

## THE ARMOR OF GOD

### Part 1

#### Ephesians 6:14-15

**Intro:** From time to time in going through Paul's letter to the church at Ephesus, we have compared this epistle with Paul's letter to the church at Colosse. The two letters were written at approximately the same time while Paul was a prisoner of Rome awaiting trial. Both deal with what is a new doctrine in the NT, the doctrine of the Church, the Body of Christ. Some expositors have said that in Ephesians there may be more of an emphasis on the Church as the Body of Christ, while in Colossians there is an emphasis on Christ as the Head of the Body.

Actually Ephesus and Colosse were located fairly close together. Colosse was just out of the circle of churches to which the book of the Revelation of Jesus Christ was originally sent, and the same churches which many Bible teachers believe the Ephesian letter was to be circulated.

One thing that seems to tie Ephesians and Colossians together is the way in which Paul addressed in both letters wives and husbands, children and Fathers, and servants and masters. Colosse was the city where Philemon lived. The church at Colosse probably met in his home, and, of course, Paul's letter to Philemon and his letter to the church at Colosse were delivered at the same time. The letter to Philemon had to do with the return to him of Onesimus, his servant who had run away from him, had gone to Rome, somehow had come into contact with the Apostle Paul who led him to Christ. In fact, Paul mentioned Onesimus in his letter to the church at Colosse. See Colossians 4:9.

However one way in which the two epistles are different has to do with what follows Paul's instructions to those like Philemon who were masters in both churches. In Ephesians we have this section that we are presently considering concerning our spiritual warfare. Paul did not speak of such a conflict with the Colossian church, but in one way both epistles do end on the same note – and that is on prayer. We are coming to that in Ephesians 6:18-20, and you will see a strong emphasis on prayer in Colossians 4, beginning with verse 2 and continuing through verse 4, and then there is a strong reference to the prayers of Epaphras in Colossians 4:12. Perhaps Paul dealt with our spiritual warfare in Ephesians because they may have been under special attacks from their enemy, the Devil, but whatever may have been the reason, both churches were in great need of prayer.

The church in America is really under attack in our day. Our whole nation is under attack from the enemy of our souls. Some of our more enlightened politicians express concern from time to time that many Americans do not realize that we are at war, a war that threatens our very existence as a nation. In the same way there are many professing Christians who do not believe that we are in a war of our own, an ongoing war against the Devil and his principalities and powers who are set on the downfall of the Church. For this conflict we must “be strong in the Lord, and in the power of His might” (Eph. 6:10). Paul was not talking about strength in numbers, but about individual Christians who are “strong in the Lord, and in the power of His might.” No other strength is sufficient. That is why each of us needs to “put on the whole armor of God” because there is no other armor that is sufficient for us if we expect to be victorious. And the parts of the armor that Paul mentions, and which I want to discuss with you today and next week, is where we will find our strength and power that we need for the battle.

Words like this are not new in the Bible. Let me read to you a part of what the Lord had to say to Joshua when he took over the leadership of Israel after Moses died. Listen to what the Lord said to him in Joshua 1:5-9:

5 There shall not any man be able to stand before thee all the days of thy life: as I was with Moses, so I will be with thee: I will not fail thee, nor forsake thee.

6 Be strong and of a good courage: for unto this people shalt thou divide for an inheritance the land, which I swore unto their fathers to give them.

7 Only be thou strong and very courageous, that thou mayest observe to do according to all the law, which Moses my servant commanded thee: turn not from it to the right hand or to the left, that thou mayest prosper whithersoever thou goest.

8 This book of the law shall not depart out of thy mouth; but thou shalt meditate therein day and night, that thou mayest observe to do according to all that is written therein: for then thou shalt make thy way prosperous, and then thou shalt have good success.

9 Have not I commanded thee? Be strong and of a good courage; be not afraid, neither be thou dismayed: for the Lord thy God is with thee whithersoever thou goest.

