

The Armor of God Ephesians 6:10-20

Introduction:

Tonight we consider the metaphors of the pieces of the armor of God.

Ephesians 6:13 (ESV) Therefore take up the whole armor of God, that you may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand firm.

Ephesians 6:14 (ESV) Stand therefore, **having fastened on the belt of truth, and having put on the breastplate of righteousness,**

Ephesians 6:15 (ESV) **and, as shoes for your feet, having put on the readiness given by the gospel of peace.**

Ephesians 6:16 (ESV) In all circumstances take up **the shield of faith**, with which you can extinguish all the flaming darts of the evil one;

Ephesians 6:17 (ESV) **and take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit**, which is the word of God,

The armor of God is an extended metaphor of the protection that God supplies in standing our ground against the evil one.

What is stressed is that we are to resist the evil one not in our own strength but in God's strength.

Ephesians 6:10 (ESV) Finally, be strong in the Lord and in the strength of his might.

We rely in God's strength by seeking His protection. That protection is represented in the metaphor of the armor of God.

Ephesians 6:13 (ESV) Therefore take up **the whole armor of God**, that you may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand firm.

The emphasis of the passage is not to give ground to the evil one.

Ephesians 6:11 (ESV) Put on the whole armor of God, that you may be able to **stand** against the schemes of the devil.

Ephesians 6:13 (ESV) Therefore take up the whole armor of God, that you may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to **stand firm**.

Ephesians 6:14 (ESV) **Stand therefore**, having fastened on the belt of truth, and having put on the breastplate of righteousness,

We must exercise restraint as we consider the metaphors of the pieces of the armor of God.

We must not try to push the metaphors too far.

I appreciate the succinctness of the Holman Bible Commentary. I will be referring to it repeatedly as we consider the “picture” of the armor of God.

We will consider each piece of the armor. First we will explain the metaphor. Then we seek to apply it.

I. The belt

Ephesians 6:14 (ESV) Stand therefore, **having fastened on the belt of truth**, and having put on the breastplate of righteousness,

A. The historical metaphor explained.

6:14. After instructions to put on the full armor of God and the promise of the power of God in victory over the devil, Paul specifically describes the various pieces of armor. **The belt of truth pictures the large leather belt the Roman soldier wore. It held other weapons and kept his outer garments in place.** To put on the belt of truth can be understood as accepting the truth of the Bible and choosing to follow it with integrity.

Max Anders, Galatians-Colossians, vol. 8, Holman New Testament Commentary (Nashville, TN: Broadman & Holman Publishers, 1999), 190–191.

B. The historical metaphor applied.

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This often is interpreted either as studying the truth so that you know it well, or speaking the truth with integrity

Bryan Chapell, Ephesians, ed. Richard D. Phillips, Philip Graham Ryken, and Daniel M. Doriani, Reformed Expository Commentary (Phillipsburg, NJ: P&R Publishing, 2009), 339.

Ephesians 4:21 (ESV) assuming that you have heard about him and were taught in him, **as the truth is in Jesus**,

Ephesians 4:25 (ESV) Therefore, having put away falsehood, let each one of you **speak the truth with his neighbor**, for we are members one of another.

- C. The same imagery can and is used differently elsewhere.

Isaiah 11:4 (ESV) but with righteousness he shall judge the poor, and decide with equity for the meek of the earth; and he shall strike the earth with the rod of his mouth, and with the breath of his lips he shall kill the wicked.

Isaiah 11:5 (ESV) **Righteousness shall be the belt of his waist, and faithfulness the belt of his loins.**

- D. What is important is that we need to be people of the truth.

13 Note that in the armor imagery, it is the belt of truth that holds all the other pieces of armor in place. Trust in the ultimate truth of Scripture enables us to keep the rest of our spiritual defenses ready.

II. The Breastplate

Ephesians 6:14 (ESV) Stand therefore, having fastened on the belt of truth, and having put on the **breastplate of righteousness**,

- A. The historical metaphor explained.

The breastplate of righteousness pictures the metal armor in the shape of a human torso common to the Roman uniform. To put on the breastplate can be understood as choosing not to harbor and nurture known sin. It is striving to be like Christ and live according to his ways of righteousness.

B. The historical metaphor applied.

The breastplate of righteousness pictures the metal armor in the shape of a human torso common to the Roman uniform. **To put on the breastplate can be understood as choosing not to harbor and nurture known sin. It is striving to be like Christ and live according to his ways of righteousness.**

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1. “This may be interpreted as acting righteously in as many situations as possible”

Bryan Chapell, Ephesians, ed. Richard D. Phillips, Philip Graham Ryken, and Daniel M. Doriani, Reformed Expository Commentary (Phillipsburg, NJ: P&R Publishing, 2009), 339.

2. This metaphor comes from the Old Testament and is used of the coming Messiah.

Isaiah 59:16 (ESV) He saw that there was no man, and wondered that there was no one to intercede; then his own arm brought him salvation, and his righteousness upheld him.

Isaiah 59:17 (ESV) He put on **righteousness as a breastplate**, and a helmet of salvation on his head; he put on garments of vengeance for clothing, and wrapped himself in zeal as a cloak.

3. In I Thess the breastplate is of faith and love. Here faith should be understood as “faithfulness”

1 Thessalonians 5:8 (ESV) But since we belong to the day, let us be sober, having put on **the breastplate of faith and love**, and for a helmet the hope of salvation.

III. The shoes

Ephesians 6:15 (ESV) and, as shoes for your feet, having put on the readiness given by the gospel of peace.

