

The Whole Armor of God

Mat 10:34 "Do not think that I have come to bring peace to the earth. I have not come to bring peace, but a sword (*Gk.3162- figuratively war*). 35 For I have come to set a man against his father, and a daughter against her mother, and a daughter-in-law against her mother-in-law. 36 And a person's enemies will be those of his own household.

Obviously, Jesus wasn't the 'spiritual' pacifist that many like to think He was when He came the first time. Yes, Jesus was all about love and mercy and taking care of our neighbors, but He was also a realist. And many who wish to point out Biblical error will take this passage and compare it with what He said in Jn 12:47.

Joh 12:47 If anyone hears My words and does not keep them, I do not judge him; for I **did not come to judge** the world but to save the world.

Jesus went on to say that "the word that I have spoken will judge him on the last day" (v. 48). "On the last day" is speaking of an entirely different situation than what He said would happen when He came the first time. In Mat 10 Jesus was, back then, explaining the consequence that would come, specifically in Jewish family relationships, from His teachings and that there would be many who would relinquish their former adherence to the Mosaic Law, and turn to what it only shadowed (*Heb 10:1*); the message of the gospel which would finally replace it (*Heb 8:13*). Jesus' message was difficult to receive by those who were so ingrained in the Old Testament and had a warped understanding of the prophecies concerning Him (*Lk 24:44*). Thus, for "a person's enemies" to "be those of his own household" would be akin today to a Muslim having raised a family in **that** religion only to have one member become a Christian (*and not to compare Islam, a man-made religion, to "the law [which was] spiritual" [Rom 7:14] which truly did come by inspiration from God [Act 7:53/Gal 3:19]*). It then was to be understood by those who heard Him that Jesus' teachings would not be accepted as prophetic fulfillment and would thus disrupt even the closest of Jewish families. The same has happened ever since within families where Christians have suffered because even their own relatives "are surprised when [they] do not join them in the same flood of debauchery, and malign [them]" (*1 Pet 4:4*). Such has caused many a weak Christian to become discouraged to the point of leaving the church. They built their faith on the sand "and it fell, and great was the fall of it" (*Mat 7:27*).

1Co 15:57 But thanks be to God, Who gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ. 58 Therefore, my beloved brothers, be steadfast, immovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, knowing that in the Lord your labor is not in vain.

- How many things do we labor at in this life that have the same promised result that Paul assured the brethren of at Corinth? Anyone who's ever owned property understands the phrase "It's always something!" When the old boiler quits and is replaced we understand that the new one will eventually need maintenance or an ultimate replacement. Same thing with cars, appliances and other things we work so hard to maintain. All the polish in the world won't keep that shiny new car from one day ending up in a junk yard to be used for parts or crushed for

recycled steel. It all just seems an exercise in futility, that is, unless what we've only become stewards of, is used to glorify God. Because what we do in service to the Lord, using whatever we've been blessed with, will go toward adding to our "treasure in Heaven" (Lk 18:22). And if we've made sacrifices concerning our families, in return we will "receive a hundredfold now in this time, houses and brothers and sisters and mothers and children and lands, with persecutions, and in the age to come eternal life" (Mk 10:30).

Rom 13:12 The night is far gone; the day is at hand. So then let us cast off the works of darkness and put on the armor of light.

"Too much time had been spent outside the service of God, so the remaining years must be dedicated to His service. All who are accountable are either "sowing to the flesh" or "sowing to the spirit" and will one day receive a harvest for the crop they planted. Much "farm time" has been lost so we must make use of what we have left."
Brad Price

Gal 6:7 Do not be deceived: God is not mocked, for whatever one sows, that will he also reap. 8 For the one who sows to his own flesh will from the flesh reap corruption, but the one who sows to the Spirit will from the Spirit reap eternal life. 9 And let us not grow weary of doing good, for in due season we will reap, if we do not give up.

And speaking of "the armor of light" another contradiction that gets a lot of attention is where Jesus encouraged His disciples to purchase swords. But for what reason since He admonished Peter for brandishing his when the mob came for Christ? Jesus knew He came for the very purpose of sacrificing His life for the world so it was Peter's misunderstanding as to why he was to be so armed.

Luk 22:35 And He said to them, "When I sent you out with no moneybag or knapsack or sandals, did you lack anything?" They said, "Nothing." 36 He said to them, "But now let the one who has a moneybag take it, and likewise a knapsack. And let the one who has no sword sell his cloak and buy one. 37 For I tell you that this Scripture must be fulfilled in Me: 'And He was numbered with the transgressors.' For what is written about Me has its fulfillment." 38 And they said, "Look, Lord, here are two swords." And He said to them, "It is enough."

"It altogether refers to their future life. They were going into the midst of dangers. The country was infested with robbers and wild beasts. It was customary to go armed."

