

# Paul's Letter to the *EPHESIANS*

## CHAPTERS 4, 5, 6: *God's Plan for the Church* (the Body of Christ) (CONTINUED)

### Principles for Spiritual Battles (6:10-20)

This study describes Paul's warnings about the spiritual war being waged against Christians and the instructions to God's followers on how to overcome the attacks and win the war. <sup>v.10-17</sup> Paul first presented truths about a believer's preparation, enemy, battle and victory <sup>v.10-13</sup>, and then he specified six necessary pieces of spiritual armor lovingly provided by God <sup>v.14-17</sup>.

#### ***The Believer's Warfare (6:10-13)***

**6:10** Finally, be strong in the Lord and in his mighty power. The true believer <sup>Ephesians 1-3</sup>, who lives a Spirit-controlled life <sup>Ephesians 4:1-6:9</sup>, will face many spiritual battles <sup>John 15:18-21, 16:33</sup>. The word "finally" marks the transition from the overview of the life of a genuine Christian to the descriptions of both the inevitable earthly/spiritual struggles and God's provision for the Christian in the battle. This section of text begins with believers being reminded that God's power is absolute <sup>2 Chronicles 20:6, Ephesians 1:18-23</sup> and they can live a victorious life when they trust in Him <sup>Psalms 25:1-3, Acts 14:23</sup> and in His strength/power <sup>2 Corinthians 12:9-10, Philippians 4:13</sup>.

Paul's command to believers to "be strong" is a common Biblical theme <sup>Psalms 27:14, 1 Corinthians 16:13</sup>, as is the reason for being strong: the presence of the Lord <sup>Joshua 1:9, Jeremiah 1:8, Haggai 2:4-5</sup>. Jesus completed the work of defeating Satan at the cross. <sup>1 Corinthians 15:56-57, Hebrews 2:14-16</sup>

**6:11** (Put on) <sup>1</sup> the full armor of God so that you can take your stand against the devil's schemes. [<sup>1</sup>endyo: to dress oneself] Paul used the common armor of the Roman soldier to describe the tools for spiritual battle offered by God to believers. Christians must wear this armor in order to keep from getting "knocked over" by the "schemes" of Satan. The devil has countless schemes (plans), involving every possible sin, immoral practice, false theology, false religion, worldly temptation. Since his expulsion from Heaven <sup>Isaiah 14:12, Ezekiel 28:16-17, Revelation 12:7-9</sup>, Satan has worked to oppose God's plans <sup>John 13:27</sup> and hinder God's servants <sup>1 Thessalonians 2:18</sup> by obscuring the gospel <sup>2 Corinthians 4:4</sup>, perverting God's Word <sup>Matthew 4:5-6</sup> and ensnaring the righteous <sup>1 Timothy 3:7</sup>, while maintaining a firm hold on his control of the world <sup>1 John 5:19</sup>.

**6:12** For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the powers<sup>2</sup> of this dark world and against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly realms. [<sup>2</sup>*kosmokrator*: world powers] Earthly struggles can involve physical combat and personal conflicts, but the battles faced by believers are spiritual at their core<sup>2</sup> Corinthians 10:3-5. Christians' struggles are with Satan and his minions, who wield menacing powers<sup>Hebrews 2:14</sup>, but Jesus defeated them on the cross<sup>Colossians 2:15, 1 Peter 3:18-22</sup>, and His sacrifice provided the basis for trust in God and in His power over any situation the believer faces<sup>Romans 8:31-39</sup>.

The "rulers" are demonic leaders who guide the affairs of Satan's realm, the "authorities" are the demon generals who execute his program, the "powers" are demonic officers/sergeants who make sure the plan is properly implemented and the "spiritual forces" are the demon troops who take Satan's marching orders to the battlefield.<sup>Ephesians 1:18-21, 3:10-11, 1 Peter 3:21b-22</sup>

**6:13** Therefore (put on)<sup>3</sup> the full armor of God, so that when the day of evil comes, you may be able to (stand your ground)<sup>4</sup>, and after you have done everything, to stand. [<sup>3</sup>*analambano*: take up, <sup>4</sup>*anthistemi*: resist, withstand] Paul summarized the previous verses by making three points: (1) saints must appropriate (take hold of & "put on"<sup>1</sup> Thessalonians 5:8) God's armor<sup>Romans 13:12</sup>, (2) they must wear all the armor (less would result in defeat, due to areas of vulnerability) and (3) God is the armor provider. These issues are essential, because since the fall of man, every day is evil<sup>Ephesians 5:15-16</sup> until Jesus returns to establish His kingdom, and standing firm against the attacks of the enemy without wavering or falling is the goal<sup>James 4:7, 1 Peter 5:8-9</sup>.

