

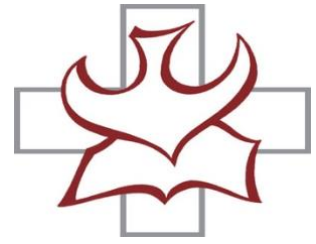
The Armor of God

The Book Of Ephesians

1 Sam 17 :4-11,32-37, 45-50 Matt 4:1-11 Eph 6:10-17

August 25, 2019

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Take a look at these pictures →
When you think about **Spiritual Warfare** and the **Armor of God**, which one do you think of yourself?



The picture on the left is tempting, isn't it? It's a brave, strong, and valiant warrior attacking the enemy; he's battling the fiery arrows of Satan, taking ground, pushing back the enemy, and defeating the demons.

The picture on the right is not quite as exciting or dramatic. It's a soldier on **guard duty**; he is standing his ground and not leaving his post. His job is to remain faithful, alert, and diligent exactly where he is stationed.

When you think about the **Armor of God**, it's tempting to think that you're the soldier on the left . . . isn't it? A brave, swashbuckling Christian engaged in spiritual battle! **But you are not!** That's how the false teachers portray the **Armor of God**; they teach that you are a great crusader; a "warrior for Jesus" who combats Satan and overcomes demons by your own power, work, effort, or strength. The false teachers claim that you are like King David who went to battle against the mighty Goliath and defeated him.

The truth, though, is that you are not like King David in the battle with Goliath; rather we are all like the Israelites hiding in the trenches *in fear of Goliath*. **Jesus is the One who is like King David**; *but even greater*. Jesus is the Mighty Warrior and the Great Crusader --- He is like the soldier in the picture on the left!

Jesus is the One who went out to battle Satan and his demons for us and on our behalf. Jesus engaged the enemy immediately after His Baptism. Jesus was tempted by the devil for 40 days in the wilderness; and never sinned. He was tempted in every way throughout His lifetime – but He never gave in to those temptations. His temptations culminated in the Garden of Gethsemane and on the Cross of Calvary. Jesus takes your place in spiritual warfare; He put on the Armor of God; He faced the Tempter --- like Adam and Eve did in the Garden of Eden; but unlike them, **Jesus never sinned**. He perfectly resisted temptation every single time for you and your salvation!

On the cross, Jesus crushed Satan's head like David crushed Goliath; and in His Resurrection, He gives you the victory!

Since therefore the children share in flesh and blood, He Himself likewise partook of the same things, that through death He might destroy the one who has the power of death, that is, the devil Hebrews 2:14

The reason the Son of God appeared was to destroy the works of the devil. 1 John 3:8

In the book of Ephesians, the **victory of Christ** that is given to you as a gift is pictured as the *Armor of God*. The **gifts of salvation** that the Lord graciously and freely gives to you and all believers is called the *Armor of God*. The *Armor of God* is a word picture to help you visualize yourself when tempted by the devil and his demons.

The *Armor of God* are the gifts of salvation that have been given to you. **Truth, righteousness, peace, faith, salvation**; even the **Word of God** are gifts that have been given to you in Holy Baptism.

- † The **belt of truth** is Christ Himself who is the way, the **truth**, and the life! He is always present with you and promises to use His mighty strength to protect you.
- † The **breastplate of righteousness** is the *not guilty* verdict that God proclaims to you; its absolution; it's the complete certainty and the absolute assurance of the forgiveness of yours sin! Satan's fiery darts of doubt cannot overwhelm you.

- † The **gospel of peace** is the peace you have with God through faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. You have a clear conscience and a pure heart in your perfect relationship with God the Father. Satan's fiery darts of guilt cannot harm you.
- † The **shield of faith** are the truths of the Christian faith; you know what is right and wrong, truth and error, good and evil from God's Holy Word! You have faith in Christ and you know His Word: Satan's fiery darts of lies will not deceive and mislead you.

The gifts of salvation that the Lord graciously and freely gives to you in Holy Baptism are described as the "Armor of God".

The **Armor of God** are the gifts of salvation that have been given to you in Holy Baptism!

The danger is turning the **Armor of God** into your own work, power, strength, or effort; and thinking that you are a brave, swashbuckling Christian engaged in spiritual battle! You think that the *belt of truth*, for instance, is you speaking truthfully to people; or *the breastplate of righteousness* are your righteous acts and good works. The danger is turning the **Armor of God** into your own work, power, strength, or effort; and thinking that you are a mighty warrior and great crusader.

The **Armor of God** are the **objective gifts** that God gives to you in Christ, by grace, and in the waters of Holy Baptism. **Truth, righteousness, peace, faith, salvation**; even the **Word of God** all point you to your Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ, who has already defeated Satan by His life, death, and resurrection! The Lord Jesus has given you the victory! Satan has no power over you; his "fiery darts" are all lies and deception; you are protected by Christ and His gifts of salvation.

The *Armor of God* is all about Christ; and keeping your eyes on Him when you are tempted.

And when you think of the **Armor of God**, the most important thing that St. Paul highlights in Ephesians is that you are on "guard duty"! 4 times in 8 verses St. Paul highlights that we are to STAND!

Put on the whole armor of God, that you may be able to **stand** against the schemes of the devil . . . Therefore take up the whole armor of God, that you may be able to **stand** in the evil day, and having done all, to **stand firm** . . . **Stand** therefore, having fastened on the belt of truth, and having put on the breastplate of righteousness. Ephesians 6:11, 13, 14

You are to stand your ground! You have **not been given** a horse to gallop into warfare; you have **not been given** a bow and arrow, nor a javelin, nor a long sword. You have been given defensive weapons. You do not have to go looking for battle; Satan will attack you! You are in close quarter combat with the Evil One; you are engaged in hand to hand fighting with demons. The battle happens in your mind and in your heart; it is evil desires, sinful fantasies, worldly attitudes, and the state of your conscience. You are to stand your ground in your heart and in your mind! You are on guard duty!

Guards stay at their post no matter what happens; there is no retreat; no surrender; but rather you **stand your ground**. You are only responsible for your post, not the whole world. You are to be faithful at your post: your life, your conscience, your heart, your family, your vocation --- that is where the battle happens. You stand guard over the holy ground of your life¹!

The **Armor of God** is meant to keep you awake; to keep you focused on Christ and His gifts of salvation to you. You are to stand your ground in your heart and in your mind! You are on guard duty!

Today we are reminded that the Christian faith and life is a battleground. The enemy is real, but unseen. The fiery arrows strike your heart and your mind and lead to sinful words and actions. But you have a champion who has given you the victory!

In Christ, you can stand your ground! The gifts of salvation that the Lord graciously and freely gives

Satan is the Enemy

“Then comes the devil, inciting and provoking in all directions, but especially agitating matters that concern the conscience and spiritual affairs, namely, to induce us to despise and disregard both the Word and works of God, to tear us away from faith, hope, and love, and bring us into misbelief, false security, and stubbornness, or, on the other hand, to lead us into despair, denial of God, blasphemy, and innumerable other shocking things.”

Martin Luther, The Large Catechism,
The Lord's Prayer, "Lead us not into temptation"

¹ This paragraph is a paraphrase from the EXCELLENT book called Grace Upon Grace: Spirituality for Today, John W. Kleinig (p.259). *This is one of the best books I have on my book shelf.*

to you in Holy Baptism you're your defense: they are the "Armor of God".
Amen!