"Men encompassed with danger may lawfully "defend" their lives. It does not prove that it is lawful to make "offensive" war on a nation or an individual. "

Albert Barnes

- Much controversy has been made over this verse about Jesus telling those who had no sword to get one. He knew beforehand of those who did have such weapons or He wouldn't have made the point of those who didn't to get one. Obviously, the text is to be taken literally because the context demands it.

“It is enough. The meaning probably is, there is enough said on the subject; as immediately after this he entered into his agony.” Adam Clarke

Luk 22:47 While He was still speaking, there came a crowd, and the man called Judas, one of the twelve, was leading them. He drew near to Jesus to kiss Him, **48** but Jesus said to him, "Judas, would you betray the Son of Man with a kiss?" **49** And when those who were around Him saw what would follow, they said, "Lord, shall we strike with the sword?"

Joh 18:10 Then Simon Peter, having a sword, drew it and struck the high priest's servant and cut off his right ear. (The servant's name was Malchus.)

Mat 26:52 Then Jesus said to him, "Put your sword back into its place. For all who take the sword will perish by the sword. **53** Do you think that I cannot appeal to My Father, and He will at once send Me more than twelve legions of angels? **54** But how then should the Scriptures be fulfilled, that it must be so?"

- Peter mistook the times and reasons for which Jesus said he would need to protect himself for the sake of spreading the gospel. The physical sword he was to possess was not for offensive purposes but for defense and not against other human beings (*those who would persecute them because of their faith*) or Jesus would never have previously said "to the one who strikes you on the cheek, offer the other also" (*Lk 6:29*). Paul would later speak of the beasts that he would encounter at Ephesus and we need to know a little history behind that statement. But first, the context. Earlier in **1 Cor 15** Paul dealt with the false teaching of there being no future resurrection asking "how can some of you say that there is no resurrection of the dead?" (*v. 12*) He made his defense on the issue concluding it rhetorically...

1Co 15:18 Then those also who have fallen asleep in Christ have perished. **19** If in Christ we have hope in this life only, we are of all people most to be pitied. **20** But in fact Christ has been raised from the dead, the firstfruits of those who have fallen asleep.

- With that statement Paul addressed a practice that was being taught by those who were claiming there was no resurrection, baptism "on behalf of the dead" (*v. 29*), asking rhetorically, "If the dead are not raised at all, why are people baptized on their behalf?" Thus he refuted both false teachings in one retort concluding neither were authorized by God. He went on to ask them for a reason that anyone could give, in relation to suffering persecution, if there was nothing beyond this life to live for.

1Co 15:30 Why are we in danger every hour? **31** I protest, brothers, by my pride in you, which I have in Christ Jesus our Lord, I die every day!

- Paul was only doing as our Lord had taught concerning personal sacrifice.

Luk 9:23 And He said to all, "If anyone would come after Me, let him deny himself and take up his cross daily and follow Me. 24 For whoever would save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for My sake will save it.

1Co 15:32 What do I gain if, humanly speaking ("as a carnal man, having no future hope"- McGarvey), I fought with beasts at Ephesus? If the dead are not raised, "Let us eat and drink, for tomorrow we die."

- The reason Peter was told to prepare to preach the gospel by purchasing a sword, had more to do with defending himself against wild animals as did Paul when having to defend himself as he fought against, but by God's hand was rescued, a lion in the arena at Ephesus, because of his faith.

"It is the most natural interpretation to suppose that Paul, on some occasion, had such a contest with a wild beast at Ephesus. It is that which would occur to the great mass of the readers of the New Testament as the obvious meaning of the passage.

The state of things in Ephesus when Paul was there [Acts 19] was such as to make it nowise improbable that he would be subjected to such a trial.

He was sentenced to this; was thrown to the wild beast; had every human prospect of dying; it was done on account of his religion; and but for the interposition of God, he would have died."

Albert Barnes

2Ti 4:17 But the Lord stood by me and strengthened me, so that through me the message might be fully proclaimed and all the Gentiles might hear it. So I was rescued from the lion's mouth. 18 The Lord will rescue me from every evil deed and bring me safely into His heavenly kingdom. To Him be the glory forever and ever. Amen.

- There are differing opinions on whether "the lion's mouth" was in reference to Paul being figuratively delivered from Nero, but...

"A basic rule of Bible interpretation is that we take passages literally unless there is a compelling reason to make them figurative."

Brad Price

- Such was the case of Daniel in the lion's den (Dan 6) so it wouldn't have been the first time God "stopped the mouths of lions" (Heb 11:33). Paul then went on to point out the real problem at Corinth; a lack of knowledge concerning the truth.

