

## Putting on the Whole Armor of God—Salvation and God’s Word

Daniel 10:13; Ephesians 6:17

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Jesus does not send us into battle against such a formidable enemy, as Satan, without first equipping us with armor and a weapon that He knows are powerful to defend us and to defeat the enemy (2 Corinthians 10:4). He does not send us into battle to fight in a hopeless cause which we cannot win or to face a certain massacre in which we cannot stand and overcome the attacks/temptations brought against us.

No matter how difficult the struggle we face in overcoming the temptations of the world, the flesh, and the devil, we must continually be assured that (1) the victory and final outcome have already been won by Christ through His death and resurrection (Colossians 2:15) and that (2) the spiritual armor Jesus has already purchased for us is mighty in defeating the enemy when it is daily put on (Ephesians 6:11,13). Neither of these truths are mere speculations of the power of positive thinking. They are the invincible and unchangeable truths of a God who cannot lie.

When we feed our minds with these truths, receive them as ours by faith, and go forth in the power of the Holy Spirit, we will resist the enemy and he will flee from us (James 4:7). Resist! Take this battle seriously. Resist! Don’t fall asleep (as did the disciples). Resist! Put on the whole armor of God—not part of it. Resist! Don’t give the enemy an inch—for he will take a mile. Resist in the power of the Spirit who is greater than any enemy or any temptation (1 John 4:4).

The devil will tempt us to think that it is hopeless to fight against those temptations/besetting sins/addictions/sinful habits—we cannot win. But that is the lie of Satan. Who will we believe: the God who cannot lie who assures us that we are more than conquerors through Christ who loves us or will we believe the father of lies who only comes to steal, kill, and to destroy? Let us daily by faith put on the whole armor of God. Our main points today are: (1) The Helmet of Salvation; and (2) The Sword of the Spirit.

### I. The Helmet of Salvation (Ephesians 6:17).

A. We have already considered Paul’s command (not a suggestion), stated twice in Ephesians 6:11,13, which includes the belt of truth, the breastplate of righteousness, the boots of the gospel of peace, the shield of faith, and now the helmet of salvation.

B. Paul was imprisoned at Rome when he wrote this Letter to the Ephesian Church. As Paul considers the physical armor worn by the soldiers of the Roman legions (the most powerful military force on earth at that time), the Holy Spirit directs him to liken the physical armor of the victorious Romans to the spiritual armor of victorious believers in Christ.

C. The helmet of the Roman soldier was usually of leather inside and of brass on the outside. Like the other pieces of armor, it was not optional but necessary, for it protected the head from arrows, spears, or rocks that could severely injure the soldier in battle.

D. Why does Paul liken the Roman helmet to the believer’s salvation?

1. When we neglect or forget to put on the helmet of salvation, we are as vulnerable to serious spiritual injury as the Roman soldier that neglects his helmet or loses it in battle.

2. Just as the enemy would seek to disable the Roman soldier by going for his head, so our spiritual enemy (the devil) seeks to disable us by going for our head so that we cannot spiritually think, believe, and hope in Christ, who is our salvation.

E. What is this salvation that is to cover/protect our heads/minds against the spiritual attacks and

temptations of the devil?

1. There are three aspects of salvation (past, present, and future) that we must cling to by faith. Our salvation in Jesus Christ is not a potential salvation, but a most certain salvation.

a. **Past** (Ephesians 2:8-9). Through faith in Christ, we have been **saved from all the guilt and the full penalty of sin**—we are forgiven and there is now no condemnation. That’s our **justification**.

b. **Present** (Philippians 2:12-13). All we who have been justified by faith alone are presently **being saved from the power of sin**; it no longer has dominion over us. That’s our **sanctification**.

c. **Future** (Matthew 10:22). All we who have been justified and are being sanctified will finally be saved from the presence of sin when we are ushered into the presence of God where all temptation and sin will be forever removed. That’s our **glorification**.

2. Paul uses the same metaphor of the helmet of salvation in 1 Thessalonians 5:8-9. The emphasis in this verse is upon the future hope of eternal salvation which we need in order to resist the temptations of the devil. Let us distinguish biblical hope from biblical faith.

a. Biblical faith is resting in what Jesus has already accomplished in our salvation through His death and resurrection. Biblical hope is resting in what Jesus shall bring to pass in our salvation through His death and resurrection. Both biblical faith and biblical hope look to the promise of God—faith trusts the promise of God in the present while hope looks to the promise of God for the future. Biblical hope is built upon biblical faith, and yet faith in Christ leads us to hope in Christ. Biblical hope is not a mere wish—“I hope it’s not too hot today.” Biblical hope is a certain expectation that God will keep His Word (not only in the present—that is faith), but also in the future—whether near future or distant future (that is hope).

