

The Christian's Armor – Part 1

The Christian life is discussed in the New Testament under the concept of spiritual warfare. Satan and his wicked agents are presented as our unseen but very real enemy. He attacks believers, especially against their minds. God has made provision for his people to be protected. This is the purpose of Paul's exhortation that "we take up the armor of God" and "stand against the devil."

There are six pieces to the armor of defense God has given the believer. Three parts fit on the body itself: the girdle or belt, the breastplate, and the shoes. A soldier is always clothed in these. The other items are equipment that the soldier picks up and uses for immediate combat purposes. When the bugle calls, he takes up his shield, puts on his helmet, and takes a sword in hand to go forth and defeat the enemy.

Each of these pieces of armor has a symbolic meaning. They stand for "[Gospel realities] ideas." God's armor is defined as the Lord Jesus Christ. He is the armor as His work for us is understood and appropriated by faith at each point of need.

God's soldier is instructed to put on the full armor of God. "Stand firm, then, having girded your loins with truth, and having put on the breastplate of righteousness, and having shod your feet with the preparation the gospel of peace...

Stand, therefore,
with truth like a belt around your waist,
righteousness like armor on your chest,
¹⁵ and your feet sandaled with readiness
for the gospel of peace. HCSB

Now **the girdle** about the loins also functioned as a belt that gathered the loose ends of a soldier's garments and formed a sort of binder. The girdle kept everything in place and freed the soldier to fight. Paul says the girdle is truth. "Truth" here is something provided for us which we put on. It is not subjective but objective, something outside of us which we put on.

Our Lord Jesus said of himself, "I am the truth." So, it appears to be the whole truth of the Gospel to which Paul refers. Our reception of the truth that is in Jesus Christ produces in us a life of reality and consistency of character.

"The faith" is a term often used to designate the objective revelation of God. Thus, we are told to resist the devil, steadfast in the faith. "***To gird up our loins with truth' is to have a settled conviction with regards to the truth that is in Christ Jesus. We can then combat Satan's lies with God's truth.*** Jesus defined Himself as "the way, the truth, and the life" (John 14:6). The

idea of absolute **truth** is inseparable from the life of Jesus Christ and from the Bible. Paul told the believers in Rome “put on the Lord Jesus Christ” (Rom. 13:14); Jesus himself prayed to the Father for us, “Sanctify them by the **truth**; your word is **truth**” (John 17:17).

The second piece of God’s provided armor is **the breastplate of righteousness**. This item of clothing covered the soldier from his neck to his thighs. It functioned as a protection for all the vital organs. Righteousness means to be right in God’s eyes. The Psalmist writes, *Righteousness and justice are the foundation of your throne; steadfast love and faithfulness go before you* (Psalm 89:14).

The righteousness of God is the divine attribute that describes God as acting always in a way that is consistent with his own character. (Fred Zaspel essay)

What righteousness does God require of us? God can require nothing less than perfect righteousness. Thomas Binney expresses this truth in his hymn, *Eternal Light*.

Eternal light! eternal light!

How pure the soul must be,
when, placed within your searching sight,
it shrinks not, but with calm delight
can face such majesty.

...

3. O how shall I, whose dwelling here
is dark, whose mind is dim,
before the face of God appear
and on my human spirit bear
the uncreated beam?

The central attribute of God is holiness. Isaiah 57:15 says of God, *the One who is high and lifted up, who inhabits eternity, whose name is Holy*. Isaiah had heard the worship of heaven when he received his commission. Isaiah 6:3 *And one called to another and said: “Holy, holy, holy is the LORD of hosts; the whole earth is full of his glory!*

John had the same experience when he saw the vision of heavenly throne, The angels and all the host of heaven cry out to him- holy, holy, holy. Revelation 4:8.

