destroy what God loves.

So what can we do?

I found myself asking God, so what do I tell people they can do if Satan is seeking to destroy the inhabitants of the earth.

For the answer to that we must turn to a prophet of another era - the New Testament time.

The apostle Paul tells followers of Jesus how to face the evil that is in the world.  
He gives us God's directions for how to defend ourselves against the devil and his evil schemes.

He says

Ephesians 6:11-18

<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 [night] and against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly realms. <sup>13</sup> 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. <sup>14</sup> Stand firm then, with the belt of truth buckled around your waist, with the breastplate of righteousness in place, <sup>15</sup> and with your feet fitted with the readiness that comes from the gospel of peace. <sup>16</sup> In addition to all this, take up the shield of faith, with which you can extinguish all the flaming arrows of the evil one. <sup>17</sup> Take the helmet of salvation and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God.

This is the most clear and direct answer in the Bible to what is our response as followers of Christ to the existence and work of Satan in the world?

God's word says – put on the full armor of God.

And he uses the metaphor of the armor of an ancient soldier to tell us the things in our lives that will protect us from or prevent Satan from having an opportunity to work in our lives.

He says:

We stand firm against the devil and spiritual forces of evil when we ...

1. Buckle the belt of truth.

Truth here is the how the truth of the gospel works in our lives.

We are saved.

We are Christ's.

We are victorious in him. And all that truth.

When we remember that gospel truth, we stand firm against what the devil might do.

It also could mean how that truth is worked out in our lives in practical ways.

We don't give the devil a foothold to attack us  
when we speak the truth and do truthful things.

When we lie and deceive, we give the devil an opportunity to work.

We stand firm against the devil and spiritual forces of evil when we ...

## 2. Put on the breastplate of righteousness.

The breastplate protected an ancient soldier's chest from an enemy's arrows and blows.

Righteousness is like a breastplate.

Here is the question then: **Is it our righteousness or God's righteousness?**

The answer is: **yes.**

Paul is dipping his pen in the ink of Isaiah who in Isaiah 59:17 says that the Conquering Messiah:

Will put on righteousness as his breastplate, and the helmet of salvation on his head.

So Christ has a breastplate of righteousness.

We are putting on the full armor of God.

It comes from him AND it is his.

Because of what Jesus has done on the cross, if we have faith in Him, we are made righteous.

We stand right before God in a right relationship with God, because of Christ's righteousness.

That defends us.

And then, this is also certainly meant by Paul,

because of all the ethical directives he gives us in this letter and elsewhere,

to be a real righteousness that God works out in our lives.

When we live right before God, Satan has no place to attack.

## 3. Fit your feet with readiness to share the gospel of peace.

We have our marching orders.

We are to declare the peace of God to all the world.

This will help us to overcome the devil's schemes.

We stand firm against the devil and spiritual forces of evil when we ...

## 4. Take up the shield of faith.

Faith is our shield.

To trust in God and in his promises, confident that he will protect us in life is our shield.

And if we do this, we will be able to extinguish all the devil's arrows.

This points to how the ancient archer would dip his arrow in pitch and light it on fire.  
It could cause even greater damage through fire.

The ancient warrior would then soak his wood shield in water to prevent his shield from burning.

Having faith in God can help protect us from all kinds  
of temptation, and doubt, and despair, and even false teaching.

## 5. Take the helmet of salvation.

This is the helmet that is our salvation.  
It is a gift. We have to take it into battle.

All the things that Christ has done for us through his death on the cross,  
When we live in the reality of them and appropriate them in our lives,  
That will help us stand against the devil.

Lastly,

## 6. Take the sword of the Spirit/word of God.

Paul says the Word of God in us is like a sword in the hands of the Spirit of God.

We are to speak the word of God into our struggles and situations.  
The word of God will give us the power of God to stand.

The word of God is our weapon.  
We must read it.  
Hear it. Listen to it.  
Memorize it. Know it.  
Speak it.

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Two interesting observation I'll add.

Whose armor is this?

### 1. This is God's armor.

It is his power that defends us.  
In the book of Isaiah, Christ has many of these pieces of armor.  
Paul uses the image from there and says we can wear his armor.

The apostle Paul does not call us to take up objects, he calls us to action.

### 2. We have to put it on.

Each of these verbs that the Apostle uses for the actions that we are to take are all a middle participle form.

A participle is an ing word.

Each one of these, in the way Paul really said it, is like ...

*having buckled* on yourself the belt of truth

*having put on* the breast place of righteousness

*having taken* the shield of faith.

God uses that form to tell us it is something we must do before the battle.

If we want to stand against the enemy of our soul,

We must have been buckled with truth and reading the word and living a life of truth.

Truth, righteousness, faith, readiness, salvation, and God's word

are all things we prepare

and then when we need them, they help us stand.

Last thing.

It is ironic, I did not intend it, but the soldier of the Dark Knight in Colorado had his armor.

He wore a helmet.

He had a bullet proof vest to protect his chest.

He had a gas mask.

He was all in black to be covered by the darkness.

He had his weapons.

He was prepared and so he accomplished his evil work.

Our battle in life is not against flesh and blood.

It is not a physical battle.

But our battle is against the powers of this dark world and against the spiritual forces of evil.

In order to be able to stand and to fight the good fight, we must put on our armor,  
the full armor of God.

and, with his power and might, we will surely be able to stand and be victorious.

Pray for victims

Pray for families