

Christ's New Community: Preparing for a Battle with an Old Enemy

The Shield of Faith

A small round shield, 2ft in diameter, looks something like a giant Frisbee, some made of leather or metal of some kind

This is a large rectangular shield 2.5 x 4.5 feet

Looked something like a door, large enough to shield the whole soldier. Was made of thick wood to deflect arrows. Enemy archers would put a cotton-like substance on them, dip them in pitch and shoot the arrows, even though the shield would deflect the arrow, the pitch would splatter and cause burns.

In order to defend against this, the Roman soldiers would cover their shields in leather. The pitch soaked arrows would hit the leather, sink in and often the flaming arrows would be extinguished. One soldier said that after a battle, these shields would often have many still smoldering arrows in them, they must of looked something like a smoldering porcupine.

What kind of flaming arrows does your enemy have in his quiver?

Arrow of tragedy

Loss of job, health, wealth, loss of friendship. He can only fire these with God's permission, but that does not lessen their impact.

Arrow of temptation

Not all temptation is from without, some is from within. Sometimes Satan fires arrows of temptation

Arrow of false teaching

2 Cor 11:13-15; Acts 20:29,30 1 Tim 4:1,2.

Arrow of persecution

Revelation 2:10, this puts pressure to quit on the believer

Arrow of subtle delusion

Look, you have nothing to fear, all is well, there is peace and prosperity

Arrow of discouragement

What is the defense against these arrows?

Faith—taking God at his word and responding accordingly; knowing and believing what God has said and in spite of circumstances to the contrary believing God. Faith in God's revealed Word and his promises is sufficient for anything in the devil's arsenal.

You know God's words.

God's Word has something to say about all these flaming arrows.

The Helmet of Salvation

Roman soldiers could wear leather or metal helmets, the whole head would be covered, only the mouth would be exposed.

Protect against just about anything except a large hammer. Stories abound of soldiers advancing into the battle with the sky filled with arrows and javelins, swords and axes.

The roman soldier was confident that he'd be OK if he had his helmet on

The helmet of salvation is that which brings confident security in the Christian warfare.

Salvation can be spoken of in three ways

Positional salvation, or Justification, Ephesians 2:8; Rom 5:1. This is where you are saved from the penalty of sin. This is a one time punctiliar

Progressive salvation or Sanctification; this is where you are being saved from the power of sin in your life, growth and change, Phil 1:6, 2 Peter 3:18. The Bible does not speak of sinless perfection in this life, but it does speak of progress.

Prospective salvation, or glorification; this is when you die and stand complete in Jesus Christ, completely holy in thought and deed, never to sin again, 1 Cor 1:8; 1 John 3:2; Heb 9:28.

Trusting in God's Word, I know I am eternally secure, I know that Rom 8:35-39 are true. I as a Christian can go into battle knowing that nothing can separate me from the Love of Christ. I know that the captain of my salvation fails not (Hebrews 13: 5,6). I know that he who began a work in me will carry it on to completion. I know... I am confident of God's work in my life, and I know that my future is secure.

The Sword of the Spirit

There are two swords the roman soldier might employ.

Longer sword, a broadsword, the length of a yardstick. Just fling it and heads would roll.

Here, the shorter sword, 6-18 inches long, this one requires more skill, but also could be more deadly.

The sword of the Spirit is the Word of God, a working knowledge of it provides for the believer to advance against the enemy.

It gives you power to invade the enemy's kingdom, Rom 1:16; 10:14, 15; Heb 4:12,13.

It gives you the power to change and to equip others to change; 2 Tim 3:15-17

How does one gain skill in the Scriptures?

Regular reading of the Scriptures, Psalm 119:99,100

Wresting with the Scriptures; working hard to understand them, 2 Tim 2:15

Meditating on the Scriptures, thinking about them in your "down times," Psalm 1:2

Practicing obedience in the Scriptures, James 1:25

Pray in the Spirit

There is much misunderstanding of prayer and prayer in the Spirit.

While we believe in the sovereignty of God, that God has determined the course and outcome of all events for his glory and the benefit of his children, we also believe that a sovereign God has chosen to work his sovereign will out in response to the sincere biblical prayers of his children. It is a conundrum to our minds, but nevertheless true!

Prayer is hard work

Prayer is talking to God, not him talking to you.

God speaks to us authoritatively and finally through his word, the Bible. We speak to him through prayer.

So what?

You understand the Christian's armor.

Now I can put these notes away and now I really get this stuff.

That is not enough. God wants you to work hard; to go into training to become a well-equipped, good soldier of Jesus Christ

Many of you will remember the end of the Cold war with the former Soviet Union.

One could have made an argument that the Soviet Union was the most powerful nation on the face of the earth only 25 years ago. But as the empire collapsed, many of her powerful weapons were rusting from misuse. Soviet submarines were literally rusting in drydock from misuse. God does not want that to happen to you.

God calls on you to put on the armor and use it regularly.