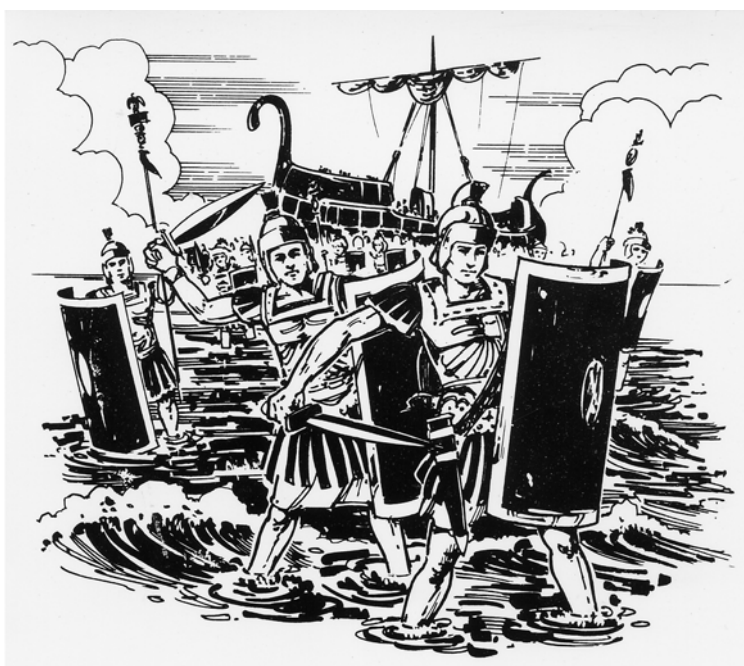


The Armour of God



Palestine in Christ's day was under the occupation of the Roman army.

The sight of a patrol of Roman soldiers on the street or the road was a very common sight.

The Roman soldier commanded great respect and was feared, dressed in a well-designed suit of armour and wielding a sharp two-edged sword.

The apostle Paul was for two years under "house arrest" guarded by a Roman soldier night and day.

Paul used this extensive knowledge of the Roman soldiers in his writing.

2 Timothy 2:3 [NIV] *"Endure hardship with us like a good soldier of Christ Jesus."*

The life of a Roman soldier was hard and disciplined.

Paul looked at the armour of a Roman soldier and used it as an object seen every day by his readers to teach a spiritual message.

Do we really need to be wearing this armour that Paul talks about?

Ephesians 6:10-12 [NIV] *"Finally, be strong in the Lord and in his mighty power. Put on the full armour of God so that you can take your stand against the devil's schemes. For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the powers of this dark world and against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly realms."*

This is the type of war we are in even if we don't realise the fact.

Our enemy is **not** physical but spiritual.

This battle rages at the speed of thought.

What are these schemes of the devil?

Mainly deceptive “*half truths*” with which Satan seeks to control our minds.

Genesis 3:1 [NIV] *“Now the serpent was more crafty than any of the wild animals the LORD God had made. He said to the woman, **“Did God really say, ‘You must not eat from any tree in the garden?’**”*

This was only partly true, as we know only one tree was to be avoided, on pain of death.

Genesis 2:16-17 [NIV] *“And the LORD God commanded the man, **“You are free to eat from any tree in the garden; but you must not eat from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, for when you eat of it you will surely die.”***

Satan emphasised the negative so Eve felt that God was depriving her of what was good.

Satan also planted doubt of God’s goodness in the mind of Eve.

2 Corinthians 2:11 [NIV] *“in order that Satan might not outwit us. **For we are not unaware of his schemes.**”*

Are we aware of Satan’s tactics?

Another tactic of Satan is to make his world and way of life seem so attractive to our physical senses.

Genesis 3:6 [NIV] *“**When the woman saw that the fruit of the tree was good for food and pleasing to the eye, and also desirable for gaining wisdom, she took some and ate it. She also gave some to her husband, who was with her, and he ate it.**”*

What God had denied looked so desirable.

Drugs – Satan tells us they will open up new worlds to our mind.

Free sex – Satan tells us to avoid the frustrations of having to restrict the pleasure of sex to the marriage relationship.

Excessive food and drink – we all need food and drink to live, surely we can’t have too much of what is essential for life?

Over the 26 years I have been a minister in God’s church, I have seen these devices of Satan take people out of the church to await an unknown fate.

1 Peter 5:8 [NIV] *“**Be self-controlled and alert. Your enemy the devil prowls around like a roaring lion looking for someone to devour.**”*

Satan as a spirit being is invisible to us.

