

The armor of God

Ephesians 6:11-18

The apostle Paul writes in his letter to the Ephesians about the armor of God. He's not doing this to be a little bit interesting. No, he thinks we as Christians have to know something about struggle. Not struggle against people, but struggle against dark powers, against the rulers, against the authorities, against the powers of this dark world and against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly realms. The subject of our struggle is the devil with his army. Fallen angels, demons.

That is something. That's why God made available the armor for us. That's the subject we're going to study.

First we read the according texts.

Ephesians 6:11-18

"11 Put on the full armor of God so that you can take your stand against the devil's schemes. 12 For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the powers of this dark world and against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly realms. 13 Therefore put on the full armor of God, so that when the day of evil comes, you may be able to stand your ground, and after you have done everything, to stand. 14 Stand firm then, with the belt of truth buckled round your waist, with the breastplate of righteousness in place, 15 and with your feet fitted with the readiness that comes from the gospel of peace. 16 In addition to all this, take up the shield of faith, with which you can extinguish all the flaming arrows of the evil one. 17 Take the helmet of salvation and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God. 18 And pray in the Spirit on all occasions with all kinds of prayers and requests. With this in mind, be alert and always keep on praying for all the saints."

Paul explains why we have to put on the full armor of God: Take your stand!

This means: show the enemy who you are. Show him you're not afraid because God Himself

will do the battle. There is a nice story in the Bible which shows exactly what I mean, it is the story of King Jehoshaphat (2 Chronicles 20:1-30).

STAND FIRM THEN, WITH THE BELT OF TRUTH BUCKLED ROUND YOUR WAIST

In the middle east they are wearing long clothes. When they want to move fast, they tucked their clothes upwards and hold it with a belt. That's the way the Israelites had to be ready to leave Egypt immediately, with their cloaks into their belt.

(Exodus 12:11 "This is how you are to eat it: with your cloak tucked into your belt, your sandals on your feet and your staff in your hand. Eat it in haste; it is the LORD's Passover.").

Elijah tucked his cloak into his belt to run ahead of Ahab

(1 Kings 18:46 "The power of the LORD came upon Elijah and, tucking his cloak into his belt, he ran ahead of Ahab all the way to Jezreel.").

Likewise we have to be ready to act immediately. The belt which we have to buckle our waist is the belt of truth.

(Ephesians 6:14 "Stand firm then, with the belt of truth buckled round your waist,").

What truth? The word of truth is the gospel.

Ephesians 1:13

"And you also were included in Christ when you heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation. ..."

Jesus is the Truth.

John 14:6

"Jesus answered, 'I am the way and the truth and the life. No-one comes to the Father except through me.'"

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The Holy Spirit is the Spirit of truth.

John 14:15-17

“If you love me, you will obey what I command. 16 And I will ask the Father, and he will give you another Counselor to be with you for ever-- 17 the Spirit of truth. The world cannot accept him, because it neither sees him nor knows him. But you know him, for he lives with you and will be in you.”

So we see, when we expect an attack of the devil, we have to take position (stand firm ...) ready to come in action (your waist buckled...).

It is also said of Jesus He would have a belt around His waist.

Isaiah 11:5

“5 Righteousness will be his belt and faithfulness the sash round his waist.”

The base of which Jesus acted was the righteousness of God. Like it is written: “The righteous will live by faith.”

(Romans 1:17 “For in the gospel a righteousness from God is revealed, a righteousness that is by faith from first to last, just as it is written: “The righteous will live by faith.””)

Jesus had a belt of righteousness around His waist and revealed “faith”.

We have to buckle the belt of truth, which is in Jesus, in His Word, in His Spirit, to reveal it. This truth will make every attacker powerless.

THE BREASTPLATE OF RIGHTEOUSNESS IN PLACE

The breastplate has to protect the body against attacks of the enemy. Which breastplate has to protect us spiritual?

The breastplate of righteousness. What is righteousness? Where does righteousness come

from?

Acts 13:10

Paul says to the sorcerer Elymas: “You are a child of the devil and an enemy of everything that is right! You are full of all kinds of deceit and trickery. Will you never stop perverting the right ways of the Lord?”

That sorcerer Elymas is called a child of the devil. He is doing like the devil does. It is “Like father like son”. Paul says, he is an enemy of everything that is right. In the King James it is: “enemy of all righteousness”. If the Satan is the enemy of all righteousness, it is clear at once righteousness comes from the One Satan is opposed: God. But again, what is that righteousness?

2 Corinthians 11:14, 15

“And no wonder, for Satan himself masquerades as an angel of light. It is not surprising, then, if his servants masquerade as servants of righteousness. Their end will be what their actions deserve.”

