

THE DIVINE ARMOR



Inspired by YAH

THE DIVINE ARMOR

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The Helmet of Salvation

“Put on the whole armor of God, that ye may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil. For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities and powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places.” (Ephesians 6:11,12)

This is a very well known passage to most Christians, as are the verses which follow it, Ephesians 6:13-17, which describe the “Whole Armor of God.” This is a collection of concepts, symbolically likened unto physical armor, which would maintain a faithful follower of Christ in even the most extreme of situations. As with Yahshua, Paul spoke in parables, drawing imagery from the battle gear worn by the Roman soldiers which were a common sight to all of the “civilized world” in that day. Anyone reading these words would know fully well the principles behind the illustrations, and could intelligently apply what he or she had learned from the resulting mental picture.

Let us therefore take a deeper look at these spiritual items mentioned, and perhaps by examining the details of the metaphor, we may also be able to appreciate the simple, yet brilliant comparisons used by the writer of that book. Though the list as it is given begins with the “loins girt about with truth,” (Eph 6:14) I will begin here “at the top” as it were with the helmet. A believer would do well to look first to his/her head in these confusing times.

“And take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God.” (Eph 6:17)



The first question I will ask is: Why a helmet? Why could not the loins be girt with salvation? Why not have a breastplate of salvation to protect the chest? Wouldn't salvation make a good shield? If studying the Scriptures teaches us anything, it's that Yah has a reason for everything He does, and can therefore be trusted implicitly, not only with our earthly lives, but also with our eternal existence. There is therefore a good reason salvation is a helmet, and that very reason is because salvation (our eternal existence) is based upon trust.

Trust, faith... all of these begin in the mind. The book of Proverbs has much to say on the subject of wisdom. “Happy is the man that findeth wisdom, and the man that getteth understanding. For the merchandise of it is better than the merchandise of silver, and the gain thereof than fine gold. She is a tree of life to them that lay hold upon her: and happy is everyone that retaineth her.” (Pro 3:13,14&18) Even more emphatically, the sage declares, “Wisdom is the principal thing; therefore get wisdom: and with all thy getting get understanding. She shall give to thine head an ornament of grace: a crown of glory shall she deliver to thee. Hear, O my son, and receive my sayings; and the years of thy life shall be many.” (Pro 4:7,9&10)

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How important wisdom is! It is compared to a most desirable woman, and moreover she bears many gifts, including a happy and long life, riches (both earthly and spiritual) and honor (3:17); not to mention the crown of life itself, as Paul alludes to in what was probably his final letter: 2 Timothy. “I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith: Henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, shall give me at that day: and not to me only, but unto all them also that love His appearing.” (2 Tim 4:7,8) What confidence! Paul was not yet dead, and surely the threat of death must have been a trying ordeal, yet he did not even consider the possibility that he might deny Christ and save his life.

Already had he claimed the victory over this world, though still in it, and looked forward with unshakeable faith to an unwavering final chapter in his ministry, that of sealing his testimony. Who wants to die? But Paul was ready, for he had wisdom enough to know that true peace and true joy can only be found in a world ruled by Yahshua the Christ, and not it’s current, wretched usurper.

So, where do we get this wisdom? Where do we find this wonderful lady, to persuade her to dwell with us all our days, giving us peace in this life (as much as it is possible to have) and confidence even in the face of death and judgment? Naturally, Proverbs has the answer to this as well: “The fear of the Lord is the beginning of knowledge: but fools despise wisdom and instruction.” (Pro 1:7) It has a beginning, you see, and that beginning is a choice, a decision.

The word “fool” is used often in the book of Proverbs, but it does not usually denote someone who is mentally deficient or slow of understanding. Rather, the word “fool” is translated from five or so different Hebrew words, including: *peti*, *kesil*, *les*, *nabal*, *eviyl*, and so on. Each of these has a slightly different connotation, but all have a common element. Whereas a wise person follows a certain path, that of humility, caution and self control, a fool walks another road, adorned by pride, haste and self gratification. A fool may indeed be clever, but all his wonderful resources are employed in fruitless ventures, in seeking ways to justify a spirit of rebellion.

The wise man’s path, righteousness, has at its end life. The fool’s path, folly, has its end in dust, ashes and sorrow – if he is lucky. But someone may choose which path to follow. “A wise man will hear, and will increase learning; and a man of understanding shall attain unto wise counsels.” (Pro 1:5) Like misery, wisdom also loves company, and one who wishes to walk the path of righteousness will seek after wisdom, understanding, and knowledge which has its beginning in respect and reverence for Yah the Father.

Salvation is a helmet, because it protects the head, the brain, the seat of the mind. This is where the decision is made – salvation is a free gift, and given to all, but it is our choice whether to accept it or reject it. Christ Yahshua died for everyone on earth, but not all will stand and say, “Thank you, Lord, I accept.” Why is the grace of Yah not as manifest as in the days of the apostles? Why are the prophecies slow in coming, and the healing so rare? Jeremiah tells us: “... thou hast polluted the land with thy whoredoms [spiritual unfaithfulness, in this case] and with thy wickedness. Therefore the showers have been withholden, and there hath been no latter rain; and thou hadst a whore’s forehead, thou refusedst to be ashamed.” (Jer 3:2,3)

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It is upon the forehead that mankind will be sealed for Yah (Rev 7:3) or marked for the Beast, if one chooses his way (Rev 13:16). It is an individual's choice which determines his eternal destiny. "For [prayer] is good and acceptable in the sight of God our Savior; who will have all men to be saved, and to come unto the knowledge of the truth." (1 Tim 2:4) Yah desires that we all choose righteousness, the path of knowledge, and come to accept His saving grace. But we are not slaves, and He will force no one into Heaven. We must have "faith unfeigned" the apostle writes (1 Tim 1:5); that is, a true and honest trust in Christ and Him who sent the sacrifice.

Notice that while a helmet leaves the front open, for a soldier to see, it also protects the **back** of the head. This is faith – that we do all we know is right, acting with earnest effort on what we can perceive, but we also trust that Yah will preserve us against that which we have no control over; that which we cannot see or prepare for. Salvation does not blind us, but it covers us, and guards us from unforeseen danger. Salvation is a helmet – it is for the highest place on the body, the head, and it protects all the body from assaults directed downwards unto us, against "spiritual wickedness in high places."

This is the "Seal of God" in our foreheads – that we have intelligently, completely and consistently chosen the Righteousness of Christ for our clothing, forsaking the folly of our past lives, and moving on, confident, as was Paul, that we are done with doubt and a diluted faith. Faith, John writes, is the Victory over the world (1 John 5:4) and it leads to obedience to the law of love (5:3), ultimately resulting in eternal life (5:11). True faith, based upon constant love, is that which enables us to keep ourselves separate from the desolation of known sin, and even the "smell of smoke," leaving us free to claim eternal life even before death, as did Christ (John 16:33,17:4), Paul (2 Tim 4:7), Stephen (Acts 7:56), Peter (2 Peter 3:13), John (1 John 5:18,19) and Jude (Jude 24). **This is the gift of prophecy at its highest level!** This is when we know we shall NOT fail nor be discouraged, and when we grasp the victory and receive the seal.

Look again upon the helmet:



Notice the mark upon the forehead:



This stamp of approval from the Father bears His Name, and the authority by which He claims us as His own. Request the study The Seal of God for more details on this symbol.

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The helmet is our covering, our protection and our promise of a coming covering for our heads, the crown of life. It is the guardian of our senses, as the head contains our majority of sensory organs, and enables us to see the “straight paths” for our feet (Heb 12:13) which our Savior graciously provides for us. Some Christians have listed the “major” sins to be Pride, Envy, Sloth, Wrath, Greed, Lust and Gluttony. Of course, we know that there are no “major” sins, per se, and the “soul which sinneth, it shall die,” (Ezek 18:4) but these are perhaps useful categories we can use to examine the natural results of the real problem – a rebellious spirit.

If a man cannot be saved by works, how can he therefore be damned thereby? Rather, if a man is righteous, he will do good works naturally. Similarly, if a man is yet to accept the grace of Christ, he will sin – naturally. The difference is the Grace of Yah, and it is obtained by us choosing to accept it. Of the “Seven Deadly Sins” above, we see that of them all, Gluttony is that which is most associated with the senses. This is a tendency towards unrestrained indulgence, not only in food (which is the most common modern meaning), but in all aspects of life. While the Spirit counsels “every man that striveth for the mastery is temperate in all things,” (1 Cor 9:25) “The fool hath said in his heart, ‘There is no God.’” (Psalms 14:1) and rushes headlong into getting all he can out of this life.

If such is the case, he has his reward (and no more) in the pale and insipid pleasures of the fallen earth. But we, who have the Helmet of Salvation, we look forward by faith to a better country. We need only abandon our previous “forehead” and choose to accept the seal of Victory. We need only decide that life is better than death, righteousness better than folly, and Yah a better ruler than Satan. “And this is life eternal, that they might know thee, the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom thou hast sent.” (John 17:3) You can have this gift NOW, if you choose to accept it. You also may put on the helmet of salvation and watch with joy as you gain access to the other pieces of armor. Who will be protected in the coming days of wrath? “And I saw another angel ascending from the east, having the seal of the living God, and he cried with a loud voice to the four angels, to whom it was given to hurt the earth and the sea, saying ‘Hurt not the earth, neither the sea, nor the trees, till we have sealed the servants of our God in their foreheads.’” (Rev 7:2,3) “For the grace of God that bringeth salvation hath appeared to all men,” (Titus 2:11) “For He saith, ‘I have heard thee in a time accepted, and in the day of salvation have I succoured thee,’ behold, now is the accepted time; behold, **now** is the day of salvation.” (2 Cor 6:2)

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The Breastplate of Righteousness

“Put on the whole armor of God, that ye may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil. For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities and powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places.” (Ephesians 6:11,12)

In this second section, we move a bit further downward. Salvation, we have seen, is a choice, and is therefore represented as a helmet, a protection for the mind, the forehead. So what about righteousness? That’s fairly important for a Christian to have, certainly. “Thou lovest righteousness, and hatest wickedness: therefore God, thy God, hath anointed thee with the oil of gladness above thy fellows.” (Psalms 45:7) And what is this anointing the psalmist is speaking of? It fills us with gladness, it seems, and it exalts us above the station of an ordinary person. But we must take care here, not to delude ourselves into thinking that we have earned this position of our own merits.

Noah, Hebrews 11:7 tells us, became “heir of the righteousness which is by faith.” “But we are all as an unclean thing, and all our righteousnesses are as filthy rags; and we do fade as a leaf; and our iniquities, like the wind, have taken us away.” (Isaiah 65:4) So what shall we do, then? “For the Son of man shall come in the glory of His Father with His angels; and then He shall reward every man according to his works.” (Matt 16:27) Since “all... have come short of the glory of God,” (Romans 3:23) aren’t we all in trouble? Well, that is what the sacrifice of Christ was for, to provide us a way of salvation.

And as we accept this salvation, and put on this spiritual “helmet” sealing and protecting our choice, we also lay aside our previous filthy rags, and “white robes were given unto every one of them; and it was said unto them that they should rest yet for a little season.” (Rev 6:11) Two things become clear here. First, there is a call to a deeper understanding of the Sabbath. The connection between the 7th day and the Victory is this – that on the 7th Day, Yah rested, because all the works were completed. All that was to be done was done, and there was nothing else to do. All creation was perfect, and so there was rest. So it is with us, when we have claimed the Victory in Christ, we come to that understanding, that all the work was done, and completed at the cross. And there is nothing else for us to do but rest. Once a week, we have a most important reminder of this blessed provision.