1Co 15:33 Do not be deceived (Gk.4105- Thayer- to be led into error): "Bad company ruins good morals." 34 Wake up from your drunken stupor, as is right, and do not go on sinning. For some have no knowledge of God. I say this to your shame.

- As Jesus said concerning false teachers and how we should avoid associating with them...

Mat 15:14 Let them alone; they are blind guides. And if the blind lead the blind, both will fall into a pit."

- In finishing his reason to not associate with those who would lead them astray, Paul then dealt with what he understood as being their real mistake, their lack of accountability to teach those among them.

"Their preoccupation with arguing over the resurrection of the dead may have led them to forget about the unsaved-people who were "dead in their trespasses and sins" (Eph 2:1)."
Brad Price

The physical sword, then, that Jesus instructed His disciples to buy was for the sole purpose of their personal defense against wild animals when they became His "witnesses in Jerusalem and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth" (Act 1:8). It would in turn help them focus on wielding their spiritual sword "for the defense of the gospel" (Php 1:16). It literally was, and is, a war between the spiritual and carnal, a...

War of the Words

2Co 10:3 For though we walk in the flesh, we are not waging war according to the flesh. 4 For the weapons of our warfare are not of the flesh but have divine power to destroy strongholds.

- We are all guided by our human nature. But the real battle Christians wage is not a physical one, even though the physical can sometime be affected by it. It is spiritual in nature and we've been given power through the word of God to put an end to man-concocted philosophies.

2Co 10:5 We destroy arguments and every lofty opinion raised against the knowledge of God, and take every thought captive to obey Christ, 6 being ready to punish every disobedience, when your obedience is complete.

- What defense does any philosophy have that is against truth? Elevated attitudes are brought low and humbled when the simple message of the gospel is spoken. But how is it possible to defend against such irreverence if our own submission to the gospel isn't fully complete?

1Co 16:13 Be watchful, stand firm in the faith, act like men, be strong. 14 Let all that you do be done in love.

- To "be watchful" literally means to "keep awake: -be vigilant" (Gk.1127). We can be so tempted to follow false ideas and doctrines if we aren't aware of their existence through a consistent amount of preparation to defend against such. If we don't station ourselves, as sentinels who guard a military camp, fixed and maturing in the faith, how can we then defend it against "deceitful spirits and teachings of demons" or "the insincerity of liars" (1 Tim 4:1-2)?

Col 2:6 Therefore, as you received **Christ Jesus** the **Lord**, so walk in **Him**, ⁷ rooted and built up in **Him** and established in the faith, just as you were taught, abounding in thanksgiving. ⁸ See to it that no one takes you captive by **philosophy** and **empty deceit** (*Gk.539- delusion*), **according to human tradition**, according to the **elemental spirits of the world**, and **not** according to **Christ**.

- “Delusional” is a word that can fitly describe so many people who rely on what others think and teach or what has been handed down to them from past generations. Such man-made philosophical ideas have no value when compared to the teachings of our **Lord**.

1Pe 4:1 Since therefore **Christ** suffered in the flesh, arm yourselves **with the same way of thinking**, for whoever has suffered in the flesh has ceased from sin, ² so as to live for the rest of the time in the flesh no longer for human passions but for the will of **God**.

- **Peter** finally understood what **Jesus** meant when instructing him to be prepared for the persecution that would come to those who love **Him**. When telling his readers to “arm” themselves, he wasn’t urging them to do so with carnal weaponry but with the same mindset that **Jesus**, in the beginning, tried to arm him with.

1Pe 4:3 For the time that is past suffices for doing what the Gentiles want to do, living in sensuality, passions, drunkenness, orgies, drinking parties, and lawless idolatry. ⁴ With respect to this they are surprised when you do not join them in the same flood (*Gk.401- license: -excess*) of debauchery (*Gk.810- un-saved-ness, profligacy [Webster- recklessly wasteful]*), and they malign (*Gk.987- defame, speak evil*) you; ⁵ but they will give account to **Him Who** is ready to judge the living and the dead.

- But some **Christians** still have the attitude of “The world is falling apart and there’s nothing I can do to save it so why even try?”. And “**Jesus** didn’t save everyone **He** came in contact with so why put forth the effort if we can’t get more people to listen to the message of the gospel?” True, there were only somewhat more than five hundred (*1 Cor 15:6*), out of the countless Jews that heard **Jesus**, that were converted before **He** ascended back to the **Father**. So **what** if our message doesn’t resonate with those we come in contact with. Have we even given the thought that, even though the gospel may fall on deaf ears for the most part, and sometime it will be derided, defamed and ridiculed, ...

Php 1:18 ... in every way, whether in pretense or in truth, **Christ** is proclaimed, and in that [we should] rejoice... (?)

