

Ephesians
August 17, 2008
Ephesians 6:10-24

I. Armors of God

The armor of God has an interesting history. First, we see it on God in Isaiah:

Isa 59:15-17

The LORD looked and was displeased that there was no justice.

16 He saw that there was no one, he was appalled that there was no one to intervene; so his own arm worked salvation for him, and his own righteousness sustained him. 17 He put on righteousness as his breastplate, and the helmet of salvation on his head; he put on the garments of vengeance and wrapped himself in zeal as in a cloak.

NIV

Here we see the armor being:

Breastplate	Righteousness
Helmet	Salvation
Garments	Vengeance
Cloak	Zeal

From the Apocryphal, the Wisdom of Solomon has another example of God's armor:

Chapter 5

17The Lord will take his zeal as his whole armor, and will arm all creation to repel his enemies;18 he will put on righteousness as a breastplate, and wear impartial justice as a helmet;19 he will take holiness as an invincible shield, 20 and sharpen stern wrath for a sword, and creation will join with him to fight against his frenzied foes.

NRSV Apocrypha

Breastplate	Righteousness
Helmet	Impartial Justice
Shield	Holiness
Sword	Wrath

While more of a stretch, we might also see the armor of God in Isaiah 11:4-5 concerning the Messiah:

Isa 11:4-5

4 but with righteousness he will judge the needy, with justice he will give decisions for the poor of the earth. He will strike the earth with the rod of his mouth; with the breath of his lips he will slay the wicked. 5 Righteousness will be his belt and faithfulness the sash around his waist.

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Belt	Righteousness
Sash	Faithfulness (Note: A sash was a ribbon that showed rank.)
Sword (rod)	Spirit (breath)

Next we see the armor in Paul's earlier book of 1 Thessalonians:

1 Thess 5:8

8 But since we belong to the day, let us be self-controlled, putting on faith and love as a breastplate, and the hope of salvation as a helmet .

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Breastplate	Faith and love
Helmet	Hope of Salvation

The breastplate and helmet are common to both, as is salvation being connected to the helmet. "Faith and love" replace "righteousness," perhaps signifying that these

are the qualifications to claim “righteousness,” not on what the Christian has done but what God has done. In this expanded armor, the breastplate is again associated with “righteousness” and “faith and love” are omitted.

II. Ephesians’ Armor of God

Eph 6:10-18

10 Finally, be strong in the Lord and in his mighty power. 11 Put on the full armor of God so that you can take your stand against the devil's schemes. 12 For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the powers of this dark world and against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly realms. 13 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. 14 Stand firm then, with the belt of truth buckled around your waist, with the breastplate of righteousness in place, 15 and with your feet fitted with the readiness that comes from the gospel of peace. 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. 17 Take the helmet of salvation and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God. 18 And pray in the Spirit on all occasions with all kinds of prayers and requests. With this in mind, be alert and always keep on praying for all the saints.

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Verse 10 Obviously, strength comes from the Lord. Paul might have been alluding to this situation concerning David:

1 Sam 30:6

6 David was greatly distressed because the men were talking of stoning him; each one was bitter in spirit because of his sons and daughters. But David found strength in the LORD his God.

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Verse 11 The armor is from God. Only with God’s help can we hope to overcome the world or the evils of this world...or as 2 Peter 1:4 calls it “to escape the corruption in the world.” As Peter puts it:

1 Peter 4:1

4:1 Therefore, since Christ suffered in his body, arm yourselves also with the same attitude, because he who has suffered in his body is done with sin.

NIV

Verse 12 Usually rulers, authorities, powers, and spiritual forces are considered to be kinds of fallen angels or demons, perhaps a hierarchy of them since these terms appear to levels of power. All we know is that our struggle is not against flesh and blood but against these beings whatever they are. Apparently they are also in league with the devil in some way. Perhaps another reference to these being was seen in:

Eph 1:19b-22

19b That power is like the working of his mighty strength, 20 which he exerted in Christ when he raised him from the dead and seated him at his right hand in the heavenly realms, 21 far above all rule and authority, power and dominion, and every title that can be given, not only in the present age but also in the one to come.

NIV

Verse 13 The armor of God in Ephesians 6 is:

Belt	Truth
Breastplate	Righteousness
“Shoes”	Readiness to spread the good news
Shield	Faith
Helmet	Salvation
Sword	The Spirit, the word of God

Truth refers to one who reflects and practices the reality of Jesus Christ and the faithfulness of God in their life.