And let me add to those wonderful words, equally wonderful words which God gave to His people in Isaiah 40:28-31:

28 Hast thou not known? hast thou not heard, that the everlasting

God, the Lord, the Creator of the ends of the earth, fainteth not, neither is weary? there is no searching of his understanding.  
29 He giveth power to the faint; and to them that have no might he increaseth strength.

30 Even the youths shall faint and be weary, and the young men shall utterly fall:

31 But they that wait upon the Lord shall renew their strength; they shall mount up with wings as eagles; they shall run, and not be weary; and they shall walk, and not faint.

So our strength is not in ourselves. It is not that we are to outnumber the Devil's forces. Our strength is in the Lord. Many times in the OT the Lord gave His people the victory when they were greatly outnumbered by their enemy. Perhaps you remember how Jonathan sought to encourage his armor bearer when he went down to see the mighty Philistines. These were Jonathan's words which are found in 1 Samuel 14:6:

Come, and let us go over unto the garrison of these uncircumcised: it may be that the Lord will work for us: for there is no restraint to the Lord to save by many or by few.

Paul, in verses 13 to 18 was telling the Ephesians how they could "be strong in the Lord, and in the power of His might," the Lord's might. For today we will look at just verses 14 and 15.

## **I. WE ARE TO "STAND."**

You can't help but see, if you have eyes to see at all, that Paul put a special emphasis on the word "stand" in these verses. And this all follows what Paul had already said in verse 27: "Neither give place to the Devil." We are not to think at all about retreating from the Devil. We are to stand and to withstand.

I have great respect for the power of the Devil, but let me tell you something: *the Devil is a coward*. He has great power, and he is very subtle, but he is a coward. He goes about like a roaring lion seeking whom he may devour, but if you resist him in the power of God, he will flee from you. You and I are to stand, to stand in the power of the Lord, to stand in dependence upon the Lord, but we are to take our stand against him, and let Him do the running. We are no match for the Devil in our own power, but if we stand in the power of God, the Devil is the one who will flee from us. The Devil has been trying for over 6,000 years to kill the Jews and to destroy the Church, but he is not even close to doing what he

wants to do. So we don't run from the Devil. We take our stand in the power of God, and he will flee from us.

This is the mind-set that we need to have. "Greater is He Who is in us than he who is in the world." See 1 John 4:4.

But what does this standing require? Here is Paul's second point:

## **II. "HAVING YOUR LOINS GIRT ABOUT WITH TRUTH" (Eph. 6:14a).**

One outstanding commentator who has written on the book of Ephesians has stated the meaning of this part of verse 14 in this way: "Stand firm then with the belt of truth buckled around your waist" (McGrath and Packer on Charles Hodge, p. 216).

The belt served at least two purposes for the ancient soldier. It strengthened the soldier's back, and it was where a soldier would tuck his long robes to allow him greater freedom in action. Now this is preparation that the Christian has taken, and continues to improve, in anticipation of having to face the Devil in conflict. And it is truth that is known and believed and obeyed. And it is the truth of God that Paul had in mind. It is God's Word, not just on our tables, but in our hearts that is primarily required if we are to be up to facing the Devil or any of his evil forces. We need to know the truth. We need to believe the truth. And we need to be living the truth. It is by such use of the Word that we are strengthened for the battle, and assured of victory. We take our stand on the Word of God. There is real power for us in the Word. If we ever neglect the application of the Word to our lives, we are courting disaster.

This morning did you walk into church with the belt of truth around your waist?

What is the second part of the armor of God that Paul mentioned?

## **III. "THE BREASTPLATE OF RIGHTEOUSNESS" (Eph. 6:14b).**

There are two verses in Isaiah that are obviously related to what the Apostle had to say here about the breastplate of righteousness. It is found in Isaiah 59:16-17:

16 And he saw that there was no man, and wondered that there was no intercessor: therefore his arm brought salvation unto him; and his righteousness, it sustained him.

