

## ***The Armor of God***

"Therefore take up the whole armor of God, that you may be able to withstand in the evil day, having done all, to stand" (Ephesians 6:13). Our Father has not left us defenseless when it comes to our battles "against the wiles of the devil" (v. 11). Earlier, Paul mentioned that the brethren should be "strong in the Lord and in the power of His great might" (v. 10). Let's take note of our armor that God has given us through Christ.

1. Having girded your waist with truth (v. 14). It is truth that can set us free (John 8:32). This gives us power over the enemy of lies, and the devil is that father of such (John 8:44). Without truth we have no defense against anything that is false. Truth is what is required for a soldier of Christ to be victorious.

2. Having put on the breastplate of righteousness (v. 14). It is this quality that the enemy abhors. Righteous actions (word or deed) causes those in opposition to be tormented further (Romans 12:20). Saints will be tempted to engage in carnal warfare (2 Corinthians 10:4), which would mean to take off our breastplate. Make sure it stays on and resist the devil and he will flee (James 4:7).

3. Having feet shod with the preparation of the gospel of peace (v. 15). Any spiritual conflict would bring certain defeat without having a firm stand. Christians have the peace, which brings assurance, through the gospel (Philippians 4:7). Having doubts is to give a foothold to the enemy. Satan's earliest tool used to hurt man was by casting doubt: "You shall not surely die" (Genesis 3:3). The gospel of peace will cast out uncertainty (2 Timothy 1:12).

4. Taking the shield of faith (v. 16). The whole purpose of being a good soldier is to please our God, and without faith it is impossible to please Him (Hebrews 11:6). The edge that children of God have is their ability to walk by faith and not by sight (2 Corinthians 5:7). This enables them to quench the fiery darts of the wicked one (Ephesians 6:16).

5. Take the helmet of salvation (v. 17). What greater comfort is there than knowing you shall be saved? What soldier would fear a battle when he is assured victory? The salvation of the Lord is there for those who will wear it. This is trusting in God who can deliver us (Matthew 6:13, 2 Peter 2:9). It is useless to fight without seeing the salvation of the Lord.

6. Take the sword of the spirit, which is the word of God (v. 17). Knowing that the only thing we are up against is everything that is not God's word, it is only fitting that the use of God's word would be our needed weapon. Too many soldiers are trying to defend truth without God's word. We must use the word for it has the power (Romans 1:16).

As is often pointed out, notice that the armor does not prepare one who turns his back to the enemy -- he would be unprotected. This is why throughout the scriptures we are told to press straight ahead (Philippians 3:14). The narrow road doesn't have room to turn back for a rest. If you do that, you are not on the road.

Finally, our text in Ephesians 6, mentions, "praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit, being watchful to this end with all perseverance and supplication for all the saints" (v. 18).

Are you wearing the whole armor of God?

- ***by Chuck Bartlett***

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## ***The Right Choice***

Often we are reminded of Joshua's statement to Israel of old, "choose you this day whom ye will serve... ..but as for me and my house, we will serve the Lord" (Josh. 24:15). What choice are you making? Are you submitting to the Lord? Are you serving Him? Just what is the right choice?

For the non-Christian, the right choice is to obey the gospel. Paul wrote, "For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth; to the Jew first, and also to the Greek" (Rom. 1:16). A failure to obey the gospel results in "everlasting destruction" (2 Thes. 1:8). Obey today!

For the unfaithful Christian, the right choice is to repent and pray. When a Christian named Simon was guilty of sin, Peter commanded him to "Repent therefore of this thy wickedness, and pray God, if perhaps the thought of thine heart may be forgiven" (Acts 8:22). In sin, one is

separated from God (Isa. 59:1-2). Choose to be rejoined in fellowship with the Lord and your brethren!

For the faithful Christian, the right choice is to keep on keeping on. "And let us not be weary in well doing: for in due season we shall reap, if we faint not" (Gal. 6:9). Be thou faithful unto death!

- by *David McPherson*

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## ***Reactions to The Truth***

When Paul preached his famous sermon on Mars Hill in Athens, his teaching received three distinct reactions. "And when they heard of the resurrection of the dead, some mocked: and others said, we will hear thee again of this matter. So Paul departed from among them. Howbeit certain men clave unto him, and believed . . ." (Acts 17:32-34). Do you see it? Some rejected the teaching immediately. Others procrastinated or withheld judgment, and did nothing. But some enthusiastically accepted the truth and acted upon it.

The same three reactions are in evidence to this day - even among members of the Lord's church. Consider this scenario: The preacher preaches a "hard" sermon that exposes sin and worldliness. It is one of those sermons that "steps on toes" and hits "close to home." Some Christians will grow angry. The things taught suggest the need to change, and they are not willing to do so. They are happy to hear preaching on things they already agree about, but if a lesson contradicts their existing views or practices, they get mad. They are like those in Athens who "mocked."

Some other brethren hear this same sermon and, while it plainly shows that there are things they need to change in their life, they postpone any action. These are the ones who commend the preacher as they go out the door: "I really needed that!," or "You really stomped on my toes today!" And, yet, they do nothing. They continue in their former ways, effectively saying, "we will hear thee again of this matter."

Thank God that there are those who are tenderhearted -- those who are always looking to bring their life into closer harmony with the will of God. These are the folks who, upon hearing the truth, respond by putting it into practice in their lives. If it means changing from what they previously believed, they will do so. Their commitment is to the Lord. Serving Him is their first priority. May their tribe increase!

- by *Greg Gwin*