The second thing that is revealed by this statement is that the robes were given to the saints. Those who are redeemed put on clothing not their own. In fact, they put on the Righteousness of Christ, “I will greatly rejoice in the Lord, my soul shall be joyful in my God; for He hath clothed me in the garments of salvation, He hath covered me with the robe of righteousness, as a bridegroom decketh himself with ornaments, and as a bride adorneth herself with her jewels.” (Isa 61:10) Our deficiencies are covered with the Righteousness of the Redeemer, and we are thus equipped to stand in the day of judgment.

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Our very name is changed when we put on this robe, “In those days shall Judah be saved, and Jerusalem shall dwell safely; and this is the name wherewith she shall be called, “THE LORD OUR RIGHTEOUSNESS.” (Jer 33:15) We are not to put off the name that Yah has given us to bear. The name we have as an organization, as a church, is vital to our connection with Christ. We cannot deny the title He has given us to bear, or we deny His authority over us, and we thereby deny Him. The Lord is the righteousness of His people, not that we have earned it, but because we have chosen the free gift of salvation, and been clothed in righteousness.

Now, turning to the armor, we see righteousness not called a robe, but rather, “Stand therefore, having your loins girt about with truth, and having on the breastplate of righteousness.” (Eph 6:14)



As does a robe, the breastplate covers the main body, the largest and so perhaps the most vulnerable place on a warrior. And whereas a robe is a garment for a time of peace, so now it is a solid, secure object, which can protect us from both the front and the back. Salvation is a choice, and Righteousness is the condition which results from it – a condition of the heart.

If we are wearing a helmet, we can't see it. We don't always “feel” that we have salvation, we don't always have the emotional confirmation that Yah is with us. Yet the knowledge of our decision is what gives us the constant assurance. Righteousness, however: we can look down and see that, spiritually speaking. “But in every nation he that feareth Him, and worketh righteousness, is accepted with Him.” (Acts 10:35) Righteousness is connected to actions. “Even so faith, if it hath not works, is dead, being alone. Was not Abraham our father justified by works, when he had offered Isaac his son upon the altar? And the scripture was fulfilled, which saith, ‘Abraham believed God, and it was imputed unto him for righteousness: and he was called the friend of God.’” (James 3:17,21,23)

Abraham's faith, and the resulting condition of his heart, allowed him to do the required actions, to undertake the most painful trial of going forth to sacrifice his son. By faith, because he “believed God,” he was granted the garment of righteousness, but this showed itself by his works. A condition of his accepting the covering was obedience. The undeserved grace of Yah was his to wear, because he believed AND obeyed.

The head is higher in the body than the heart. Even so: emotions are good, and we would not be human if we did not have them, but if we allow them to rule us, we have a serious problem. Those readers with quicker eyes will notice that the date I post this is February 14th, so let us talk about the heart, for a while, on this Valentine's Day.

To a natural man, “The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked. Who can know it?” But the redeemed will have prayed, “Create in me a clean heart, O God; and renew a right spirit within me.” (Psalms 51:10) A man who has accepted the grace freely offered, and put on the

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helmet of salvation, will become aware of higher principles than desires of the flesh. For the greater love, the love that Yah desires he have, someone may need to put away the desires of his heart, following his forehead rather than his chest. This is a most painful process, and all are called to bear their cross, and for this reason, we are not left defenseless.

The Lord becomes our Righteousness, and we are not given a flexible, yielding covering like chain mail – but rather a plate: a sturdy armor with which to hide the scars that living in this world will naturally cause. The heart may be desperately wicked (or at least we may have memories of a deceitful heart), but it is also soft, and easily injured. It can be injured from the front – an underserved criticism, perhaps, or a temptation to the senses. It can also be wounded from behind – a sharp and sudden reminder of one’s past. But “My grace is sufficient for thee,” saith the Messiah, and the breastplate of righteousness, our concern and resulting actions in the best interest of others, protects us from both of these assaults.

As inflexible as plate armor is, it also leaves the arms free to move, and it does not restrict movement of the legs either. It does not imprison our humanity; it does not transform us into cold, unfeeling beings, cut off from emotion. Quite the opposite – it strengthens us instead to deal with a deeper level OF emotions, and gives us the freedom to act on our feelings, to help ourselves and others as best we know how. If we follow our hearts only, with no regard for principles and common sense, we will assuredly do more harm than good. The breastplate gives us a layer of protection, so we have time to weigh the counsels of our hearts, before we act upon them.

Look again upon the breastplate:



Notice the mark upon the chest:



This the seal that Yah places upon the body of the believer. The lion is a symbol of strength, mastery, royalty and courage. The strength and the royalty are not our own, we are rather “heirs” to the kingdom, and partakers of the strength that was in Yahshua be His divinity. But the mastery is ours to attain, though also by His grace and empowerment, and the courage is also a decision we must make.

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In these last days, we are told, the faithful prophesy. The spirit of Yah is poured out upon all flesh, and the work which closes up this chapter of earth's history will be accompanied by miracles as in the days of the Apostles (see Joel 2:28-32, 3:14-16). We who have claimed salvation stand ready to give the earth Heaven's final testimony, and when there is faith enough upon the earth, there will be healing of the sick and raising of the dead (Rev 11:11). We stand ready to work Yah's righteousness. But we need to DO in order to become ready.

The apostles spent time with Christ, watching Him heal and calming storms. When He therefore "called unto Him the twelve, and began to send them forth two by two; and gave them power over unclean spirits," they went. They were FAMILIAR with the healing, and with the casting out of demons. "And they went out, and preached that men should repent, and they cast out many devils, and anointed with oil many that were sick, and healed them." (Mark 6:7,12,13) So it is with us, as we study the Word of Yah daily, and meditate on His ways, we become familiar with Him.

I have heard it said that some Christians may be a single act of obedience away from receiving the anointing they were promised. Some have all the knowledge of the Scriptures, all the insights of the Spirit, certainly more than I now do. But if they do not act upon it, if they do not begin to practice works of faith and obedience, can they be of any use?

"But what think ye? A certain man had two sons; and he came to the first, and said, 'Son, go work today in my vineyard.' He answered and said, 'I will not,' but afterward he repented, and went. And he came to the second, and said likewise. And he answered and said, 'I go, sir,' and went not. Whether of them twain did the will of his father?' They say unto him, 'The first.' Jesus saith unto them, 'Verily I say unto you, that the publicans and the harlots go into the kingdom of God before you.'" (Matt 21:28-31)

Acting on one's faith takes courage. Having the knowledge is not enough. "Therefore to him that knoweth to do good, and doeth it not, to him it is sin." (James 4:17) We must not only be hearers of the Word, but doers thereof. For this reason Righteousness is a breastplate, covering our hearts, and sealed with the mark of a lion. We are led by principle, not feelings, for indeed, "we walk by faith, not by sight" (2 Cor 5:7) since "faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen." (Heb 11:1) It takes courage to believe in that which we have not seen, but Christ encourages us, "Blessed are they that have not seen, and yet have believed." (John 20:29)

Let us not be that "one act of obedience" away from where Yah has called us to be. Let us not be content with simply being "better" than we were before we were called. It is ours to claim the righteousness of Christ, and to put away the old corrupt desires after the flesh alone, and to step into the place, which Christ has gone ahead of us to prepare. By our faith, we DO have that power to do always that which pleases the Father. We therefore stand, having on the breastplate of righteousness.

Of those that are called the "seven deadly sins," (Pride, Envy, Sloth, Wrath, Greed, Lust and Gluttony), we find that of these, Greed is the primary condition of the heart. Wrath and Envy may also be associated with the emotions, but it is greed, seeking the good of our selves before that of others, which is in the most obvious opposition to righteousness. Righteousness seeks first to have us fulfill the best good of others, losing sight of our own desires in order to be faithful servants to

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our fellow man. Greed, and it's other name, selfishness, turns our best efforts inward, and the gifts which Yah has given to us for the edification of others are wasted.

“How long shall this be in the heart of the prophets that prophesy lies? Yea, they are prophets of the deceit of their own heart.” (Jer 23:27) Even the best gifts of Yah, if not protected by the breastplate of righteousness, will be perverted by the natural heart of he that has received it, and by his greed, both he and his followers shall be overcome. But this need not be the case. The second item of armor is as free as the first, and when one chooses Salvation and puts on the helmet thereof, Righteousness is not far behind. Salvation is a **choice**, and righteousness is the **step** that results from it.

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The Girding of Truth

“Put on the whole armor of God, that ye may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil. For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities and powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places.” (Ephesians 6:11,12)

Although I began this series with the Helmet of Salvation, this is not the first item that Paul listed in the Ephesians passage. The first object listed there pertains to truth, an eternal concept, and perhaps the most basic to Christian understanding. “In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.” (John 1:1) And Christ prayed, “Sanctify them through thy truth: thy Word is truth.” (John 17:17) The very Word of Yah is truth, for by His Word was all creation spoken into existence (Gen 1:3, Psalms 33:6, John 1:3). This is perhaps the first thing a Christian needs to know; Yah is truth, and His Word is truth.

But why? Why does this need to come first, and why is truth the first principle of the Divine Armor to be mentioned by Paul? The reason is because everything else, even Salvation's helmet, depends upon faith to be of use. We need to believe such things exist – that they are true – and we need to believe we can have them. How can anything else make sense without this? The Bible teaches that without faith, it is impossible to please God or serve Him, and this is also very clear: “So then faith cometh by hearing, and hearing **by the Word of God.**” (Rom 10:17). Fear of the Lord may be the beginning of knowledge, so say the Proverbs, but unless we know the truth about Yah, and that He IS truth, we may as well say, with the hardhearted Pharaoh of Egypt, “Who is the Lord, that I should obey His voice and let Israel go? I know not the Lord, neither will I let Israel go.” (Exodus 5:2)

Truth is the key to our eternity, and is vital to standing confidently before the Throne. “And take not the word of truth utterly out of my mouth; for I have hoped in thy judgments.” (Psa 119:43) Did not the apostles teach us to approach the Father with boldness through Christ? Did they not declare that we were to have confidence in our salvation? Even more to the point, is not truth one of the major aspects of our “new nature” as a child of Yah? Of those who are ultimately redeemed from the earth, among the other passages describing them, we find this: “And in their mouth was found no guile: for they are without fault before the throne of God.” (Rev 14:5) The saints must live in an atmosphere of truth, for where truth is, there also is the Father.

Lies are part of the old nature, that which was crucified with Christ, as Paul explains in Galatians 2:20. In another letter, he writes to believers saying, “Lie not one to another, seeing that ye have put off the old man with his deeds; and have put on the new man, which is renewed in knowledge after the image of Him that created him.” (Col 3:9,10) How easy it is to understand! God is truth, and we who serve Him, therefore, will also be born of truth, and act upon truth, and speak truth. If we first acknowledge that Yah is true, we are only then able to trust Him, and to put on other parts of the armor. Truth must first convict us of our need to be saved from our sins; for it is indeed true that we all need Christ Yahshua if we wish to live and never die.

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“Stand therefore, having your loins girt about with truth, and having on the breastplate of righteousness.” (Eph 6:14)



Loins are perhaps not the primary target of an attacking enemy during a battle. However, any man will tell you it is probably his least favorite spot to be hit. A blow to the arm, or leg, or even the chest, will not necessarily end a fight. But if we have a certain area of our body take damage, we will quickly start waving a white flag. To leave this area exposed is to render every other protective object we are wearing useless against an enemy such as we have, who is able to tempt in **all** ways.

