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HOW TO USE THE SHIELD OF FAITH

A STUDY OF THE BOOK OF EPHESIANS
NUMBER 77
EPHESIANS 6:16

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EPHESIANS 6:16 "Above all, taking the shield of faith, wherewith ye shall be able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked."

The New Testament used warfare as an analogy of the spiritual warfare we are to face every day as Christians. This warfare is the battle that we fight daily against the Devil and all fallen angels. This is the warfare of the Angelic Conflict.

In the little red-back hymnal we used in the church of my boyhood, there is a song called "The Fight Is On." The words go like this--

"The fight is on, the trumpet sound is ringing out,
The cry 'to arms' is heard afar and near;
The Lord of hosts is marching on to victory,
The triumph of the Christ will soon appear.

The fight is on, O Christian soldier,
And face to face in stern array,
With armor gleaming, and colors streaming,
The right and wrong engaged today!
The fight is on, but be not weary;
Be strong, and in his might hold fast;
If God be for us, His banner o'er us,
We'll sing the victors song at last.

The second verse of that song talked about buckling on the armour so we would be able to stand in the thick of the fight. As I sang that song as a youth, I had no idea what it meant. I knew there was a battle but I knew little about the intensity of it and the persistence of the Devil and his angels.

Intensity Of The Angelic Conflict

The conflict between Christ and the Devil centered over the fact that the Devil was determined that Christ must never be born of a virgin and die on the cross for the sins of the world. When God made that promise in Genesis 3:15 that this would happen, the Devil immediately set himself to see to it that Christ would never be born and would never mount that hill and pay for sins on the cross. The intensity of this struggle and the success of the Devil is the story of the flood and how the human race was almost destroyed. Had it not been for Noah and his sons and their wives, the Devil would have succeeded in this plan. But the human race was saved, pure humanity was preserved, and from this line, Christ was one day born of Mary a true human being. When once the Devil saw that he would not be able to keep Christ from being born and from going to the cross, he then intensified his efforts against the human race and he set forth to destroy every believer he could. That is why we are now living in the intensified stage of the Angelic Conflict. Indeed the fight is on!

Assets For This Conflict

Since God knew that this conflict would be intensified in the Church Age, he made provision for it by providing additional assets for Church Age saints. All believers in the Church Age have resources available to them that were not available before. In fact, everything is different in the Church Age. For the first time, in the Church Age every

believer is his own priest. He doesn't need someone to be his go-between, but he goes directly to God himself. In the Church Age, every believer is indwelt by the Holy Spirit and every believer is indwelt by Christ. The operating assets of the believer in the Church Age is God's answer to the intensification of the pressure of Satan and his fallen angels.

Paul Observed The Roman Shield

Paul was imprisoned at Rome as he wrote this message, and he had been giving close observation to the equipment worn by this Roman soldier of the Praetorian Guard. We have already studied the belt of truth and the breastplate of righteousness and the shoes of the gospel of peace. Now Paul turns our attention to the shield of faith. The words "above all" do not carry the connotation that this shield of faith is more important than this other equipment. The words really mean "in addition to this." The words are "en pasin." It means that this shield must be included in the equipment for a well-dressed soldier.

EPHESIANS 6:16 "Above all, taking the shield of faith, wherewith ye shall be able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked." The word "taking" here is an aorist, active, participle of "analambano" and it means to pick up something. We as Christians are to pick up the shield of faith. Since we are told to pick up the shield of faith, this is an excellent time for us to pause and review the Faith-Rest Technique.

THE DOCTRINE OF THE FAITH-REST TECHNIQUE

Keep in mind as we outline this doctrine that in this analogy Paul is making, that the shield is the faith-rest technique. The Greeks had a circular shield and the Romans had a longer shield that protected more of the body. Faith is something that all members of the human race possess. Most of the things we learn are things we learn by faith. The Romans didn't exist for 1,000 years because they had great leadership but because they had great principles and these principles brought stability to the whole world. They instilled in the world respect for authority. Their shields were so big the heathen world called them "doors" and they made fun of the big Roman shield and said "can you carry that door around with you?" The greek word for shield is "thureos" and it means the people who carried a door into battle. But the Romans learned to use these shields and became the greatest fighters in all the world. Though the Romans were not as big in stature as many of their enemies, they were able to defeat them many times because of their training and their mental attitude. So though the heathen ridiculed and made fun of the "thureos" they came to respect it and fear it.

