

## The Armor Of God #3

"And take the helmet of salvation and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God" (Eph. 6:17). Paul gave Christian soldiers armor to protect themselves from their great enemy and adversary -- the devil. There are six items he lists, four of which have been commented on in two earlier articles: a breastplate of righteousness, girdle of truth, feet shod with the preparation of the gospel of peace, and the shield of faith. The last remaining two are cited in vs. 17 which has been quoted above: the helmet of salvation and the sword of the Spirit.

The helmet of salvation is a most important piece in our spiritual armor. It has been shown that while "*righteousness*" sometimes refers to justification in the scriptures (Romans 1:16f; 3:21; et al.), it does not carry that meaning here. Rather "*righteousness*" has reference to one keeping his heart pure. Such a conclusion is reached because in the text "*righteousness*" and "*salvation*" are listed separately -- suggesting a difference in significance and meaning.

Salvation from sin is mandatory if one is to wage war successfully against Satan. While moral goodness is necessary, it is insufficient, for while we "must be good to be saved," the painful truth is that no matter how "good" we might be, none live above sin. Did not Paul say, "*All have sinned and come short of the glory of God*" (Rom. 3:23)? The goodness of Dorcas commended her, but did not justify her nor did the moral excellence of Cornelius save him (Acts 9:36; 10:2). That this is true we are informed by the Holy Spirit for he caused Paul to write that "*we are saved, not by works done in righteousness which we did ourselves, but according to his mercy he saved us*" (Tit. 3:5).

The Hebrew letter speaks of a "*great salvation*" (Heb. 2:3). It is that. The greatness of salvation is seen in the sacrifice Jesus offered that man might be reconciled to God. It describes a measureless love! The greatness of salvation is seen in the magnitude of that which the blood of Christ can remove. The catalog of sins itemized in 1 Corinthians 6:9-12: fornication, idolatry, adultery, effeminate, abusers of themselves with man, thieves, covetous, drunkards, revilers, and extortioners was the former condition of some in Corinth, but they had been washed, sanctified, justified: in short, they had been saved! Marvelous and mighty are both God's mercy and His power to remove the sins of men.

Finally, the Ephesians were commanded to take the sword of the Spirit. The word also is likened unto a sword in Hebrews 4:12: "*the word of God is quick*

*and powerful and sharper than any two-edged sword.*" It is not likely coincidental God's word is likened to something *"two-edged."* The word pierced Pentecostians who cried out in anguish, *"Brethren, what shall we do?"* (Acts 2:37). It also cut Stephen's accusers to the heart but they stopped their ears, gnashed on him with their teeth, and then stoned him (Acts 7:54, 57-58). The different reactions resulted not from a different message but from different hearts who heard that message. God's word will always meet with different reactions.

Wisdom, philosophy, and the reasoning of men are not sufficient to war against the devil. Jesus met every temptation of Satan with God's word. His success in foiling Satan's temptations is assurance that, if we follow the same tactics, we today will successfully overcome the devil. Satan's tactics change because his cunning, crafty nature calculates to catch men unaware. His every effort is to surprise man into sin, a highly successful attack (Gal. 6:1f). "Be prepared" is not only a good motto for scouts; it works for Christians as well if this preparation consists of him being thoroughly familiar with God's word, coupled with the determination not to spare any effort to avoid Satan's snares.

Let each put on the whole armor of God. Let us determine that whatever we do, we will stand, and having done all -- to stand!

Jim McDonald