A visible lion is **not** dangerous to its prey, but we are in “*lion country*”, with high grasses to hide him from our view.

Satan like a lion attacks in a savage way the spiritual weak, spiritual sick or the young who are in the Church.

Satan like a lion waits until his intended prey are relaxed, then strike at incredible speed going for the soft underbelly of his prey.

Without protection we are as good as spiritually dead once Satan attacks.

1 John 1:5-7 [NIV] *“This is the message we have heard from him and declare to you: **God is light; in him there is no darkness at all. If we claim to have fellowship with him yet walk in the darkness, we lie and do not live by the truth. But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus, his Son, purifies us from all sin.**”*

Lions attack their prey mainly at night when it is dark, so we need to be constantly walking in the light, God’s presence.

Ephesians 6:13 [NIV] *“**Therefore put on the full armour of God, so that when the day of evil comes, you may be able to stand your ground, and after you have done everything, to stand.**”*

Every day is a “day of evil” as far as Satan is concerned.

I hope that you now realise how essential the spiritual armour is that God will provide us with if we ask Him.

Belt of truth

Ephesians 6:14 [NIV] *“**Stand firm then, with the belt of truth buckled around your waist...**”*

A Roman soldier wore a foundational tunic of cloth that allowed all the armour to fit comfortably.

This garment was held securely in place by a wide belt.

John 17:17 [NIV] *“**Sanctify them by the truth; your word is truth.**”*

We need to ask, ‘do we have a sure foundational knowledge of God’s Word, the Christian Bible, our Handbook for Life?’

Without this knowledge all the rest of the armour will feel uncomfortable and we may **not** always be wearing it.

1 Peter 1: 13 [NIV] *“**Therefore, prepare your minds for action; be self-controlled; set your hope fully on the grace to be given you when Jesus Christ is revealed.**”*

Paul knew that those to whom he was writing needed to be constantly revising God’s Word on a daily basis.

We all need to set aside a period of each day to drink in of God’s Word, the Christian Bible, our Handbook for Life.

The Breastplate of Righteousness

Ephesians 6:14 [NIV] *“... **with the breastplate of righteousness in place.**”*

The breastplate on the Roman soldier covered the vital life-giving organs of his body, heart, lungs, etc.

The breastplate **only** covered the front of his body so to retreat would lay him open to easy attack.

Where do we get this breastplate of righteousness?

Isaiah 64:6 [NIV] *“**All of us have become like one who is unclean, and all our righteous acts are like filthy rags; we all shrivel up like a leaf, and like the wind our sins sweep us away.**”*

The breastplate made of our own personal righteousness would be of very poor quality and not a very effective defence.

Romans 4:21-25 [NIV] *“being fully persuaded that God had power to do what he had promised. This is why **“it was credited to him as righteousness.”** The words “it was credited to him” were written not for him alone, but also for us, to whom God will credit righteousness, for us **who believe in him who raised Jesus our Lord from the dead.** He was delivered over to death for our sins and was raised to life for our justification.”*

It was Abraham who was fully persuaded, having total faith in what God had promised.

At the beginning of each day I put on this breastplate of credited righteousness in this way.

First I confess any sins I’m aware of and ask for the blood of Jesus Christ to atone for them and any other sins I may have overlooked.

1 John 1:8-9 [NIV] *“**If we claim to be without sin, we deceive ourselves and the truth is not in us. If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness.**”*

This is the promise I have faith in and claim daily.

I then ask for some of Jesus Christ’s righteousness to be credited to me as promised, thus making me a fit vehicle for the Holy Spirit to work in and through.

Luke 11:13 [NIV] *“If you then, though you are evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, **how much more will your Father in heaven give the Holy Spirit to those who ask him!**”*

This also is a promise I claim in faith.

Hebrews 10:38 [NIV] *“**But my righteous one will live by faith.** And if he shrinks back, I will not be pleased with him.”*

This is how we begin each day living by faith in our Saviour Jesus Christ.

Iron Shod Sandals

Ephesians 6:15 [NIV] *“and with your feet fitted with the readiness that comes from the gospel of peace.”*

The Roman soldier wore strong, well-fitting leather sandals with iron studs on the soles and heels.

Have you ever tried walking over rough terrain without shoes?

Very debilitating, making it impossible to fight effectively.

Do we know and are we comfortable with the gospel message our lives are to preach to others, mostly without words but by our peaceful, caring and loving lifestyle?