17 For he put on righteousness as a breastplate, and an helmet of salvation upon his head; and he put on the garments of vengeance for clothing, and was clad with zeal as a cloke.

This speaks of the plight that the Lord saw that His chosen people were in and what He did to meet their needs. So He put on the breastplate of righteousness. His arm brought salvation, and He was sustained by His righteousness.

This is a wonderful picture of the Gospel. The Lord saw the plight of His ancient people, just as He has seen our plight, with not even one to intercede for us. And yet, being a righteous God, He could not violate His own righteousness in bringing salvation to His people. We now know how He maintained His own righteousness in providing salvation for His people. He charged our sins to His incarnate Son. He laid upon the Lord Jesus Christ the iniquity of us all. He suffered in our place. He paid our penalty in full, so that as the Apostle Paul wrote later in Romans 3:24-26:

24 Being justified freely by his grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus:

25 Whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation through faith in his blood, to declare his righteousness for the remission of sins that are past, through the forbearance of God;

26 To declare, I say, at this time his righteousness: that he might be just, and the justifier of him which believeth in Jesus.

One of the Devil's favorite ways of attacking us who are the people of God, is to cause us to doubt our salvation. If we doubt the forgiveness of our sins, if we doubt that we are truly saved, we are incapacitated for the battles that come our way. If the Devil can get our attention focused on the things we have done which are displeasing to God since we have been saved, or the things that we have said, or the things that we have thought, he has severely wounded us. But if we know that Jesus died to pay the full penalty of our sins, and that we are covered with the righteousness of God, then our confidence in the Lord cannot be shaken, and we can face our enemy knowing that the blood of Christ covers any accusation that he could possibly bring against us.

So to be assured of our salvation is what it means to be have put on the breastplate of righteousness. It guards us against all of the charges that

the Devil can possibly bring against us. When the Devil seeks to wound you with his accusations concerning salvation, make sure that you have put on the breastplate of righteousness, and that you know what that means.

But I have one more point before I close this morning. It is the third part of the armor of God.

#### **IV. “YOUR FEET SHOD WITH THE PREPARATION OF THE GOSPEL OF PEACE” (Eph. 6:15).**

His feet were very important for the ancient soldier. He used his feet for two main purposes: first, to stand, and second, to walk. And these, of course, would prepare him for battle with the enemy.

In the Devil’s opposition to us, he constantly works to get us to believe that God is not with us, and that God is not for us. The Apostle Paul said in Romans 8, “If God be for us, who can be against us.” Someone made the statement that if God is our Friend, it makes no difference who our enemies might be. On the other hand, if it seems that God has forsaken us, and that He does not care what happens to us, nothing can compensate for such a loss.

In the previous breastplate of righteousness, we had a picture of the Gospel. Here Paul was talking about the soldier’s footwear, “the Gospel of peace.” In Romans 5:1 Paul brought together righteousness, or justification and peace when he wrote the words, “Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ.” So again the Gospel is brought into play. Perhaps this is why Dr. Jerry Bridges tells us that we need to preach the Gospel to ourselves every day we live. If we do, we will see that there is no basis for the way the Devil lies about our relationship with God and with Christ, and the eternal nature of that relationship. Absolutely nothing can ever separate us from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord. There is nothing that prepares us more to stand for our Lord, and to stand against our enemy, nor is there anything more effective, than the God-given assurance that through Christ and the Gospel we have peace with God.

**Concl:** But the question remains, how prepared are we to meet the enemy of our souls? The armor of God is our only security. But you cannot have the armor of God without having God, and you can’t have

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God except through Christ. And yet there are many who profess to know God through Christ who have not put on the armor of God. Make sure that you are not one of them.

How rich we are because of all that we have in Christ. May we put on and wear the whole armor of God that we may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all [that God in His grace enable us to do] to stand.