1. The mechanics of the faith-rest technique are given in Hebrews 3:6-4:16. You take the promises of God into your mind and from them you exhale faith toward God.
2. Faith was the basic ingredient of the Christian life in the Old Testament era.
HABAKKUK 2:4 "Behold, his soul which is lifted up is not upright in him: but the just shall live by his faith."
This is also taught in Romans 4:17-21 and the whole 11th chapter of Hebrews. We read in that chapter again and again "by faith."

3. The ministry of the Holy Spirit in spirituality did not occur until New Testament times. This is a doctrine of the Church Age.
JOHN 7:39 "(But this spake he of the Spirit, which they that believe on him should receive: for the Holy Ghost was not yet given, because that Jesus was not yet glorified.)"
JOHN 16:14 "He shall glorify me: for he shall receive of mine, and shall shew it unto you."
1 CORINTHIANS 6:19-20 "What? know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost which is in you, which ye have of God, and ye are not your own? For ye are bought with a price: therefore glorify God in your body, and in your spirit, which are God's."
EPHESIANS 5:18 "And be not drunk with wine, wherein is excess; but be filled with the Spirit;"
4. The faith-rest technique produces a relaxed mental attitude plus freedom from mental attitude sins.
ROMANS 5:5 "And hope maketh not ashamed; because the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost which is given unto us."
GALATIANS 5:22 "But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith,"
ISAIAH 26:3-4 "Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace, whose mind is stayed on thee: because he trusteth in thee. Trust ye in the Lord for ever: for in the Lord JEHOVAH is everlasting strength:"
5. The faith-rest technique brings dynamics to prayer.
MATTHEW 21:22 "And all things, whatsoever ye shall ask in prayer, believing, ye shall receive."
MARK 11:25 "And when ye stand praying, forgive, if ye have ought against any: that your Father also which is in heaven may forgive you your trespasses."
6. The faith-rest technique is a principle in the victory in the Angelic Conflict.
HEBREWS 11:6 "But without faith it is impossible to please him: for he that cometh to God must believe that he is, and that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him."
1 JOHN 5:4-5 "For whatsoever is born of God overcometh the world and this is the victory that overcometh the world, even our faith. Who is he that overcometh the world, but he that believeth that Jesus is the Son of God?"
7. Faith-rest will continue as a principle throughout the entire Church Age.
2 CORINTHIANS 5:7 "(For we walk by faith, not by sight:)"

There are five ways on which to rely in picking up the shield of faith.

1. The daily function of grace perception.
 In order to live the Christian life, we must use the shield of faith every day. Take in doctrine every day. Study some Bible doctrine every day.
ROMANS 10:17 "So then faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God."

2. We pick up the shield by the exhale of doctrine.
HEBREWS 4:1 "Let us therefore fear, lest a promise being left us of entering into his rest, any of you should seem to come short of it."
HEBREWS 4:3 "For we which have believed do enter into rest, as he said, As I have sworn in my wrath, if they shall enter into my rest: although the works were finished from the foundation of the world."
 We claim promises and exhale faith toward God.
3. We pick up the shield when we are filled with the Holy Spirit.
GALATIANS 5:22 "But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith,"
4. We pick up the shield by fighting the good fight of faith.
 We do this under extreme pressure.
1 PETER 1:7-8 "That the trial of your faith, being much more precious than of gold that perisheth, though it be tried with fire, might be found unto praise and honour and glory at the appearing of Jesus Christ: Whom having not seen, ye love; in whom, though now ye see him not, yet believing, ye rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory:"
 We get ready for the real pressure by fighting the charge of the mosquito. But this is the charge of the elephant. You train on mosquitoes, but this is the real thing, the charge of the elephant.
5. We pick up the shield by occupation with Christ.
HEBREWS 12:12 "Wherefore lift up the hands which hang down, and the feeble knees;"

The word "wherewith" means "with which." "With which shield you will be able." The word for "able" is a future, active, indicative of "dunamai." The future tense means that you are in a training period now and the day will come when you will be prepared for the battle. The words "to quench" is an aorist, active, infinitive of "sbennumi." It means to extinguish, to cut off.

