

EPHESIANS Part XVIII

Ephesians 6:10-20 “Suit Up, You’re in the Army Now!”

Please turn in your bibles to Ephesians 6:10.

We are now in the homestretch concerning the book of Ephesians. It has been quite a journey, with a few sidebars, but I hope that it has helped us all in understanding God’s plan and how it is to work overall and in each of our homes.

Today we will study Paul’s final instructions before signing off in his letter. He has dealt with the overall plan of God as to how He will join everyone, both Jew and Gentile into one large family that Paul states is now the re-constituted Israel. He has given the theology behind this as well as the new culture and practical structure of the family, since to the Gentile converts, these things are somewhat foreign. Today we will see that Paul focuses on the spiritual warfare to which every child of God is called. You see, we are in a battle whether we like it or not. The malevolent powers, though they have had their ultimate powers taken away by the resurrection of Jesus, still have some fight left in them for a time. But we are no longer at their mercy. Therefore, Paul is now telling these new converts, as well as us in the present day what we need to do in order to run our race and fight the good fight. Paul makes no bones about this. He has been fighting for decades at this point. He has been beaten, run out of town, thrown in jail and will ultimately be killed for this very fight. And in that day, the stakes were somewhat more costly for them than for us.

Gentiles who came to follow Jesus would have been ostracized from their families and communities, and in many cases would have lost everything. The church truly had to become their family and all that entailed. While in this culture, that isn’t necessarily the case for us, the enemy is still at work and we can/ will have to pay a price for following Jesus – at least, that is, if we are in the fight and not hiding in the bushes.

2 Timothy 3:12

¹² Indeed, all who desire to ^vlive a godly life in Christ Jesus ^wwill be persecuted, ¹³ while ^xevil people and impostors will go on from bad to worse, deceiving and ^ybeing deceived.

Go ahead and count on it. If we aren’t being persecuted from somewhere and someone, it’s probably because the enemy doesn’t know we are in the fight. Let’s let that simmer in the background as we see what Paul has to say about this.

Eph. 6:10 Finally, ^ebe strong in the Lord and in ^fthe strength of his might. ¹¹ ^gPut on ^hthe whole armor of God, that you may be able to stand against ⁱthe schemes of the devil. ¹² For ^jwe do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against ^kthe rulers, against the authorities, against ^lthe cosmic powers over ^mthis present darkness, against ⁿthe spiritual forces of evil ^oin

the heavenly places. ¹³ Therefore ^ptake up the whole armor of God, that you may be able to withstand in ^qthe evil day, and having done all, to stand firm. ¹⁴ Stand therefore, ^rhaving fastened on the belt of truth, and ^shaving put on the breastplate of righteousness, ¹⁵ and, ^tas shoes for your feet, having put on the readiness given by the gospel of peace. ¹⁶ In all circumstances take up ^uthe shield of faith, with which you can extinguish all ^vthe flaming darts of ^wthe evil one; ¹⁷ and take ^sthe helmet of salvation, and ^xthe sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God, ¹⁸ praying ^yat all times ^zin the Spirit, ^awith all prayer and supplication. To that end, ^bkeep alert with all perseverance, making ^csupplication for all the saints, ¹⁹ and ^dalso for me, that words may be given to me in opening my mouth ^eboldly to proclaim ^fthe mystery of the gospel, ²⁰ for which I ^gam an ambassador ^hin chains, that I may declare it boldly, as I ought to speak.

Let's break this down into bite size chunks.

Eph. 6:10 Finally, ^ebe strong in the Lord and in ^fthe strength of his might. ¹¹ ^gPut on ^hthe whole armor of God, that you may be able to stand against ⁱthe schemes of the devil. ¹² For ^jwe do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against ^kthe rulers, against the authorities, against ^lthe cosmic powers over ^mthis present darkness, against ⁿthe spiritual forces of evil ^oin the heavenly places.

Paul has already spoke about these powers in this letter. Paul believed that they are real, and so did Jesus. What Paul is not saying is that there is a demon under every rock or in every foul person. What he is saying is that the powers are real and that they are still pulling the strings that move people to oppose God and what is right. This is where the fight actually is. Therefore, we must engage at the spiritual level more than we tend to do. We tend to see our enemy as the person/ people standing before us. And they may well be on the other team, but their source comes from someone outside of them, just as it does for the believer. Throughout the Bible we see this type of imagery being used, such as when Daniel's prayers are hindered by an evil prince, (spiritual entity, not an earthly prince), such as when Job was being attacked, etc. That is very real. Therefore, we need to come to this realization if we are going to be effective and worth our spiritual salt. This is where the real battle lies. Prayer is the preparation for battle, not the last resort. Paul knows this. Read how he prays for the situations and circumstances of his hearers and fellow workers. Paul then tells us what this battle entails by using a staunch military metaphor, one with which both he and the Ephesians were familiar as they were accustomed to seeing Roman troops everywhere.

