

An exegetical paper on ephesians 6:14-20



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Summary Statement: Ephesians 6: 14-20

Paul is commanding Christians to put on the full armor of God, while standing in the power of the Holy Spirit and endless prayers, during spiritual warfare.

Outline :

- I. Stand in God's Truth Against Satan's Lies (v. 14a)**
- II. Trust in God's Righteousness (v. 14b)**
- III. Be Ready to Spread the Gospel of Peace (v. 15)**
- IV. Keep the Faith (v. 16)**
- V. Do not Doubt Salvation (v. 17a)**
- VI. Use the Word of God Against Satan (v. 17b)**
- VII. Pray with All Perseverance and Intercession for All Saints (v. 18)**
- VIII. Pray for Him (Paul) and His boldness (vv. 19-20)**

I ntroduction

The Apostle Paul pens a letter to the saints at the church of Ephesus. In the onset of his letter, he talks about the good news of salvation for those now positioned in Christ. The new believer has been chosen by God, redeemed by His Son, Jesus and sealed by the Holy Spirit.

He also addresses the need for Christians to be fully clothed in the armor of God. He expounds on each piece of the spiritual garment that is necessary to overcome the attacks of the enemy, during spiritual warfare. Followed by

the attire needed for spiritual warfare, he also discusses the importance of prayer and its relevancy in the life of saints. The letter to those in the church of Ephesus is a timeless correspondence. The message in his letter is still applicable for today's Christians.

Specifically, this paper will discuss the purpose of spiritual armor and the required weapons needed for victory during spiritual warfare.

Context

The Apostle Paul was the author of the Book of Ephesians, written in A. D. 60. Saul (before his conversion), born in Tarsus (Asia Minor, known today as the country " Turkey"), was a Jew, Roman citizen (Acts 22: 25-29), and by heritage status (his father's), a Pharisee (Acts 23: 6). It was after his conversion (Acts 9) that he became history's greatest witness to and for Christianity.

The church of Ephesus was one of the early churches that Paul established approximately A. D. 53. Paul, spent over three years, teaching and preaching to the saints at Ephesus. During this time, he became very close to them. At the time of the writing, there did not appear to be any problems that existed, in prompting the letter. The Ephesians were faithful followers of Jesus Christ (Eph. 1: 1). This letter appears to have been sent to the new converts in Ephesus to encourage them. At the time of the writing, it is stated that Paul was in a Roman prison for preaching the Gospel.

The Book of Ephesians is divided into two sections. Chapters 1-3 focuses on the divine position of the new believer through their relationship in Christ. In

Chapters 4-6, the focus is on the divine practices of the new believer through their relationship in Christ (Nelson 406).

In the first part of Paul's letter to the saints of Ephesus, he expounds in detail and enlightens them on the spiritual blessings they have received in Christ (1: 3 – 3: 21). In the second part of the letter, he urges them to live a life worthy of God's calling. He also instructs them on how they should live (4: 1-32). He admonishes them to be imitators of God and gives instructions for wives, husbands, children, parents, slaves and masters (5: 1-6: 9). Paul's final instructions to the saints were to be strong in the Lord and in His mighty power. Paul further warns the new believers of the attacks from Satan and their need to "put on the full armor of God so that they can take a stand against the devil's schemes" and he encourages them to always pray (6: 10 – 18). Lastly, he, personally, seeks their prayers for holy boldness in preaching the mystery of the gospel, for which he is an ambassador, while he is imprisoned (6: 19-20).

Content

This paper will share insightful and specific ways as to why Christians should put on the full armor of God as well as pray. It is believed by many theologians that Paul's use of a Roman soldier's armor for war was a perfect metaphor for contrasting the spiritual armor necessary for God's children during a spiritual warfare. Roman soldiers were well-trained and equipped to win battles. The use of each part of their armor had a strategic purpose in protecting them during war. Although their uniform/armor was designed for physical war, the "full" armor of God is necessary for spiritual war and

victory. Just like the Roman soldier, without any part of his armor, he would be vulnerable to defeat, if not death. Ephesians 6: 14-17 expounds on what is the actual armor of God and what it is used for in comparison with the analogy of a soldier's armor. In addition to the armor of God, the paper will express the need for prayer (Eph. 6: 18-20) for self, others and leaders. These key verses are in direct relations to the prior vv. 10-13, in which Paul tells them, " Finally, be strong in the Lord and in his mighty power. Put on the full armor of God, so that you can take your stand against the devil's schemes. 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. 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." The conjunction " therefore" typically presents some type of conclusion which was either based on an earlier reason or argument. In v. 13, " therefore" is based on the earlier reason, found in vv. 11-12, as to why the full armor of God is necessary. This conjunction connects to the previous three verses (vv. 10-12) as well as the following four verses (vv. 14-17).

