

The Church, Militant, Triumphant

He will rule them with an iron scepter; he will dash them to pieces like pottery.—Revelation 2:27 (also Psalm 2:9)

The church during the Gospel age is spoken of as being “militant.” This does not mean they go to war with swords, guns, and tanks. God’s people battle in an entirely different way because their warfare is against the temptations of the world, of human desires, and the deceitfulness of Satan.

The church does not fight for their “rights.” It was a terrible mistake when, in the Middle Ages, the church battled with swords and spears against nations and those who did not accept the dominant church’s beliefs.

When Jesus and the apostles were on earth, they did not interfere in any way with earthly powers. On the contrary, they taught their followers to obey the laws of the land and to respect those in authority because of their office even if they were not personally worthy of this respect (Matthew 22:21; Romans 13:1). Jesus and his apostles were law-abiding, although they were separate from and took no part in the governments of this world.

Ephesians 6:11-17 describes the “armor” the church militant is to wear. The Christian does battle by wielding the sword of the spirit, the word of God, the truth. He proclaims the good news of the coming kingdom and has the spirit of service to others.

The breastplate of righteousness symbolizes our Savior’s death. It is a covering for us provided by the merit of Jesus’ sacrifice. Our hearts would fail from discouragement without it.

The sandals of peace symbolize our full consecration to the

Lord. They help us over the rough places without compromising the truth.

The shield of faith is our trust in God and his truth. It helps us withstand the “arrows” of Satan and his followers.

We put on the helmet which symbolizes knowledge, an intelligent hope of salvation. We need this as the adversary Satan will try everything in his power to take us away from the truth. We carry the sword of the spirit which helps us defend the doctrines of Christ from the attacks of error. We can own this sword only by careful and constant study of God’s word and by being ready to use it in defense of the truth.



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with swords, guns, or tanks.