

THE ARMOUR OF GOD - PART IV The Shield of Faith

Text: Ephesians 6:16

Key Word: Faith

Key Thought: Our Faith in God Protects Us Against the Devil's Fiery Darts

The 4th piece of God's armour carries an abundance of liveable truth for the believer.

This piece of armour brings us to a noticeable change in thought. The Authorized Version uses the words, "***Above all***" we are to take the shield of faith. It almost makes one think that the following three pieces of armour are more important than the previous ones. Another way of saying the same thing according to the Greek language is,

"In addition to all this, take up the shield of faith, with which you can extinguish all the flaming arrows of the evil one."

Ephesians 6:16

There is also another difference in the words that Paul chooses. Instead of saying "***having***" (KJV) he now uses the word "***take or taking***." The first three parts of the armour are fixed to the body by a special fastening. A soldier takes and places the helmet on his head; reaches out and takes his shield and does the same for his sword.

Therefore these three are put down when you are in state of rest. The moment the enemy becomes active again we must take up these final three pieces of armour to be made ready for the Battle. **What Are Five Noticeable Things That Paul Describes?**

I. THE ROMAN SHIELD

A Roman soldier carried a shield which was quite large. They were approximately 4 feet in length and 2 ½ feet wide. Originally the soldiers stood behind them like a door of protection. They were eventually altered to an oblong shape to reduce the weight but still protected their entire body. An army would often march like a moving wall enclosed in the front as well as all around. The soldiers in the front and outside lines held their shields vertically while the other lines held theirs horizontally. They became an impregnable wall.

This shows how our faith can be used to offer protection for each other. **OUR FAITH** can bring about victory in another believer's life.

I. THE ROMAN SHIELD (Contd.)

The shields were made of wood initially but later were lined with fireproof metal. Since the shields were heavy, soldiers couldn't escape quickly. The protection was therefore ensured from a distance. **This shield was made for standing in battle not running from battle.** Later in time, leather shields were imbedded with metal discs to lighten them and yet still offer protection.

The shields were used to overcome the preliminary attacks that their enemies would hurl at them from a distance. In close contact, the helmet and the sword and buckler became the important pieces of armour.

II. THE FIERY DARTS

These "darts" or "arrows" were made of either wood or metal. They both had a special-sharpened point. The tip was often wound with a material soaked in a flammable substance. When the army was ready to attack, the tip would be placed in a flaming fire so it would burst into flames. These fiery arrows would then be hurled at the enemy. If the dart (arrow) penetrated another flammable material (a thatched roof) it would burst into a greater flame. They were also very capable of burning a large portion of the enemy's body rendering him inactive in the fight.

Soldiers used to throw these flaming arrows at their enemy from all directions and in such great amounts that it caused incredible confusion.

III. THE ENEMY

We must realize that we are fighting the battle of our lives against not simply "evil" but rather the "evil one" or the "wicked one." We are therefore, not in some impersonal warfare. We are not fighting simply "forces" but rather the devil who is commanding and controlling his agents of iniquity. This is not an abstract force, but the devil is a real, living, created being. Evil is a personal being. He manipulates the evil spirits under his control who in turn manipulates people.

Martin Luther got so angry at the devil that he one day threw an inkpot at him. John Bunyan wrote a masterpiece of his personal struggle against devilish forces in his book "*Pilgrim's Progress.*"

IV. THE TACTIC

These flaming arrows try to penetrate us in many ways. Have you ever woken up in the morning and immediately were confronted with a thought that is evil or blasphemous, even before you had a chance to think?

IV. THE TACTIC (Contd.)

The devil then tries to make us believe that we were the originators of those thoughts and that we have no right to call ourselves a Christian. He tries to drive us into a state of despair and depression.

Have you ever noticed that you can watch T.V. for endless hours or read the paper but as soon as you try to read the Bible and pray your thoughts begin to wander and you become distracted?

This is what I term "**Trench Warfare.**" You can't see the enemy but he continues to know when to strike at you. Some of the greatest Christians have been plagued by horrible doubts. The devil hopes that the saint will assume that the thoughts and feelings are his/her own and will begin to doubt that he/she is really a Christian. He sometimes chooses to strike an individual, while at other times against churches, and sometimes against families or even whole communities or countries.