John 14:6

**6 Jesus answered, "I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me
NIV**

The analogy is often given that the belt surrounds the soldier...so should the truth of God surround us. The enemy is against the truth:

John 8:44

**44 You belong to your father, the devil, and you want to carry out your father's desire. He was a murderer from the beginning, not holding to the truth, for there is no truth in him. When he lies, he speaks his native language, for he is a liar and the father of lies.
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A breastplate was a large leather, bronze, or chain-mail piece that protected the body from neck to the thighs. Our righteousness comes from God because of what Jesus has done (2 Cor. 5:21). Through justification, we are declared righteous. In all that we do, we must let that righteousness be reflected in our actions. Knowing that we have been approved by God gives us great power to deal with the problems of this world. Of course, Satan will still attempt to accuse us:

Rev 12:10

10 Then I heard a loud voice in heaven say:

**"Now have come the salvation and the power and the kingdom of our God, and the authority of his Christ. For the accuser of our brothers, who accuses them before our God day and night, has been hurled down.
NIV**

Verse 15 Roman soldiers had special sandals that protected their feet in battle and allowed them to travel well and fast with ease in a time when comfortable shoes were not common. If we are surrounded with the truth and if we are protected by God's righteousness, we should have peace as we travel through life and encounter these problems.

Phil 4:6-7

**6 Do not be anxious about anything, but in everything, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God. 7 And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.
NIV**

Verse 16 Think of faith as complete and absolute reliance on God. Think of "flaming arrows" as temptations. Ultimately in life, we will find that all worldly supports will fail us. Only through sustained faith, a belief that God will see us through regardless of what our eyes see as the problems before us, can we hope to prevail.

1 Cor 10:13

**13 No temptation has seized you except what is common to man. And God is faithful; he will not let you be tempted beyond what you can bear. But when you are tempted, he will also provide a way out so that you can stand up under it.
NIV**

Verse 17 Salvation is associated with “hope” in 1 Thes 5:8, where our hope is the totally assured through the faithfulness of God. Therefore, salvation is really referring to the process of our salvation. While we are already justified, we must still work out our salvation through fear and trembling. Even though tempted and tested, our helmet cannot be cracked; we cannot be stopped.

Verse 17 As is often point out, the sword is the only offensive part of the armor, actually not really part of the armor but certainly associated with it. The word of God can come from the Spirit, or it can come from the Bible, which came from the Spirit operating in the original writers. One interesting verse that Paul might have been contemplating when he wrote this from the OT, which Jesus also quoted to thwart the devil, is:

Deut 8:3

3 He humbled you, causing you to hunger and then feeding you with manna, which neither you nor your fathers had known, to teach you that man does not live on bread alone but on every word that comes from the mouth of the LORD.

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Verse 18 “Pray in the Spirit” means that we need to pray with God’s strength and His help through the Spirit (Note the Spirit in verse 17).

III. Final Comments

Eph 6:19-24

19 Pray also for me, that whenever I open my mouth, words may be given me so that I will fearlessly make known the mystery of the gospel, 20 for which I am an ambassador in chains. Pray that I may declare it fearlessly, as I should. 21 Tychicus, the dear brother and faithful servant in the Lord, will tell you everything, so that you also may know how I am and what I am doing. 22 I am sending him to you for this very purpose, that you may know how we are, and that he may encourage you. 23 Peace to the brothers, and love with faith from God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ. 24 Grace to all who love our Lord Jesus Christ with an undying love.

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Verse 19 Paul might be the big cheese, but he needs to be included in these prayers. The “mystery” is the good news that Jesus Christ has come to save both Jews and Gentiles.

Verse 20 While we know that Paul’s request will be granted, it is comforting to see that it was in this verse:

2 Tim 4:17

17 But the Lord stood at my side and gave me strength, so that through me the message might be fully proclaimed and all the Gentiles might hear it. And I was delivered from the lion's mouth.

NIV

Verse 21 Tychicus is a faithful fellow worker and messenger of the Apostle Paul and is also mentioned in Acts 20:4, Col. 4:7, 2 Tim. 4:12, and Titus 3:12.

IV. Question

How can you lean on the Holy Spirit’s help in doing battle for the Kingdom of Heaven?