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The Breastplate of Righteousness
6: 14b

The breastplate of righteousness DIG: What is the difference between the *imputed* righteousness we receive at the moment of salvation and our *practical* righteousness?

REFLECT: How can truth, righteousness, and peace help you to stand against the enemy's attacks? How costly can it be to neglect putting on the breastplate of righteousness?

**Our righteousness is to be taken and wrapped around our whole being, as it were,
just as ancient soldiers covered themselves with breastplates of armor.**

No Roman soldier would go into battle without his breastplate, a tough, sleeveless piece of **armor** that covered his full torso. It was often made of leather of heavy linen, onto which were sewn overlapping layers of animal hooves or horns or pieces of metal. Some were made of large pieces of metal molded or hammered to conform to the body. The purpose of that piece of **armor** is obvious – to protect the heart, lungs, intestines, and other vital organs.

In ancient Jewish thinking, the heart represented the mind, will and bowels, the seat of emotions and feelings. The mind and the emotions are the two areas where Satan most fiercely attacks believers. He creates a world system, a sinful environment by which he tempts us to think wrong thoughts and to feel wrong emotions. He wants to cloud our minds with false doctrine, false principles, and false information in order to mislead and confuse us. He also wants to confuse our emotions and thereby pervert our affections, morals, loyalties, goals, and commitments. He desires to snatch **the Word of God** from our minds and replace it with his own perverse ideas. He seeks to undermine pure living and replace it with his own perverse ideas. He seeks to undermine pure living and replace it with immorality, greed, envy, hate, and every other vice. He wants us to laugh at sin rather than mourn over it, and to rationalize it rather than confess it and bring it to

the Lord for forgiveness. He seduces us to become so used to sin in and around us that it doesn't bother our conscience.



Therefore, we are to **put on the breastplate of righteousness,** as protection against those attacks **(6:14b). Righteousness** is to be taken and wrapped around our whole being, as it were, just as ancient soldiers covered themselves with **breastplates** of **armor**. When **Sha'ul** talks here about **righteousness**, **he** is not talking about our *imputed* **righteousness**, the perfect **righteousness** that **God** transfers to our spiritual bank account at the moment of salvation (see the commentary on **The Life of Christ, to see link click Bw – What God Does for Us at the Moment of Faith**). **ADONAI's** imputed **righteousness** protects us from hell, but it does not protect us from the Adversary in this life. **The breastplate of righteousness** that we put on as spiritual **armor** against the Evil One is the *practical* **righteousness** of a life lived in obedience to **God's Word**. Therefore, **YHVH Himself** puts on our *imputed* **righteousness**, but we must put on our *practical* **righteousness**.

Not to be **armored** with **the breastplate of righteousness** can be very costly to the believer. **John's** first epistle contains many warnings and commands to believers, and these are given, along with other truths, **so that our joy may be made complete (First John 1:4).** In other words, lack of obedience brings lack of **joy**. The **joyful** believer is an obedient believer. Unholy living does not rob us of salvation, but it robs us of salvation's **joy**. Sadly, the Church today is often guilty of supplying believers with the paper **armor** of good advice, programs, activities, techniques, and methods – when what people really need is the godly **armor** of holy living. No program, method, or technique can bring wholeness and **joy** to the believer who is unwilling to confront and forsake their sin. Failure to be armed with *practical* **righteousness** will result in fruitlessness, loss of reward (see the

commentary on **Revelation Cc – We Must All Appear Before the Bema Seat of Christ**), and reproach to **God's Name**.

Beloved, Peter pleads, **I urge you as aliens and strangers to abstain from fleshly lusts, which wage war against the soul (First Peter 2:11). Fleshly lusts** and every other kind of sin are part of Satan's arsenal with which he **wages war against** our very **souls**. Our **armor** must include **the breastplate of righteousness**, the genuine holiness of the genuine believer whose **every thought** is **held captive to the obedience of Messiah (Second Corinthians 10:5),** and whose mind is set **on things above, not on the things that are on the earth (Colossians 3:2).** Therefore, let us **put on the Lord Yeshua Messiah, and make no provision for the flesh in regard to its lusts (Romans 13:14).**[258]



For a Roman soldier **the breastplate** was most essential to protect the vital organs while in battle. If the heart or lungs were injured it would most likely be a fatal wound. In a different way, **the breastplate** of **the High Priest** was essential for protection as well. In this case it was not so much the physical organs of the body but the spiritual essence of the soul. In Judaism, the heart is symbolic of the inner being of every person and it needs protection. Not surprisingly, the Torah required **the High Priest** to wear a *choshen* (a special **breastplate**) to symbolically protect **his** heart as **he** ministered. **The breastplate** was an important reminder of a critical ministry of **the High Priest**. It contained twelve different stones representing the twelve tribes of **Isra'el** (see the commentary on **Exodus Ga – Fashion a Breastplate for Making Decisions**).

The priest was to always be a mediator between **God** and **His** people, a perfect picture of **the** coming **Messiah**. **The Rabbi** quotes a verse from the TaNaKh that alludes to this **breastplate** and the fact that **it** represents the **righteous** character of **God Himself**. **He put on righteousness as His breastplate, and the helmet of salvation on his head; He put on the garments of vengeance and wrapped himself in zeal as in a cloak** (see the commentary on **Isaiah Js – According to What They Had Done, He Will Repay Wrath to His Enemies**)**.** The battle of **the Spirit** cannot be fought with **a** Roman **breastplate**, but requires the *spiritual* **breastplate** represented in **the High Priest**. As we believers enter spiritual battle, we need to protect our souls with **the righteous breastplate** of **God**.[259]

*Dear Heavenly **Father**, Praise **You** for giving me **the righteous breastplate** of **Messiah**. **He made the One who knew no sin to become a sin offering on our behalf, so that in Him we might become the righteousness of God (Second Corinthians 5:21).** How great a cost **You** had to pay in order to give to me **Your righteousness**. **(Hebrews 12:2).** When trials and problems come, please help me remember the great cost **You** so willingly paid for victory over sin and its penalty of death, and how short life on earth is. Someday I will live with **You** in great peace and joy in heaven for all eternity! **For I consider the sufferings of this present time not worthy to be compared with the coming glory to be revealed to us (Romans 8:18).***

*It is also a comfort for me to meditate on what a wonderful Father **You** are. **Your** love is never-ending and your holy wisdom means that however **You** lead me, it will always be the wisest thing to do. **You** restore our souls **(Psalms 23:3)** and **You** are always with me. **For God Himself has** said: **I will never leave you or forsake you (Hebrews 13:5c).**Thank **You** for **the breastplate of righteousness** and for being such a wonderful heavenly **Father**. In **Messiah Yeshua's** holy Name and power of **His** resurrection. Amen*