“ So that” is a purpose/result statement, in this case, it is referring to the saint’s outcome of being able to stand against the devil’s schemes (v. 11) and when everything is done, they are still standing. These types of statements or sentences describe the result, reason or consequence of some actions (Duvall 75). Paul’s command to put on the armor of God is for spiritual survival. After the enemy’s attack, the saint will still be standing, having clothed himself in the full armor of God.

Stand in God’s Truth Against Satan’s Lies (v. 14a)

Stand firm then, with the belt of truth buckled around your waist.

Roman soldiers wore belts to uphold their tunics during war so that it would not hinder them during the battle. As we look at this verse, Paul is commanding Christians to “ stand and gird their loins with the “ belt” or “ girdle” (lit., “ having girt” your loins with truth”) of truth (Gk., “ *aletheia*”; *fem. noun*). Paul is admonishing the Christians to “ Stand firm” (Gk., *histēmi*, hold up) in the “ truth” in what they know and believe about the truth of Jesus and God’s word. They are to be of a “ steadfast mind” or “ one who does not hesitate, does not waiver” from the truth. And, at the same time, Christians must live their lives in the truth of God’s word. Satan is the author of lies. Therefore, it is incumbent upon Christians to know and apply the Word of truth to their lives so that when Satan attacks with his lies, Christians will be able to stand in God’s truth, having girded (lit., “ to gird about or around”; passive verb; literally – “ girding one’s self for service”) themselves with the belt of truth. Just as the Roman soldier needed the girdle to give him support and stability, Christians need to make sure that

their belt of truth is in place and secure. To be secure in the truth, Christians would need to study and believe the truth of God and the Bible. Jesus is the way, the truth and the life (John 14: 6). In 2 Cor. 10: 5, Paul admonishes Christians to bring into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ.

Paul is commanding saints to read and believe in God's word so that when the enemy comes with lies against God's truth, the saint will be able to stand up against such attacks. The Christian can remind the enemy about what is written in the Bible as it relates to their life or situation.

Trust in God's Righteousness (v. 14b)

With the breastplate of righteousness in place.

Roman soldiers wore breastplates that would cover their chest and back. This would protect them from possible spear wounds. Paul is commanding that Christians put on the breastplate (Gk., " *thorax* "; mas. Noun; the chest by implications a corselet, which protects the body on both sides from the neck to the middle of the body) of righteousness (Gk., " *dikaiosyne* "; fem. noun). This weapon protects the heart of the saints from such emotions that are provoked by fear, insecurities and trust. Righteousness is attained by God through Jesus Christ. There is nothing past, present nor future that could gain God's righteousness through anything done by the Christian's ability. The enemy would want the believer to believe that they must " do something " to attain or be righteous in God's sight. Righteousness is the character or quality of being right or just. Righteousness is found in God because of his love and His only begotten Son, Jesus Christ, who gave his life so that none would be lost. We experience God's righteousness through his

faithfulness and truthfulness. Being clothed in righteousness is like a man being impregnable (Barclay 183). Satan is the accuser of the brethren, in which case, he is just waiting for an opportunity to remind Christians of their wrong doings. As we are assured of the breastplate of righteousness, with God through Jesus Christ, we will be able to withstand the attacks of the enemy. It is through the righteousness of Christ that makes Christians worthy of right standing with God and not from one's own ability to be justified by their own doings.

Be Ready to Spread the Gospel of Peace (v. 15)

And with your feet fitted with the readiness that comes from the gospel of peace.

Roman soldiers wore boots referred to as caligae. These boots stood up against long distance as well as protected their feet. Paul is commanding Christians to walk this journey sharing good news about Jesus Christ. In agreement with Lee, some Christians seem to withstand any attack from Satan, because their feet are shod (Gk., “*hypodeo*”; *verb*) with the firm foundation of the gospel of peace (Lee 542). It seems like no matter what the enemy tries to say or do, they stand on the firm foundation of Gospel of peace (Gk., “*eirene*”, “*to bring peace*”; *reconcile*; “*to make*”; Heb., “*shalom*”). They always win. Satan's attacks do not shake them. One must study God's word, daily and consistently. This practice will prepare the Christian to be ready to spread the Gospel in and out of season. Preparation (Gk., “*hetoimasia*”; *noun*; “*to prepare*”) is the way that “leads to peace (salvation).” Preparation is also found in Eph 6: 15, “of having the feet shod

with the “ preparation” of the Gospel of peace. The Gospel itself is to be the firm footing of the believer, his walk being worthy of it and therefore a testimony regarding it.

