

The Upper Room Sunday School Class

October 13, 2002

'Our Riches in Christ'

A Study of Ephesians

"...praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit." Eph. 6:18

Therefore take up the Whole Armor.

Conditions of the time:

As Paul was speaking in contextual analogies, the Christians were able to make the visual connection. Since we have lost touch with that period of history, it's important to get a picture of what we're dealing with here.

The apostle Paul had a lifelong contact with the Roman army. He was a Roman citizen and very patriotic; and his admiration of the fighting forces of Rome was great. The Roman army was at its peak of efficiency during the early Christian era. It served as police and frontier guard over all of Europe, the borders with Asia, and North Africa. Paul had many dealings with Roman legionnaires.

- A Roman soldier delivered Paul from the mob in Ephesus.
- Roman soldiers saved his life when the mob in Jerusalem wanted to kill him in the temple area.
- The Roman soldiers were able to deliver Paul out of Jerusalem from the hands of the religious leaders who wanted him dead, and they brought him safely to Caesarea.
- It was Roman soldiers who escorted Paul on the trip from Caesarea to Rome, the voyage on which Paul suffered shipwreck.
- Roman soldiers delivered Paul to the Roman garrison of the Praetorian Guard for his imprisonment.

Paul wrote the epistle to the Ephesians during the period of his house arrest in Rome while he was guarded by a centurion of the Praetorian Guard. Paul recognized the mission field of the military and understood very well God's plan in having him in Rome under these conditions. -From Warren Doud, 'Grace

Notes'



The Whole Armor.

A. The whole armor... panoplia, "all armor and weapons"; so, "all military equipment".

Among the Greeks the *panoplia* was the complete equipment used by heavily armed infantry.

B. The various groups of Roman soldiers all wore the same armor.

- Hastati - 25-30 yr olds
- Principles - 30-40 yr olds
- Triarri - Veteran reserves (pikes)

The hastati (from hasta, "javelin") were less experienced soldiers under training. They were usually not well trained with the more sophisticated weapons such as the spear, machaira sword, or bow. These

troops were usually not used in the main battle, but only in the opening skirmish when javelins were thrown at the advancing enemy. The new believer is the hastati in the Christian life. He is not trained with much in the way of weapons because he is still ignorant of a lot of God's Word. -From Warren Doud, 'Grace Notes'

II. Why Do We Just Stand?



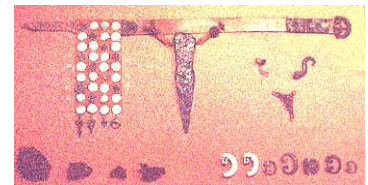
"Standing" is the first thing taught in unarmed combat or martial arts. One of the first things taught in Judo, for instance, is how to "break the stance" of the opponent. The Gauls, against whom the Romans fought many campaigns, under Julius Caesar and others, were human "tanks" in the sense that their ability to take a very strong combat stance made them difficult to defeat in individual combat.

Every believer is a member of the combat team and is required to take his own part, to stand on his own. We are armed with spiritual gifts and equipment, provided by Grace, to fight against the forces of Satan. -From Warren Doud, 'Grace Notes'

Grammar Note: In verses 14 to 17 there is a string of verbs, all of which are aorist participles in the middle voice. These are the verbs such as "take" or "put on" associated with putting on the pieces of armor. The Greek aorist participles have the same standing in a context as the English past participle in that the action of the participles precedes the action of the main verb in the sentence. The idea is that before a soldier can take his place in the ranks, he must be outfitted and trained.

(v. 14) The Belt of Truth - The Believer's Integrity

- A. The belt/girdle holds the other parts of the armor together. "**...with truth...**" (aleitheia), refers to truth taught accurately. Since the belt also held the sword, unless we practice the truth (integrity), we cannot use the Word of truth.



The Roman soldier put around his waist a very wide belt which was the holder for a lot of equipment. There was a loop, for example, for the scabbard for the machaira sword. Other loops held ropes and a rations sack. When the legions conquered a city, the soldiers would empty out the ration sack to make room for gold, jewelry, and other loot they picked up.

There were loops on the belt for darts. The belt was tied in several places to stay in place, so that no matter how the soldier moved about, fell down, climbed hills, etc., the belt was always in place with weapons at the ready. There were designs stitched into the belt which designated various campaigns in which the veteran had fought. Instead of campaign medals or ribbons, the soldier would weave into the belt something he had taken during the battle. -From Warren Doud, 'Grace Notes'



- B. Truth is the integrating force in the life of the victorious Christian. In Christian armor, it is integrity that holds everything else together. If you do not have integrity in the big and small things of your life, you are going to lose the battle. Without truth everything falls apart. Satan will come against you with lies and bring a lack of integrity into your life. - Adrian Rogers

(v. 14) The Breastplate of Righteousness - The Believer's Purity

A. The breastplate symbolizes the believer's righteousness in Christ.

the breastplate... (thoraka) [Engl. cognate "thorax"]. This was attached to the belt and provided protection for the upper torso, front and back. **Note: the belt had to be put on first, then the breastplate.**

In the ancient world, breastplates were of layers of cloth, sometimes with metal greaves attached. The Greeks introduced a bronze breastplate, with bronze plates covering vital areas or the torso, held together with leather or cloth connections. Some Samaritans noticed that horses' hooves, cattle horns, etc., were made of very hard material, so they began to use horn sewed to cloth to protect from blows.