2 Corinthians 6:14

“Do not be yoked together with unbelievers. For what do righteousness and wickedness have in common? Or what fellowship can light have with darkness?”

We can learn from these texts, ‘light’ and ‘righteousness’ are synonyms.

They are opposite to darkness and wickedness. Light against darkness. Righteousness against wickedness.

Romans 9:31, 32

“but Israel, who pursued a law of righteousness, has not attained it. Why not? Because they pursued it not by faith but as if it were by works. They stumbled over the “stumbling-stone”.”

Israel looked indeed for righteousness, but thought to be justified by keeping the law. They didn’t see it was written in Genesis 15:6 Abraham was justified through faith. And, it is the same way for us Christians.

Jesus had a belt of righteousness around His waist and revealed “faith”

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Romans 5:1

“Therefore, since we have been justified through faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ,”

We Christians are also justified through faith. Keeping the law doesn't bring us justification either.

When the enemy attacks us with thoughts as: you are and will ever be a sinner, these attacks will glance off against our breastplate of righteousness.

We are not justified through our own works, but through the justification of God. Our faith is credited as righteousness.

Romans 4:4, 5

“Now when a man works, his wages are not credited to him as a gift, but as an obligation. However, to the man who does not work but trusts God who justifies the wicked, his faith is credited as righteousness.”

When we are realizing this well, every attack of the devil, in this way, will glance off against the breastplate.

YOUR FEET FITTED WITH THE READINESS THAT COMES FROM THE GOSPEL OF PEACE

Readiness to bring the gospel of peace is one part of the armor of God. It has no use to put shoes in without doing one step. That's why this part of the armor point out to going out, come into motion in situations where there is no peace. Peace in situations, peace in hearths.

Matthew 5:9

“Blessed are the peacemakers, for they will be called sons of God.”

Romans 10:14, 15

“How, then, can they call on the one they have not believed in? And how can they believe in the one of whom they have not heard? And how can they hear without someone preaching to them?
15 And how can they preach unless they are sent? As it is written, “How beautiful are the feet

of those who bring good news!”

And when we bring the gospel of peace indeed, the enemy looses territory.

TAKE UP THE SHIELD OF FAITH, WITH WHICH YOU CAN EXTINGUISH ALL THE FLAMING ARROWS OF THE EVIL ONE

In the early days the soldiers shot a lot with flaming arrows. That's why the army made shields with a fleece over it. That fleece was made wet. When then the flaming arrows came they could extinguish them by taking up the wet shield.

By the shield of faith the flaming arrows of the devil can be extinguished.

The flaming arrows are the opposite of the shield of faith. They are arrows of unbelief. The devil knows that when he can “light” us with some unbelief, we are totally in fire, in fire with unbelief.

In Hebrews 3:19 we can read, the people of Israel could not go into the promised land because of their unbelief. (Hebrews 3:18, 19
“And to whom did God swear that they would never enter his rest if not to those who disobeyed? So we see that they were not able to enter, because of their unbelief.”)

By the shield of faith the flaming arrows of the devil can be extinguished

The devil knows this too, and that's why he will shoot at us with “unbelief” to get us so far we will not enter our promised land: the Kingdom of God. He will only succeed when we don't take up our shield of faith to resist his attacks.

1 John 5:4

“This is the victory that has overcome the world, even our faith.”

(The world is everything which has nothing to do with God.)

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TAKE THE HELMET OF SALVATION AND THE SWORD OF THE SPIRIT, WHICH IS THE WORD OF GOD.

The helmet of salvation. The assurance that helmet offers is the assurance of salvation, which is in no one else, but Jesus.

Acts 4:12

“Salvation is found in no-one else, for there is no other name under heaven given to men by which we must be saved.”

With whatever story the devil comes with whatever names, like Buddha, Mohammed or who-ever, there is no other name given to people by which we must be saved, then Jesus Christ.

The sword of the Spirit, that is the word of God. The written Word of God. This word was used by Jesus when the devil tried to seduce Him in the desert.

Knowing the word of God is a very powerful weapon against the attacks of satan. It is also a very powerful weapon to attack. When we pull on “ahead of our brothers”

(see Joshua 1:14 “Your wives, your children and your livestock may stay in the land that Moses gave you east of the Jordan, but all your fighting men, fully armed, must cross over ahead of your brothers. You are to help your brothers”),

we will take away territory of the devil by using the sword (=the word) in our hand.

When we do what Jesus said in Mark 16, we are offensive.

Mark 16:17

“In my name they will drive out demons...”

By speaking in the name of Jesus, through the authority of the Word, demons will be conquered. That’s why we need knowledge of the Word, but we also need the authority of the Word (Jesus). Doing so, the devil will loose terrain.