Some of these fiery darts come as imaginations or fantasies. Our enemy can conjure up scenes, and depict events. He can paint pictures into our minds that seem so real. He uses these hand in hand with our desires, passions, and lusts in order to arouse us into destructive patterns. We must realize that temptations will come our way no matter what we try to do to avoid them.

*"No **temptation** has seized you except what is common to man. **And God is faithful**; he will not let you be **tempted** beyond what you are able to bear. But when you are **tempted**, he will provide a way out so you can stand up under it."*

I Corinthians 10:13

"Dear friends, do not be surprised at the painful (fiery - KJV) trial you are suffering, as though something strange were happening to you."

I Peter 4:12

V. OUR DEFENCE

6516 Jesus Answering the Door

*** Martin Luther was often very graphic in the description of the activities of the Devil. Asked one time how he overcame the Devil, he replied, "Well, when he comes knocking upon the door of my heart, and asks 'Who lives here?' the dear Lord Jesus goes to the door and says, 'Martin Luther used to live here but he has moved out. Now I live here.'" The Devil seeing the nail prints in his hands and the pierced side, takes flight immediately. ***

When Satan begins to hurl his fiery darts in our direction we are not simply to step forward and stop them with our breastplate of righteousness. We must often use more than one piece (and sometimes even all of the) armour at work in order to overcome the wicked one.

The Shield of Faith is to be used to dispel the darts that the enemy hurls at us.

"for everyone born of God overcomes the world.

This is the victory that overcomes the world, even our faith.

5. Who is it that overcomes the world? Only he who believes that Jesus is the Son of God?"

I John 5:4,5

Faith never points to itself. **Faith has an Object.** Cults produce followers who have faith in faith or faith in a person other than God. You can't work up faith by vain repetition or acts of love. It is God who instills secure faith in our heart and causes us to look to Him for a greater measure of faith.

"Against all hope, Abraham in hope believed and so became the father of many nations . . .

*20. he did not waver through unbelief regarding the promise of God, **but was strengthened in his faith** and gave glory to God,*

21. being fully persuaded that God had power to do what he had promised."

Romans 4:18, 20,21

V. OUR DEFENCE (Contd.)

Abraham's faith led him closer to God. There was an Object for his faith to be founded upon. **That Object was God who always kept His Word.** Abraham knew how to keep his shield of faith in a proper position. **His shield was not some mystical mind game. He found the One who gave him a foundation for his life.** God knew when and how to encourage the father of our faith.

"Do not be afraid, Abram. I am your shield, your very great reward."

Genesis 15:1

"God is our refuge and strength, an ever-present help in trouble."

Psalms 46:1

"For the Lord is a sun and a shield; the LORD bestows favor and honor."

Psalms 84:11

The shield of faith always keeps God in focus. We are to keep hidden behind its protection. All the fiery darts will be quenched before they make us immobile. **God's shield of faith is immovable and indestructible.** Let the hosts of hell come for they cannot destroy those who "resist steadfast in the faith."

Remember that Jesus already faced the fiery weapons of hell and came forth as the victor. No weapon that is formed against us will prosper as we keep our shield of faith in position. When a hawk is attacked by crows or kingbirds, he does not make a counterattack, but soars higher and higher in ever widening circles until his tormentors leave him alone.

Is it your time to rise on the wings of faith? Does your shield need to be raised to a position of protection? Have you been burnt by a fiery dart lately? Ask God today to increase your faith in Him and His Word.

C:\My Documents\WPWin(X7)\Sermons.2017\The Amour of God\Ephesians 6_16.wpd

Date: Mar 19/17

Place: FCA

Time: 10:30 Am

Song: But Thou O Lord (Art a Shield for Me) - Am

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II. THE FIERY DARTS

III. THE ENEMY

IV. THE TACTIC - *I Corinthians 10:13; I Peter 4:12*

V. OUR DEFENCE - *I John 5:4,5; Romans 4:18, 20,21; Genesis 15:1; Psalm 46:1; Psalm 84:11*