

***and having put on the breastplate of righteousness, (6:14b)***

The phrase, “*having put on,*” being in the middle voice, confirms that the believer clothes himself with the “*breastplate of righteousness.*” Someone might ask, “Why put on a breastplate of righteousness when 1Corinthians 1:30 and 2Corinthians 5:21 confirm that New Testament believers have already been made righteous?” Yes, we were made righteous in our person (in our souls and spirits) the moment we accepted Christ (1Corinthians 1:30; 2Corinthians 5:21)—a righteousness not attained through good works or deeds (Romans 3:20; Ephesians 2:8-9; Titus 3:5). However, a difference exists between possessing righteousness versus implementing that righteousness while combating the enemy. God’s people are to “*put on the breastplate of righteousness*” (Ephesians 6:14b) by appropriating (through faith) the fact that they are already righteous. Thus, rule number one when facing the enemy is to remember that he first attacks our person, our identity, by attempting to convince us that we are something we are not—confirmed by Satan’s initial attack against the Son of God:

*And the devil said to Him, “If You are the Son of God, tell this stone to become bread.” (Luke 4:3)*

Satan’s goal was to convince Jesus that He was not the Father’s Son. His mission, therefore, is to convince us that we are lowly sinners saved by grace rather than righteous saints of God. Why? Believers who view themselves as sinners saved by grace act like sinners saved by grace by accepting sin as a natural response. Believers who view themselves as righteous saints perceive sin as totally unnatural, avoiding sin at all costs by rejecting the enemy’s schemes.

Believers who fail to understand who they are in Christ are incapable of using “*the breastplate of righteousness*” as protective armor (Ephesians 6:14a). Countless believers struggle with their identity, viewing themselves as worthless sinners when they are righteous saints (1Corinthians 1:2; 2Corinthians 5:21). So long as “*the accuser of the brethren*” (Revelation 12:10) can convince God’s people that they are second-class citizens of the Kingdom, and thus partially unrighteous, the church cannot stand in battle. As the breastplate of righteousness protected the heart of the Roman soldier, it, in the spiritual sense, covers the heart of the saint—which includes his mind, will, and emotions. Only as we appropriate our true identity do we protect our minds from Satan’s onslaught. We were made the “*righteousness of God*” (2Corinthians 5:21) the moment we accepted Christ. Because we received such a standing, God will never condemn us (Romans 8:1). In fact, He will present us “*blameless with great joy*” (Jude 24) before Him. The enemy cringes when we begin to realize this truth. Consequently, one of the prerequisites for wearing the “*breastplate of righteousness*” is realizing that our person (being soul and spirit) has been made totally righteous—that only our behavior improves in righteousness as we mature in the faith. What wonderful news! This truth extinguishes the false accusations directed our way by “*the father of lies*” (John 8:44), “*the accuser of the brethren*” (Revelation 12:10).

Believers unconcerned with righteous living are incapable of putting on the breastplate. Sin handicaps, making us weak-kneed and feeble before our enemy. It gives Satan “*an opportunity*” to defeat us (Ephesians 4:25-27) by robbing us of our authority and joy.

*Conclusion:* Understanding our righteous standing before God, along with a passion to walk in righteousness, is required before we can “*put on the breastplate of righteousness*” (Ephesians 6:14).

**Ephesians 6:15—and having shod your feet with the preparation of the gospel of peace;**

In Paul's day, Roman soldiers wore boots that provided ample traction. These boots were essential, for to lose footing while engaging in hand-to-hand combat normally meant death. Paul equates the "*gospel of peace*" with such attire. He realized that none of God's children could stand without being "*shod...with the preparation of the gospel of peace.*" Again the middle voice is implemented, confirming that the believer is to perform this action on himself.

