



**WORLDVIEW MADE PRACTICAL**  
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**The Full Armor of God - Part 2**  
***Equip Yourself for Effective Defense! Ephesians 6:10-20***

By Tal Davis

In the first installment of this three part series, we presented the fact that, as Christians, we are engaged in warfare against spiritual forces. In the first section, we identified the enemy's nature and the scope of the conflict. We are not battling an earthly military power, but one far more dangerous. We face in battle the devil and his demonic allies – the forces of wickedness (Ephesians 6:10-13). The Apostle Paul, in his letter to the believers in Ephesus, tells his readers to stand firm against the schemes of Satan, who wants to defeat us and rid us of our assuredness of salvation in Christ. Like an infantry soldier in an army, the only way victory can be won, says Paul, is to "put on" or "take up" the full armor of God.

In this second section, we examine and analyze the specific articles that Paul says compose our defensive armor of God. As we mentioned in the first installment, Paul was guarded by Roman Legionnaires while imprisoned in Rome. This gave him ample opportunities to discuss with the soldiers the various items of military attire they wore and carried (and to tell them about Jesus). Paul immediately saw a perfect and recognizable analogy for explaining to his readers how to equip themselves for spiritual combat.

*14 Stand firm therefore, having girded your loins with truth, and having put on the breastplate of righteousness, 15 and having shod your feet with the preparation of the gospel of peace; 16 in addition to all, taking up the shield of faith with which you will be able to extinguish all the flaming arrows of the evil one. 17 And*

*take the helmet of salvation.* (Ephesians 6:14-17a NASB)

Paul begins his inventory with a reiteration of his earlier command to "stand firm." Just as an infantryman must brace himself and establish his ground to fight, so must we prepare to do spiritual battle. Paul begins with the defensive weapons.

First (vs. 14a), he tells them "having girded your loins with truth" (*perizosamenoι ten osphyn en aletheia*). The image is of a soldier getting ready to march into the fray by pulling up his tunic and undergarments (i.e.: girdles), and tightening his belt, to give himself the greatest amount of mobility. Attached to the belt was the sheath holding his sword.

In this case, Paul says we are to gird ourselves with truth. Truth is reality as it actually is now and was in the past. One thing Satan hates is the truth. Jesus called him the "father of lies" (John 8:44). Satan will do his best to convince us that disobeying God will be in our favor. The truth, however, is a powerful weapon when we are attacked by evil. We know that Jesus' words and the Bible are truth. In fact, Jesus was Truth incarnate (John 14:6; see also John 1:14-18; 8:31-32; 18:37)!

Next (vs.14b), Paul says to make sure the "breastplate of righteousness" is in place. The Roman soldier wore a brass, wooden, or chain mail breastplate to protect his torso and heart from spears or daggers. The breastplate served something of the same function as the modern soldier's bullet-proof vest. Probably the lives of thousands of soldiers and police officers have

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been saved by wearing their Kevlar vests. Kevlar is stronger than steel, and much lighter, and can literally stop a bullet before it can penetrate the body. Our spiritual bullet-proof vest consists of the character and holiness of God, that is, His righteousness (*dikaïosynes*) which protects our heart and soul. By faith we are clothed in Christ's righteousness, so we carry His righteousness (not our own – we do not really have any) to deflect the enemy's attacks.

Paul goes on in verse 15 to say, "having shod your feet with the preparation of the gospel of peace." If you have ever played a field sport like football, baseball, soccer, or even golf, you know that essential components of your uniform are appropriately designed – one element of which is fitted shoes. Field shoes almost always include some sort of cleats or spikes on the soles to help provide traction and prevent sliding on slippery surfaces. Sometimes, unfortunately, unscrupulous players will try to use their spikes as weapons to injure an opponent. In a recent NFL football game, a lineman, after pulling himself out a pile-up, intentionally stomped on the arm of an opposing player. Needless to say he was thrown out of the game and was levied a hefty fine by the league.

Roman military planners and outfitters certainly understood this principle. The typical legionnaire wore heavy sandals strapped tightly to his feet and calves. The soles bore spikes that, like modern sports shoes, gave the soldier a solid base for long marches, standing against enemy attacks, and for helping him use his weapons effectively (or maybe to use as weapons themselves).

Again, Paul recognized a strong simile for spiritual warfare. He says

we need to wear shoes of the "preparation of the gospel of peace." That phrase is *en hetoimasia tou euangeliou ten eirenes*, literally, "with the readiness of the gospel (good news) of peace." We go ready for war standing solidly on the truth of the Christian message of salvation through Christ that brings real peace to those who respond positively.

Next (vs.16), Paul says to take up "the shield of faith with which you will be able to extinguish all the flaming arrows of the evil one." Roman legionnaires carried large wooden or metal shields, usually three to five feet tall and covered with material that could put out the fire of a flaming arrow. The primary purpose for the shield was to protect them from the spears and arrows launched by their enemy. The shields were also often used to form a "Turtle" (Latin: *Testudo*) wherein a squad of infantry would surround and cover themselves with shields as they advanced toward an enemy's position.

The "evil one" is, of course, Satan. He will launch his flaming arrows of temptation against God's people. Our faith or unflinching trust in God will serve as a shield to protect us against his attacks.

And finally, the last vital defensive piece of gear. Most modern soldiers would never consider going into battle without some kind of solid headgear. In World War II, untold GIs' lives were saved by their "steel pot" helmet when bullets ricocheted off them. Roman soldiers also wisely wore metal hats to protect their heads. Paul says (vs. 17) to "take the helmet of salvation." The assurance of our salvation, by grace through faith, symbolically wards off doubts that may attack our minds.

These are the defensive weapons of our spiritual armor. Unbelievers, naturally, do not have this armor. Thus, they are defenseless against the forces of evil at work in their lives. The terrible problems plaguing humanity

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are evidence of that fact. As Christians, we must take up these defensive tools to guard against the assaults of our enemy the devil.

In part three, we will examine the offensive weapons God makes available to take the fight to the enemy. As believers, we are not confined to a siege mentality, we can go on the attack. In the next installment we will see what are the most potent weapons in our arsenal.

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