In ancient warfare they shot arrows that had a flaming torch on them and in this way they burned their enemy and set fire to their dwellings. When the soldier would drop his shield to put out the fire, he would drop his guard and the enemy could then penetrate through his protection and get to his body.

Please notice "the fiery darts of the wicked one." The word "fiery" is a perfect, passive participle of "puroo" and it means "having been set on fire." The word for darts is "bale or belos" and it comes from the verb "ballo" which means to throw. We get the word ball from this greek verb.

So this says that we have been set on fire from the Devil himself. The word "wicked" comes from "poneros" and this refers to a specific person. Satan himself is pictured here as throwing fiery darts at the believer. Fallen angels also participate in throwing the fiery darts at the believer.

There is no substitute for the shield of faith. In our next study we will see the helmet of salvation.

THE CHRISTIAN'S HELMET--SALVATION
THE CHRISTIAN'S SWORD--THE WORD OF GOD

A STUDY OF THE BOOK OF EPHESIANS
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EPHESIANS 6:17 "And take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God:"

We continue our study of the analogy of the Christian's spiritual life to the equipment worn by the Roman soldier. In Paul's day Rome had universal military training and all males wore the uniform and trained in the military. Paul, as we are studying him now, was under house arrest in Rome and was constantly guarded by a Roman soldier. Each item of the soldier's equipment challenged the mind of Paul and from Paul's pen, we have this beautiful analogy of the Christian's battle equipment.

EPHESIANS 6:17 "And take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God:" The word "take" is an aorist, active, imperative of "decomai." This word originally meant to cling to something, to want something very badly and it came to mean "to take or to receive." The aorist tense pinpoints the point of time when the soldier actually goes into battle. In the analogy it refers to that point of time when one is born again and enters into the Lord's service. The active voice of this verb calls attention to the fact that each individual must do this for himself, and no one else can do this for him. The imperative mood means that this is a command from God and is not optional. It is exactly the same meaning as the words of Jesus to Nicodemus, "Ye must be born again."

The word "helmet" comes from "perikephalaia." "Peri" means "around" and "kephalia" means "head" so the helmet is something you put around the head for protection. Inside the head is the soul and the spirit and the Bible refers to the soul as being saved. We find this idea of the soul being saved in these passages.

HEBREWS 10:39 "But we are not of them who draw back unto perdition; but of them that believe to the saving of the soul."

MARK 8:36 "For what shall it profit a man, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul?"

PSALM 19:7 "The law of the Lord is perfect, converting the soul: the testimony of the Lord is sure, making wise the simple."

Naturally Paul would think about salvation when he saw the Roman helmet. The Roman helmet was the best in all the ancient world. In carrying this analogy on farther, we might liken the different parts of the helmet to elements in salvation.

The helmet lining

The helmet was lined with skin which had been softened. It represents the blood of Christ and imputed righteousness as found in Genesis 3:21.

The bronze metal

The word is "casque" and refers to the permanent plan of God for our salvation.

The gold crest or plume

This is a picture of the God-man, Jesus Christ, who is the author of our salvation.

The chin strap

The strap was on the helmet to keep it in place. Once we accept Christ our salvation is secure and permanent.

There are many doctrines that come to the mind as one looks at the helmet of our salvation.

The Doctrine of Propitiation

This is based on the character of God. The cross is God's way whereby he could demonstrate his love for all mankind. God made a sovereign decision millions of years ago to provide salvation by allowing Jesus to go to the cross. But there was the problem of God's righteousness and his justice, and through the cross, both his righteousness and justice would not be sacrificed. At the cross man can come under the maximum love of God without God violating his own character. When one believes in Christ, he takes on the helmet of salvation.

The Doctrine of Reconciliation

We have already mentioned this earlier in another study under the title "the gospel of peace." Man and God were separated by sin and there was no way for this great gulf to be crossed. There was no way for man to break through the barrier. That barrier is sin, and no man is equipped to handle his own sins. The barrier is the wages of sin, and the wages of sin is death. The other phase of this problem is the problem of man's birth. Men are born spiritually dead AND THERE IS ABSOLUTELY NO WAY FOR MAN TO REACH GOD ON HIS OWN. Then there is the problem of relative righteousness. God just can't have fellowship with sinful man. You see, the position of man is a sinful position, as stated in those words "As in Adam all die." So there is no way for man to get to God on his own. But Christ stepped in and made a way and this is what we call reconciliation.

