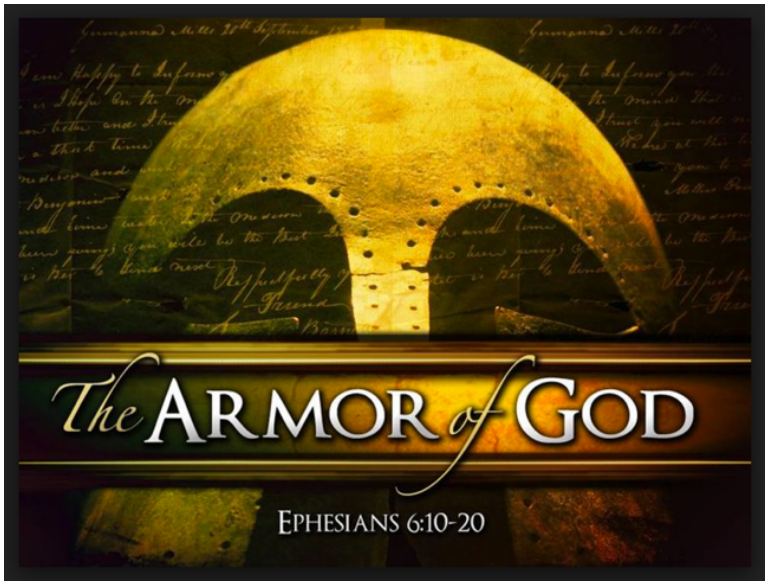
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The Armor of God
6: 10-13

The armor of God DIG: What is the purpose of a soldier's armor? Why does Sha'ul advise believers to equip themselves with "the full armor of God?" What does it mean to "stand your ground?" What kind of "deceptive tactics" might the enemy use to try to knock you off course? In what ways will a life of prayer benefit you in spiritual warfare?

REFLECT: In what ways are believers like soldiers seeking to defeat an enemy? How would you define "spiritual victory?" How can truth, righteousness, and peace help you to stand against the enemy's attacks? What are some of Satan's tactics that Paul is referring to? Which piece of armor do you need to pay more attention to? Why?

We must make use of every piece of equipment that ADONAI has provided if we are to be victorious in our spiritual lives.



Rabbi Sha'ul began **his** letter by talking about the riches, privileges, and benefits that all believers have been given **in Messiah (1:3** to **3:21)**. **He** went on to explain

the believer's role in pursuing a godly life worthy of this calling **(4:1** to **6:9). He** now concludes by using a metaphor to remind **his** readers that a very real spiritual **battle** is being waged for their souls. By equipping **the armor** that **ADONAI** has provided them for this battle, they can be prepared for the onslaught of the enemy and be ready for the life of service that **the Lord** has for them in **His** spiritual army.[250] **Finally, grow powerful in union with the Lord, in union with his mighty strength (6:10)!** The word **finally** (Greek: *loipos*) is usually interpreted in the sense of "therefore," as a conclusion drawn from what was said previously. But the phrase used by **Paul** in the Greek can also mean *from this point forward.* The believer will always be in a battle until the day we are taken home to heaven or until **the Lord** returns.[251]

As **the apostle** ends **his** letter, **he** feels compelled to address an essential topic for all believers – the spiritual battle. **He** has already firmly established the point that this current world is often a hostile place for those who seek to walk with **God (2:1-2)**. The environment of this age is often chaotic and destructive since its principle ruler is **Satan**. There are so many things that transpire in day-to-day life that are not the perfect will of **God**. It was a dangerous thing for **YHVH** to give mankind freewill and the tragic fruit is seen in the daily news. It is within this hostile environment that the follower of **Yeshua** finds himself.

