

THE ARMOR OF GOD:
BAPTISMALLY ENCLOSED IN CHRIST

Summary of what we will learn: The Armor of God may be the most memorable part of Ephesians. It is important we recognize that each piece belongs to God and is given by God to the Christian in Holy Baptism. Being clothed in this armor is a metaphor for living in our baptism each day. Also we will see that the armor and weapons are not primarily *offensive*, but defensive. The Church is under assault, but we can stand strong, knowing the victory is already won, and like insurgents we can nab back from the enemy the flesh and blood captives enslaved by our spiritual foes.

Ephesians 6:10-17

¹⁰ Finally, be strong in the Lord and in the strength of his might.

¹¹ Put on the whole armor of God, that you may be able to stand against the schemes of the devil.

¹² For we do not wrestle against flesh and blood,

but against the rulers,
 against the authorities,
 against the cosmic powers over this present darkness,
 against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly places.

¹³ Therefore take up the whole armor of God, that you may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand firm.

¹⁴ Stand therefore, having fastened on the belt of truth, and having put on the breastplate of righteousness,

¹⁵ and, as shoes for your feet, having put on the readiness given by the gospel of peace. ¹⁶ In all circumstances take up the shield of faith, with which you can extinguish all the flaming darts of the evil one; ¹⁷ and take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God,

v. 10 – Where is the Christian’s strength?

v. 11 – From *walking* metaphors to **making a stand** – What image does this call to mind?

What should we remember about the “schemes of the devil”? Are they overt or covert?

Dr. Luther: Satan “comes against us not with force, but with cunning, that is, with lies (John 8:44).”

St. John Chrysostom: “The devil never openly lays temptations before us. He does not mention idolatry out loud. But by his stratagems he presents idolatrous choices to us, by persuasive words and by employing clever euphemisms.”

v. 12 – Who is (and is not) the enemy of the Church?

Dr. Winger: “Whether worshiped as gods among the pagans, appeased as spirits of the earth and air, or admitted into the soul’s inner sanctum through possession or trance, these demons (1 Cor 10:20) are the enemy’s shock troops who inspired fear and reverence among the Ephesians Gentiles before they were rescued from their grasp by that magnificent change of lordship: Baptism into Christ, who ‘triumphed over them by [the cross]’ (Col 2:15). Thus Paul’s warning that the battle is not against blood and flesh is not meant to frighten the Ephesians, but to provide fair warning of where the real danger lies and to encourage them to treat their fellow human beings as victims in need of rescue.”

v. 13 – It may be redundant to a dull, modern reading, but put yourselves in the Ephesians’ shoes while hearing this read to them from the far-off hands in chains of the Apostle they called “pastor” for three years. *Stand firm!*

Unpacking the Armor – It is Christ’s Own Armor, Now Given to Us in Baptism

the belt of truth – probably from the messianic prophecy of Isaiah 11:5

the breastplate of righteousness – is God’s own breastplate worn in battle in Isaiah 59:16-17

(shoes) the readiness given by the gospel of peace – the Good News Messenger of Isaiah 52:7

the shield of faith – long oblong shield for defense of the whole body, God Himself in *countless* OT vss

the helmet of salvation – God’s own possession, given to us (Isaiah 59:17 again), OT YHWH = Salvation

the sword of the Spirit = the word of God – this particular sword was short for personal combat

Dr. Luther: “That is chiefly done by preaching the Word and proclaiming it from the pulpit. But in addition, also every Christian should use this sword in hearing the Word, reading it, singing it, speaking it, and meditating upon it. For its power is such that wherever it is proclaimed in its truth and purity, wherever we learn it with diligence and sincerity, wherever we think upon it, there no Satan and no devil can abide.”

Dr. Luther: “Moreover, this Word weakens and harms the devil’s kingdom, for it takes from him many souls, so that his kingdom comes to totter. Wherever this Word is read and proclaimed, Satan’s lies and errors are revealed and put to flight.”

Closing Thoughts

Should the Church be following Business Models or Principles of War?

Well, which are we? A business in a marketplace or an army on a battlefield?

Who are we dealing with? Neutral, potential clients or spiritual captives of a hostile enemy?