The Romans had the ideas for armor design which provided light weight combined with ease of movement and protection from blows. The best type was called the qwrac stadiaV (thorax stadias), or "breastplate which stands by itself". This breastplate was attached to the belt by leather thongs passed through rings on the bottom to keep it solidly attached. It was anchored to the belt, and it was above the belt. -From Warren Doud, 'Grace Notes'

B. "Righteousness" relates to the Christian's moral responsibility to his fellow men.

The breast-plate secures the vitals, shelters the heart. The righteousness of Christ imputed to us is our breast-plate against the arrows of divine wrath. The righteousness of Christ implanted in us is our breast-plate to fortify the heart against the attacks which Satan makes against us. The apostle explains this in 1 Th. 5:8, *Putting on the breast-plate of faith and love*. Faith and love include all Christian graces; for by faith we are united to Christ and by love to our brethren. These will infer a diligent observance of our duty to God, and a righteous deportment towards men, in all the offices of justice, truth, and charity. -Matthew Henry

C. The breastplate is right out there for everyone to see ... and take aim at. The belt of truth combined with the breastplate of righteousness is the basis for the edification of the Christian.

Read Phil. 4:6-8 ... Eph. 6:18

(v. 15) The Shoes of the Gospel of Peace - The Believer's Tranquility

A. The Gospel gives us a solid footing by which to stand and withstand in battle.

The infantryman fights with the least glamour and the highest casualties. While the Greek soldier wore greaves to protect his ankles, the Roman soldier wore a heavy soled sandal which had metal studs on the bottom for good footing on uneven or slippery ground. This shoe was known in Latin as the caligula, so the foot soldier was called caligatus. -From Warren Doud, 'Grace Notes'



It is difficult to see how such a flimsy piece of footwear could have been so beneficial to the Roman soldier. It does not offer much in the way of protection and does not give the impression of being very sturdy when going over rough terrain. However, as with all things Roman, the design of the caligae was meant to be functional in many ways.

The openness of the caligae enabled the soldier to wear them all day, to work, march, stand in them for long periods without discomfort. The leather strips were made so that they did not rub against certain parts of the feet and so cause sores. When a soldier had been on a march of 25 miles, which was commonplace, he would have aching feet but no blisters. He could remove his caligae and dip his bare feet into the nearest river to cool them off, washing away the aches of the day. He was then refreshed and ready to continue. –“Romans in Britain” website

- B. Without peace and a knowledge of the Gospel, Satan will cause us to stumble. However, we must also be prepared each day to share the Gospel of peace ... and it may be a rocky road.

Read Romans 10:15

(v. 16) The Shield of Faith - The Believer's Certainty

- A. "Above all" ... Our faith is paramount and it goes before us.
- B. The faith spoken of in this passage is not so much a saving faith, but a living faith. A trust in the promises and the power of God. Faith is a defensive weapon which protects us from the fiery darts of Satan ... whenever they come.

fiery darts – Thucydides, an ancient Greek writer, refers to these arrows as the most deadly type. There were three types of arrows used in those days – normal arrows, arrows dipped in tar and set on fire, and those filled with a combustible fluid which would burst into flames upon impact. These last ones were disguised to look harmless until they impacted into the enemies camp, then flames would spread everywhere as more and more arrows descended, causing unexpected chaos in the camp as well as destroying everything in flames.



Read Romans 10:17



The Romans had a long, rectangular, knees-to-chin shield which protected from arrows and spears and could be knelt behind during an arrow barrage. It was quite a bit heavier and clumsier than the smaller Greek circular shield; but there was a series of exercises, a manual of arms, designed to give the soldier flexibility and strength in the use of the shield. Groups of soldier who were besieging a town could form close together and hold their shields over their

heads to make a huge testudo, or "turtle", to protect the group from missiles. –From Warren Doud, 'Grace Notes'

Construction

To make the scutum light enough to carry when marching, it was built mainly from flat strips of wood that were laid at right angles to each other. Much in the same way that plywood is made today.

The scutum was sealed together then heated and placed in a press while still hot. This press would give the distinctive rounded shape. It was then allowed to cool naturally, then when it was removed from the press the scutum would retain its shape.

It was shaped and designed in this way so that any missiles thrown at the soldier would be deflected to one side. This would mean less effort by the soldier would be needed to defend himself. If the scutum was flat, a rock hitting the scutum would make a direct impact, which meant the soldier's arms would have to absorb the power generated by the missile. Being curved, the scutum would send the missile off to one side, so there would be less effort needed to deflect the energy transmitted to the soldier's body.