Loins are the part of the body concerned with reproduction, for both the male and female. A “child of one's loins” refers to direct offspring. In the spiritual sense, reproduction deals largely with gaining brethren for the Kingdom. “Sing, O barren, thou that didst not bear; break forth into singing, and cry aloud, thou that didst not travail with child: for more are the children of the desolate than the children of the married wife, saith the Lord.” (Isa 54:1) This is echoed, in terms of witnessing, by Paul in Galatians 4:27. If we are to reproduce fruitfully in the spiritual sense, we must have “loins girt about with truth.” Our message of Christ must be without a hint of deception or self-seeking tendencies. What greater reward can there be than knowing we have been an instrument in the eternal salvation in someone as important as ourselves?

By witnessing, we bring ourselves life. As it was done unto us, so we must do unto others in every good thing. Every other part of the body is for the body's own sake: the chest, the legs, the arms... but the loins give life to others, and for this reason, Paul declares that truth, the most basic of the Heavenly principles, must cover this aspect of our beings. Nothing is arbitrary in the Word of Yah. Even when speaking of defending ourselves against Satan, the writer, under the inspiration of the Spirit, is calling us to be faithful witnesses to the glory and saving grace of Yahshua. What soldier is for his own benefit? What armed man stands alone on a battlefield? We must, even as we battle, remember our purpose, our true cause. We are here to serve others.

“But he that is greatest among you shall be your servant.” (Mat 23:11) Naturally this takes humility. “And He said, 'Verily I say unto you, except ye be converted, and become as little children, ye shall not enter into the kingdom of Heaven. Whosoever therefore shall humble himself as this little child, the same is greatest in the kingdom of heaven.’” (Mat 18:3,4) Someone who is seeking the Kingdom of Heaven merely for his own glory, or to escape judgment for the salvation of himself alone will not be able to do this. The twin of one such as this is Judas, who will betray the brethren when tribulations are near. Read the record of the last supper to see this scenario acted out in dramatic fashion.

The remedy to this, the key to true humility, is to understand only the truth. “For the Son of man is come to save that which was lost.” (Mat 18:11) We are all equally deserving of death, for as long as we hold onto the sinful nature that we inherited from Adam's “loins,” we are out of harmony with love, and out of harmony with all reality. But Christ bids us to take our burdens to

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Him, who will bear them for us, and pay the penalty for sin. Knowing this truth, and realizing our true selves, as fallen beings in need of a Savior; we will find that humility is a natural result of beholding ourselves through Yah's eyes. Only then will our offspring be numerous.

After Adam and Eve sinned (Gen 3:7), their first instinct was to cover their nakedness. Before this, “they were both naked, the man and his wife, and they were not ashamed.” (Gen 2:25) It was not until a lie entered into their lives by the words of the serpent in Genesis 3:3 that they felt the need to be shielded. A lie will uncover our nakedness, it will expose the natural, sinful man, no matter how good our motive may seem to be at the time. Adam's second recorded sentence after falling was already mixed with the poison of deception, “The woman whom thou gavest to be with me, she gave me of the tree, and I did eat.” Not an outright falsehood, perhaps, but already he was seeking to justify his error by passing the blame. There was “guile found in his mouth.”

But unto the serpent this promise was made, “And I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed: it shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise his heel.” (Gen 3:15) Yes, there will be trouble for the honest and righteous in this life, but it is as a bruise to the heel, they are “light afflictions,” as Paul calls it. But as for the liar, as for the followers of Satan, their wound will be to the head, and it will be a fatal blow. But see again references to reproduction. The woman's “seed” and Satan's offspring would be at war. The very last book of the Bible, Revelation, tells of this. “And the dragon was wroth with the woman, and went to make war with the remnant of her seed, which keep the commandments of God, and have the testimony of Jesus Christ.” (Rev 12:17)

Yah clothed the nakedness of the first couple after their fall with animal skins (Gen 3:21), and so it is for the lovers of truth in the last days, for we are clothed with Christ, the Word, for the Word is truth. Mary conceived Christ by the Holy Spirit, and so will our lives be made perfect, and Christ-like, only in conjunction with this Spirit, which is called, in John chapter 16, “The Comforter, the Spirit of truth” who will “guide you into all truth.” (John 16:7,13) The Girding of Truth is a call to be faithful witnesses, having the honest testimony of Christ Yahshua for the salvation of souls, including our own.

As we look more closely at the girding:



We notice the mark upon the belt:



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So far, we have seen an image of a man upon the helmet of salvation and a lion upon the breastplate of righteousness. Now, on the girding of truth, we see a bull. In many ancient cultures, the bull (or calf) was a symbol of fertility. Aside from the now obvious association with loins, there is also a deeper, Scriptural meaning. Though we haven't gotten to the Eagle yet, the four beings mentioned here are representations of the aspects of Yah. The four angels which stand around the throne in Revelation 4:7, Ezekiel 1:10 and Ezekiel 10:14.

Of the four, the Bull is the only creature that is offered as a sacrifice. When the prodigal son returns home, a calf is slain in celebration. For sin offerings in the atonements, a bullock (castrated bull) was used as a substitute for the transgressor, as was also the case during the dedication of a priest (Lev 8:14). Thus the bull is intimately associated with both reproduction and matters of life and death. As a lamb is the symbol of innocence slain in the death of Christ, so is the bull a representation of the life-giving vigor, which was similarly spilled for our sakes.

It was the consumption of a bull by heavenly flames on Elijah's altar (1 Kings 18:30-39) that demonstrated to the Israelites who the true God was, Yah or Baal. Before the sacrifice the prophet prayed, "Hear me, O Lord, hear me, that this people may know that thou are the Lord God, and that thou hast turned their hearts back again." (1 Kings 18:37) So it will be with us, as we go to prepare the way for the coming of Christ, as we go forth to tell the **truth** about our holy and gracious God. But we must remember as we do so that we are humble and honest messengers of the King, doing all things without deception, undue secrecy or falsehoods of any kind, "For the word of the Lord is right, and all His works are done in truth." (Psalms 33:4)

One may notice that "Lying" is not listed among the seven deadly sins, as they are called by some theologians. The principles of Pride, Envy, Sloth, Wrath, Greed, Lust and Gluttony do not seem to be directly connected with deception. Indeed, a lie can be used to justify any of these, and denial is the very language of the unrepentant. We find, however, that none of these sins ARE lies in themselves, except for one. Pride may be based upon actual merits; envy is the desire of things not our own; a lazy person may be quite honest about his sloth, and the wrathful, greedy and gluttonous may always find reasons to justify their actions without resorting to direct trickery.

But Lust begins in the mind. Indeed, it remains there until it acts itself out by some other sin. It is an aspect of both envy and greed that is inherently based upon a lie. By the word "lust," the Scripture does not merely indicate sexual covetousness, and it is often a difficult concept to separate from envy, particularly in modern language. Lust is a mental addiction, a habitual fantasizing about things or people that are not our own. To "look upon a woman with lust," is not merely to acknowledge that there is beauty in physical attributes, for "God created them male and female," (and we need only read the Song of Solomon to realize we were intended to be appealing to each other within the proper context) but to look with lust is to willfully harbor desires which have no basis in righteousness.

As you see, the concepts of the armor build upon each other. The choice to claim salvation leads to a condition of righteousness, and upon taking that step, one becomes a witness to and vessel of the truth as it is in Christ (but that same truth must **first** draw us, which is why it is listed first by Paul). But if we cling to our lusts, the desires of the flesh, have we truly died to our former

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selves? To indulge our lust is to still be living as the “old man!” “For the flesh lusteth against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh: and these are contrary the one to the other: so ye cannot do the things that ye would.” (Gal 5:16) Lust is the lie behind every “work of the flesh” described in Galatians 5:19-21. It is a denial of the death of self to sin, which the Word declares that a Christian WILL have experienced. One who walks knowingly after his lusts denies Christ's sacrifice, and if he continues in it, he will have lied to the Spirit itself, the result of which is death. (see Acts 5:4)

If we are workers of truth and not falsehood, we will have nothing to be ashamed of – not before men, and not before Yah. The truth will cover our shame, just as Christ has covered our sinfulness in His own righteousness. The most vulnerable part of ourselves, our ability to speak the Word to others, will be girt, incorruptible, and to any who would stand against us, the truth will be like fire proceeding out of our mouths to devour them (Rev 11:5). Let the body of Christ have no unnecessary secrets among its members, but let us “confess our faults, one to another,” and thereby come into one accord. If we shall act in this manner, the return of the Son of man will not be far off. If the Spirit therefore convicts us of lust, or any sin of which we are formerly guilty, let us not despair, but “we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous;” (1 John 2:1) and if we honestly confess and repent, He will restore us and return us to our rightful place – as true heirs of His Kingdom.

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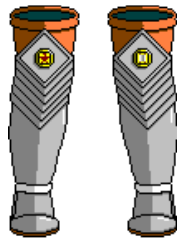
The Shoes of The Gospel

“Put on the whole armor of God, that ye may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil. For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities and powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places.” (Ephesians 6:11,12)

As I hope the reader is beginning to realize, the principles involved in the Divine Armor build upon each other to create an intricate, powerful, and invincible whole. Each piece draws upon powerful imagery to create in the mind of the hearer a picture with various levels of meaning. I have found often that each time I read over particular passages of the written Word, there are new meanings waiting to be understood. The Bible is a book that grows with us. As we come to deeper levels of commitment and wisdom, the Scriptures expand and point ever onward to the perfection that is Christ Yahshua.

In the armor, as we move downward from the head, we find that the concepts move also *outward*. What I mean is this: the item on the head, Salvation, is for the individual. The object on the torso, Righteousness, affects our outward actions, and how we relate to others in everyday life. The covering for our loins, Truth, prepares us to work for others in ways that will affect them for all eternity. Now, the fourth item we come to expands upon this, and moves our mind further outward, to think globally.

As a warrior, you now stand with a helmet, a breastplate, girding around your waist, “And your feet shod with the preparation of the Gospel of peace.” (Eph 6:14)



This latest addition to your collection is the final implement for your body. There is your external equipment (the sword and shield), yet to discuss, but as far as coverings for your main “being,” this is it. Salvation prepares your soul, Righteousness prepares your heart, and Truth trains you to speak to others, but now you enter this last phase of personal preparation: putting what you have learned and what you have practiced into action.

People don’t generally consider shoes to be armor, but in the days of swords and spears, even an inch of exposed skin was a potential target for an opponent. In order to protect the legs, some suits of armor (particularly those of Greek origin) included shin-guards known as “greaves” to deflect low frontal attacks. If a soldier’s legs are injured during a battle, no matter how strong he is, or how good with a blade... if he can’t move, he can’t fight. Even worse, if he falls in a bad spot, he can become quite an obstacle to his own side, as his fellows stumble over him to move forward.

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Readiness to bear the gospel is what will eventually determine the eternal destiny of all who come to a knowledge and understanding of the truth. Bearing the gospel does not only mean bearing it to others, but bearing it also upon ourselves. Paul did not compare the concepts of Christianity to tools or possessions; rather he compared it to armor, something the individual must put on and wear. Those looking upon a warrior immediately knew what his employment was, for it was evident in his bearing. In the same way, when we are sanctified, and ready to bear the Gospel both on ourselves and to others, we are known by our very presence, to be the servants of the most High.

