

The Armour of God - 2

Ephesians 6:10-20

The **belt** was an essential piece of military equipment. It clung to the soldier and shielded some of the most vulnerable areas of the body. It was the first part put on as it kept other bits of armour in place, including his sword, and the tunic would be tucked under it.

The **breastplate** was his protection for his chest and abdominal areas and it afforded critical protection from powerful blows. Without it, an arrow could easily pierce his heart or lungs.

His leather **sandals** were laced up the centre of the foot and onto the ankle. This openness enabled the soldier to wear them all day in his work, in marching, in fighting, and in standing for long periods - without getting blisters! Thick soles were studded with iron hobnails which gave good traction and were handy when trampling the enemy.

A bronze or iron **helmet** protected his skull and neck from enemy blows and falling debris. It had two hinged side pieces, often lined inside for comfort, to protect the cheekbones and jaw.

The Roman **shield** was made from wood covered with leather. The shield was not flat but semi-circular so that missiles thrown at the soldier would be deflected to one side. The shield had a metal projection in the centre which was used to stun or wind an opponent, easing the soldier's subsequent strike with his sword. So, the shield was both defensive tool and offensive weapon.

The "tortoise" battle formation was so named because the shields would protect the men like a shell protects a tortoise. The front row soldiers held their shields in front of them, edge to edge; soldiers on the flanks held their shields to the side. Troops in the middle balanced their shields on their helmets. As long as the soldiers held together this way, the enemy would have trouble defeating them. Even the enemy's fiery darts (arrows tipped with a flammable liquid then set on fire) were ineffective against the Roman shields because the Romans drenched their leather-covered shields with water before going to battle.

The Roman iron **sword** was used both offensively and defensively. Used defensively, it, along with the other armour pieces, enabled the soldier to deflect the enemy's blows. Offensively, it was used to attack and counter-attack an enemy until the weapon seriously wounded or killed the assailant. In battle, rows of Roman soldiers pressed back their enemies one step at a time by alternating a forward thrust of the shield with a forward plunge of the sword.



Read: Ephesians 6:14 – 17

The Armour of God - What a great visual aid Paul used! As we look at each piece of the Christian's spiritual armour, consider

- **what it means in practice to put it on.**
- **using personal examples of having used each part**
- **how are we affected if we neglect to put it on.**

1. THE BELT of TRUTH (v14)

Read: John 8:31-32 John 14:6 John 16:13
John 17:17 Eph 1:13 2 Cor 11:3-4

- Who is 'Truth'? How does He protect and guide us so that we may live in the shelter of His love?
- Why do you think this is the first part of the Christian armour?

2. THE BREASTPLATE of RIGHTEOUSNESS (v14)

Read: Romans 7:21-25 2 Cor 5:21 Romans 8:1-4
Proverbs 4:23 Matthew 6:21,33 2 Peter 3:13
Eph 4:22-24

- What is the antidote to Satan's ploy of reminding us of sin and bringing us that feeling of being under a sense of God's condemnation?

3. THE SANDALS of THE GOSPEL OF PEACE (v15)

Read: Ephesians 2:13-18 John 14:27 Phil 4:6-7
Isaiah 26:3 2 Cor 5:17-20 Col 3:15

- Why do you think the gospel is likened to the soldier's footwear?
- Who could you tell about the Prince of Peace?

4. THE SHIELD of FAITH (v16)

Read: Gal 2:20 2 Tim 4:7 Jude 1:3
2 Chron 14:11 James 1:2-3 1 John 5:4

- In the Greek it is more accurately read 'the shield of *the* faith'. How does this affect our reading of verse 16? What does '*the* faith' consist of? What does *our* faith consist of?
- What are you doing right now that requires faith?

5. THE HELMET OF SALVATION (v17)

(In one fierce battle a soldier, Bruce Maximus, wore a full helmet shaped like a face in the image of his Emperor Caesar Augustus. Wearing it not only protected his face and eyes but it said to those he fought " I see you through my emperor's eyes and I am representing him in battle. I fight for his glory.")

Read: John 5:24 Psalm 51:12 Phil 2:12-13
1 Peter 3:21-22 Rom 13:10-14 1 Thess 5:6-11

- What has salvation saved us from in the past, the present and the future?
- Define hope and explain how Biblical hope differs from the world's view?
- Are we viewing life through a cross-shaped visor?

6. THE SWORD of THE SPIRIT (v17)

Read: **Matthew** 4:1-11 Heb 4:12-13 2 Tim 3:15-17
Col 3:16 John 17:13-19 2 Cor 10:3-4

The Word of God can be used for defence or attack.

- How did Jesus overcome his various temptations in the wilderness? List the battlefields in your life and ask God to give you at least one sword from His Word for each area of battle.
- Do we know our Bibles well enough to use it to advance God's Kingdom, and to encourage and strengthen our fellow soldiers – in other words, to maintain a state of readiness?

7. IN CONCLUSION

It may be appropriate to spend some time, first in silent contemplation of our Commander and acknowledging that without His aid we are useless in the battle, and then in corporate prayer remembering Hebrews 4:16 - 'Let us then approach God's throne of grace with confidence, so that we may receive mercy and find grace to help us in our time of need.'

8. GETTING PERSONAL

- Do you feel as if you have been playing at the Christian life, or are you on the front lines in active service to our great Commander, Jesus Christ?
- What can you do to make sure you maintain a state of readiness and are therefore dressed and prepared for spiritual battle?
- In what practical ways can we help, support and encourage each other in our own Home Group?
- In the Old Testament, God is seen as a Warrior for His people. The armour we are to wear is the armour that the Redeemer (Isaiah 59:20) wears when He comes to rescue God's people. It is the armour Christ has already worn in saving us from sin, death, hell and the judgement of God. You may want to consider the parallels in Isaiah 11:5, Isaiah 52:7, Isaiah 59:17 with the description of the armour of God in Ephesians as an additional private study.

The next session will be on 19th/20th February when we will consider Ephesians 6:18-20.