The Doctrine of Redemption

Sin is handled in this way. Man is lifted from the slave market of sin by the doctrine of unlimited atonement.

1 JOHN 2:2 "And he is the propitiation for our sins: and not for ours only, but also for the sins of the whole world."

Christ stepped in and paid the penalty for our sins and gives to us his righteousness and God says, "You are justified," So man comes to God by the way of the cross and this is called "peace" in this Ephesian analogy. It is peace between man and God.

The only offensive weapon mentioned in this analogy is the "Sword of the spirit." The greek word for sword is "machaira" and the "machaira" was a Roman invention. This is one of the most amazing inventions in all the history of warfare and kept Rome going for almost a thousand years. There were about five different kinds of swords used in that time.

Romphaia

The "Romphaia" was a broad double handed sword, something like six or even eight feet long. But one swing was all a man could do and then he was vulnerable to attack.

Zxziphos

The "zxziphos" was a sword with a sharp point used to thrust into the body of the enemy. It had little or no blade on it.

Akinakes

The "akinakes" was made famous by the Persians, but was more of a dress sword. It had jewels in the handle and was very ornate.

Dolon

This was a small sword that could be hidden in a case or stick and was used for assassination.

But the great sword was the "machaira." It was a short sword, with two blades, one on each side and a very heavy but sharp point which would kill with one thrust. The Romans never got off balance using this sword. They learned how to thrust it out from behind their shield and the enemy was dead almost before he knew he had been struck. They often said in a jesting phrase, "He always got the point."

So there is no accident here that Paul used this very word in describing the offensive weapon of the Christian. It was the most useful weapon in the ancient world and Paul knew that the Word of God was the Christian's most effective weapon. The greek says, "The sword from the spirit" and this is a genitive of source. The word for spirit is "pneuma." The word used for "word" here is not the usual word you would expect. The word here is "rema" and rema means specific doctrine a mandate from God of specific truth.

So the offensive weapon of the Christian is The Word of God.

THE DOCTRINE OF THE INSPIRATION OF THE SCRIPTURE

1. The principle of inspiration is found in the greek words "theo pneustos" and they mean "God breathed."

2 TIMOTHY 3:16 "All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness:"

It involves both inhale and exhale. Here is the writer of Scripture and he breathes it into his mind, then under the guidance of God, breathes it out in doctrine. The Holy Spirit participates both in the inhale and the exhale.

This idea is expressed in these verses.

2 SAMUEL 23:2-3 "The Spirit of the Lord spake by me, and his word was in my tongue. The God of Israel said, the Rock of Israel spake to me, He that ruleth over men must be just, ruling in the fear of God."

ISAIAH 59:21 "As for me, this is my covenant with them, saith the Lord; My spirit that is upon thee, and my words which I have put in thy mouth, shall not depart out of thy mouth, nor out of the mouth of thy seed, nor out of the mouth of thy seed's seed, saith the Lord, from henceforth and forever."

JEREMIAH 1:9 "Then the Lord put forth his hand, and touched my mouth. And the Lord said unto me, Behold, I have put my words in thy mouth."

MATTHEW 22:42-43 "Saying, What think ye of Christ? whose son is he? They say unto him, The son of David. He saith unto them, How then doth David in spirit call him Lord, saying,"

MARK 12:36 "For David himself said by the Holy Ghost, The Lord said to my Lord, Sit thou on my right hand, till I make thine enemies thy footstool."

ACTS 28:25 "And when they agreed not among themselves, they departed, after that Paul had spoken one word, Well spake the Holy Ghost by Esaias the prophet unto our fathers."

The exhale was the writing of Scripture. God's complete and perfect message was recorded with perfect accuracy the very words of Scripture bearing the authority of divine authorship.

The inhale was the inspiration and the exhale was the writing down what had been inspired.

2. The origin of Scripture is not human viewpoint but the viewpoint of the Holy Spirit.
2 PETER 1:20-21 "Knowing this first, that no prophecy of the scripture is of any private interpretation. For the prophecy came not in old time by the will of man: but holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost."
 This is poorly translated here. It say, "No prophecy of the Scripture originated from one's own viewpoint."