The Scripture says "when", not "if the day of evil comes". All saints will face days of "evil".

The Armor of God is one of the many spiritual blessings available to Christians<sup>Ephesians 1:3</sup>. Putting on God's Armor ("armor of light") is similar to being clothed with Jesus<sup>Romans 13:11-14</sup>.

### **The Believer's Armor (6:14-17)**

**6:14-15** Stand firm then, with the belt of truth buckled around your waist, with the breastplate of righteousness in place, and with your feet fitted with the readiness that comes from the gospel of peace. For the third time for emphasis<sup>v.11,13</sup>, Paul firmly exhorted Christians to "stand firm". First, the **belt of truth** provided a way to cinch up a loose-fitting tunic<sup>Exodus 12:11, 1 Kings 18:46</sup>, allowing soldiers to engage in one-on-one combat hindrance-free: living a life rooted in truth permits the spiritual warrior to fight without being burdened by doubt<sup>Mark 8:31-33, John 20:24-29</sup>.

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Next, the **breastplate of righteousness** <sup>Isaiah 59:17</sup> protected the heart & other vital organs: living in Christ's righteousness <sup>Romans 3:21-24</sup> and a righteous lifestyle <sup>Colossians 1:10, 2 Timothy 2:22</sup> protects the heart and soul of the spiritual warrior. The **shoes of** (feet fitted with) **the gospel of peace** <sup>Isaiah 52:7, Romans 10:15</sup> were like the Roman boots with nails to grip the ground, giving the soldier confidence in his ability to stand: the gospel results in the divine support for the "peace with God" <sup>Romans 5:1-11</sup>, allowing believers to battle fearlessly <sup>John 14:1,27</sup>. The belt of the Roman soldier was 6-8 in wide. All the armor/weapons could be attached to it. Paul spoke of "readiness", which implies purposeful preparation: a prerequisite for success in any activity for the Lord <sup>Joshua 7:1-13, Amos 4:12, Mark 1:2-3, 2 Timothy 2:20-21, 4:1-2, 1 Peter 3:15-16</sup>.

**6:16** In addition to all this, take up the shield of faith, with which you can extinguish all the flaming arrows of the evil one. The Roman **shield of faith** <sup>Genesis 15:1, Psalm 7:10</sup> was very large, in order to protect the entire body: positive trust in God (faith) is a covering in the spiritual battles. Enemy flaming arrows were extinguished by leather-covered, water-soaked Roman shields: intense earthly temptations are thwarted by a firm, confident conviction of faith <sup>1 John 5:3-5</sup>. The shield of the Roman soldier was very large: about 4 ft tall and 2½ ft wide.

**6:17** Take the helmet of salvation and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God.

The **helmet of salvation** <sup>Isaiah 59:17, 1 Thessalonians 5:8</sup> protected the warrior's head: an accurate understanding of eternal security <sup>1 Peter 1:3-9</sup> will keep the mind of the spiritual combatant from being distressed over the attacks from evil spirits on the doctrine of salvation <sup>Romans 10:8-11</sup>.

The **sword of the Spirit** <sup>Hebrews 4:12</sup> is the offensive armament in the Roman warrior's armor: in spiritual war, the sword is the only weapon God has provided to the believer for thwarting the attacks of Satan <sup>1 John 2:12-14</sup> and for destroying the enemy's strategies <sup>2 Corinthians 10:3-5</sup>. The sword consists of the Word of God, as Jesus demonstrated in the wilderness. <sup>Matthew 4:1-11</sup>

This sword is from the Greek word meaning a dagger-like (short) sword (*machaira*) <sup>Acts 16:27</sup>. The Bible also references (although fewer times) the long sword (*rhomphaia*) <sup>Luke 2:34-35</sup>.

Six weapons are mentioned here <sup>v.14-17</sup> (belt, breastplate, shoes, shield, helmet and sword). These are traditionally considered a complete list of the Armor of God. However Biblically, the number six usually signifies the incomplete number of man <sup>Revelation 13:18</sup>. The very next verse <sup>Ephesians 6:18</sup> describes prayer, possibly representing a seventh 'weapon' in the armor.

Please forward questions/comments about these notes to ron price, ron@hopeinchristnm.com, 505-294-4743.