The result is an ongoing spiritual battle between the forces of evil and the power of **God**. It may seem overwhelming, but **Sha'ul** is not totally pessimistic about the battle. We are already more than conquerors through the work of **Yeshua** and the ultimate victory is guaranteed! Yet the battle rages for those who seek to walk in the light of **God's** ways. For this reason **the apostle** reminds **his** readers to grow strong in their faith-walk. **He** has already commended **the Ephesians** on their remarkable spiritual growth and success as followers of **Yeshua (1:13-16)**. But as is often the case, **he** also encourages **them** to grow stronger in **the Lord**. The snares of the fallen world are way beyond **their** own strength to overcome, but with **God's** help, **they** will find **their** way to final victory **in Messiah**. The strength of **ADONAI** is offered to every believer in the midst of worldly challenges.[252]

The provision, the armor of God: Use all the armor and weaponry that God provides, so that you will be able to stand firm (6:11a). To stand firm (Greek: from *histemi*), when used in a military sense, had the idea of holding a critical position while under attack. The intent of the encouragement here is not unlike that of our **Lord** to the embattled church at Thyatira, whom **He** commended:

Hold fast until I come (Rev 2:25).[253] Since this battle is in the spiritual realm, by necessity it requires spiritual weapons. While **Paul** will use the analogy of a soldier, **he** clearly is referring to **the** spiritual **armor of God**. The following details can fit the description of a Roman soldier of the first century, but there are some intriguing modifications from spiritual **armor**. It is more likely that, as a **Rabbi**, **he** is referring to spiritual weapons that would be understood in the context of Judaism. **ADONAI** has provided these weapons to stand against the spiritual forces that oppose **God**.

The enemy: against the deceptive tactics of the Adversary (6:11b). The Evil One is **Satan**. This phrase is even a play on words, as the Hebrew word **Satan** means *opposition* or *adversary*. Although **he** was originally one of the angels close to the throne of **God**, **he** chose to oppose **his Creato**r and even lead a rebellion of other angelic beings. Most commentators agree that the descriptions of a fallen pagan king can only be attributed to a greater spiritual power, **the Old Serpent (Isaiah 14:12-17; Ezeki'el 28:11-19; Revelation 12:1-11)**. Thus, it is not an early king, but **Lucifer** (a later Latin translation) and **his demons** that were cast out of heaven to the earth where they continue to cause spiritual havoc **(2:2)**. This is not just Christian teaching **but it is also well documented in rabbinic theology as well.**

It is said that the work of the Ruler of Darkness falls into three broad categories: he seduces mankind, he accuses them before God, and he inflicts the punishment of death (Tractate *Bava Batra 16a*). It was the Tempter who was responsible for encouraging Isra'el to make the Golden Calf in the wilderness (Tractate *Shabbat 89a*). As **his** name implies, **the Adversary** is constantly opposing all that **God** seeks to establish. What makes this spiritual war especially tricky are the deceptive tactics that are employed by **him**. **Satan** knows that most people would recognize his destructive ways if he made a direct attack. **He** is much too deceitful to appear in the obvious red leotards with the pitchfork legend! **He** is more likely to cause **his** confusion through guerilla warfare or surprise attacks.

Rabbi Sha'ul warns elsewhere that **the Deceiver** will even disguise **himself** as **an angel of light (Second Corinthians 1:14)**. No doubt **the Accuser** will seek to attack humanity in its areas of greatest weakness, whether it is greed, illicit sex, addictions, or even religion! Tragically, **he** does a pretty good job of keeping unbelievers distracted and away from the Kingdom of **God**. Here, however, the **Rabbi** is addressing the believers **in Messiah** and warning them to be on the alert. **Satan** knows **he** cannot capture the true believers in **Yeshua (John 18:28-29)**.

But **the Ruler of this world** can certainly get believers off the good path of walking with **Messiah**. It is not a question of losing one's salvation (see the commentary on **The Life of Christ, to see link click Ms – The Eternal Security of the Believer**) but losing many of **God's** intended blessings. For this reason, the apostle warns the believers to stay alert and to keep armed with spiritual weapons.[254]

The battle against demons: For we are not struggling against human beings, but against the rulers, authorities and cosmic powers governing this darkness, against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly realm (6:12). With all the craziness of the world, it is tempting to blame external sources. Yet, while all people are accountable to **God** for their attitudes and actions, those who have some spiritual discernment understand that it is not just an outward battle being fought. All these evils are merely manifestations of the greater spiritual battle that is taking place.