Of course, we first need to know what the Gospel IS in order to be prepared to carry it. The basics of Christianity are simply this:

- 1) Yah created the universe, the world, and mankind. (Gen 1:1-28)
- 2) Adam, the first man, turned away from his purpose by disobeying – an extraordinary tragedy in a previously perfect creation. (Gen 3:6)
- 3) Despite of his disobedience, because he was deceived into sin, and was not willfully and purposely rebellious (Gen 3:13), mankind was provided a way, a sacrifice, which would enable him to regain the favor of Heaven. That sacrifice was Yahshua the Messiah, or Jesus Christ. (Mat 1:21, John 3:16) But the sacrifice was not given right away; a period of time was allotted first. (Dan 9:24)
- 4) Because man's transgression caused a change in his very nature, and he was now inherently contrary to Yah's principles (Jer 17:9), The Elohim provided a set of guidelines, a holy Law, by which man should know when he was in error. (Exodus 20:1-17, Gal 3:19)
- 5) By foreknowledge of the sacrifice, or by trusting in it after it was given, mankind was redeemed from his sinful nature. (James 2:23, Acts 4:10-12)
- 6) By accepting the sacrifice **fully**, a man may return to the innocence that Adam sold to Satan for the price of a woman and a fruit. The "new nature" comes about when one's spirit is in agreement with the One who came to pay the price for us (Gal 2:20, 1 John 3:6,9). This concept is called the Victory. (1 John 5:4)
- 7) Despite **this** wonderful good news, this **GOSPEL**, the early teachers of salvation warned that errors would seep into the doctrine by the hand of the same one who first caused man's fall (Acts 20:29). This slowed down the completion of the work.
- 8) Some now began to misrepresent the gospel in two major ways. Firstly, some teach that the Law was a temporary ordinance, designed to justify us by works before the sacrifice was given (or that the sacrifice somehow changed the manner in which the Law should be kept). This is rebutted in Romans 3:31. Secondly, they teach that it is not possible to fully put away our sinful nature before death or the return of Christ. This is emphatically declared a falsehood by Romans 8:4, 1 Cor 2:16, 2 Tim 3:16 & 17, Heb 10:26-31, James 1:4, 1 John 3:7,8 and many, many other places.

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9) In these last days, there are a people who have been called to repair the errors that the church has fallen into (Jer 6:16, Isa 58:12) and proclaim the TRUE GOSPEL once again, and completely, to all the world. (Mat 24:14, Rev 14:6-12)

10) You, dear reader, are now being called to become one of those people: to accept the Gospel – the Victory – and to proclaim it to others. (1 John 1:3, 2 Tim 4:1-5, Mat 10:6,7,16, Mark 16:16)

So let's discuss this Gospel a while, both the repairing of it, and the proclaiming of it. The prophet Ezekiel received an interesting vision, and he recorded it as follows:

“Then [Yah] said unto me, ‘Hast thou seen this, O son of man? turn thee yet again, and thou shalt see greater abominations than these.’ And He brought me into the inner court of the Lord’s house, and behold, at the door of the temple of the Lord, between the porch and the altar, were about five and twenty men, with their backs toward the temple of the Lord, and their faces toward the east; and they worshipped the sun toward the east. Then He said unto me, ‘Hast thou seen this, O son of man? Is it a light thing to the house of Judah that they commit the abominations which they commit here?’” (Ezekiel 8:15-17)

I may have more to say about this “worshipping of the sun” later, but for now let us see what Yah does in order to counter these “abominations.” “He cried also in mine ears with a loud voice, saying, ‘Cause them that have charge over the city to draw near, even every man with his destroying weapon in his hand.’ And behold, six men came from the way of the higher gate, which lieth toward the north, and every man a slaughter weapon in his hand; and one man among them was clothed with linen, with a writer’s inkhorn by his side: and they went in, and stood beside the brasen altar. And the glory of the God of Israel was gone up from the cherub, whereupon He was, to the threshold of the house. And He called to the man clothed in linen, which had the writer’s inkhorn by his side.

“And the Lord said unto Him, ‘Go through the midst of the city, through the midst of Jerusalem, and set a mark upon the foreheads of the men that sigh and cry for all the abominations that be done in the midst thereof.’ And to the others He said in mine hearing, ‘Go ye after him through the city and smite: let not your eye spare, neither have ye pity: Slay utterly old and young, both maids and little children, and women: but come not near any man upon whom is the mark; and begin at my sanctuary.’ Then they began at the ancient men which were before the house.” (Ezekiel 9:1-6)

This is a most important vision to those who await the return of Christ, and I will most likely return to it for a more detailed examination in another article, but for now, we need only reflect upon the parallel with the vision received by John in his Revelation. “And I saw another angel ascending from the east, having the seal of the living God: and he cried with a loud voice to the four angels, to whom it was given to hurt the earth and the sea, saying, ‘Hurt not the earth, neither the sea, nor the trees, till we have sealed the servants of our God in their foreheads.’ And I heard the number of them which were sealed: and they were sealed an hundred and forty and four thousand of all the tribes of the children of Israel.” (Rev 7:2-4)

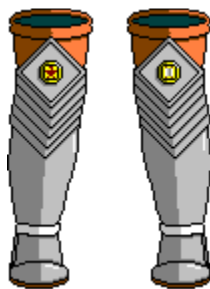
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What a day of wrath it will be when those destroying angels are loosed! Behold that not men only, but little children and young women will come under the frown of the Most High if they are not sealed with the Mark of Yah. But see the hope, see the blessed chance that is left open to us! Behold a man in linen even now going forth with a writing case, to write down the names of those who have accepted the Victory, behold an angel with the seal of the living God waiting to cleanse utterly those who are willing with the blood of the Lamb before this last great Passover. We, who know and live the Gospel, are that man and that angel. Notice the angel said, "...till WE (plural) have sealed the servants of God." We are also that number of believers both saved and sealed from the wrath to be poured out "without mixture" upon the earth and the inhabitants thereof.

The three angels in Revelation 14:6-11 have the Everlasting Gospel, a warning of judgment to come, and a plea to accept the sealing of Yah and to reject the alternative symbol: the mark of the beast. The reader is now being called to step into this office by faith, to accept the seal for himself and then, "having the seal of the living God," to "go through the midst of the city," bearing this blessed good news to one and all. Remember, that the destroying angels "began at the ancient men which were before the house." The closer one is to the truth, and the more familiar one is with the ways of the Father, the more urgent it is that he accept this message NOW, for no one knows how soon the man in linen will complete his work, and declare, "I have done as thou hast commanded me." (Ezek 9:11)

One more thing I should like to point out is this, Ezekiel's vision of this sealing of the living believers begins with these verses: "... the hand of the Lord God fell there upon me. Then I beheld, and lo a likeness as the appearance of fire: **from the appearance of his loins even downward, fire**; and from his loins even upward, as the appearance of brightness, as the color of amber." (Ezek 8:1,2) In his vision, Ezekiel sees the messenger clothed in brightness from the waist up, and from the loins down, his legs are like fire. Once again: legs, movement, associated with the movement of the Gospel to all the world, and the fire of the Holy Spirit is the essence and drive behind the final message.

Directing our attention again to the greaves:



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We can see two seals upon them:



Since I have already taken up so much space examining what the true Gospel actually is, I shall here attempt to be brief. Fortunately, the images emblazoned upon the shoes of the preparedness of the Gospel should be fairly self-explanatory, by this point. An Eagle: the symbol of royalty, speed and motion, the fourth aspect of the Father upon His throne, marks the going forth of the angels to seal those who mourn the corruption of the world, and sincerely long for justice, security and peace (Ezek 9:4). Three white doves represent the three angels of Revelation 14, and the mighty bird in the center signifies the fourth angel of Revelation 18, the bright messenger that descends with all the glory of Yah, the restored Gospel, and the final warning to withdraw from Babylon and be saved.

The second seal, the fifth of the series of seven, is the written Word of Yah. For “all Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness; That the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works.” (2 Tim 3:16) The armor begins to unify, and we see the correlation of faith, truth, good works and the written Word of Yah. The scroll of the fifth seal of the Armor is both the Scripture itself and the Book of Life upon which the “man in linen” will record the names of those who have repented of their iniquities and have become these whom Paul mentions: “Some men’s sins are open beforehand, going before to judgment.” (1 Tim 5:24)

If we are faithful to confess our sins, and to accept the Victory so that we “sin not,” (1 John 2:1) we send our sins before us to judgment, and we are cleansed of them, and “there is therefore no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit.” (Romans 8:1) “There remaineth therefore a REST to the people of God.” (Heb 4:9) Let us enter then into this rest, that we may be saved by grace, equipped to do good works, speaking truth and going forth to proclaim the Gospel of Christ Yahshua to all the world.

Once again we return to the “seven deadly sins” listed in some religious commentary. Of these, we find that Sloth is the one primarily concerned with movement and unfulfilled responsibilities. Those who love the Word of Yah and are eager to have others share in their joy and eternal future will have little occasion to indulge in “actively wasting time,” as it were. Rest is, of course, essential – but we must ever be ready, when Yah shall call us to labor in the field, to say, at a moment’s notice, “Here I am, O lord. I go.” May Yah bless us all to this end.

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The Shield of Faith

“Put on the whole armor of God, that ye may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil. For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities and powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places.” (Ephesians 6:11,12)

The whole purpose of the Divine armor is so that we “may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil.” But Satan is a powerful opponent, and he is well practiced in the art of temptation. Even Christ the Redeemer was brought to His knees with the effort of resistance against this most subtle and terrible foe. (Luke 22:39-46) What hope, then, do we have to resist? If even the perfect man, the spirit of Yah embodied, had so difficult a trial, how then shall we overcome?

Thus far we have been promised a helmet, a breastplate, girding and reinforced shoes. But what of our arms? And our faces are still exposed, aren't they? And even if they were not, a mighty blow to the head would still do us in, despite the helmet, and a heavy spear may yet breach our chest's protection. If Satan finds a big enough sword to swing against us, we are still in danger of being injured. There are still “weak points” in our defense.

Naturally, there is an answer to this as well, for Yah is “not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance.” (2 Peter 3:9) Repentance and an inward, spirit-conversion are essential before this armor can be worn, but that is only the beginning of our new lives, not the end of our adventure. In order to reinforce our ability to withstand our most potent adversaries, the very “rulers of darkness in this world,” we are provided with yet another device by our most gracious Lord.

“Above all, taking the shield of faith, wherewith ye shall be able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked.” (Eph 6:16)



This is the longest description given in the Ephesians passage, and the only object for which its specific purpose is mentioned. This is significant, for of all the armor, this may be the single most important defensive item. Each of the objects mentioned so far is fixed in place. A helmet protects the head only, a breastplate only the chest and midsection. The loins specifically are covered by the girding, and shoes go nowhere but on the feet. But a shield is different. Attached to the arm, it is mobile, and able to cover all the body if placed in the right place at the right time. It not only provides an additional layer of defense to the already well-equipped warrior, but it covers all the “weak points” mentioned before, making us therefore invulnerable.

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But remember, a shield must be in the right **place** in order to be useful. One need only wear armor, but combat using a shield takes some practice. Faith is one of the most central issues in Biblical writings. What it is, what it does, how it is practiced, where to get it, all of these are described, explained and discussed over the course of the 66 Books. As an experiment (and I am actually doing this as I write) I will flip to a random page of the Scriptures and I am certain I will find at least one passage applicable to faith:

Interestingly enough, I have found this passage on the page I turned to, Isaiah 52, and the first three verses read as follows, “Awake, awake; put on thy strength, O Zion; put on thy beautiful garments, O Jerusalem, the holy city: for henceforth there shall be no more come into thee the uncircumcised and the unclean. Shake thyself from the dust; arise, and sit down, O Jerusalem: loose thyself from the bands of thy neck, O captive daughter of Zion. For thus saith the Lord, “Ye have sold yourselves for nought; and ye shall be redeemed without money.” (Isa 52:1-3)

Freedom from slavery, the putting on of strength and garments, and the redemption of mankind, all in three verses. “Ye shall be redeemed,” says the prophet, and this is the message of the church to all the world in every age.