"*The gospel of peace*" can be defined in two statements. First, the New Testament believer has "*peace with God*" once "*justified by God*"—subsequent to exercising "*faith*" in Christ (Romans 5:1). Second, the New Testament saint walks in "*the peace of God*" (Philippians 4:7; John 16:33; 14:27) as he allows the Holy Spirit to fill (Ephesians 5:18; Galatians 5:22) and empower (Acts 1:8; Romans 15:13) him for daily living. Therefore, the "*gospel of peace*" not only establishes peace between God and the saints but also brings peace to the souls of saints who properly apply it (the gospel) in principle and practice.

Scripture validates that peace "with" God must be established before one walks in the peace "of" God. Peace "with" God is gained at the point of salvation/justification and cannot be undone, while the peace "of" God is dependent on the believer's thought life and conduct. The saint who chooses disobedience instantaneously loses the peace "of" God, regaining it only after repenting of his misdeeds.

We must be equipped with these truths if we are to withstand the enemy's onslaught. As the serpent falsely accused God while addressing Eve (Genesis 3:4-5), he continues placing lies about God's Person in the minds of the saints. He desires that we view God as an unjust, unfair, vicious tyrant who is out to destroy us. Nothing, not even a cross, could allow such a God to enter into a peaceful relationship with the redeemed. Only one weapon extinguishes Satan's falsities: A contextual interpretation and application of God's Word. We, without hesitation, are to replace his lies with truth. We have "*peace*" with the God of the universe (Romans 5:1), Who loves us (John 3:16), is for us (Romans 8:31), and views us as part of his glorious family (John 1:12). No believer can stand void of these truths.

Neither can the believer stand unless he walks in the peace "of" God, the peace that results from a godly lifestyle. This peace is a "*fruit of the Spirit*" (Galatians 5:22) which can be instantaneously squelched through disobedience, leaving us powerless against the enemy. Satan has purpose in making sin so extraordinarily enticing. He knows we will retreat in battle if we will but take a bite.

"*Preparation*" (Ephesians 6:15) can be rendered "readiness," meaning that "*the gospel of peace,*" once understood (in context), "readies" the saint for Satan's fiercest attack. The converse is true as well, for believers whose understanding of the gospel is lacking retreat at the slightest sign of conflict.

**Ephesians 6:16—in addition to all, taking up the shield of faith with which you will be able to extinguish all the flaming missiles of the evil one.**

Three pieces of equipment are mentioned in verses 16 and 17—"*the shield of faith*" (Ephesians 6:16), "*the helmet of salvation*" (Ephesians 6:17), and "*the sword of the Spirit*" (Ephesians 6:17). They will be examined at this time.

The Roman soldier possessed two shields: (1) a small shield worn on the forearm (2) a large shield measuring approximately four feet by two and one half feet. Paul addresses the second

shield in verse 16.

The root word for “*shield*” (Ephesians 6:16) is rendered “*door*” in Matthew 6:6. Thus, the soldier’s shield was similar to a door in that it was large enough to hide behind (the Roman soldier was smaller in stature than the average man today). Made of thick wood and covered with leather, it could intercept the enemy’s fiery arrows (“*flaming missiles*”) and, in many cases, “*extinguish*” them. (Several of these arrows were covered with pitch and ignited before being launched.) Can you imagine the appearance of the shield after battle? Its exterior might have been peppered with arrows and charred beyond recognition, but the shield would have functioned according to design.

Paul’s message is clear. The believer’s shield is capable of intercepting and extinguishing all the “*flaming missiles of the evil one*” (Ephesians 6:16). This shield consists of “*faith*” (Ephesians 6:16), the “*victory*” that overcomes anything the enemy sends our way (1John 5:4). Hence, all of the enemy’s sinful thoughts (flaming missiles) are intercepted and squelched by “*the shield of faith.*”

“*Faith*” in this instance points to simple trust in God and His Word, a faith that grows as the believer matures (2Thessalonians 1:3). Without it we cannot please God (Hebrews 11:6) or prevail in battle (Romans 5:2; 1Corinthians 16:13; 2Corinthians 1:24; 1Peter 5:9; 1John 5:4), for faith extinguishes the enemies lies so we can live victoriously! Regardless of the magnitude, type, or timing of the temptation, we can triumph through faith—faith in God’s ability to see us through!