AND PRAY IN THE SPIRIT ON ALL OCCASIONS WITH ALL KINDS OF PRAYERS AND REQUESTS.

It is not only using the Word that conquers the enemy, we have to pray on all occasions in the Spirit. What is meant here by praying in the Spirit with all kinds of prayers and requests?

Let’s now too compare bible with bible. There are three bible parts which are speaking about that. We will treat these three bible parts and at the end we will check them to see how much they are applicable to Ephesians 6.

Romans 8:26, 27

“In the same way, the Spirit helps us in our weakness. We do not know what we ought to pray for, but the Spirit himself intercedes for us with groans that words cannot express. And he who searches our hearts knows the mind of the Spirit, because the Spirit intercedes for the saints in accordance with God’s will.”

These verses have of course a context. The “groans” of the Spirit are in connection with the “groaning” mentioned in verse 22. The whole creation has been groaning as in the pains of childbirth. Verse 23: but we ourselves, who have the first fruits of the Spirit, groan inwardly. Why? Because we are waiting too. We are eagerly waiting for our adoptions as sons. When we read verse 23 well, we see the adoption as sons is the same as the redemption of our bodies. We are eagerly waiting. And because it is not revealed to us what we would be

(1 John 3:2 “Dear friends, now we are children of God, and what we will be has not yet been made known. But we know that when he appears, we shall be like him, for we shall see him as he is.”),

we can’t pray for it in a proper way, But thanks to God, the Holy Spirit prays for us, the Spirit himself intercedes for us with groans that words cannot express.

The second text part comes from 1 Corinthians. 1 Corinthians 14:2 and 4

“2 For anyone who speaks in a tongue does not speak to men but to God. Indeed, no-one understands him; he utters mysteries with his

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spirit. ...4 He who speaks in a tongue edifies himself.”

One of the gifts of the Spirit is speaking in tongues. And as we see here in 1 Corinthians 14, someone who is talking in tongues speaks to God. Nobody understands him. Through the Spirit he speaks mysteries to God. Why does God want us to speak words which are not understandable for anyone? Is it not possible for the Holy Spirit to pray directly, without using us? Of course that's possible for the Holy Spirit, but God want us to edify our faith. He want us to speak those words whom the Holy Spirit is giving us to speak, eliminating, in that respect, our intellect. By surrendering, in that way, to Him, by letting us to be lead by His Spirit, we speak mysteries to God. And the result is we are edifying ourselves. By opening our hearts and our mouths in faith to Him, there will be an interaction: He builds our faith.

Is this not a little bit far-fetched to read all these thing in these verses? No, because this thought is confirmed in the third part about praying in the Spirit.

Jude 1:20

“20 But you, dear friends, build yourselves up in your most holy faith and pray in the Holy Spirit.”

It is an assignment: “build yourselves up!”
In what? “In your most holy faith .”
How? “Praying in the Holy Spirit.”

We've seen in these three bible parts:

1. Gods Spirit is praying for the saints because we don't know all the time how to pray.
2. Gods Spirit want to use our spirit and mouth to speak mysteries to God, by speaking in tongues.
3. Gods Spirit is blessing us in that way by building up our faith.

Now back again to the description of the armor of God in Ephesians 6.
Ephesians 6:18 KJV

“18 Praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit, and watching there unto with all perseverance and supplication for all saints;”

To take your stand against the devil and his armies it is -after all- necessary to be in contact with God the Father. Praying always. How? By praying in the Spirit.

Gods Spirit knows best what has to be prayed in case of an attack. But Gods Spirit doesn't want to do that that without us. That's why He gave us the gift of speaking in tongues. As result of this praying in the Spirit our faith is build-up. And that's the last thing the devil wants.

James 4:7 says it very clear:

“7 Submit yourselves, then, to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you. 8 Come near to God and he will come near to you.”

For a child of God it is not necessary at all to be afraid of the devil. He has no power to us Christians.

Jesus has all the power! And through Him we are conquerors too!

Romans 8:31-39

“31 What, then, shall we say in response to this? If God is for us, who can be against us? 32 He who did not spare his own Son, but gave him up for us all--how will he not also, along with him, graciously give us all things? 33 Who will bring any charge against those whom God has chosen? It is God who justifies. 34 Who is he that condemns? Christ Jesus, who died--more than that, who was raised to life--is at the right hand of God and is also interceding for us. 35 Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall trouble or hardship or persecution or famine or nakedness or danger or sword? 36 As it is written: “For your sake we face death all day long; we are considered as sheep to be slaughtered.” 37 No, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him who loved us. 38 For I am convinced that neither death nor life, neither angels nor demons, neither the present nor the future, nor any powers, 39 neither height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord.”

By opening our hearts and our mouths in faith to Him, there will be an interaction: He builds our faith