Most of the world scoffs at the idea of the existence of **the Devil**, but the fact remains that someone is doing a very good imitation of **him**! In fact it is evil spiritual rulers, authorities and cosmic powers that are stirring up most of the trouble. Even if most of the world is in denial, the Scriptures, **as well as the ancient rabbis,** confirm that there are spiritual forces that are manipulating the events of world history. As **the apostle** says, it is a spiritual struggle of epic proportions.

The victory, standing firm: So take up every piece of war equipment God provides; so that when the evil day comes, you will be able to resist; and when the battle is won, you will still be standing firm (6:13). The Rabbi has informed the believers to use the right spiritual equipment for this battle. Here is a more specific encouragement for them to take up every piece of battle gear **God** has already provided. But what good does it do if it stays in the storage locker? This is precisely the point where too many believers of today fail. Many feel defeated and beat up by **the Adversary** because they have not taken up their battle gear. It must be an active choice combined with exerted effort on our part. We are called to resist and to stand firm. This is the difference between a defeated, confused believer and a believer who is walking in strength and victory! No soldier would think of going into battle without his **armor**. As with the **Ephesian** believers, we too must make use of every piece of equipment that **ADONAI** has provided if we are to be victorious in our spiritual lives.

Paul was probably chained to a Roman soldier when **he** wrote the letter of **Ephesians**, and looking at the soldier's **armor**, **he** was inspired by **the Ruach Ha'Kodesh** to see in it the analogy of **God's** spiritual provision for our battle with **Satan** and **his demons**. As **the apostle** explains, the believer's **armor** equips him beyond the initial facts of the Gospel. **It** is living the obedient, Scripture-dominated, **Spirit**-empowered life that enables us to **stand firm**. However, there was another good analogy. **Sha'ul** will also quote a number of references in the Torah to back up **his** teaching, the bulk of which deal with the garments of **the High Priest**. These garments have a great application to the battle in the spiritual world.[255]

*Dear Heavenly **Father**, Praise **You** that **You** are Almighty and have the power to conquer all that come against **You**. **Your** omniscience sees the future as though it has already happened and you have already won all future battles! **Your** children can totally trust their future to **You** for **You** have already conquered all enemies. When Satan gathers all the armies of the world against you, you wipe him out without even a fight for the sword from your mouth strikes them all down.* ***From His mouth comes a sharp sword – so that with it He may strike down the nations – and He shall rule them with an iron rod, and He treads the winepress of the furious wrath of Elohei-Tzva'ot. On His robe and on His thigh He has a name written, "King of kings, and Lord of lords."*** *. . .* ***Then the beast was captured, and along with him the false prophet who had performed the signs before him by which he deceived those who had received the mark of the beast, as well as those who had worshiped his image. These two were thrown alive into the lake of fire burning with brimstone. (Revelation 19:15-16, 20).***

*I can also be victorious, as I wear **the armor** that **You** have provided for me. How great that **You** live within me to strength me and to guide me in spiritual battles.* ***Yeshua answered and said to him: If anyone loves Me, he will keep My word. My Father will love him, and We will come to him and make Our dwelling with him (John 14:23).*** *Thank **You** that **You** also give me powerful **armor** to help me handle all **temptations**.* ***No temptation has taken hold of you except what is common to mankind. But God is faithful – He will not allow you to be tempted beyond what you can handle. But with the temptation He will also provide a way of escape, so you will be able to endure it (First Corinthians 10:13).***

*The victory that comes after a battle is a reward and joy that I rejoice in laying at **Your** feet in thanks and appreciation for **Your** help by the power of the indwelling*

Ruach Ha'Kodesh *and* ***the armor*** *which you give me. Though fighting is not a joy, when I wear* ***Your armor****, then victory is assured and there is joy in pleasing* ***You*** *by my obedience! In* ***Messiah Yeshua's*** *holy Name and power of* ***His*** *resurrection. Amen*