The scutum was not only a defensive tool, it was a weapon in its own right. The central raised portion in the middle (umbo) was forged from one piece iron or bronze and was not only used as protection for the left hand, but also as a weapon. The raised boss would be thrust into the enemy's face or chest, causing severe injury and disabling them. Then the [sword \(gladius\)](#) was thrust forward into the opponent's body. –“Romans in Britain” website

- C. In battle, the shield was clipped to the belt (Truth+Faith). Some of the Roman shields were designed so the edges of the shield could interlock together. They could then march into the enemy like a solid wall. This suggests that we as Christians are not in the battle alone, but are truly a family of God. If one of us takes a hit, it affects all of us. That's why prayer is so important!

(v. 17) The Helmet of Salvation - The Believer's Sanity

- A. [Perikephalaia: Something placed around the head.]

The Romans had the best helmet of the ancient world. Many other nations used helmets of cloth wrappings, animal hides or bones, or hooves, etc. The Roman helmet had chinstrap, visor, and came down to cover the back and sides of the neck. Officers' helmets had a ridge on top on which was mounted plumage or some sort of brush, depending on the rank.



The parts of the Roman helmet were: a lining of leather, softened for comfort and good fit; the helmet itself which was a bronze casque for the soldier, or iron alloy for officers; a metal crest for the plume; and a chinstrap. The highest ranking officers had gold and silver alloy helmets for parade dress. -From Warren Doud, 'Grace Notes'

- B. Satan wants to attack the mind, the way he defeated Eve. The helmet refers to the mind of God.

A soldier used a helmet to protect his head because if his head was wounded, he wouldn't be able to think. Every believer needs to have the mind of Christ under the control of Almighty God. When a person is saved, for the first time he has his right mind. A person without the Lord Jesus Christ has a form of insanity. They do not operate with the mind that God made them to have. The most important thing for you to have at all times is an assurance of your salvation. -Adrian Rogers



Have you ever heard this? "I don't have to be in church to worship God."

It is too bad that many Christians have the idea that the intellect is not important, when in reality it plays a vital role in Christian growth, service, and victory. When God controls the mind, Satan cannot lead the believer astray. The Christian who studies his Bible and learns the meaning of Bible doctrines is not going to be led astray too easily.

Read 2 Peter 3:18
Read 2 Timothy 2:2

(v. 17) The Sword of the Spirit - The Believer's Standard

- A. [Machaira: A small sword. A straight sword for thrusting.] A material sword pierces the body, but the Word of God pierces the heart.

There were many types of swords used in the ancient world:

The romphaia was a broadsword used mostly by the Gauls of Julius Caesar's time. It was used with both hands, was six to eight feet long, sometimes with one edge, sometimes two, and used to hack off limbs and heads. The "barbarian" soldiers made great slicing sweeps with the broadsword, leaving himself open for thrusts of the machaira.

The machaira is described by Vegetius in his Military Instructions to the Romans. "They likewise taught not to cut, but to thrust, with the sword. For the Romans not only made jest of those who fought with the edge of a weapon, but always found them an easy conquest. A stroke with the edge, though made with ever so much force, seldom kills, as the vital parts of the body are defended both by bones and armor. On the contrary, a stab, although it penetrates only a few inches, is usually



fatal. Besides, in the attitude of striking [with the broadsword], it is impossible to avoid exposing the right arm and side. On the other hand, the body is covered when a thrust is given, and the enemy receives the point before he sees the sword."

The user of the machaira is always covered, always protected, always on balance, and always ready for defense or attack. Matthew Henry in his commentary agrees that Paul learned about Roman armor from being under the charge of the praetorian prefect. *-From Warren Doud, 'Grace Notes'*

...with this we assault the assailants. Scripture-arguments are the most powerful arguments to repel temptation with. Christ himself resisted Satan's temptations with, *It is written*, Mt. 4:4, 6, 7, 10. This, being hid in the heart, will preserve from sin. *-Matthew Henry*

- B. A physical sword requires the hand of a soldier, but the sword of the Spirit has it's own power, for it is "living and powerful".

Read Hebrews 4:12

A physical sword wounds to hurt and kill, while the sword of the Spirit wounds to heal and give life. But when we use the sword against Satan, we are out to deal him a blow that will cripple him and keep him from hindering God's work.

Note that Satan can also quote the Word: "For it is written" (Luke 4:10), *but he does not quote it completely*. Satan tries to use the word of God to confuse us, so it is important that we know every word that God has given us.

"You can prove anything by the Bible," someone said. True – if you take verses out of context, leave out words, and apply verses to Christians today that do not really apply. The better you know the Word of God, the easier it will be for you to detect Satan's lies and reject his offers.

The "whole armor of God" is a picture of Jesus Christ

Christ is the Truth , John 14:6	[Belt]
He is our righteousness , 2 Cor. 5:21	[Breastplate]
He is our peace , Eph. 2:14	[Sandals]
His faithfulness completes our faith , Gal. 2:20	[Shield]
He is our salvation , Luke 2:30	[Helmet]
He is the Word of God , John 1:1, 14	[Sword]

**By faith, put on the armor and trust God for the victory.
We are never out of reach of Satan's devices, so we must never be without ...
The WHOLE ARMOR OF GOD.**

To God be the glory

Additional content from Warren Wiersbe's 'Be Rich' book on Ephesians.