



**WORLDVIEW MADE PRACTICAL**  
**Volume 15 Number 6**  
**February 12, 2020**

**The Full Armor of God - Part 3**  
***The Best Defense is a Good Offense! - Ephesians 6:10-20***

By Tal Davis

In the first installment of this three part series, we reviewed the fact that, as believers in Christ, we are fighting a spiritual war against the devil and his diabolical allies. We analyzed what is fully involved in this cosmic conflict. In his letter to The Ephesians, Paul makes clear we are not engaging the powers of this world, but those of a spiritual nature, viz. Satan's forces of wickedness (Ephesians 6:10-13). The Apostle Paul tells his readers in Ephesus to stand firm against the schemes of Satan. He uses the analogy of a Roman infantry soldier and tells us to "take up the full armor of God."

In part two, we examined some of the gear that God provides to us as armor. As we said at the outset, Paul was jailed in Rome where he saw the military equipment carried by Roman legionnaires. He recognized a practical similarity between the soldier's array and the spiritual weapons designed for battle in spiritual attacks.

In this third part, Paul changes his perspective. He moves from prescribing defensive armaments to offensive weapons. An effective military leader knows that just barricading his army and staying on the defensive is never enough. In ancient times cities built high walls, sometimes surrounded by water, to ward off any sieging enemy. In most cases, however, the enemy would eventually find a way to breach the wall and overrun the city.

The Romans were especially skilled at defeating any barriers their opposition erected. One example happened in A.D. 73-74 with the Roman Le-

gions in Judea, under the command of Lucius Flavius Silva. His engineers built a large ramp and siege tower to attack a band of about 1000 Jewish Zealots on top of a fortified hill called Masada. The Jewish rebels, realizing they were doomed, decided to commit mass suicide rather than surrender to the Romans who they regarded as no better than swine.

The point is, a solely defensive posture is insufficient to be victorious in battle. The same is true in the spiritual realm. Christians can not only defend themselves against Satan's power, they can actually counter-attack and put him and his demonic allies in full retreat.

In his letter to the Ephesians, after he had enumerated the various defensive weapons in the spiritual arsenal (vss. 6:14-17a), Paul presents a series of powerful offensive weapons for taking the fight to the adversary. Beginning in verse 17b, as he closes out his menu of spiritual arms, Paul tells them to take up "the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God."

A Roman legionnaire normally was equipped with two or three personal arms. He would usually have a sharpened metal spear about six feet long that he used to charge the enemy lines or hurl at them. The other weapon he would carry was a two-edged sword which was used for close combat. Archers had bows and arrows which they lit with fire and shot long range at the enemy.

As they approached the enemy line, the Roman soldiers lined up in single file teams of five to seven men. When the sword-to-sword battle began, the first in line would fight until he was exhausted, wounded, or dead. He then

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moved to the back of the row allowing the next fresh man in line to continue the fight. This tactic was the legendary Roman phalanx by which they conquered the world.

Paul's reference to the Sword of the Spirit introduces our first armament to charge Satan's strongholds. He identifies it as the "word of God." We understand that this refers to the written Word found in the Scriptures. As Jesus Himself demonstrated at His temptations, the most effective way to defeat the devil is by accurately quoting the Bible. Of course, Paul and the Ephesians only had the Old Testament as canonical Scripture. Nonetheless, they certainly included the recorded words of Jesus, as passed from the Apostles, as well as the letters of Paul and other Apostles as part of their inspired literature.

We are blessed with the full Old and New Testaments. By filling our minds with divine truth, we are able to sustain our assault on the lies and destructive acts of the evil one. God's word penetrates to the core of a person's being. As the writer of Hebrews asserts:

*For the word of God is living and active and sharper than any two-edged sword, and piercing as far as the division of soul and spirit, of both joints and marrow, and able to judge the thoughts and intentions of the heart.* (Hebrews 4:12 NASB)

The Holy Spirit supernaturally acts through the Word to illuminate the heart with truth and render an effect in a person's life.

*16 All Scripture is inspired by God (theopneustos - "God-breathed") and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, for training in righteousness; 17 so that the man of God may be adequate, equipped for every good work.* (2 Timothy 3:16-17 NASB)

John, in Revelation, described the words of the risen Jesus in a similar vein.

*In His right hand He held seven stars, and out of His mouth came a sharp two-edged sword; and His face was like the sun shining in its strength.* (Revelation 1:16)

*"And to the angel of the church in Pergamum write: The One who has the sharp two-edged sword says this..."* (Revelation 2:12)

So God's word, the sword of the Spirit, is a primary spiritual armament. But it is not the only offensive weapon in our arsenal. The passage below is loaded with significant content for waging spiritual warfare.

*18 With all prayer and petition pray at all times in the Spirit, and with this in view, be on the alert with all perseverance and petition for all the saints, 19 and pray on my behalf, that utterance may be given to me in the opening of my mouth, to make known with boldness the mystery of the gospel, 20 for which I am an ambassador in chains; that in proclaiming it I may speak boldly, as I ought to speak.* (Ephesians 6:18-20 NASB)

As we look at these verses, it is clear what is Paul's key concept, and what is, though he does not call it such, another spiritual weapon. In fact, it may be our most important offensive weapon. That element is prayer!

Four times in verse 18 alone, Paul uses the words "pray" (*proseuche*) and "petition" (*deesis* - "supplication") indicating the importance in which he regarded it. He pleads with the Ephesians to pray at all times. That is, to be in a prayerful mindset in all situations. He tells them to "pray at all times" (lit.: "in every season") and do it "in the Spirit" (*pneumati*). Effective prayer means we yield our minds and hearts to the leading of the Holy Spirit. Paul further urges them to be on the alert, or watchful, with "perseverance"

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(*proskarteresis* - "steadfastness"). For whom in this passage are we to pray so powerfully? He says "all the saints." "Saints" includes all believers in Christ in all places and times.

But Paul, in verses 19 and 20, narrows his appeal for prayer to none other than himself. He specifically needs their support in those times and opportunities he has to proclaim "the mystery of the gospel" (*to tou mysterion euangeliou*). The "mystery" refers to the truth of God that was unknown to most of the world until the coming and proclamation of the gospel (i.e.: "the good news"). It was for that reason he was in prison. Paul, nonetheless, was determined to speak with boldness as he was called by the Lord.

So, we possess another powerful offensive weapon. It what I call God's Spiritual Atomic Bomb. That ultimate weapon is preaching and telling the Gospel of Jesus Christ. When we share the Gospel with a lost person, and that person receives Jesus Christ as his or her Lord and Savior, it is like dropping a nuclear bomb in the middle of Satan's kingdom. A soul is rescued from Satan's evil empire of sin and death.

## Conclusion:

Man has waged wars for millennia. Every nation that has ever existed has recognized the need for armed forces both for the defense of its people and to make offensive attacks on their enemies. As we

have seen in these articles, we Christians are engaged in a spiritual conflict. It is cosmic in scope, but is fought on the local and personal battlefields of the heart. We cannot avoid it. The enemy, Satan and his minions, is at the gate. God has provided us the weapons to defeat the adversary. We must take up and put on the full armor of God.

We have formidable defensive tools at our disposal: the belt of truth; the breastplate of righteousness; the boots of the preparation of the gospel of peace; the shield of faith; and the helmet of salvation.

Likewise we are equipped with powerful offensive weapons: the two-edged sword of the Word of God; the power of persistent prayer; and the ultimate weapon – the Gospel of Jesus Christ.

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