

Fuller details on the armour

• **Disciplines**

Paul is dealing with his last major topic in this letter: spiritual warfare. He has told his friends that they must be strong in the Lord and they must put on an armour provided for them. Verses 14–20 now give us fuller details concerning the armour.

• **Six pieces of armour**

It is a spiritual picture of Christian attentiveness to the procedures of living the godly life. It is necessary for the Christian to trust in the power of God. That was the point of Ephesians 6:10. But there are certain disciplines that have to be followed as well. Paul puts this in picture language. Resisting Satan is a matter of wearing and putting on spiritual armour.

• **Three already worn**

We notice that there are six pieces of armour. Three items of equipment are envisaged as already being worn. *'Stand therefore, having put the truth around your waist as a belt, and having put on the breastplate of righteousness'* ^{□1}, *and having your feet fitted with the readiness of the gospel of peace'* ^{□2}.

□1 6:14
□2 6:15

• **Three to put on or take up**

Then there are three pieces of armour that have to be put on in addition to the first three. *'In addition to all this, take up the shield of faith, with which you can extinguish all the burning arrows of the evil one'* ^{□1}. *Take the helmet of salvation and the sword of the Spirit which is the word of God'* ^{□2}.

□1 6:16
□2 6:17

Then Paul has something to say about prayer ^{□1}, but he does not use a piece of armour as an illustration of prayer.

□1 6:18-20

1. The belt of truth

1. **The first piece of armour is 'the belt of truth'**. This brings us to a question of interpretation. Are the pieces of armour something wholly God-given or are they aspects of Christian godliness. For example is 'the truth' to be taken as the truth **of the gospel**, or is it truthfulness of **character**, integrity? The answer is: these items of armour are God's armour. They are firstly pure **gifts** to us; only afterwards do they work themselves out in our own character.

• **The truth of the entire gospel message**

There are several reasons why this must be true.
(i) The picture language is taken from Isaiah ^{□1} where the items of equipment are pieces of armour worn by the divine warrior. They are aspects of the equipment of the Lord Jesus Christ given to us.
(ii) Our truthfulness, righteousness and peace, are surely not capable of standing up to Satan's devices. Christian experience has to be involved in biblical interpretation. Paul's letters are practical; they work out in the way we live. Anyone who thinks he can stand against Satan in the strength of his own morality has not done much standing against Satan!

□1 see Isaiah 11:5; 59:17

2. The breastplate of righteousness

The 'belt of truth' is the entire gospel. It is 'the truth' that sets us free, the whole counsel of God. No one is ready to resist Satan's attacks who is not held together by God's entire gospel-message.

• **The righteousness of Christ – reckoned ours**

2. **Second is 'the breastplate of righteousness'**. This is supremely the righteousness of Jesus Christ reckoned to be ours. Philippians 3:4b–9 is the best exposition. There is righteousness over our lives which comes to us by the faithfulness of Jesus Christ. It is first 'reckoned' to us. When we trust in Jesus Christ. God does not 'reckon' or 'count' sin to us ^{□1}. To him that does **nothing** but believes on God who justifies the ungodly, his faith is reckoned for righteousness. It is this '**reckoned**' righteousness that covers us.

□1 see Romans 4:7–8

It is our safety when Satan attacks us. It specially covers our chest; it is a breastplate. The ancient man or woman thought of his feelings and emotions as being inside his chest. When you are emotional or worried your chest feels tight and your breathing is affected. But God has provided something to protect these inner feelings: the breastplate of Christ's righteousness. Of course we then go on to work out the righteousness in the way we live, but it is first and foremost a gift from God.

3. Shoes of peace

- Ready to speak the gospel to anyone, anywhere

3. **Next is to be fitted with 'the shoes of peace'**. When I have the gospel 'strapped on to me', I am at peace with God and am ready to speak the gospel of peace to anyone anywhere.

It must be noticed that these first three items of armour are fixed on at all times. They do not have to be 'taken up' in time of spiritual attack. They should be fixed on to our lives long before any special attack of Satan and his forces.

4. Shield of faith

- Protected by God's character, promises and power

4. **The shield of faith**. To hold up the shield of faith means to apply your faith to any particular problem that comes along. It means to hold up what you know from God's word and stand behind it for protection. The large shield of the Romans was as big as a door. You protect yourself by standing behind the character of God, the promises of God, the power of God. These things that you know are true – you use them as a protective shield.

5. Helmet of salvation

- Confident expectation of victory

5. The **helmet of salvation** is our expectation of salvation, our sure and certain knowledge that in this battle victory is certain. The Roman officers who wore brightly coloured feathers on their helmets were famous for their victories. The helmet made them proud to be in the armies of Rome. The Christian 'holds his head high' as one of Christ's soldiers. He knows his Commanding Officer is with him. Victory is sure.



6. Sword of the Spirit

- God's word quoted and used as a sword

6. **The sword of the Spirit** consists of particular parts of God's word. 'The truth' of 6:14 is the entire gospel; the 'word of God' in 6:17 is special parts of God's word quoted and used as a sword. Jesus used God's word in this way ^{¶1}.

In the midst of battle the Christian has some blessings fixed on to him. And then there are certain things he does in order to stand against the devil. The last three items require watchfulness, wakefulness. The first three are permanent fixtures; the second three are activities which we have to 'take up' and 'put on'.

^{¶1} see Matthew 4:4, 7, 10

		<p>Dr Michael Eaton is highly respected internationally as a theologian, author, preacher and teacher. He lives in Kenya where he is one of the leaders of the Chrisco Fellowship. His <i>Preaching Through The Bible</i> (PTTB) books are highly popular worldwide. Michael Eaton puts the theological and practical meaning of the Bible in a clear and down-to-earth way so that what is written can be easily understood by the reader.</p> 
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