

verse 18, Paul goes on to say:

“...*With this in mind, be alert and always keep on praying for all the saints.*” (NIV)

Strong’s states that the Greek word that is translated as “*be alert*” means “*to be sleepless, keep awake, watch, be attentive, ready.*” Let us not forget that this statement is still in the context of *armor*. Paul is reminding the Christian to always be alert and always be watching for the schemes of the Devil to show themselves even among the saints.

Paul then asks them to pray for him with a very *specific* request in verses 19 and 20 of Ephesians 6.

¹⁹*Pray also for me, that whenever I open my mouth, words may be given me so that I will fearlessly make known the mystery of the gospel, ²⁰for which I am an ambassador in chains. Pray that I may declare it fearlessly, as I should.*” (NIV)

Even after describing in great detail this entire list of armor that Christians need to “wear,” Paul knows that prayer for each other is an absolutely necessary part of the armor and asks for prayers so that he will be able to declare the gospel “fearlessly.” The King James Version uses the word “boldly.” Paul had gone through many trials and was at the very time he was writing these words being held in chains. He, of all people realized that declaring the gospel was not an easy thing to do. He understood that even with being clothed in all of the armor that he had just listed, he still needed prayers for the courage to be bold and fearless.

Several years ago, the lead actor in a popular movie made the statement that “*There’s a peace only to be found on the other side of war. If that war should come I will fight it!*” Our war with Satan *has* come and God expects us to fight it. So the armor that Paul listed in Ephesians 6 is no less important for Christians today than it was for the Roman soldiers. It is however, of no use at all if we don’t put it on and join in the battle. It is said that on D-Day on Omaha Beach only 1/5th of the soldiers fired their weapons and as few as 450 did so consistently. Paul suffered *much* because he *boldly* defended and declared what he believed (II Cor 11:23-33). Does God expect anything less of us?

“It is written: ‘I believed; therefore I have spoken.’ With that same spirit of faith we also believe and therefore speak” (II Cor. 4:13 NIV)

“¹You then, my son, be strong in the grace that is in Christ Jesus. ²And the things you have heard me say in the presence of many witnesses entrust to reliable men who will also be qualified to teach others. ³Endure hardship with us like a good soldier of Christ Jesus.” (Eph. 2:1-3 NIV)

“Diligence” is a privately funded publication of:
Dennis and Sherri Owens — Cincinnati, Ohio
diligence@gorfsystems.com — <http://www.gorfsystems.com/diligence/>



DILIGENCE

“We want each of you to show this same diligence to the very end, in order to make your hope sure.” — Hebrews 6:11

A ministry of Dennis and Sherri Owens

Volume 3

April 1, 2004

Issue 4

The Devil, His Tricks And The Armor — Part Three — Continued

Ephesians 6:10-20 gives the faithful Christian a list of armor that will enable him or her “...*to stand against the wiles of the devil.*” In previous issues (which can be viewed on line at www.gorfsystems.com/diligence), we have already discussed verses 10 through 14. So we’ll begin our discussion for this issue with verse 15 of Ephesians 6.

“and with your feet fitted with the readiness that comes from the gospel of peace.” (NIV)

Paul has already mentioned the belt of truth and the breastplate of righteousness. He now says that the feet should be “...*fitted with the readiness that comes from the gospel of peace.*” It’s quite obvious that the shoes of a soldier must not only carry him many miles but also be comfortable. Wars have been won and lost because of the condition of the feet of the soldiers in the army. The historian Josephus described the shoes of the Roman soldier as “*all full of thick and sharp nails...*” (War of the Jews V6 1.8) so as to ensure a good grip. Many of the victories of Alexander the Great and Julius Caesar were due largely to the fact that the feet of the soldiers in their armies were so well shod that they could travel over very rough terrain at incredible speed. Soldiers need proper footwear not just for *defensive* reasons but also to go on the *offensive*. The goal in physical warfare is not just holding ground but advancing, not just survival but victory, not just standing firm but marching forward. The same is also true in *spiritual* warfare. The goal is not just survival but victory. The aim is not just to avoid defeat but to drive back the evil one and take territory away from him. Christians should be ready to stand firm and fight off Satan — be ready to move into enemy occupied territory, win victories for Jesus, and carry out the mission He has given us. To put it another way, Christians should not only resist Satan to avoid their own eternal damnation but they should also spread the message of eternal life to others — be on the *offense* with their Sword.

So Paul says that the feet of a soldier of Christ should be “...*fitted with the readiness that comes from the gospel of peace*” The King James Version says that the feet should be “...*shod with the preparation of the gospel of peace.*” Readiness? Preparation? According to Vine’s Expository Dictionary the Greek word translated these two ways “*has the meaning of firm footing or foundation*” Where does such readiness, preparation and firm footing come from? Paul

continued on page 2

says it “...comes from the gospel of peace.” In other words, the gospel provides the footing for everything we do. It is vital for *defense* and for *offense*. The “...gospel of peace...” enables us to stand firm and defend ourselves when Satan attacks. It also enables us to go on the offensive.