A. The historical metaphor explained.

6:15. Feet fitted with the readiness pictures the hobnailed shoes which kept the soldiers footing sure in battle. To put on these shoes could be understood as believing the promises of God in the gospel and counting on them to be true for you. Faith in these promises yields peace in the Christian's life.

B. The historical metaphor applied.

The Greek word for readiness does not appear anywhere else in the New Testament.

Romans 10:15 (ESV) And how are they to preach unless they are sent? As it is written, "**How beautiful are the feet of those who preach the good news!**"

IV. The shield

Ephesians 6:15 (ESV) **and, as shoes for your feet**, having put on the readiness given by the gospel of peace.

A. The historical metaphor explained.

6:16. The shield of faith pictures the small, round shield the Roman soldier used to deflect blows from the sword, arrow, or spear of the enemy. To take up this shield can be understood as rejecting temptations to doubt, sin or quit, telling yourself the truth and choosing on the basis of the truth to do the right thing.

B. The historical metaphor applied.

6:16. The shield of faith pictures the small, round shield the Roman soldier used to deflect blows from the sword, arrow, or spear of the enemy. **To take up this shield can be understood as rejecting temptations to doubt, sin or quit, telling yourself the truth and choosing on the basis of the truth to do the right thing.**

V. The helmet

Ephesians 6:17 (ESV) **and take the helmet of salvation**, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God,

A. The historical metaphor explained.

6:17. The helmet of salvation pictures the Roman soldier's metal protective headgear. It does not refer to our salvation in Christ. First Thessalonians speaks of the helmet of the "hope of salvation," which is probably a parallel idea. That being the case, taking the helmet of salvation could be understood as resting our hope in the future and living in this world according to the value system of the next.

B. The historical metaphor applied.

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1 Thessalonians 5:8 (ESV) But since we belong to the day, let us be sober, having put on the breastplate of faith and love, **and for a helmet the hope of salvation.**

VI. The sword

Ephesians 6:17 (ESV) and take the helmet of salvation, **and the sword of the Spirit**, which is the word of God,

A. The historical metaphor explained.

The sword of the Spirit pictures the soldier's weapon sheathed to his belt and used both for offensive and defensive purposes. Taking the sword of the Spirit—defined for us as the Word of God—can be understood as using Scripture specifically in life's situations to fend off attacks of the enemy and put him to flight. We see the example of Jesus using the Scripture this way in Matthew 4:1–11.

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B. The historical metaphor applied.

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Jesus fought the temptations that the evil one used by wielding the word of God.

In Hebrews, the sword of the word of God can pierce to the very heart.

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

VII. Summary:

“The apostle carefully identifies the source of the strength in our armor. He says, “Be strong in the Lord and in his mighty power” (Eph. 6:10). How are we to be strong in his power? We “put on the full armor of God” (Eph. 6:11). After identifying the magnitude of Satan’s power, Paul again tells us to “put on the full armor of God” (Eph. 6:13). The apostle repeatedly emphasizes the divine source of our protection. We take our “stand against the devil’s schemes” (Eph. 6:11) and “stand [our] ground” (Eph. 6:13) not primarily by more vigorous performance of good deeds or by greater exercise of our willpower and resolve, but through confidence in and dependence on God’s provision”

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“Thus, when the day of evil comes and our temptation is great, we should not say, “Satan cannot touch me because of how truthful, righteous, and faithful I have been.” Rather we should say, “I am protected by the truth that though I feel weak, I am strong; though I may fall, I possess Christ’s righteousness.¹³ And though I am not perfect, I have peace with my God who has provided the faith I could not conjure (for faith, too, is a gift of God),¹⁴ the salvation I could not earn, and the Spirit I daily need.” The spiritual disciplines and godly practices of our lives are not what protect us against Satan; they are the means of grace by which God builds within us greater understanding and confidence in him, so that we will stand on his promises and provisions when the day of battle comes.

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This armor is put on through prayer.

Ephesians 6:18 (ESV) **praying at all times in the Spirit, with all prayer and supplication.** To that end, keep alert with all perseverance, making supplication for all the saints,

Conclusion:

(Over)

Here is an example of putting on the armor of God in prayer.

REGENERATION

O GOD OF THE HIGHEST HEAVEN,
(petition)

*Occupy the throne of my heart,
take full possession and reign supreme,
lay low every rebel lust,
let no vile passion resist thy holy war;
manifest thy mighty power,
and make me thine for ever.*

(Praise)

Thou art worthy to be praised with my every breath,
loved with my every faculty of soul,
served with my every act of life.

(Praise and ground of petition)

**Thou hast loved me, espoused me, received me,
purchased, washed, favoured, clothed, adorned me,
when I was worthless, vile, soiled, polluted.**

(Confession)

I was dead in iniquities,
having no eyes to see thee,
no ears to hear thee,
no taste to relish thy joys,
no intelligence to know thee;

(Praise and ground of petition)

**But thy Spirit has quickened me,
has brought me into a new world as a new creature,
has given me spiritual perception,
has opened to me thy Word as light, guide, solace, joy.**

Thy presence is to me a treasure of unending peace;

**No provocation can part me from thy sympathy,
for thou hast drawn me with cords of love,
and dost forgive me daily, hourly.**

(Petition)

*O help me then **to walk worthy of thy love,**
of my hopes, and my vocation.
Keep me, for I cannot keep myself;
Protect me that no evil befall me
Let me lay aside every sin admired of many;
Help me to walk by thy side,
lean on thy arm,
hold converse with thee,
That henceforth I may be salt of the earth and a blessing to all.*

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