Redemption, as with every good thing from the Father, depends upon faith, for “faith is the substance [the reality] of things hoped for,” (Heb 11:1) and the righteous pray, “**thou** art my hope, O Lord God, thou art my trust from my youth.” (Psa 71:5) More emphatically, we know that without faith, our armor is incomplete, for “without faith, it is impossible to please Him.” (Heb 11:6) Of course, we could go on and on about faith, making this one section as long as the other 6 combined, extolling its virtues, but perhaps the average reader would be best served by reviewing its basics. These are just those questions asked above: what is faith, how do we get it, and what do we do with it once we have it.

One of the reasons faith is so important is because of it’s very nature as a non-fixed addition to the armor. Even without claiming salvation on an innermost level, a shield can protect your head. Even those who have not fully learned the paths of righteousness can protect their hearts if they believe. Not everyone who was in the service of Yah understood the value of complete honesty (Gen 12:13), but by their faith they were justified. Even when the followers of Christ did not have a perfect Gospel doctrine, by their faith they were able to work miracles (Mark 9:39-40). Such is the power of faith, rightly used. It is certainly not a substitute for any part of the armor, and we should never become content remaining as we are, but as we move onward to perfection, it is a covering for our lack of perfect wisdom. Yah “layeth up sound wisdom for the righteous; He is a buckler [shield] to them that walk uprightly.” (Pro 2:7)

So what IS it, anyway? Faith is the trusting in things unseen. (Heb 11:1) It is being confident that Yah will keep His promises to us, given by prophecy and parable. (John 16:25) It is **knowing** those promises, and acting upon them, as if He had indeed already kept them. (John 16:23, Rom 4:17) Faith is believing that Christ Yahshua rose from the dead, and that by following His way, we also will partake of His victory over the grave. (1 Cor 15:12-34) It is the power, if we act in the principles of Heaven, to move mountains (Mat 17:20), and indeed to do anything: “Jesus said unto him, ‘If thou canst believe, all things are possible to him that believeth.’” (Mark 9:23)

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So where do we get faith? It is a gift to human beings by the Holy Spirit (Gal 5:22). It comes by hearing the Gospel (Romans 10:17), and it is available to **everyone**. (Acts 17:24-28, 2 Pet 3:9)

What does faith do? It leads us to repentance. (Acts 2:37-39) It transforms our inner beings, and restores a person to his or her true status, as a *ben ha Elohim*, child of God. (Eph 4:20-24) It enables us to accept the anointing of the Holy Spirit, for both the sure salvation of our souls and the more visible signs of His presence. (Mat 3:11, Acts 2:43)

What do we DO, then, with this faith? Well, we can do “wonders and miracles,” (Acts 6:8) but that should certainly not be the ultimate objective of its existence in us. Primarily, we rely on it for justification before Yah (Rom 3:28 and numerous other places), upon which all of the rest of this Christian walk really depends. It establishes the Law in our hearts, for by faith we receive it written on our inner beings, and not just as ordinances engraved upon stone. (Rom 3:31) We access the grace that allows us to claim the promises He has for us (Rom 5:2), and the wonders and miracles are just the natural result of this. Though faith is often responsible for the “flashier” events, like healing the sick and parting the seas, it is significant that righteousness, which concerns itself with the everyday kindnesses we show towards others, is mentioned first.

The greatest miracle that faith works is truly the transformation of the heart, which enables us to do the “little things” that make other people happy. By faith, we can consistently and unfailingly live a life of humble looking-out for the welfare of others, and what more than this does Yah desire of us? “He hath shewed thee, O man, what is good; and what doth the Lord require of thee, but to do justly, and to love mercy, and to walk humbly with thy God?” (Micah 6:8) We are not all called to be miracle workers, but we are all called to **love**. “Love worketh no ill to his neighbour: therefore love is the fulfilling of the law.” (Rom 13:10) Faith is only complete through love, and that love will lead to right actions. Reading all of the second chapter of James will reveal this clearly enough, and it concludes with the verse, “For as the body without the spirit is dead, so faith without works is dead also.” (James 2:26)

And “thanks be unto God, which always causeth us to triumph in Christ, and maketh manifest the savour of His knowledge by us in every place.” (2 Cr 2:14) What do we do with faith? Why, we claim the Victory! He **always** causeth us to triumph in Christ, reads the verse above. “According to my earnest expectation and my hope, that in nothing I shall be ashamed, but that with all boldness, as always, so now also Christ shall be magnified in my body, whether it be by life, or by death. And having this confidence, I **know** that I shall abide and continue with you all for your furtherance and joy of faith.” (Phl 1:20, 25) This is prophecy at its highest level.

Recalling the shield, the symbol of faith:



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We find imprinted there a most important seal:



The cross has become perhaps the most common and easily-recognizable symbol of human culture as a whole. It has come to mean many things to many people, and perhaps because of its common appearance it has lost much of its significance. To the ancient world, particularly as the Roman empire came into power, it was a feared instrument of an agonizing death. To Christians in the first century and thereafter, it became the *veronica*, the “true image” of victory snatched from the jaws of apparently certain defeat. The cross became inextricably linked to the concepts of life, death and resurrection.

It’s significance upon the shield of faith? The cross also became linked to Christ Himself. Even before His death, Yahshua spoke of this in relation to Himself and His final experiences before His glorification. “Then said Jesus unto his disciples, ‘If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow me.’” (Mat 16:24) They must have been confused by His words at the time, but how clear it became to them afterwards!

As the New Testament demonstrates, the cross became not only a symbol of His suffering and death for us, but also His ultimate triumph, as the following passage indicates: “But God forbid that I should glory, save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom the world is crucified unto me, and I unto the world.” (Gal 6:14) It was something to rejoice about, and certainly the visual standard of a Christian’s spirit of self-denial. (1 Cr 1:17, Phl 3:18) This image was now the symbol of all that Christ was to a believer – evoking scenes of both pain and triumph, as Yahshua is the “the author and finisher of our faith; who for the joy that was set before Him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God.” (Heb 12:2)

Faith in Christ, that is the key. It is faith in **His** life, death and sacrifice; faith in **His** promises that enables us to have confidence before the Father. In fact, we are to have the same faith-based relationship with Yah that He did. “Here is the patience of the saints: here are they that keep the commandments of God, and the faith of Jesus.” (Rev 14:12) Not only are we to have faith IN Him, but also we are to have the faith OF Him, that is – we are to have the same **manner** of relationship with the Father, and also *to the same degree*. Sounds impossible, does it? That’s why it takes a miracle... that’s why it takes faith. “But thanks be to God, which giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ,” (1 Cr 15:57) “for whatsoever is born of God [both Christ AND we] overcometh the world: and this is the victory that overcometh the world, even our faith.” (1 John 5:4)

In all the previous articles about the Divine Armor, we have seen that one of the “seven deadly sins” (Pride, Envy, Sloth, Wrath, Greed, Lust and Gluttony), is particularly guarded against by each piece of the whole. There is one of these sins that is particularly contrary to faith. When we

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look upon another person, and we see the things he or she has, and we become dissatisfied with what we possess as a result, this is known as envy. Of possessions and the material things of this world, Christ taught this:

“Therefore I say unto you, Take no thought for your life, what ye shall eat, or what ye shall drink; nor yet for your body, what ye shall put on. Is not the life more than meat, and the body than raiment? Behold the fowls of the air: for they sow not, neither do they reap, nor gather into barns; yet your heavenly Father feedeth them. Are ye not much better than they? Which of you by taking thought can add one cubit unto his stature? And why take ye thought for raiment? Consider the lilies of the field, how they grow; they toil not, neither do they spin: And yet I say unto you, that even Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these. Wherefore, if God so clothe the grass of the field, which to day is, and to morrow is cast into the oven, shall He not much more clothe you, O ye of little faith?” (Matthew 6:25-30)

Those who “take thought,” or worry, about their earthly cares to the extent it becomes a temptation to them, these are considered to have little faith by the world’s Redeemer. If we envy, it means we are not content with what we already have; and if we are not content, we are displaying a lack of faith. By faith we can say, “Yah will provide,” and it doesn’t even take great faith to understand that those who **do** have more material good than they know what to do with are not one mite happier for it. Faith allows us to overcome envy, for Paul once wrote, “I have learned, in whatsoever state I am, therewith to be content.” (Phl 4:11) He gives as his reason the fact that, “my God shall supply all your need according to His riches in glory by Christ Jesus.” (Phl 4:19)

To trust in Yah enough to overcome envy; to have faith enough to move mountains, indeed, to commit our very soul’s safety to Him, these things are summed up nicely in a Psalm. “Behold, the eye of the Lord is upon them that fear Him, upon them that hope in His mercy; to deliver their soul from death, and to keep them alive in famine. Our soul waiteth for the Lord: **He is our help and our shield.** For our heart shall rejoice in Him, because we have trusted in His holy name. Let thy mercy, O Lord, be upon us, according as we hope in thee.” (Psalms 33:18-22)

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The Sword of The Spirit

“Put on the whole armor of God, that ye may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil. For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities and powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places.” (Ephesians 6:11,12)

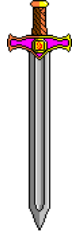
Our defense is secure. We **know** that we are secure, because we know Christ, the source of all safety and comfort. By faith, we need never “take thought,” for any undue concern. We know that even where we have deficiencies yet to learn of and put away, we are covered by the infinite and tender mercy of our Redeemer and Creator. We know we have the true Gospel, for every promise Christ has ever given to us we now see is ours to claim. We have gladly accepted Salvation, believing in the truth of His Word, and we have confidence in what He has said. “And now, little children, abide in Him; that, when He shall appear, we may have confidence, and not be ashamed before Him at His coming.” (1 John 2:28) And we not only have confidence in our personal experiences, but also in our ability to share the True Gospel with others, for each of us may go about, “Preaching the kingdom of God, and teaching those things which concern the Lord Jesus Christ, with all confidence, no man forbidding him.” (Acts 28:31)

But are we done? We know we have the Gospel, but if we just stand on street corners proclaiming, “Repent, for the end of the world is at hand,” we may not be as effective as we would like. In the previous essay about the shoes of “the preparation of the Gospel of peace,” I quoted this line, from Ezekiel 8:2, “Then I beheld, and lo a likeness as the appearance of fire: from the appearance of his loins even downward, fire.” The messenger shown to Ezekiel had legs covered with fire, the very part of the body Paul refers to when speaking of the Gospel message. This is fire of the same kind that descended upon the apostles at Pentecost (Acts 2:4) which enabled them to preach the Word with power and authority. It is the same baptism of “the Holy Ghost and fire” (Mat 3:11) that all believers must receive in order to do the “good works” unto which we were created. (Eph 2:20)

It is the Spirit, that essence of Yah that moves within us, that is the key to having the right words at the right time. “And when they bring you unto the synagogues, and unto magistrates, and powers, take ye no thought how or what thing ye shall answer, or what ye shall say: for the Holy Ghost shall teach you in the same hour what ye ought to say.” (Luke 12:11,12) It is the Holy Spirit that gives you the Word of God in your mouths, to speak to others. It will be, indeed, it **is** a powerful weapon for both their good and yours, “For the word of God is quick, and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and is a discernor of the thoughts and intents of the heart.” (Heb 4:12)

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“And take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God.” (Eph 6:17)



How is it that the sword, which is a weapon, is mentioned in such close conjunction with the helmet of salvation? It is because you yourself were once cut with this very same sword if you now HAVE the helmet. You yourself once had to feel the sting of the Holy Spirit's convictions, and then repent and accept Christ's sacrifice, in order to have inherited eternal life. And, in order to have others be saved, in order to get them to grasp hold of their own salvation, in order to share the Gospel, you must also take the sword to them. They are intimately connected, for one leads to the other.