b. If we only look back in faith to what Jesus has accomplished, but do not look forward in hope to what He shall accomplish, we will find ourselves faltering and falling before many of the temptations of the enemy. For it is our certain hope that we will win, that we will finish the race, that there is laid up for us a crown of life that keeps us going, keeps us fighting the enemy, and keeps us rising again and again when we fall. We will simply give up and quit if there is no hope of overcoming that sin or that habit, healing that broken relationship, finding help for that financial need, or persevering through that severe trial.

c. Hopelessness is not the lot of the Christian, for we serve the God of hope (Romans 15:13). He is absolutely sovereign. Nothing is impossible with God. He cannot lie. He is ever faithful to His Word. The hope of salvation is so needed by us—especially when we are struggling from the temptations of the enemy. We need to be able to see that light at the end of the dark tunnel (especially as death draws nigh).

d. And yet it is not biblical hope to tell God how He must meet what we think we need. He is God. He is Lord and we are His redeemed servants. We hope in what He has promised. We hope in knowing He will always give us what is good for us and deny us what is not good for us. Biblical hope does not restrict what God can do, but biblical hope does not tell God what He must do and how He must do it. That is why it is so important for us to know and be filled with the God’s Word; for it is in His promises found in Scripture that we hope.

## II. **The Sword of the Spirit (Ephesians 6:17).**

A. The kind of Roman sword that is in view here is not the large sword that required both hands to forcefully swing it (*romphaia*), but is rather the short two-edged sword kept in the scabbard (*machaira*). This is the only offensive weapon in our battle against the temptations of the enemy. In our offensive attack against the enemy, we are not to try to out debate or to out reason the devil with the words of men. He wants us to use the words of psychologists that use secular humanism as their truth to fight against his temptations. That is using Satan’s words against Satan’s temptations. It’s useless. However, Paul calls us to use the sword of the Spirit which is the Word of God to battle the temptations of the devil (Hebrews 4:12).

B. This is how the Lord Jesus battled the devil when He was so severely tempted in the wilderness.

Jesus countered each of the temptations of Satan with, “It is written” (Matthew 4). That is our strength as well—not the vain philosophies of the world, but, “Thus saith the Lord.” But if we are to be effective in using the sword that the Spirit of God has inspired, namely, the Word of God (Holy Scripture), we must be familiar with it. It must not be a stranger to us. We must understand it from reading it, studying it, meditating upon it, writing it upon the doorposts of our house with sticky notes, and memorizing it so that we can pull out our sword at any time and use it against the enemy’s temptations—not in a mechanical, robotic way, but by faith and hope clinging to Christ and His mighty promises/commandments.

### C. Examples

1. When the devil tempts us that we are too sinful to come to Christ. We have sinned away all God’s mercy, we take the sword of the Spirit, “It is written” (1 Timothy 1:15-16).
2. When Satan tempts us that we are all alone in facing this powerful temptation, we pull the sword of the Spirit out, “It is written” (Hebrews 13:5-6).
3. When our adversary tempts us that he is too strong and there are too many of them that stand against us, we lift the sword of the Spirit, “It is written” (1 Samuel 14:6; Romans 16:20).
4. When the liar tempts us that we cannot resist this temptation because we have fallen so many times before, we pierce him with, “It is written” (1 Corinthians 10:13).
5. When that great fear-monger, Satan, tempts us to panic about our circumstances or about relationships, we slay the dragon with, “It is written” (Isaiah 41:10).
6. When that behemoth of discouragement and despair tempts us to give up because we are so weary in our struggle against afflictions/trials/temptations, we quit not, but thrust the sword of the Spirit into his heart with, “It is written” (Galatians 6:9; Philippians 4:13).
7. When the blasphemer tempts us to think that our need is greater than God’s resources, we resist the devil with the sword of the Spirit, “It is written” (Philippians 4:19).
8. When the accuser of the brethren assails us with fear as we draw near to death, we silence him with the sword of the Spirit, “It is written” (Psalm 16:11; Psalm 116:15).

D. We fill our worship service from beginning to end with God’s Word (whether it is the Call to Worship, the Prayers, the Singing of Psalms, the Scripture Reading from the Old and New Testaments, the Sermon, and the Benediction). Why? Worship is about our glorious God—not about us. It is thinking God’s thoughts and worshipping Him in only the way He has appointed in His Word. That’s why God’s Word is central to worship. God’s Word is powerful. It strengthens us, comforts us, instructs us, comforts us, cleanses us, and conforms our thinking, our desires, our words, and our actions to Jesus Christ by His Almighty Spirit.

E. Putting on the whole armor of God is the divine means God has appointed for us to resist the world, the flesh, and the devil.

1. Let us not be discouraged that we do not see a full and complete victory over those temptations immediately. That is also the temptation of the enemy to discourage us that we stop trying.
2. God would have us to persevere and not to give up—to rise again when we fall—to carefully consider where and how the enemy tempts us—and to devise a biblical plan to strengthen us in using the whole armor of God.
3. Finally, let us draw near to the Lord in prayer and communion with Christ. Don’t run from Him, but to Him. Daily prayer and communion with Jesus make the whole armor of God effective against the enemy. That is where we will end this study next week (God willing).

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