So does this somehow seem to be an oxymoron? How can Christians prepare their feet for *war* with the gospel of *peace*? How can footwear prepared from *peace* serve as boots for combat during war? How can war bring peace? In the previous issue we said that we put on the righteousness of Jesus Christ when we are immersed in the watery grave of baptism. By accepting Christ as our Lord and Savior we’re no longer on our own. Satan loses his ability to intimidate us when God is on our side. We become fearless warriors for God. Satan can and will attack our hearts, but if our feet are “*fitted with the readiness that comes from the gospel of peace*” our inner peace will stay strong. Remember that verse 10 said “...in *His mighty power*.” War against Satan is the only means to lasting peace and being at peace with God is what allows us to be *fearless* as we war against Satan. And once that war is won, we will have eternal peace and joy with no more grief or pain.

Then in verse 16 of Ephesians 6, Paul states;

“In addition to all this, take up the shield of faith, with which you can extinguish all the flaming arrows of the evil one.” (NIV)

Faith is described as the “shield” that will protect us from “...*the flaming arrows of the evil one*.” The soldier’s shield was a *defensive* weapon that was about four and one half feet tall. He would hide as much of his body behind it as he possibly could so that flaming arrows would not hit him or his armor. Satan constantly fires flaming arrows of temptation at Christians. So Paul is telling us that we’ll be able to “...*extinguish all the flaming arrows of the evil one*” if we “hide” behind our faith in Jesus Christ. We won’t become weakened from fear and unbelief during a barrage of Satan’s fiery darts if we hide behind the shield of faith in Him.

Let’s move on now to verse 17 of Ephesians 6.

“Take the helmet of salvation and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God.” (NIV)

The Greek word used in this verse for “take” is not the same as the one used in verses 13 and 16. This word is more frequently translated as “receive” and two times in the King James version as “accept.” So when Paul said to “take” the helmet of salvation he meant more than to just “carry it” or “wear it” as with the other pieces of armor. This word “take” implies something being *offered* to us that we can *receive* by our action of acceptance — which is our immersion in the watery grave of baptism. So Paul relates salvation to the helmet that a soldier wore. Those helmets were usually made of bronze and had cheek plates that extended well down the face. There was not much that could pierce a helmet. It was so heavy that it had an inside lining of fabric or sponge-like material to

make its weight bearable for the soldier to wear. It of course, protected the *most* vulnerable and vital part of the body — the head. The helmet of salvation then is for the Christian, the most basic and necessary protection. Being armed with such a protective piece of armor allows the Christian to remain fearless in the heat of battle with the enemy.

Then Paul in that same verse refers to “...*the sword of the Spirit which is the word of God*.” We’ve already been discussing the Sword throughout many of the articles in this series so we’ll not go into much detail here except to mention that the sword the Roman soldier used was a close range weapon and obviously used as an *offensive* weapon. The Sword of the Word, given by the Spirit is also for *us* to use as an *offensive* weapon. In Matthew chapter 4, Christ was tempted by Satan in the wilderness and He used the power of the Scriptures to resist and defeat His enemy. Scriptural arguments are the most powerful offensive weapon we have. God is doing the fighting through *us* when we answer the deceptions of Satan with the Word of God. Christians learn to conquer the enemy by understanding the Word and applying its life-changing truths to themselves and others and by obeying its commands.

The Sword of the Spirit is not the only offensive weapon mentioned by Paul in his list of armor. The second of two is listed in this next verse of Ephesians 6.

“¹⁸And 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.” (NIV)

That second offensive weapon is prayer. In this verse Paul states that there are three important aspects of praying — 1) praying in the Spirit, 2) praying on all occasions 3) praying with all kinds of prayers and requests.

Concerning praying in the Spirit, we know that Acts 2:38 tells us that we receive the “...*gift of the Holy Spirit*...” when we accept Christ through baptism. Romans 8:26 and 27 assures us that the Spirit will aid us in prayer.

“In the same way the Spirit also helps our weakness; for we do not know how to pray as we should, but the Spirit Himself intercedes for us with groanings too deep for words; and He who searches the hearts knows what the mind of the Spirit is, because He intercedes for the saints according to the will of God.” (NASB)

The second aspect of prayer that Paul mentions is that we are to pray “...*on all occasions*...” Persistence and vigilance are an important part of the prayer life of a Christian. I Thessalonians 5:17 tells us to “*pray without ceasing*.” Prayer is quite possibly *the* most important part of the arsenal available to the faithful Christian.

The third aspect of prayer that Paul mentions is that we should pray “...*all kinds of prayers and requests*” — not only prayers that honor and praise God but also prayers of request for personal wants or needs — *all kinds* of prayers. Then in