We have seen that Christ displayed two aspects of Himself to us while He was with us on the earth. He was the kind and tender Savior who washed the feet of His wondering followers in John 13:5, but also it was He who cast out the moneychangers from the Temple in Matthew 21:12. It was He who said, “Peace I leave with you, my peace I give unto you,” (John 14:27) and it was also He who said, “Think not that I am come to send peace on earth: I came not to send peace, but a sword.” (Mat 10:34) He is the “Man of sorrows” in Isaiah 53, but He is the “Righteous Judge” of Revelation 19. He is the Lamb led to the slaughter, and also the Lion of the tribe of Judah. He is our shield, our defender, but He is also the living Word of God, our Sword.

Jeremiah, though an Old Testament prophet, has exceedingly relevant things to say concerning these last days. He writes, “Cursed be he that doeth the work of the Lord deceitfully, and cursed be he that keepeth back his sword from blood.” (Jer 48:10) A stern way of putting it, perhaps, but we see that if we apply it to the “spiritual warfare” of these last days, it is actually a great message of love and mercy. How can we, who know the Father and Son, keep back our hand from the labor of showing others the Way the Truth and the Life? How can we allow any deceit or personal issues to mar Yah's perfect blade? Cursed indeed is anyone who lets his brother be wounded unto death by this world, when he had the opportunity to wound him unto life! But it is not Yah who will curse such a person; if he does not share the Gospel, he does not **have** the true Gospel, and he is cursed already.

The Sword's purpose is for the “piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart.” It is for the stripping away of illusions, for as we hold up the polished blade of the sword, the shining surface is as a mirror, reflecting our true selves in the Word of God, and leading every willing observer to repentance. Against Israel, Yah declared “Behold, I, even I, will bring a sword upon you, and I will destroy your **high places**.” (Eze 6:3)

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Echoing this sentiment, Paul explains exactly what these “high places” are in regards to the spiritual nature of individuals: “For though we walk in the flesh, we do not war after the flesh: (For the weapons of our warfare are not carnal, but mighty through God to the pulling down of strong holds;) Casting down imaginations, and **every high thing that exalteth itself against the knowledge of God**, and bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ.” (2 Cr 10:3-5) The spiritual sword we bear is for the cutting down of pride, ignorance, hatred... all those things which Satan uses to separate us from the love of our Creator. The doctrine of the Bible is remedy against all these things, for it teaches the spoken word of Christ.

I saw this demonstration given once: A preacher stood up with a line drawn on his face with a marker. He went on speaking to his congregation as if nothing had happened, and then when someone pointed it out, he acted surprised. Taking out a mirror which he conveniently had on hand, he looked at himself and found the streak. He turned to them and said, “Well, I see that I am not clean. Now what should I do about this?” Some people started to suggest things, and he said, “What? I should break the mirror?” With a laugh, the people said, “No.” He said, “Should I hide the mirror and never look into another mirror again?” Once more, the people answered, “No.” He asked, “But isn’t that what so many people do? They do not like the fact that they can see themselves in error, as pointed out by the Word of God; yet instead of admitting it, they either attack the validity of the Bible, or they seek to ignore the problem by closing the Book and letting it collect dust on their tables.”

As Paul has written, the Law was “added because of transgressions,” (Gal 3:19) and in another place he said, “I was alive without the law once: but when the commandment came, sin revived, and I died.” (Romans 7:9) Paul saw himself convicted as a sinner in the Holy Word of Yah, and knew he was worthy of death. But did he choose to ignore it, or did he therefore despise the law, calling it an evil, outdated concept as some have? No, for he said just after, “Wherefore the law is holy, and the commandment holy, and just, and good.” (Rom 7:12) It was the **sin** that the law pointed out which slew him, he explains in verse 13. To put it another way, “the law was our schoolmaster to bring us unto Christ, that we might be justified by faith.” (Gal 3:24) In the same way that the law did not cause Paul to “die,” the **mirror** did not cause the speaker’s face to be dirty, but rather it revealed the dirt, which was there already.

Some have said, “Well, since we are thus already led to Christ, what purpose has the law now? For did not Paul also say, ‘after that faith is come, we are no longer under a schoolmaster,’?” (Gal 3:25) It is true that after Christ comes fully into our hearts we are no longer under the law. But Paul needed the law to show where he had fallen short, and so do we still. The law had passed away to *Paul* who admitted his guilt under it, and confessed his death-worthy sin, and accepted life anew in Christ. So it is to us, we ALSO need the Law to be our schoolmaster, each and every one of us need to feel the sting of that Sword, so that we CAN accept Christ and be under grace. Then, and *then only*, are we not under the law, for when Christ enters our hearts, and writes the law ON our hearts, we do keep the law by nature, and not by commandment. We love others by nature, not by commandment, and every point of the Decalogue becomes our delight to fulfill. The sword is for each of us individually. Oh, let us not run from the invitation to confess and repent unto life.

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The pastor who gave that example next took a rag which was lying nearby and, holding up the mirror again, wiped off the stain. “See,” he concluded, “the Word of God is only a mirror, but of itself it will not make us clean any more than it made us dirty. It is we who, after seeing the stain, must accept the fact as it is shown, and then confess the sin and be made clean by the Grace freely offered.” I am paraphrasing shamelessly here, but the principle should be plain enough. Though we possess a powerful weapon in the Word of Yah, we can in no way use force of either a physical or emotional nature. We can “cut” them, we can show them their deficiencies from the plain language of the Scriptures, but it is the Spirit Itself, the aspect of the Sword that WE do not control, which must give them the strength to ask for healing.

The Gospel itself is the message: it is the thing which gives us movement, and guides our feet to find the people Yah would have us speak to. It gives us the gift of salvation to share with others, but it is the Sword, the Spirit of Yah, which enables those words to be accepted. The Gospel puts us in the right position, but the Spirit is the Thing that wounds, the Spirit is the One who reveals the truth of the matter to hearers. “But the Comforter, which is the Holy Ghost, whom the Father will send in my name, He shall teach you all things, and bring all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you.” (John 14:26)

But beware also, for Yahshua is of two aspects, as I said before. Let us not think we ride forth as conquerors only! We are both the cutters *and* the cut, just as Christ is both Judge *and* Redeemer. We are not the destroying angels in Ezekiel 9 or Revelation 7. The work of casting down belongs to Yah only, and those He appoints. We are the “man clothed in linen” of Ezekiel, and the angel “having the seal of the living God” from the latter Book. Our weapons are spirit, not carnal, and they are not like the weapons of this earth. If we seek to impose our faith upon others, by force of arms or legal process, we usurp the authority that belongs to Christ the Righteous Judge alone.

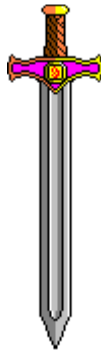
We are to go forth and show our wounds, and the Sword will do its own work through us. It is not to drive others to the ground in defeat, but to invite them down unto their knees with us... that is our role as true soldiers. The sword is “two-edged” for it cuts both ways, both the bearer and him unto whom it is borne. We are all equally guilty under the Law, and all equally “more than conquerors through him that loved us.” (Rom 8:37) We are MORE, **better**, than conquerors, for we do not go forth to strike down, but to uplift. Our sword heals, for though it wounds, the wound is not fatal, if he that is cut will repent and be saved.

Look upon it this way: birth is not a pleasant experience, for what baby would be pleased to be cold and wet and hungry all at once? Surely no kind person would desire to cut a newborn infant from a nice, warm and secure womb. But so it is with those who sleep in the dark, inviting cocoon of sin. So it is with those who find comfort in their traditions and their self-satisfied ways of life. But if one is not born, *he cannot live*. It is also a painful experience for the mother, but of this Christ said, “A woman when she is in travail hath sorrow, because her hour is come: but as soon as she is delivered of the child, she remembereth no more the anguish, for joy that a man is born into the world.” (John 16:21) Yah is not happy either to allow trials to fall upon us, but He knows it is the way by which we learn to depend upon Him – a vital aspect of our salvation.

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Bearing the sword may cause an unpleasant experience to others, for who enjoys being wounded? Which natural man enjoys seeing his faults revealed in the Word of Yah? But afterwards, after all this, when the cleansing is done, and we stand before the throne “not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing,” (Eph 5:27) then there will be rejoicing such as we cannot know in this world. “For I reckon that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us.” (Romans 8:18) Awakening to the truth is like being born. It is a tear-filled, and unpleasant process to confess that we have been asleep. And then we must learn to feed, and then to walk, and then to run. But when we walk uprightly, when we are mature in nature and in faith, then we are free. After birth, there is life!

As we examine the sword more closely:



We find there an image imprinted on the cross guard:



When Adam and Eve first violated their holy nature by allowing in the sin of mistrust, they were sent out of the garden of Eden. This was not some arbitrary punishment meted out by the Father in order to cause them sorrow. This was a visible symbol of the awful tragedy which had already occurred. It was so when Moses broke the first stone tablets after the newly-liberated Israelites had fallen into idolatry. The breaking of the stones was only an earthly reflection, for the true “breaking of the law” had already occurred. In the case of our first parents, they were not only driven out, but they were kept out by Cherubic angels, each bearing a fiery *kherv*, a flaming sword. Purists will say that the Hebrew actually translates to “a flaming *as of a sword* which turned every way,” rather than “a flaming sword which turned every way.” (Gen 3:24)

That is, they mean to say that what kept Adam and Eve out was only the “brightness” of the fire, which appeared to be a blaze reminiscent of the glare off of a sword’s blade turning “every way” in the bright sun. Whichever the case, we must keep it in mind that Cherubim, as indeed all angels, are “ministering **spirits**,” and are not made of the substance of the earth. In the same way, the swords which these bore were not actual, sharpened strips of metal, but the very Glory of Yah manifest into the appearance of a weapon. Translation differences notwithstanding, the

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purpose of the “flaming” was clear. The brightness was an instrument of destruction against the darkness now present in mankind, and its very existence was a representation of the power of Yah.

But Christ is Judge *and* Redeemer. Even the light of destruction was a warning, a reminder... and an invitation back. Little is recorded of what Yah said to Adam and Eve after their fall, but in the very next chapter (Gen 4:4) we find their children performing the rites of sacrifice. From the very earliest time after sin, the promise of a substitute was given by our Merciful Lord. There must be blood to form a covenant, and there must be fire to complete the acceptance of it. “And he shall kill the bullock before the Lord: and the priests, Aaron’s sons, shall bring the blood, and sprinkle the blood round about upon the altar that is by the door of the tabernacle of the congregation... and the priest shall burn all on the altar, to be a burnt sacrifice, an offering made by fire, of a sweet savor unto the Lord.” (Lev 1:5,9)

Were not the Israelites in the wilderness? Could they not have killed the animal in sacrifice and then benefited from the meat of the beast? But there was a *reason* why the offering must be consumed by flame; there is ALWAYS a reason Yah does things in just the way He does. It was to point forward, even in those most ancient times, to the giving of the Holy Spirit unto mankind as never before. Christ was the sacrifice, slain for all the world in the later chapters of the Gospel Books, and His blood was offered as atonement for our sin, but it was at Pentecost, when the sacrifice was sanctified with fire in the first chapter of Acts... THIS was the visible sign that the offering had been accepted on our behalf before the Heavenly courts. The fire of the Holy Spirit, that is the sign of Yah’s favor. Those who do not recognize the mercy and love of our tender Creator even in those “harsh” Old Testament times do not know Him, nor can they worship Him in spirit and in truth. Let any who shy away from the notion of the B.C. Books as an accurate representation of the Father be confounded by it’s clear repetition in the New.

