

MSB247

MORE Seed and Bread

BRIEF BIBLICAL MESSAGES FROM

THE WORD OF TRUTH MINISTRY

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GOD'S PROTECTIVE ARMOR

by John C. Ribbens

Mankind is living in precarious times. Never before has Satan been more active than in the closing days of the present Dispensation of Grace. These frightful conditions will not prevail. The believer's life is constantly being threatened by a barrage of lies flowing out of the satanic host described by the apostle Paul as principalities, powers and the rulers of the darkness of this world. These ruthless and wicked beings will stop at nothing to destroy the life of the believer in Christ. These times would be unnerving were it not for the fact that our lives are hid with Christ in God (Colossians 3:3). Satan currently has access to the television screen, the Internet and the printed media. Paul describes this wicked one as the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that now worketh (is operating) in the children (sons) of disobedience (Eph. 2:2). Who are these principalities, powers and rulers of darkness? Paul describes them as the spiritual hosts of evil men among the most exalted ones, spoken of in Ephesians 6:12. These sinister beings are satanic in character and will stop at nothing to deceive, influence and destroy the lives of men.

In view of the existence and influence of these powerful men, what are we to do or what can we do? In the strongest language possible the apostle Paul declared, Finally, my brethren, be strong in the Lord, and in the power of His might (Eph. 6:10). Dr. R. F.

Weymouth says it this way; "In conclusion, strengthen yourselves in the Lord and in the power which His supreme power imparts." Understand that our God is infinite in power, strength, wisdom and grace. The psalmist David declared, Hear my voice, O God in my prayer: preserve my life from the fear of the enemy. Hide me from the secret counsel of the wicked; from the insurrection of the workers of iniquity (Psa. 64:1-2). The psalmist also says, In God is my salvation and my glory: the rock of my strength, and my refuge is in God. Trust in Him at all times; ye people, pour out your heart before Him: God is a refuge for us (Psa. 62:7-8).

Ephesians 6:11 declares, Put on the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil. The word "armor" is a translation of the Greek word panoplia, meaning something forming a protective covering. This same word also occurs in Ephesians 6:13 where it expands to the whole armor of Christ. Our protective covering is in Christ and His Word. By turning to Christ in prayer we avail ourselves of the infinite resources that only He can provide. Our defense against the enemy does not rest in great material possessions or in the acrobatic word skills some men may possess, posing as spiritual leaders. Although they may be articulate, persuasive, and hold positions of great influence, they offer no deterrent in dealing with the power and influence of the wicked one. Jesus said, Beware of false prophets which come to you in sheep's clothing (deceptive garb), but inwardly they are ravaging wolves (Matt. 7:15).

Paul warns us to Put on the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil (Eph. 6:11). The word "wiles" is concerned with the craftiness of the devil. Weymouth translates this word as "the stratagems" of the devil. Satan is exceedingly clever and deceptive. Paul stated, For such are false apostles, deceitful workers, transforming themselves into apostles of Christ. And no marvel; for Satan himself is transformed into an

angel of light (2 Cor. 11:13-14). We must not be deceived--his strategies can only lead to destruction.

The apostle now resorts to powerful language by reminding us that we wrestle not against flesh and blood (human foes), but against principalities, against powers, against rulers of darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places (Eph. 6:12). For the latter part of the verse, Dr. Weymouth suggests "the forces that control and govern this dark world." Our current conflict is not with "flesh and blood," signifying what men have become by birth. We have no way of understanding the minds of some men who are criminally responsible for the inhumane suffering of innocent men, women and children. God can choose to know who these men are who will stop at nothing to maintain positions of power and influence. Such are men like Yugoslavian president Slobodan Milosevic, and the widely suspected-terrorist Saudi Arabian businessman Osama Bin Laden.

In view of these critical times we are admonished to take unto you the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand (Eph. 6:13). By heeding this instruction we will be able to "withstand in the evil day." This term "withstand" is a translation of the Greek word *anthisteemi*, which has the primary meaning "to resist."

