

The Entire Armor of God – *Ephesians 6:13-17*

Introduction – We saw in verses 10-12 that in order to stand against the wiles of the devil we must know our source of strength, know our enemy, and understand the nature of the battle in which we fight. Paul now goes on a detailed list of the armor of God with which we are to fight, both defensively and offensively, against those schemes.

The Whole Armor of God and All its Pieces – Let's begin by taking a look at each piece of the armor listed here. Paul is writing from prison and is of course very familiar with the clothing of the Roman soldier, a timely illustration of what it means to put on Christ, for that is what we are doing with each piece. Every piece of armor is the Lord Jesus.

The Belt of Truth – Our fight is against the lies of the devil and so we must begin with truth and truthfulness. But this is not a commitment to universal, autonomous propositions. *"I am the way, the truth, and the life,"* Jesus said (John 14:6). Jesus is truth.

The Breastplate of Righteousness – An essential defense against the accusing, slanderous attacks of the evil one is the declaration that there is no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus (Rom 8:1). When we put on righteousness, we are putting on Jesus, Who is *"the LORD, our righteousness"* (Jer 23:6). Jesus is righteousness.

Boots of the Gospel of Peace – Standing firm, or striving forward, we stand upon and announce the Good News of peace to all men, the only peace. But preaching peace in a world at war is an act of war. We stand on the twin proclamations of the only peace with God and the only peace between men. And in both cases, Jesus is our gospel of peace (Isaiah 6:9).

Shield of Faith – This describes a full-body shield that protected one against flaming spears. It is the object of our faith and the faithfulness of that One that protects us (Rev 19:11). Jesus is our faithfulness.

Helmet of Salvation – Jesus' name means "Jehovah's salvation" and He is our salvation (1 Thess 5:8-9).

Sword of the Spirit – This is the Word of God and so Jesus is the Sword (Rev 19:15, John 1:1-3).

Having the Armor of God is Being "*In Christ*" – Wearing the armor is analogous to being *"in Christ"* and so as Paul ends this letter, He is referring back to where he began. In Ephesians 1:1-12 we were told that our salvation, our faithfulness, our hope, the truth, our redemption, our peace, and our reign as victors were all *"in Christ"* (Eph 1:1, 3, 4, 6, 7, 10, 11, 12). To put on the armor of God is not to go out and fight for Christ; it is to fight *"in Christ."* This is not a call to greater human righteousness and resolve. It is to generate and regenerate our confidence in the One Who has defeated the evil one and then to stand *"in Him."*

Why is it God's Armor? – It is called the armor of God and not "my" armor. This is the armor that the Lord put on (Isaiah 59:16f). He puts this armor on His Son (Isaiah 61:10). The Bridegroom has been clothed, and those who are in the new Adam are clothed with Him (and one can argue that Aaron, the high priest, was clothed with this armor). We find ourselves wearing the armor because we are viceroys and priests of His kingdom, seated with Him on His throne (Eph 2:6).

"Put on" Language – We have seen similar language in Eph 4:22-24. In that section, we learned that those who are in Christ have put off the old man and have put on the new. Having done so, they were further exhorted to apply that putting off/on action in various situations (vv25ff). The point is that, in the same way, Ephesians 6:13ff exhorts us to *"put on"* that which we have put on, (i.e. "having put on..."v14). This is similar to the prayer in Eph 1:15ff where Paul prays for us to know and exercise the power we have already been given. You are putting on Christ Whom you have put on.

"...that you may be able to withstand in the evil day..." – There are evil days and we have been told to *"walk circumspectly"* (Eph 5:15) *"because the days are evil."* While Paul is warning us soberly about a true enemy, we must remember that he does so with a view of Christ's actual and impending victory. Each evil moment is an opportunity to redeem the time (Eph 5:16). Every lie is withstood with truth, every darkness with light, all death and corruption with life and hope, all warfare with the gospel of peace. Grace, forgiveness, truth, and hope are our weapons. We have been fitted with Christ; we are fitted to withstand every enemy.

And That is the Point of the Armor – When we have put on the full armor of God, it is not to play theological dress up; we have been fitted to fight. Where are your battles?

Temptations to doubt God's goodness, love, grace or sufficiency – in difficult times, through a terrible or terminal disease or disability - or the oncoming experience of death, the final enemy – financial difficulties, wayward children, trials brought on for seemingly no good reason. Put on the armor.

Trouble in life undermining our present victory – real persecution, or simple peer pressure at work or school, fear of criticism when you stand for truth – or Satan's hindrances upon faithful plans (1 Thess 2:18). Put on the armor.

Doctrinal confusion and falsehood – we are not to be *"tossed to and fro and carried about with every wind of doctrine."* Put on the armor.

Temptations to worldliness – the dainties of the world, *"the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life – is not of the Father but is of the world"* (1 John 2:16) *"Put on the armor – that you may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand."*