Matthew 28:18-20 [NIV] *“Then Jesus came to them and said, **“All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptising them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you.** And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age.”*

This is a commission that every Christian has from Jesus.

Revelation 12:11 [NIV] *“They [Christians] overcame him [Satan] by the blood of the Lamb [Jesus Christ in them] and by the word of their testament [a loving lifestyle].”*

Isaiah 52:7 [NIV] *“How beautiful on the mountains are the feet of those who bring good news, who proclaim peace, who bring good tidings, who proclaim salvation, who say to Zion, “Your God reigns!”*

The “mountains” refer to the nations.

We are to bring hope to a world that sees no real hope for the future.

We are to assure all people that the Creator God reigns, and He is in total control of everything that is happening.

In the end this time of trial and pain will work out good for all humanity.

Romans 10:14-15 [NIV] *“How, then, can they call on the one they have not believed in? And how can they believe in the one of whom they have not heard? And how can they hear without someone preaching to them? And how can they preach unless they are sent? As it is written, “How beautiful are the feet of those who bring good news!”*

As soldiers of Jesus Christ we are always on active service, **not** remaining in the comfort of our barracks [our church fellowship].

Shield of Faith

Ephesians 6:16 [NIV] *“In addition to all this, take up the shield of faith, with which you can extinguish all the flaming arrows of the evil one.”*

The large shield that the Roman soldier carried covered most of his body and was designed to be used as part of the combined defence of a group of soldiers, creating a box that would defend them from missiles that came from every direction.

Hebrews 11:6 [NIV] *“And without faith it is impossible to please God, because anyone who comes to him must believe that he exists and that he rewards those who earnestly seek him.”*

Without faith we can never please our commander Jesus Christ.

Romans 8:24-25 [NIV] *“For in this hope we were saved. But hope that is seen is no hope at all. Who hopes for what he already has? But if we hope for what we do not yet have, we wait for it patiently.”*

Saved by hope that is founded on faith in the promises that Jesus Christ has made to all who trust in Him.

Romans 10:17 [NIV] *“Consequently, faith comes from hearing the message, and the message is heard through the word of Christ.”*

Faith comes from the promises made in God’s Word, the Christian Bible, our Handbook for Life.

Luke 17:5, 7-10 [NIV] *“The apostles said to the Lord, “Increase our faith!” ... “Suppose one of you had a servant ploughing or looking after the sheep. Would he say to the servant when he comes in from the field, ‘Come along now and sit down to eat’? Would he not rather say, ‘Prepare my supper, get yourself ready and wait on me while I eat and drink; after that you may eat and drink’? Would he thank the servant because he did what he was told to do? So you also, when you have done everything you were told to do, should say, ‘We are unworthy servants; we have only done our duty.’”*

Faith is increased by doing all that is expected of us as Christians.

Matthew 5:41-42 [NIV] *“If someone forces you to go one mile, go with him two miles. Give to the one who asks you, and do not turn away from the one who wants to borrow from you.”*

Faith is increased by doing more than is asked or expected of us as Christians.

Helmet of Salvation

Ephesians 6:17 [NIV] *“Take the helmet of salvation...”*

The Roman soldier’s helmet covered the top, sides and back of his head.

1 Thessalonians 5:8 [NIV] *“But since we belong to the day, let us be self-controlled, putting on faith and love as a breastplate, and **the hope of salvation as a helmet.**”*

The hope of salvation is our protecting helmet.

What is protected is our mind and spirit, the centre where all the functions of the body are coordinated and all decisions are made.

Revelation 21:1-5 [NIV] *“Then I saw a new heaven and a new earth, for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away, and there was no longer any sea. I saw the Holy City, the new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride beautifully dressed for her husband. And I heard a loud voice from the throne saying, “Now the dwelling of God is with men, and he will live with them. They will be his people, and God himself will be with them and be their God. **He will wipe every tear from their eyes. There will be no more death or mourning or crying or pain, for the old order of things has passed away.**” He who was seated on the throne said, “I am making everything new!” Then he said, **“Write this down, for these words are trustworthy and true.”***

Having a vision of the world tomorrow when Jesus Christ is ruling, constantly before our eyes will protect our mind from the stress of day-to-day trials and pains.

2 Timothy 3:15 [NIV] *“and how from infancy you have known **the holy Scriptures, which are able to make you wise for salvation through faith in Christ Jesus.**”*

A knowledge of God’s Word will give us the wisdom and faith in the future.

