

The Shield of Faith

The Armour of God Series

God's Armour (Eph 6:10-20)

Ephesians 6:16 *In all circumstances take up the shield of faith, with which you can extinguish all the flaming darts of the evil one...*



Roman soldiers commonly used 2 kinds of shields. **First** was a small round shield (About 600mm diameter), attached to the arm by two leather straps. It was lightweight and used in hand-to-hand fighting.

Second was the *thyreos*, which Paul refers to in Ephesians 6:16. This shield was about 1.35m high and 740mm wide. It was made from solid wood and covered with metal or thick leather which could be soaked with water. It was designed to protect the entire body and withstand burning arrows.

Soldiers with these shields were placed in the front lines of a battle. They would stand side by side with their shields touching, often forming either a rectangle or a long straight line of defence. Archers stood behind this protective wall of shields and shot their arrows as they advanced against the enemy. Anyone standing or squatting behind the wall of shields would be protected from incoming arrows or spears which would often be on fire with burning pitch.

The soldier's shield, helmet, and sword were kept to one side in readiness for use when fighting began. Whereas the soldier's belt, breastplate, and shoes were continuously worn for protection.

In Ephesians 6:16, Paul draws a parallel between the usefulness of faith with the usefulness of a shield. Just as a shield could be held up by an individual, or collectively held up by a united group, the shield protected from the incoming burning arrows.

Likewise, whether individually or collectively, the shield of faith provides spiritual protection from Satan's schemes of burning arrows which attack us.

Some details:

- ~ Faith is trusting belief in God the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.
It is the substance of belief in God.
- The context in Ephesians 6 is NOT speaking of salvation, or any other set of specific beliefs as Christians, which is what Paul refers to in Eph 4:13. Paul is NOT referring to any particular doctrinal views or gospel details.
- Paul is focused on the overarching fact of faith. It is a much more foundational faith in God that Paul has in mind here.
- It is the character of faith described in Hebrews 11:6; *without faith it is impossible to please him, for whoever would draw near to God must believe that he exists and that he rewards those who seek him.*
- Faith speaks out in full belief the truths of God's when confronted with the enemy's lies and attacks.

- ~ Faith in God is the believer's shield, and it is to be used *"in all circumstances."* From minor irritations to fierce frontal satanic confrontations – faith that God will protect, secure, and deliver is the shield Paul speaks of here.
- God responds to a believer's faith when under attack through any of Satan's schemes, or Satan's people.
 - Faith in God is NOT faith in something or anything. It is NOT simply hoping for a favourable outcome. It is NOT demanding that God work in the way we think best. **It is simply faith in God to do His will.**
 - You see, faith is only as dependable and useful as the trustworthiness of its object and source. A believer's faith is effective because the object and source of their faith is God, through the relationship we have with God's Son Jesus Christ. Therefore, a believer's faith is dependably powerful. Faith in God does not fail, because the One in whom that faith is placed never fails.
 - The shield of faith is NOT a weapon, but a protector.
- ~ It is the believer's responsibility to *take up the shield of faith.* This decision cannot be made by someone else on your behalf. It's personal, you must be the one to do it.
- ~ Faith is specifically to be used to *extinguish all the flaming darts* (Arrows) *of the evil one.*
- Faith has the ability to really put out the burning arrows of satanic attack.
 - Faith does NOT remove us from the battle. Remember, the Armour of God is for the purpose of making a us stand in the battle and survive (Eph 6:13).
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- Faith is NOT a magic chant to rectify life's nuisances or to change irritable people. The *shield of faith* is specifically used in demonic attacks of all kinds and all sizes, which may sometimes include life's nuisances or irritable people who are doing the devil's will.
- Therefore, the primary area of demonic attack is temptation to sin. Secondly, demonic attack comes to seduce believers into error about God, including error about Christ and the Holy Spirit. This includes error about the Gospel and God's Word.
- Satan has an arsenal of different types of burning arrows. They come in all shapes and sizes, but all have the same intent, to devour God's children (1Pe 5:8).
- Remember, God's armour has only 1 purpose, to cause believers to withstand even the worst of attacks and remain standing in faith when the battle is over. **We are designed to be survivors.**

Questions:

- 1) What could our *"shield of faith"* look like in our lives?
 - 2) Describe some of the *"flaming darts"* which the devil fires at us which faith can deflect?
 - 3) How can we hold up our *"shield of faith"* when being fired upon?
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