James 4:7-8 reads: **Resist the devil and he will flee from you. Draw nigh (near) unto God and He will draw nigh unto you.** We are under no compulsion to yield our lives to the works of Satan. As John reminds us, **Ye are of God, little children, and have overcome them: because greater is He that is in you, than he that is in the world** (1 John 4:4). In the strongest possible words Paul now goes on to state, **Stand therefore, having your loins girt about with truth, and having on the breastplate of righteousness; and your feet shod with the preparation of the gospel of peace; above all, taking the shield of faith, wherewith**

ye shall be able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked (one) (Eph. 6:14-16). A man's loins are that part of a man's body which essentially acts as a protective enclosure for his vital organs, including his kidneys, liver, lungs and heart. Expressed in simple language, Paul says, "Take your stand with truth as your belt, righteousness as your breastplate, the gospel of peace firmly on your feet, salvation as your helmet, and in your hand the sword of the Spirit, the Word of God." In Hebrews Paul tells us, "**The word of God is quick, and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword. . . .**" (Heb. 4:12). Therefore, when some self-proclaimed evangelist tells you "death" is the avenue into heaven or the road to hell, don't believe it. The Bible says, "**The last enemy that shall be destroyed is death**" (1 Cor. 15:26). When some presumed Biblical scholar tells you that the "rapture of the church" is imminent, avoid this misconstrued error.

Truth destroys the lies of Satan. Jesus said, "**I am** (I personify) **the way, the truth, and the life. . . .**" (John 14:6). Unless the teachings of men accord with the facts of Scripture, they should not be believed. Salvation, leading to eternal life, is not based upon being a member of some religious organization, but only upon believing that "**Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God**" (John 20:31). The Proverbs of Solomon declare, "**Buy the truth, and sell it not; also wisdom, and instruction, and understanding**" (Prov. 23:23). It is humanly impossible to place a precise value on the truth of God, except to say its value lies beyond our power of comprehension. Recognizing the infinite worth of the truth of God, we are privileged to incorporate His truth into our lives. This fact recognizes the value and importance of "the sword of the Spirit" which is the Word of God (Eph. 6:17).

Paul instructs the believer, **Above all, take the shield of faith, where with ye shall be able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked** (one) (Eph. 6:16). These "fiery darts" are the work of insidious and corrupt men who are driven by greed and an intense

desire to control the behavior of other men. They are described for us in Psalm 64:5-6 as those who encourage themselves in an evil matter: **they commune of laying snares prively (in secret); they say, Who shall see them? They search out iniquities; they accomplish a diligent search: both the inward thought of every one of them, and the heart, is deep.** This is a description of those men who spend every waking hour devising ways and means to control the thinking and behavior of innocent (cultured) men.

These works are manifest in the filth found in immoral publications, which line the book stores. How long will God permit this flow of evil to run its course? The answer lies in the words of the psalmist, **But God shall shoot at them with an arrow; suddenly shall they be wounded** (Psa. 64:7). This is nothing less than the arrow of truth. These purveyors of lies, whether stemming from the lips of some so-called evangelist or a corrupt political leader, will instantly be stopped. As the above Psalm continues, **So shall they make their own tongue to fall upon themselves: all that see them shall flee away** (Psa. 64:8). You can see that they will openly confess, "How could we have been so wrong?" Their advocates and supporters will seek to distance themselves from these men.

Finally Paul declares, **And take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit which is the Word of God** (Eph. 6:17). No admonition could be of greater value. Recognize that the "helmet of salvation" is designed to protect our heads. Our head is the focal point of our essential being. Not only does our head (skull) contain our brain, but includes our hearing, our eyesight, and our capacity to detect odors as well as to interpret and initiate actions from all the sensory functions of the body. All of these critical functions are essential to our survival. Indeed as the psalmist David declares, I will praise Thee; for I am fearfully and wonderfully made: marvelous are Thy works; and that my soul knoweth right well (Psa. 139:14).

Tragically, some men's minds are filled with evil thoughts; their eyes are exposed to lewd behavior. Men permit themselves to hear voices of deceptive men and ear-piercing sounds of what some men call "music." Once God assumes sovereignty men will **sing unto the Lord a new song; for He hath done marvelous things; His right hand, and His holy arm, hath gotten Him the victory** (Psa. 98:1). As we await that tremendous day, let us put on God's protective armor and stand upon the rock of our salvation (Psalm 89:26). David's "song of deliverance" says, **Thou hast also given me the shield of Thy salvation: and Thy gentleness hath made me great** (2 Sam. 22:36).

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