As the Holy One God requires absolute holiness and righteousness and no person outside of Jesus the Messiah has such! But God, acting in his righteousness, provides this for us. *He that Yahweh God, sent redemption to his people; he has commanded his covenant forever. Holy and awesome is his name!* Psalm 111:9

In the words of Romans 3, *it is “the righteousness of God which is by faith.”* We could never be good enough to stand before the holy God. What we need is the perfect righteousness of God. This is what is credited or imputed to us when we believe in Christ. Now God looks at me clothed in the righteousness of Jesus. He pronounces me a good, just, righteous, and holy man.

No longer can the law condemn me because by debt has been paid by the Savior. Nor can the accusations of the devil touch me.

What does God provide that keeps us safe from the fiery darts of the wicked one?

The breastplate of righteousness refers to the righteousness purchased for us by Jesus at the cross (2 Corinthians 5:21): *For our sake he made him to be sin who knew no sin, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God.*

Righteousness, which is the perfect holiness of Christ, comes from God alone.

This breastplate protects our vital organs spiritually.

Our only true protection from Satan is what Christ has done for us and what he is in us.

Zinzendorf wrote:

“Jesus thy blood and righteousness
My beauty are, my glorious dress;
Midst flaming worlds, in these arrayed,
With joy shall lift up my head.”

The **third basic piece of armor** was **the heavy sandals**, or the equivalent of today’s *army boots*. These special shoes allowed for good traction and endurance in marching and fighting. Prepared footwear spells readiness.

Paul says our feet must be shod with the Gospel of peace. Only then are we ready, equipped, and able to fight. “Feet” in Scripture are often used as a symbol of the Christian walk. Thus, the whole of life must be engaged in the spiritual conflict.

These shoes are called “shoes of the gospel of peace.” The result of the Gospel working in our hearts is an inner heart peace from God. The resulting conviction that we have been reconciled with God gives us courage and zeal to fight the good fight of faith.

Listen to what the Scripture says about Feet and the gospel:

How beautiful upon the mountains are the feet of him who brings good news, who publishes peace, who brings good news of happiness, who publishes salvation, who says to Zion, “Your God reigns.” Isaiah 57:2

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!” Romans 10:15

All this is from God, who through Christ reconciled us to himself and gave us the ministry of reconciliation; that is, in Christ God was reconciling the world to himself, not counting their trespasses against them, and entrusting to us the message of reconciliation. Therefore, we are ambassadors for Christ, God making his appeal through us. We implore you on behalf of

Christ, be reconciled to God. For our sake he made him to be sin who knew no sin, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God. 2 Corinthians 5:18-21

“The one who says he resides in God ought himself to **walk** just as he walked.” 1 John 2:6
Walk in a manner worthy of the God who calls you into His own kingdom and glory. 1
Thessalonians 2:12

Colossians 1:10

So that you will walk in a manner worthy of the Lord, to please Him in all respects, bearing fruit in every good work and increasing in the knowledge of God;

We are to fit our feet with the good news of peace. We are to advance onto the battlefield unafraid, because we carry with us the good news of Jesus’ death and resurrection. An old adage states that “the best defense is a good offense.”

God's Church is sent to herald the good news of God's Kingdom, which will spread His way of peace around the whole world. Having our shoes on, we are ready to move, to spread these glad tidings to others. Recalling the words of Jesus, “I will build my church and the gates of Hades will not overpower it.” Matthew 16:18

When a person becomes a Christian, he is automatically drafted into the army of the soldiers of Christ. But he is not only drafted, but he is also equipped with the spiritual weapons he needs to engage in holy combat for the glory of God and the advancement of the Church in the world.

Today we’ve looked at the three pieces of equipment which fit on the body itself: the girdle or belt, the breastplate, and the shoes. Next time we’ll look at the three remaining pieces of spiritual armor which the Christian soldier takes up when the bugle calls him to head for the battlefield:

the shield of faith, the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the Word of God.

On to the fight, Christian soldier! Your God supplies you with the armor for victory.

Wayne Conrad
Dallas, Texas 75228
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