

THE PANOPLY OF GOD

Ephesians 6:10-17

Introduction: If anybody knew about the Roman soldier's armor and weapons, it was Paul, for he was a prisoner a long time and was actually chained to a soldier around the clock. Paul had lots of time to think and he thought of the Christian and his/her battles and how he/she needed protection. Then Paul began to think of how God protects His own and so Paul assigned parts of the Roman soldier's protective armor to spiritual protection the Christian has. He used the heavy belt, the breastplate, the shoes, the shield, the helmet and the sword in his comparisons.

There are even hymns that sing about such things, a hymn such as "Onward Christian Soldier." "Panoply" is broken down into two words: pan - meaning "all" and apla - meaning weaponry, armor.

I. THE SHIELD OF FAITH

1. To possess a suit of armor still isn't enough, there must be a shield.
2. Remember the figure "Achilles" who was immersed in the river Styx by his mother and was immune to harm until he was shot by a poison arrow in the heel which had not been immersed in the river as he was held by his heel when immersed. Protected, yet a weak spot.
3. Remember king Ahab of the Old Testament, clad in his armor and in battle, but an arrow was shot between layers of his armor and killed him. Protected, yet a weak spot.
4. For those who wore a suit of armor, there is still a great need for protection and Paul calls it the shield of FAITH.

II. FAITH SHIELDS ONE'S HEAD AGAINST DOUBT

1. Either a person is FOR or AGAINST the Lord Jesus and His Church.
2. Many religious polls have been made with questions like: "Is there a personal God?" - "Is God divine?" - "Is it necessary to belong to the Church?" People were asked what did they THINK.
3. Some countries have closed Church doors, but the real tragedy is not that the doors were shut by the country's government, but that the people didn't seem to really care.
4. Religious questions about the Lord, His Church, should be answered only by FAITH.
- *Hebrews 11:6*
5. There are no alternatives of Faith for the Christian. Nothing replaces FAITH.
6. Why do people take their own lives? Why do people commit suicide? NO FAITH in anything.

III. FAITH SHIELDS THE HEART AGAINST LOVE OF THE WORLD

1. **James 4:4** - The believer cannot serve the Lord God and the world, both.
2. Satan tempted Jesus to become involved in worldly things.
3. The rich, young ruler who came to Jesus wanting eternal life didn't want to give up worldly things.
4. The love of the world takes us away from God and how God wants us (believers) to live.
- **2 Timothy 4:10**

IV. FAITH SHIELDS THE HAND THAT HOLDS THE SWORD

1. The sword is the Word of God.
2. There is a great tragedy in not using the "sword," the Word of God.
- The Church seems to be using the "sword" as a club, not as a sword that has power.
- **Hebrews 4:12-13**
3. Remember the time when Nehemiah was involved in rebuilding the walls of Jerusalem and he had the men keep a sword in one hand and building tools in the other? They stay prepared at all times.

V. FAITH GIVES GLORIOUS VICTORY IN THE END

1. The Bible is a book of REALISM.
- But it has always had notes of victory.
- The Old Testament spoke of victories by God's people.
- The New Testament speaks of victory for the Lord's Church.
2. The life of the Lord Jesus had its ups and downs, yet when down, Jesus rose from the dead and ascended back into His heaven, has been crowned king of kings and given the name above all names. Glorious victory.
3. The power of Satan causes sin, sickness, hurt, death but the power of the Lord Jesus will heal, save, restore, redeem, etc.

CONCLUSION:

1. The Word of God closes with a shout of victory!
2. Through the shield of FAITH the believer shall be victorious as Jesus has been victorious.