The Holy Spirit is the Sword which Christ declared He was sending to us in Matthew 10:34. It is our weapon to wield as we bear the Divine Armor. It is the means by which we “converteth the sinner from the error of his way,” “save a soul from death” and “hide a multitude of sins.” (James 5:20) As surely as fire is the symbol of that Holy Spirit, and indeed all of the glory of Heaven, (Ezek 1:4) it is as fitting an icon for the Sword thereof. Fire is the sign of the acceptance of the sacrifice, and that includes the acceptance by an individual of the Gospel for the transformation of their character. The Sword of the Spirit divides asunder the soul and spirit, and invites the wounded to offer up their hearts as a burnt offering, “a sweet savor unto the Lord.” When the sacrifice is accepted, when the fire has consumed the flesh there offered, then there is forgiveness of sins, then we are ready to meet Him and “not be ashamed before Him at His coming.” The two-edged sword must cut both ways, both into our hearts, and into the hearts of those to whom we bring this most precious message.

Upon reading the list of sins that some consider to be the “deadly” ones, (Pride, Envy, Sloth, Wrath, Greed, Lust and Gluttony), we find this of one of them: “And my wrath shall wax hot, and I will kill you with the sword; and your wives shall be widows, and your children fatherless.” (Ex 22:24) There are some things that belong to Yah alone. Jealousy and Wrath are two of these. He can be jealous for our respect, because He knows that only He can save us. He

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can be Wrathful against a people, because they do more harm than good to His other children, and will not repent. But they are all based upon His central, all-inclusive emotion, that of love.

Now Satan would have us attempt to be like God. This isn't bad, in it's right context, for we know Christ is our example. But He would have us be like Him in **all** ways, meaning independent OF Him, and gods unto ourselves. "Ye shall be as gods, knowing good and evil," was included in his very first deception, back in Genesis 3:5. This was Satan's fall, you see, that he sought to replace the Throne. In Isaiah 14:14, the prophet heard him say, "I will ascend above the heights of the clouds; I will be like the most High." Satan sought to take on those things which belonged to Yah only, such as worship. This desire, this hungering for that which belonged only to the Most High, this is what poisoned his mind to the extent that there is now no remedy for him.

In the same way, if we try to take on those things that belong ONLY to Yah, such as jealousy, worship... or wrath, we take on the mind of Satan, whereas Scripture says a Christian has "the mind of Christ." (1 Cr 2:16) Notice that the seven deadly sins are all conditions of the mind and heart; for example, "murder" isn't there. However, Christ taught that, "Whosoever hateth his brother is a murderer." (John 3:15) If a man kills another in wrath, it would be as Moses breaking the stone tablets, just the **result** of the law already being broken, of the sin already being present.

Wrath belongs only to the Lord. If we take it upon ourselves to be angry without due cause, or to punish offenders (and yes, this is a reference to the Trademark issue, among other things), we take the Sword out of the hand of Christ, the Righteous Judge, and we step into an office we have no business claiming as our own. Our sword is of the Spirit, not of the flesh. If we thus labor, bearing the blade in love and not anger, we will find that there is no place in our hearts for wrath. Who can hold hatred or anger against someone they are trying to help? If our motive is true, and our hearts right, we will hate no man, though all the world hate us. The Sword of the Holy Spirit cuts both ways.

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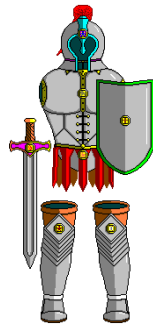
The Whole Armor of God

“Put on the whole armor of God, that ye may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil. For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities and powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places.” (Ephesians 6:11,12)

So now the warrior arises, armored both above and below, before and behind, and carrying a weapon of such vast power that its destiny is to change the very world. The servant of Yah is “thoroughly furnished unto all good works.” (2 Tim 3:17) We have examined each individual article of the armor, and a spoken a little on how they all connect, how they all fit together.

The Helmet is above all, for without Salvation as a factor, what else are we doing here? Right below it is the chest, the torso, covered by Righteousness. The Breastplate which guards this region, involving our emotional “selves,” is subject to the head, to the principles of Heaven and therefore to Christ Himself. Our loins, our vulnerability, that is covered by Truth, and that symbolic Girding also sanctifies our method of “reproduction,” that is, witnessing and bringing others to Christ. The Gospel, which empowers our movement as Christians, is as a reinforced pair of Shoes, directing our paths to others, and keeping us ever walking safely with our Lord. Faith guards us like a Shield, able to cover any weak area, and as it is non-specific and unattached, it becomes more effective and more useful the more often it is exercised. Our sole yet singular weapon, the Sword of the Spirit, is what makes us effective as soldiers. It gives our words the true power of Yah’s presence, and it sharpens our efforts, making our witnessing by words and example a blade that cuts into the hearts of those in our path.

The warrior stands thus:



We notice, upon observation, that there is only one item of the suit that affects only us. Only the Helmet, only Salvation is for us alone. We see that this follows the spirit of Yah’s justice, for it was written, “The fathers shall not be put to death for the children, neither shall the children be put to death for the fathers: every man shall be put to death for his own sin.” (Deu 24:16) Of course, we may be more positive, and emphasize the reverse, that each man is also *saved* by his own personal, individual acceptance of the grace freely offered. We are “saved to serve,” as they say, and this is reflected in the image presented: one sixth of our protection is for us, all the rest is to benefit others *through* us. This should ever be our focus, as we attempt to lose sight of ourselves, for each Christian may rightly declare, as did even Christ, “I can of mine own self do nothing.” (John 5:30)

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We have seen the individual use of each part, and so we know that no one item of the armor can be replaced by another. Even Faith, which is our mobile shield, cannot secure us of itself. Although it is useful to cover any area, if we are wholly unprotected except for faith, we are yet vulnerable. Again, this is in perfect keeping with Biblical principle: “Thou believest that there is one God; thou doest well: the devils also believe, and tremble. But wilt thou know, O vain man, that faith without works is dead? Ye see then how that by works a man is justified, and not by faith only.” (James 2:19,20,24) Faith justifies us before the Father, this is true, but if it is not accompanied by the corresponding works, we may be sure that our faith is not genuine. True faith shows itself by works, as is explained in James 2:18. In the same way, if we have true faith, the true shield, then we are true soldiers, and we will have also all the OTHER sections of the armor present: truth, righteousness, sound Gospel doctrine and so on.

If we read the Book of Ephesians, we see that verses 12 to 17 of this passage are merely an explanation, an expansion of what is referred to in verse 11 as this “whole armor of God.” If we remove these detail-giving verses, we find that the passage still makes perfect sense. Ephesians 6:10, 11 and then 18 together, eliminating 12-17, reads, “Finally, my brethren, be strong in the Lord, and in the power of His might. Put on the whole armor of God, that ye may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil. Praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit, and watching thereunto with all perseverance and supplication for the saints.” Verses 12 and 13 tell us what the Armor does, and the remaining, up until 17, give us the particulars of it.

But we see that the true purpose of the passage is not merely to give a pleasing analogy. It is informative, oh, yes, but the focus of Paul’s letter here is relying on Yah, and maintaining our connection to Him through “prayer and supplication.” The details of the armor are given for our edification, to fix the principles in our minds, but now that we are aware of them, we can transcend them, and move on to the heart of the matter.

Anyone who has read a few articles written here knows that I emphasize very strongly a Biblical principle called the Victory. Others have diverse names for it – some call it “sanctification,” others refer to it as “taking on the Spirit of Christ,” and some name it in the same way Paul did, as a spiritual crucifixion of self: we die with Him so we may live with Him. “I die daily,” the apostle wrote. (1 Cor 15:30) All of these are quite correct and fitting terms for it. I merely apply to this concept the label given to it by John, who wrote, “For this is the love of God, that we keep His commandments: and His commandments are not grievous. For whatsoever is born of God overcometh the world: and this is the victory that overcometh the world, even our faith.” (1 John 5:3-5) I call it simply, as do some others, The Victory.

This is, and will be, the song of the 4th Angel of Revelation 18 until the end of this age. The victory over sin is THE fulfillment of the true message of the Gospel of Christ Yahshua. It was by His death that it was made possible, and it was by His life we know the way to do it... it is by prayer. But first let us look at the Victory itself, before we see how it is done. Some will say: “It cannot be done; it isn’t even possible. There can be no complete mastery over one’s sinful nature.” But the truth is, this viewpoint is idolatry, plain and simple, as I will demonstrate if the reader will allow.

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First of all, we KNOW that some men have done it. Paul taught an oft-repeated principle, that the wages of sin is death, (Romans 6:23) which is but a repeat of the Old Testament prophet's assertion that "the soul that sinneth, it shall die." (Ezekiel 18:20) He is speaking of the **soul** here, not the body, for some will say this applies to the capital punishment attached to many sins in ancient Israel. Returning to Paul, some protest the teaching on the basis of some of his statements, such as that made in Romans 7:24, 25, which reads, "O Wretched man that I am! Who shall deliver me from the body of this death? I thank God through Jesus Christ our Lord. So then with the mind I myself serve the law of God; but with the flesh the law of sin." This seems to speak of a separation – that Paul WILLS to do the perfect law of Yah, but because of his body, and its sinful flesh, he cannot.

But we find, if we keep reading into the next chapter (and there were no chapters when this letter was written, for it was meant to be read as a whole), that Paul was merely answering in verse 25 the question posed in verse 24. Who indeed shall deliver him? Why, Christ, of course. Through Christ Paul is now able to "walk not after the flesh, but after the spirit," and because of THIS, "there is therefore NOW no condemnation" for him. If anyone thinks I am misreading, let them read for themselves. Even starting from Romans 7, we see that Paul was not merely stating his condition but **leading up to something**. He writes in chapter 7, "I find a law, then, when I would do good, evil is present within me." (Rom 7:21) Even more (apparently) convincingly, he writes in verse 15 to 18, "For that which I do I allow not: for what I would, that do I not; but what I hate, that do I. If then I do that which I would not, I consent unto the law that it is good. Now then it is no more I that do it, but sin that dwelleth in me. For I know that in me (that is, in my flesh,) dwelleth no good thing: for to will is present with me; but how to perform that which is good I find not."

Paul says here that he wants to do good, but "what I hate, that do I." Confusing, isn't it, when Scripture teaches us, "Blessed is the man that endureth temptation: for when he is tried, he shall receive the crown of life, which the Lord hath promised to them that love him." (James 1:12) The writer of Romans doesn't seem to be enduring from these words, does he? Yet in a later letter he writes, "Henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the Righteous Judge, shall give me at that day: and not to me only, but unto all them also that love His appearing." (2 Th 4:8) We don't have any reason to doubt that. So then, it seems Paul says he HAS endured temptation. But doesn't that conflict with Romans 7? The *exact* wording, a **crown**, is used, so they must have been on the same page.

From this, it should be clear that Romans 7 taken by itself doesn't give us the whole picture. If we read, we find that Paul actually says this of the things he hates, but does, "For I know that in me (that is, in my flesh,) dwelleth no good thing: for to will is present with me; but how to perform that which is good I find not." (Rom 7:18) I repeat that here to emphasize the bracketed portion, "In my flesh." Reading another verse, we see again, "For I delight in the law of God after the inward man: But I see another law in my members, warring against the law of my mind, and bringing me into captivity to the law of sin which is in my members." (Rom 7:23)

Now, Paul is very emphatic on this point, that the sin dwells, and has influence from, his **flesh**. But as we read chapter 8, as we need to in order to understand the apparent contradiction between Paul and James, we find this, "For what the law could not do, in that it was weak

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through the flesh, God sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin, condemned sin in the flesh: That the righteousness of the law might be fulfilled in us, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit. For they that are after the flesh do mind the things of the flesh; but they that are after the Spirit the things of the Spirit. For to be carnally minded is death; but to be spiritually minded is life and peace. Because the carnal mind is enmity against God: for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be. So then they that are in the flesh cannot please God.” (Rom 8:3-8) After Paul makes it clear the sin-nature resides in the part of man considered the “flesh,” he then says (just as clearly), those who walk in the flesh cannot therefore please God. Of course, we know from Heb 11:5 that Enoch did, and we know from 1 Th that Paul did also.

