

# The Whole Armor of God

Earlier in his letter to the Ephesians, Paul laid the groundwork to later teach about the whole armor of God. He used the Greek *epouranios* for Christ seated in heaven with authority over all principalities and powers, “Which he wrought in Christ, when he raised him from the dead, and set *him at his own right hand in the heavenly [epouranios 2032] places, Far above all principality, and power, and might, and dominion, and every name that is named*” (Eph 1:20-21). He then qualified this as our salvation, “hath quickened us together with Christ, **(by grace ye are saved;)** And hath raised *us* up together, and made *us sit together in heavenly [epouranios 2032] places* in Christ Jesus ... For **by grace are ye saved** through faith; and that not of yourselves: *it is the gift of God*” (Eph 2:5,6,8). We’re saved by sitting with Christ at God’s right hand—Him representing us before God as if we’re seated there.

Toward the end of his letter, “**Put on the whole armour of God**, that ye may be able to stand against the wiles of **the devil**. For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against **principalities, against powers**, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against **spiritual wickedness in high [epouranios 2032] places.**” (Eph 6:11-12). We put on the armor by “putting on” Christ, “But put ye on the Lord Jesus Christ” (Rom 13:14), “put on Christ” (Gal 3:27), “put on the new man” (Eph 4:24). We “put on” Him when we live after His example, commandments, and teaching. When submitting to His Son, God defends us against the devil as if wearing armor.

God’s defense likened to armor was also depicted in the Old Testament. With Abraham, “Fear not, Abram: **I am thy shield**” (Gen 15:1), and also with David, “The God of my rock; in him will I trust: *he is my shield*” (2Sa 22:3), “But thou, O LORD, **art a shield for me**” (Psa 3:3), “The LORD *is* my strength and **my shield**” (Psa 28:7).

The individual pieces of armor that Paul lists are holistic—we must practice the sum of the parts to “put on” the whole armor and be successfully defended. And Paul had already taught about the parts in his letter leading up to this synopsis. Having “your loins girt about with **truth**” (v. 14), is learning the truth from Christ’s teaching, “But ye have not so **learned Christ**; If so be that ye have **heard him**, and have been **taught by him, as the truth is in Jesus**” (4:20-21). If we won’t hear and submit to the truth Christ taught, we lack this one piece and therefore don’t have the whole.

Having on “the breastplate of righteousness” (v. 14), is living righteously after the image of God in which we were created, “And that ye put on the new man, which **after God is created in righteousness** and true holiness” (4:24). God’s Son created us to live morally righteous after His image—His example and teaching.

To have “your feet shod with the preparation of **the gospel of peace**” (v. 15), is to keep the peace between Jews and Gentiles, “**the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace**” (4:3). Christ is the peace between both, “For he is **our peace**, who hath made **both one**” (2:14). The “gospel of peace” is what He preached to both, “**preached peace to you** which were afar off, **and to them** that were nigh” (2:17).

The “shield of faith [*faithfulness*]” (v. 16), is being faithful to Christ as He was to His Father, “because of Christ’s faithfulness” (3:12 NET). When the “fiery darts” of false accusations were hurled against Him, He simply trusted His Father to defend Him as a shield, “Who, when he was reviled, reviled not again; when he suffered, he threatened not; but **committed himself to him** that judgeth righteously” (1Pe 2:23).

The “helmet of salvation” (v. 17), is our hope of salvation when the Lord returns, “others which have no hope ... unto the coming of the Lord” (1Th 4:13,15), “for an helmet, the hope of salvation” (1Th 5:8). It’s “the hope of his calling” (1:18), “one hope of your calling” (4:4). The serpent’s head and his children’s will be bruised, “**thy seed** and her seed; it shall **bruise thy head**, and thou shalt bruise his heel” (Gen 3:15). The hope of the Lord’s return is our helmet that protects our head.

The “sword of the Spirit [*breath*], which is the word [*rhēma* 4487] of God” (v. 17), is “the **washing of water** by the word [*rhēma* 4487]” (5:26). It was when Christ “poureth **water** into a bason, and began to **wash the disciples’ feet**” (Jhn 13:5), then gave them the *rhēma*, “A **new commandment** I give unto you, **That ye love one another; as I have loved you**” (Jhn 13:34). The sword in the armor is serving. We “fight” our enemies by serving them as Jesus washed Judas’ feet.

Of course “Praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit [*breath*]” (v. 18), as Christ taught us “After this manner therefore pray ye” (Mat 6:9), and as Paul voiced two prayers earlier in this letter 1:16-23, 3:14-21. Salvation isn’t simply about believing some facts are true. We must be actively clothed with the whole armor of God to be defended against the devil and ultimately be saved.