We need to constantly rehearse the promises that God has made and the future society, based on love, that we can assist Jesus to create.

Sword of the Spirit – the Word of God

Ephesians 6:17 [NIV] *“... **the sword of the Spirit** which is the Word of God.”*

Hebrews 4:12-13 [NIV] *“For **the word of God is living and active. Sharper than any double-edged sword, it penetrates even to dividing soul and spirit, joints and marrow; it judges the thoughts and attitudes of the heart. Nothing in all creation is hidden from God’s sight. Everything is uncovered and laid bare before the eyes of him to whom we must give account.**”*

The sword we use is two edged, for defence and attack, both involve the work of the Holy Spirit in our lives.

The two-edged sword of the Roman soldier effectively carved out an empire.

Our use of the sword of the Spirit is to prepare people for the Kingdom of God, ourselves and all we come in contact with whom God is calling at this time.

John 16:13 [NIV] *“But when he, the Spirit of truth, comes, he will guide you into all truth. He will not speak on his own; he will speak only what he hears, and he will tell you what is yet to come.”*

Holy Spirit will teach us.

John 16:8 [NIV] *“When he comes, he will convict the world of guilt in regard to sin and righteousness and judgment:”*

Holy Spirit will bring us and others to the point of repentance.

John 7:38-39 [NIV] *“Whoever believes in me, as the Scripture has said, streams of living water will flow from within him.” By this he meant the Spirit, whom those who believed in him were later to receive. Up to that time the Spirit had not been given, since Jesus had not yet been glorified.”*

Pray daily that the Holy Spirit will work in us and flow through us to others that they also may come to know, worship and eventually love our Creator God.

2 Timothy 2:15 [NIV] *“Do your best to present yourself to God as one approved, a workman who does not need to be ashamed and who correctly handles the word of truth.”*

Allow the Holy Spirit to show us how we are to use the Word of God to direct our own lives and help others to study and rely on God’s Word, the Christian Bible, our Handbook for Life.

Constant Communication with Our Commander

Ephesians 6:18 [NIV] *“And pray in the Spirit on all occasions with all kinds of prayers and requests. With this in mind, be alert and always keep on praying for all the saints.”*

Much of the success of any warfare is dependent on good communications.

In World War 1 many men lost their lives repairing telegraph wires on the battlefield.

In World War 2 the wireless operator was a “marked man” for mortar attacks.

Our chief enemy [Satan] hates us to be in contact with our Commander in Chief, Jesus Christ, and will try in every way he can to cut off that contact.

1 Thessalonians 5:17-18 [NIV] *“pray continually; give thanks in all circumstances, for this is God’s will for you in Christ Jesus.”*

Prayer and thanks to God should be constantly on our lips or in our mind.

All armour and weapons need regular inspection to ensure they are ready for a sudden attack.

- 1 Are we wearing our armour? ... or is it getting rusty in some cupboard?
- 2 Are there loose folds in our under tunic that could trip us up? ... be sure of our belt of truth is well in place.
- 3 Are there cracks in our breastplate? ... compromising or deviating from Christ’s words or getting too close to Satan’s society will cause these cracks.

- 4 Are we wearing our sandals or are we forgetting our commission? ... not being an active soldier for Christ.
- 5 Are we holding up our shield of faith? ... and using our faith as an example to others, helping to protect those who have as yet only a small shield of faith.
- 6 Are we wearing our helmet of salvation? ... is our mind and spirit protected with the sure knowledge of our wonderful future?
- 7 In what shape is our spiritual sword? ... is it sharp and gleaming or blunt and rusting?
- 8 Are our lines of communication to headquarters in heaven open, clear and constant?
- 9 Don't wait until we hear the trumpet of war sounding before we inspect our armour to see if it is all in good condition.

Our enemy specialises in sudden attacks when we are least expecting them.

- 10 **2 Timothy 4:7-8** [NIV] ***"I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith. Now there is in store for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, will award to me on that day, and not only to me, but also to all who have longed for his appearing."***

Can we join Paul in this confident statement, knowing we are a reliable soldier of Jesus Christ and will receive this greeting at the end of our physical life.

Matthew 25:23 [NIV] *"His master replied, 'Well done, good and faithful servant! You have been faithful with a few things; I will put you in charge of many things. Come and share your master's happiness!'"*

To hear Jesus Christ say this to me on judgement day will fill me with joy that will last for eternity.

How about you?