Keep the faith (v. 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.

The soldiers used shields, also known as thereos, (Gk., “ *thyreos*”), which covered the entire front part of their body, not only for their own protection; however, when used with its fellow soldiers to form a wall, it allowed them the power of a greater protection as well as the ability to form a wall to push back the enemy. Paul commands that we are to walk in faith (Gk., “ *pistis*”; *fem. noun*). Walking in faith is a Christian’s life journey. Christians must see trials, tribulations and issues of life from God’s perspective and not their own. God promises that, “ all things will work out for the good, for those who love the Lord and are called according to His purpose for them” (Rom. 8: 28). Satan is good at inflating a circumstance making it appear greater than it is or ever was, which could cause one to doubt the presence of God and His protection. Paul is letting the saints know that they must have faith that God promises to provide protection during satanic attacks. With the shield of faith, they can quench the flaming darts of the evil (Gk., “ *ponēros*”; adjective) one.

Do Not Doubt Salvation (v. 17a)

Take the helmet of salvation.

The Roman soldier wore helmets to protect against any type of head injury. Paul is commanding Christians to never doubt their salvation received in Jesus Christ. The word helmet is used as a metaphor in this text and an analogy for symbolizing “ protection.” This word in its Greek transliteration is: *perikephalaia* (feminine noun). Satan knows that if he can convince one to believe the lies about their salvation, his chances of overcoming is greater. Satan wages war against the mind of a Christian with the purpose of causing one to doubt their salvation (Gk., “ *sōtērios*; adjective; “ the hope of (future) salvation”) through Jesus Christ. God’s truth declares that a Christian’s salvation is intact. It is by God’s grace through Jesus Christ that has guaranteed the salvation of God’s children. Ephesians 2: 8-9 declares, “ for it is by grace you have been saved, through faith—and this not from yourselves, it is the gift of God—not by works, so that no one can boast”.

Use the Word of God Against Satan (v. 17b)

And the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God.

Paul is commanding that the saints use the Word of God against Satan. The Word of God is the only offensive weapon in the armor. Jesus while in the wilderness used the Word of God against Satan, when He declared “ what was written.” Satan had no choice nor power, except to flee (Matt. 4: 4-11). It is the mention of God’s word against the enemy that causes the enemy to flee. He is unable to stand up against God’s truth, which is found in His word. Without the knowledge of God’s word and its power, one is defenseless against the attacks of the enemy.

Pray with all perseverance and intercession for all saints (v. 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 Lord's people.

Paul is commanding them to always pray, in the Spirit, with all types of prayers and requests. He commands them to be vigilant and pray for the other saints. Prayer should be continual, not sporadic and not an isolated act, but a habit (MacDonald 1953). Christian's prayers should not be selfish. There are plenty of opportunities to pray. "Praying without ceasing" should not be a challenge, as there are plenty reasons to pray (1 Thess. 5: 17).

Pray for leaders and their boldness to preach the word (vv. 19-20)

Pray also for me, that whenever I speak, words may be given me so that I will fearlessly make known the mystery of the gospel, for which I am an ambassador in chains. Pray that I may declare it fearlessly, as I should.

Paul is requesting that the Christians pray for him so that he speaks the truth about the Gospel of Jesus Christ, with a holy boldness. Christian leaders need prayers so that they may be strengthened and encouraged during the journey. Paul realized his need and the importance of being covered by the "prayers of the righteous", which avail much (James 5: 16). In Acts 28: 20, Paul, tells the Jews that "for the hope of Israel he is bound with this chain" (ten halusin tauten perkeimai) (Foulkes 180).

Application

Christians will experience many attacks from the enemy, in which case, they need to be equipped to overcome the attacks. Paul commands in Ephesians 6: 14-20 that Christians put on the “ full armor of God” so that they can withstand the attacks of the enemy, which are surely coming. It is the “ putting on of the full armor of God (i. e., daily)” that will result in victory over the attacks. Unfortunately, some Christians are not prepared for the spiritual warfare and therefore live defeated lives. Any piece of the armor that is missed will possibly result in casualties of a spiritual warfare.

There was a Christian lady who had seven children.

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