- Thus said, how many people will know **Jesus** as a result of our spreading the gospel or of those taught by the conversions we made once we’re gone? How many people heard **Peter’s** sermon, shortly after **Jesus** returned to **Heaven**, whose collective consciences were goaded to be added to the church on the day of Pentecost? *Act 2:41* ... about three thousand souls. So we need to be careful when thinking nothing we can do will ever save anyone. Generations ago there

were those who were converted that affected the lives of others of their day, who went on to affect others and so forth. The gospel was first preached almost two thousand years ago and someone took the responsibility seriously enough that it has continued on since then. How else, **Christian**, would it have been made known to you?

Eph 6:10 Finally, be strong in the **Lord** and in the strength of **His** might. **11** Put on the whole armor of **God**, that you may be able to stand against the schemes of the devil.

- It can be said that **Satan** is a master of disguise. And his duped cohorts come with many disguises.

2Co 11:13 For such men are false apostles, deceitful workmen, disguising themselves as apostles of **Christ**. **14** And no wonder, for even **Satan** disguises himself as an angel of light.

- How we decipher between those who preach truth and those who promote the lie can only be accomplished through putting on the whole armor of **God**.

Eph 6:12 For we do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the cosmic powers over this present darkness, against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly places.

- It's not science fiction. There are wars being fought behind the scenes as **Daniel** wrote in **Dan 10:13-20**. Such, according to this passage, are still taking place even as we speak. And we all suffer the consequence of such wars through the actions of others, our personal health or other things resulting from "the spiritual forces of evil" that are permitted to do their will. So what part do we have?

Eph 6:13 Therefore take up the whole armor of **God**, that you may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to **stand** firm. **14** **Stand** therefore, having fastened on the **belt of truth**, and having put on the **breastplate of righteousness**, **15** and, as **shoes** for your feet, having put on the **readiness** given by the gospel of peace. **16** In all circumstances take up the **shield of faith**, with which you can extinguish all the flaming darts of the evil one; **17** and take the **helmet of salvation**, and the **sword of the Spirit**, which is the word of **God**,

- **Paul** used the well-known armor of a Roman soldier to illustrate his point in a call to arms to the soldiers of the cross. A belt was used to "hold things in place and allow freer movement" (*G. Hampton*), thus "**the truth will set you free**" (**Jn 8:32**) as long as we have it in place. A breastplate for the common soldier was to protect his vital organs. But according to **Pro 13:6** "Righteousness guards him whose way is blameless..." Concerning the shoes of the Roman soldier...

"To hold his ground in even the worst conditions, the Roman soldier wore hobnailed sandals. The Christian is prepared, or ready, for the battle when he has on his gospel shoes." Gary Hampton

- How else can we “stand firm”? Another important feature of the Christian’s armor is the shield.

“Lipscomb says the shield was two and one-half feet wide and four feet high. It was made of wood covered with thick leather on the outside. When the enemy fired flaming arrows, they bounced off the tough leather and dropped harmlessly to the ground.”

Gary Hampton

- The helmet was another part of his armor that the Roman soldier could not live without. It is our “hope of salvation” (1 Thes 5:8) that keeps us from discouragement which would lead us to defeat. But the only part of our spiritual armor that is to be considered offensive is “the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God”. It is the same sword Jesus wielded throughout His earthly ministry and was seen in John’s vision on Patmos.

Rev 19:15 From His mouth comes a sharp sword with which to strike down the nations, and He will rule them with a rod of iron. He will tread the winepress of the fury of the wrath of God the Almighty.

- It is that same sword the Christian soldier is to use for “discerning the thoughts and intentions of the heart” (Heb 4:12). Christian, are you wearing the whole armor of God? Remember, nothing was given to protect our backs but fellow Christians thus there’s no sense in retreating. Or have you, as David stated when he donned Saul’s armor, “not tested them” (1 Sam 17:39)?

“The Christian’s duty is to love the Lord, do his will, serve his kinsmen in Christ, work for the conversion of the lost, and conduct his attitude and life so as to facilitate his enemies’ salvation, if at all possible. Unfortunately these are biblical truths which all too many appear to have forgotten—if indeed they ever understood them.”

God’s Providential Use of Nations/ The Christian Chronicle- Wayne Jackson

1Ti 6:11 But as for you, O man of God, flee these things. Pursue righteousness, godliness, faith, love, steadfastness, gentleness. 12 Fight the good fight of the faith. Take hold of the eternal life to which you were called and about which you made the good confession in the presence of many witnesses.

- If you haven’t made that good confession, if you haven’t put on the whole armor of God, or maybe you have but you haven’t tested it enough to be in the thick of the spiritual battles being waged against all that is righteous, we need to have a talk. But if you haven’t put Christ on in baptism you need to do that first and we can help you.

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