Therefore, they must have learned to overcome the flesh. And this is exactly what Chapter 8 of Romans says. “And if Christ be in you, the body **is dead** because of sin; but the Spirit is life because of righteousness. For if ye live after the flesh, ye shall die: but if ye through the Spirit **do mortify the deeds of the body**, ye shall live. For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God.” (Romans 8:10,13,14) Notice the wording here: the body “is dead,” and we “do mortify the deeds” of the flesh. It’s present, and it comes after the references in verse 7. Paul declares that the deeds follow the mind, for if we are carnally minded, we will do the deeds of the flesh, and if spiritually minded, the things of the spirit. Paul taught that Christ, by the power of the Spirit “condemned sin in the flesh.” And we know from John’s writings (and of John it is said he most closely reflected the nature of Christ), that “as He is, so are we in this world.” (1 John 4:17)

Paul believed that he did have that Crown laid up for him in paradise, and unless we are to say that he disagreed with James, we must believe that he did overcome the flesh. The criteria of the latter is that the crown is for those who “endureth” (presently, and continuously) temptation; not for those who endured once, or for those who endure “every now and then.” Again we see John saying most emphatically, “Whosoever abideth in [Christ] sinneth not: whosoever sinneth hath not seen Him, neither known him.” (1 John 3:6) Some have said this means “whosoever continues in sin” does not know Christ. But John clears that up also, “Little children, let no man deceive you: he that doeth righteousness is righteous, even as He is righteous.” (1 John 3:7) And how was Christ righteous? Why, everlastingly, unfailingly and eternally. But John goes even further than *this* – so far as to say, “Whosoever is born of God doth not commit sin; for His seed remaineth in him: and he **cannot** sin, because he is born of God.” (1 John 3:9) Is not the Word written to be understood? A reader can look over all of this chapter of 1 John and see if this is in any way a misreading of those verses.

But even without this doctrine, even without all this evidence from the Text... as I said before, we KNOW some men have done it! The Bible tells us plainly that “By faith Enoch was translated that he should not see death; and was not found, because God had translated him: for before his translation he had this testimony, that he pleased God.” (Heb 11:5) And not only him, we have another example. “And it came to pass, as they still went on, and talked, that, behold, there appeared a chariot of fire, and horses of fire, and parted them both asunder; and Elijah went up by a whirlwind into heaven.” (2 Kings 2:11) These are just two *recorded* examples, there may have been more. And perhaps, had some of the other prophets not been martyred... but of course

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that is mere speculation. Now, what we DO know, is that they aren't going to be the only ones who will ever have done it.

The much-misapplied verse in 1 Thessalonians, "Then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord," (1 Th 4:17), speaks of the last people before the end of this earth's time. Well, we know we are going to the same place as the two prophets mentioned, (where else but Heaven), and so surely it must be for the same *reason*, we have the testimony that we have "pleased God." How do we know when we have pleased Yah? Well, first we have to know WHAT pleases Him. This means we have to know HIM Himself. And how does one get to know the Living God?

We can get to that in a moment, but first I would like to show that this is what I had first set out to demonstrate – that if we say a complete victory over sin cannot be done, we have fallen prey to one of the more subtle aspects of idolatry. If we know at least two have done it... in fact, if we know even ONE has done it we know that all can. "Herein is our love made perfect, that we may have boldness in the day of judgment: because as He is, so are we in this world." (1 John 4:17) We must believe that if Enoch could do it but we cannot, then either Yah IS a respecter of persons (which He isn't, as Acts 10:34 plainly says), or that Enoch was greater than an ordinary man. If we say that Enoch and Elijah were more than men, what were they? They are worthy of heaven, therefore they must be something special... right? But we know this cannot be. God gives us each equal opportunity for salvation. Therefore we must believe that these two who were translated to Heaven "without seeing death," had no advantage over us. To do otherwise is to venerate them, and that is as surely idolatry than if John had worshipped the angel in Rev 22:9.

Let us not be guilty of this. Let us give honor ONLY to God the Father through the Son, and claim the promises He has for us. If we do this, we will live.

Now, there are a few ways to approach the "Knowing Him" part of this. First of all, we know the very knowledge of how to go about it must come from Yah. "And I will give them an heart to know me, that I am the LORD: and they shall be my people, and I will be their God: for they shall return unto me with their whole heart." (Jer 24:7) And of course we are invited, "If any of you lack wisdom, let him ask of God, that giveth to all men liberally, and upbraideth not; and it shall be given him." (James 1:5) Why is this so? Because Paul teaches that "we suffer with Him, that we may be also glorified together." (Rom 8:17) And how do we do that? Paul says we must be crucified with Him (Gal 2:20). Now, if we wish to kill ourselves, we have lots of options. We can shoot, stab, hang, poison... you get the idea. But we **cannot** crucify ourselves. Someone else must drive in the nails. Someone else must raise us on the cross. And we know that if Yah "spared not His own Son," (Rom 8:32) neither will He hold back from allowing us to pass through this spiritual death for the eternal good of our souls.

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In essence, many Christians, even when they see the Victory is possible and should be done, say “Yes, we will do it,” and then they go out and *try*. That is the mistake, that is the error. We cannot try, for we cannot DO it. We must let HIM do it for us, we must ask HIM to bring us to that place, where we must choose life or death. And we must be willing to choose death so we can live – the paradox and great truth of Christianity. “I die daily,” wrote Paul, who had learned this great truth of the Gospel.

Now what does all this have to do with the Armor? I know I have spent some time on the verses in Romans, but this was necessary, for it must be made very clear what the Victory is, and that every New Testament writer taught that it was attainable through Christ. The passage we have been discussing in Ephesians is simply another representation of it – a warrior who has no weak points, who is able to stand always “against the wiles of the devil.” Someone who has all articles of the armor will have no weaknesses – or more accurately, will have as many weaknesses as before, but will have them all covered by the Grace through which the armor is bestowed. We are not told we will be above temptation, for according to James there will still be something to “endure,” but we are promised we will always overcome through Him who died for us. “Now thanks be to God, which **always** causeth up to triumph in Christ, and maketh manifest the savor of His knowledge by us in every place.” (2 Cor 2:14)

So we know that we cannot crucify ourselves, but that it is through this death we gain the Victory. We ask Yah to take us to that cross, through the grace of His son, being willing to give up all that we have. We claim it with our mouths (James 3:1-8), for though no man can tame the tongue (James 3:8), with Yah all things are possible, and “He which hath begun a good work in you will perform it until the day of Jesus Christ.” (Phil 1:6) Now we come to the part where a lot of people get stuck. What then? How do we go through our everyday lives in fear of committing a sin? From the moment we wake up till when we lie down to sleep, how do we remain in Him to the degree that we “sin not?” How do we keep on the armor?

This is where the perfect trust with which He equips comes into play. We need only look at the way Christ did it, and we follow His example. We may do what He did, and “condemn sin in the flesh,” but we must also do it the WAY He did it, through a continuous, unbroken communion with the Father. Yes, I am talking about Prayer. Look again at the way the description of the Armor concludes; we maintain the divine armor by “Praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit, and watching thereunto with all perseverance and supplication for the saints.” (Eph 6:18) We know that Christ prayed constantly, though He had no real need to. At any moment He could have cast off the test and left us to our misery. But as with His baptism, He did it to etch out the way in which we are to walk. He went before, making the Way straight. “And for their sakes I [Yahshua] sanctify myself, that they also might be sanctified through the truth.” (John 17:19)

“Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus.” (Phil 2:5) We maintain this mind, this spirit, by “all prayer and supplication.” Is anyone tempted with a pleasing sin? “Watch and pray, that ye enter not into temptation: the spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak.” (Mat 26:41) So again, we see that the sin is in the **flesh**, and “we are the circumcision, which worship God in the spirit, and rejoice in Christ Jesus, and have no confidence in the flesh.” (Phil 3:3) We have this mind, that the sins that tempt us are of the flesh, and we reckon our flesh dead, crucified, and

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therefore we walk not after those things, but after the Spirit; and we maintain this by constant, dedicated prayer.

This is the key to keeping the Armor securely upon us. It concludes Paul's discussion of the analogy, and seals its testimony, and gives us confidence in its ability to maintain US in enduring always the temptations of Satan. "Watch ye therefore, and pray always, that ye may be accounted worthy to escape all these things that shall come to pass, and to stand before the Son of man." (Luke 21:36) We come to the Victory, we take on the armor, not by our own efforts, not by trying, but by the undeserved grace of the Father through the Son. Oh, if only the Church would once again teach these blessed truths! Would she not be like the woman with the issue of blood? "And **straightaway** the fountain of her blood was dried up; and she felt in her body that she was healed of that plague." (Mark 5:29)

This logically leads us to one thing. What would cause someone to TRY to do good, knowing he cannot of himself, and already admitting, at least in His mind, that it is not by his own works he is saved? Of the seven deadly sins... there is also only one left unaccounted for. Of the king of Tyre, and symbolically the Morning Star, the covering Cherub, the prophet spoke the following, "Thine heart was lifted up because of thy beauty, thou hast corrupted thy wisdom by reason of thy brightness: I will cast thee to the ground, I will lay thee before kings, that they may behold thee." Iniquity was found in Lucifer, evil of all kinds, but it was the Pride that really did him in. It was the Pride that forbade him from repenting when he was given the chance. It was Pride for which it is said of him, "Thy pomp is brought down to the grave, and the noise of thy viols: the worm is spread under thee, and the worms cover thee." (Isa 14:11)

Pride is what makes us unrepentant. If we feel the need to justify ourselves, it means we have lost the need to have Christ justify us. "Every one that is proud in heart is an abomination to the LORD: though hand join in hand, he shall not be unpunished." (Pro 16:5) Of the seven, it is the most deadly, for it prevents us from confessing and overcoming any of the others. We may be slothful, wrathful, lustful, greedy, envious and gluttonous, but if we are humble, when the Spirit convicts us of this, we are well able to change. But if we are proud, we will resist.

If we "Put on the whole armor of God," (Eph 6:11) and continue "praying always with all prayer and supplication," (Eph 6:18) how can we be proud? We need only look about us, at the breastplate on our chest, the girding on our waists, the shoes on our feet and the sword and shield in our hands. We need only glance down, and we can see that our strength is not our own. Our protection was not bought by our coin, nor earned by our merits. We see each piece of the Armor imprinted with a seal bearing the stamp of approval of the Father, the grace that is ours through Christ, and the sparkling shine of the presence of the Holy Spirit. We see our righteousness as filthy rags, and we may well say, "But God forbid that I should glory, save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom the world is crucified unto me, and I unto the world." (Gal 4:16) We wear the armor bought for us by another, and at infinite cost. There is no place for pride in our hearts, if we keep that ever before us.

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“Wherefore take unto you the whole armor of God, that ye may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand. Praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit, and watching thereunto with all perseverance and supplication for all saints; And the very God of peace sanctify you wholly; and I pray God your whole spirit and soul and body be preserved blameless unto the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ.” (Eph 6:13, 18; 1 Th 5:23)



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