3. The Bible is the mind of Christ and is the absolute criterion for believers.
1 CORINTHIANS 2:16 "For who hath known the mind of the Lord, that he may instruct him? But we have the mind of Christ."
PSALM 138:2 "I will worship toward thy holy temple, and praise thy name for thy lovingkindness and for thy truth: for thou hast magnified thy word above all thy name."
 (Many have Bibles with the direct words of Jesus printed in red. Now there is nothing wrong with that unless you realize that Christ actually spoke a large part of the Bible and what he spoke in Genesis three is just as important as what he spoke in Matthew five. There is no second class scripture in the Bible. It is all of major importance. If you want to emphasize what is important and want to do so with red letters, then print the whole thing in red.)

4. The Bible, as the mind of Christ, existed in eternity past, prior to the time it was put into writing.

5. Prior to the time the Bible message was written down, revelation came from God by the Holy Spirit.
2 SAMUEL 23:2 "The Spirit of the Lord spake by me, and his word was in my tongue."
EZEKIEL 2:2 "And the spirit entered into me when he spake unto me, and set me upon my feet, that I heard him that spake unto me"
EZEKIEL 8:3 "And he put forth the form of an hand, and took me by a lock of mine head; and the spirit lifted me up between the earth and the heaven, and brought me in the visions of God to Jerusalem, to the door of the inner gate that looketh toward the north; where was the seat of the image of jealousy, which provoketh to jealousy."
MICAH 3:8 "But truly I am full of power by the spirit of the Lord, and of judgment, and of might, to declare unto Jacob his transgression, and to Israel his sin."

6. There were four categories of Old Testament revelation.
 - a. The spoken word "Thus sayeth the Lord."
 - b. God revealed himself through dreams.
GENESIS 15:12 "And when the sun was going down, a deep sleep fell upon Abram; and, lo, an horror of great darkness fell upon him."
DANIEL 10:9 "Yet heard I the voice of his words: and when I heard the voice of his words, then was I in a deep sleep on my face, and my face toward the ground."

- c. God revealed himself through visions
ISAIAH 1:1 "The vision of Isaiah the son of Amoz, which he saw concerning Judah and Jerusalem in the days of Uzziah, Jotham, Ahaz, and Hezekiah, kings of Judah."
ISAIAH 6:1 "In the year that king Uzziah died I saw also the Lord sitting upon a throne, high and lifted up, and his train filled the temple."
- d. God revealed himself through pastor teaching angels.
DEUTERONOMY 33:2 "And he said, The Lord came from Sinai, and rose up from Seir unto them; he shined forth from mount Paran, and he came with ten thousands of saints: from his right hand went a fiery law for them."
PSALM 68:17 "The chariots of God are twenty thousand, even thousands of angels: the Lord is among them, as in Sinai, in the holy place."
 None of these are in existence now. We have the completed Canon of Scripture now and that is all we need. God no longer speaks in these ways.

7. The extent of inspiration. It covers seven areas.

- a. The unknown past
 The Bible tells of past events unknown to man and things unconfirmed by human records and it is bona fide material, such as Genesis 1-11. Inspiration guarantees the accuracy of historical facts.
- b. Ancient history
 The Bible is not an historical textbook but when it refers to historical events, it is always accurate and complete. Such as the Sennacherib invasion which forms the background for much of the Book of Isaiah.
- c. Objective type law.
 The Old Testament contains many laws for both individuals and nations. Those laws perfectly portray the mind of God for the people to whom they were given. Repetition of these laws and the recording of these laws show how they apply to other generations. These laws are free from error and set forth God's will.
- d. Dictation
 Some Scripture contains direct quotations from God. Such commands and quotations are recorded as God wills them to be recorded.
- e. Devotional literature
 Such as many of the Psalms.
- f. The Bible records certain Satanic lies.
 Such as the Satanic lie of Genesis 3:4 when he told the woman she would not die. Now it is not true. The Bible doesn't put it in there to sponsor it as true. Inspiration indicates the accuracy of the falsehood. It guarantees the accuracy of the lie.
- g. Prophecy
 God selected what was to go in the record and it is accurate. Much prophecy has a near fulfillment and a far fulfillment. Not one word will fall to the ground.

So "The sword of the Spirit, the Word of God" is our offensive weapon.