

The Armor of God

Key Verse:
*“Wherefore take
unto you the whole
armour of God,
that ye may be able
to withstand in the
evil day, and
having done all,
to stand.”*
—*Ephesians 6:13*

Selected Scripture:
Ephesians 6:10-18

OUR KEY VERSE CONTAINS

a most expressive image meant to encourage Christians—the armor of God. Interestingly, Paul was not the first to refer to this analogy. The Prophet Isaiah uses similar language, describing armor in Isaiah 11:4,5 and 59:17. Thus, many in Paul’s audience were perhaps able to relate to this illustration. The apostle, however, does not simply quote the words found

in Isaiah but develops the idea in two ways.

First, Paul focuses on the elements found in Isaiah, changing the seven items listed by the prophet to the six listed in our lesson. Second, and more importantly, Paul applies the concept of the armor of God to the Christian. In doing so, he does not describe elements for physical battle, but for spiritual conflict. He lifts the weapons of spiritual warfare out of the realm of things that we must somehow use with our own strength. This is not our armor; it is God’s armor for our use.

Paul emphasizes that we must not keep these elements of armor merely on display or locked in some spiritual armory. The armor of God is something which must be deployed. When David tried the armor of King Saul, he could not use it as he had not “proved,” or practiced, with it. (I Sam. 17:38,39) Thus we understand that the

armor of God is to be actively used for our spiritual benefit.

It is important to note that the six pieces of armor listed in our Selected Scripture passage all cover the front of the body. Paul says, “Put on the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to stand against [Greek: toward] the wiles of the devil.” (Eph. 6:11) We are to face the enemy. Ours is a battle of confrontation, that we might prove worthy of a share in blessing all the families of the earth in the next age, according to God’s promise. (Gen. 22:18) The Apostle Peter speaks of the serious nature of our battle against evil: “Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour: Whom resist stedfast in the faith.”—I Pet. 5:8,9

Let us not miss the important admonitions provided by today’s lesson. The armor Paul speaks of is a gift of God for our protection and eventual victory. The Apostle John likewise speaks of the safety promised to those begotten of the spirit through Jesus Christ: “No one who has become part of God’s family makes a practice of sinning, for Christ, God’s Son, holds him securely, and the devil cannot get his hands on him.” (I John 5:18, *The Living Bible*) God’s promised protection from spiritual harm that we face daily resonates in Jesus’ departing prayer for his disciples the night before his death, when he said, “I am not praying that you will take them out of the world but that you will keep them from the evil one.”—John 17:15, *JB Phillips New Testament*

In his words concerning the Christian’s armor, Paul does not take away from the fact that our consecration is unto death, but he speaks to the protection God gives us during our trials “against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places.” (Eph. 6:12) How thankful we are for the provision of God’s armor, by which we can overcome all things! ■