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

Paul doesn't come up with this stuff on his own. He is actually hyperlinking to the book of Isaiah, which we will get to shortly. But his predominantly Gentile audience wouldn't necessarily know this. The Jewish believers would recognize it and see the connection. Hang with me on that.

- Armor of a Roman soldier – we are in a fight.
- The enemy is at its source, spiritual.
- “The evil day” in 2nd temple texts that usually means the Day of the Lord’s judgment.
- Having done all to stand, stand firm. (When you’ve done all you can to stand, stand firm.) Hold the line!
- Suggests a military formation with ranks.

¹⁴ Stand therefore, 'having fastened on the belt of truth,

- For the soldier, the belt held most everything else – particularly weapons.
- What it holds for us is truth. Everything is held together by truth. We need to realize this in a day when there are so many voices shouting at us and some of them may even sound convincing – at least for a while. We stand on the truth of God. And we need to stay in the word in order to fight off whatever non-sensical things the enemy is proclaiming, no matter how loudly they may say it.
- Jesus and the temptation.

and ^shaving put on the breastplate of righteousness,

The breastplate of a Roman soldier protected the vital organs of the body. (The heart).

Righteousness – This is our justification in Jesus. (Explain) It also means equity of character. (Explain)

¹⁵ and, ^tas shoes for your feet, having put on the readiness given by the gospel of peace

- The Roman boot.
- Readiness – we must be ready in season and out of season. We should in a state of constant combat readiness. We are in a state of constant deployment. Wherever our sphere of influence is, we are on duty and must be ready to minister to those around us and defend the territory from the enemy.
- We do this with the armor of which Paul is speaking.

. ¹⁶ In all circumstances take up ^uthe shield of faith, with which you can extinguish all ^vthe flaming darts of ^wthe evil one;

- Shield – wooden, covered with leather, which was soaked in water to quench arrows lit with pitch.
- This is to defend us from the attacks of the enemy. We will be attacked if we are in the fight. This may be an attack on our character or any other aspect of our lives. But we have defenses.

¹⁷ and take ^sthe helmet of salvation,

- Helmet – protects the head.
- Our salvation, both our having been saved as well as the salvation from judgment that we have as believers.
- There is no death for us. To die is gain, as Paul says.
- Martyrdom and church growth.

and ^xthe sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God,

- Though the shield could be and was often used as a weapon, the only weapon we have listed is the sword, which is the word of God.
- The Roman short sword used for close – contact fighting in a formation with other Roman soldiers.
- We fight with the word. If we don't know the word, we have no weapon. All we can do is be on the defensive.

¹⁸ praying ^yat all times ^zin the Spirit, ^awith all prayer and supplication. To that end, ^bkeep alert with all perseverance, making ^csupplication for all the saints,

- Prayer – again. It works. “coincidences”
- Dude's car
- All prayer and supplication, (explain)
- Perseverance. Praying for each other.

¹⁹ and ^dalso for me, that words may be given to me in opening my mouth ^eboldly to proclaim ^fthe mystery of the gospel, ²⁰ for which I ^gam an ambassador ^hin chains, that I may declare it boldly, as I ought to speak.

We may think that Paul was always a lion when it came to courage, but we can all pipe down due to intimidation at times. Therefore, he asks for prayer that he might boldly proclaim the gospel.

We need that same boldness. (Think of Charlie Kirk.) Yeah, we need that!

Application:

Paul's hyperlinks to the OT.

God wearing the armor for judgment

Isaiah 59:17

**'He put on righteousness as a breastplate,
and a helmet of salvation on his head;
he put on garments of vengeance for clothing,
and wrapped himself in ^szeal as a cloak.**

Jesus wearing the armor for judgment

Isaiah 11:5

**Righteousness shall be the belt of his waist,
and ^tfaithfulness the belt of his loins.**

You see, when we put on this armor, we are putting on Christ!

Gal. 3:27 For as many of you as ^vwere baptized ^winto Christ have ^xput on Christ.

Eph. 4:24 and to put on ^sthe new self, ^tcreated after the likeness of God in true righteousness and holiness.

I'm a soldier in the army of the LORD.
Don't be in the secret service!