

The background of the image is a dramatic, high-contrast photograph of dark, swirling storm clouds. The clouds are dense and textured, with some lighter areas where light breaks through, creating a sense of depth and movement. The overall tone is somber and intense.

THE INVISIBLE WAR AGAINST SATAN



Part 12: The Shield of Faith



Eugene Peterson's Paraphrase: Eph. 6:10-18

“Take everything the Master has set out for you, well-made weapons of the best materials. And put them to use so you will be able to stand up to everything the Devil throws your way. This is no afternoon athletic contest that we’ll walk away from and forget about in a couple of hours. This is for keeps, a life-or-death fight to the finish against the Devil and all his angels. Be prepared. You’re up against far more than you can handle on your own. Take all the help you can get, every weapon God has issued, so that when it’s all over but the shouting you’ll still be on your feet. Truth, righteousness, peace, faith, and salvation are more than words. Learn how to apply them. You’ll need them throughout your life. God’s Word is an *indispensable* weapon. In the same way, prayer is essential in this ongoing warfare.”

The Armor of God

- The Belt of Truth
- The Breastplate of Righteousness
- The Sandals of Readiness
- **The Shield of Faith**
- The Helmet of Salvation
- The Sword of the Spirit
- All-Prayer



A Shield for Flaming Missiles



- “In all circumstances take up the shield of faith, with which you can extinguish all the flaming darts of the evil one” (ESV).
- “In every battle you will need faith as your shield to stop the fiery arrows aimed at you by Satan” (NLT).



A Description of a Battle in 147 B.C.

- Jonathan Maccabeus had 10,000 picked soldiers and set out from Jerusalem with his brother Simon and came to Joppa.
- Apollonius (a Samaritan Gentile) took 3,000 horsemen and 8,000 foot-soldiers to attack Jonathan.
- Apollonius drew Jonathan out of the city of Joppa and into the plain.
- Apollonius had placed 1,000 horsemen in ambush in a valley to surprise Jonathan, but Jonathan became aware of his maneuver.
- Jonathan drew up his army in a square and prepared to fight Apollonius from the front or the rear.



The Account of the Battle from Josephus

“Jonathan gave his brother Simon part of his force and commanded them to engage the main body of the foe, while he ordered his own men **to make a fence of their shields**, and so receive the javelins thrown by the horsemen. Accordingly, they did as they were commanded, while the enemy’s horsemen **hurled javelins at them until they had no more left**, without injuring them at all, for the **missiles** (the same Greek word used in our text) did not reach their bodies, but glanced off the **shields** that were joined in a fence and compactly united, and so they were easily turned aside and fell back harmless.” The end of the story is that Apollonius’ soldiers became battle-fatigued, lost hope, and fled in disorder and confusion. Jonathan pursued them, killing 8,000 men that day (*Antiquities of the Jews*).

The Burning Arrow

“The burning arrow is a powerful weapon, made of turned iron, which has iron an ell long (45 inches), on it a ball whose weight is increased by lead. It has fire attached, being surrounded by tow (flax or hemp) and daubed with pitch (the distillation of wood tar or turpentine). When kindled it destroys the enemy either by wounding or burning.”





“Flaming” Missiles

- The Greek word is *pyro* (pyromaniac, pyrophobia), the verbal form meaning (literally) *to burn* or *to destroy with fire* – all kinds of combustible things (e.g., thatched roofs, tents, wooden structures, catapults, bodies, cities, etc.).
- **Figurative Uses:** In I Cor. 7:9, Paul advises the unmarried and widows that “it is better to marry than **to burn**” (burn with desire or passion; “to be consumed with the fire of sexual desire”).
- “And the tongue is a **fire**, the very world of iniquity; the tongue is set among our members as that which defiles the entire body, and sets on **fire** the course of our life, and is set on **fire** by hell” (James 3:6).



“Flaming” Missiles

- “Your gold and silver have rusted; and their rust will be a witness against you and will consume your flesh like **fire**. It is in the Last Days that you have stored up your treasure” (James 5:3).
- A fire sets up a conflagration which turns everything to ruin and ashes – a graphic picture of the devil’s temptations.
- “In this your greatly rejoice, even though now for a little while, if necessary, you have been distressed by various trials, that the proof of your faith, being more precious than gold which is perishable, even though **tested by fire**, may be found to result in praise and glory and honor at the revelation of Jesus Christ” (I Pt. 1:6-7).

The Archers



- The “archers” are the Wicked One (Satan) and his vicious, innumerable demons.
- Their assaults can be fierce, unrelenting, fiery, and destructive.
- The flaming missiles are of two sorts: (1) those that entice and tempt with certain promises of satisfaction; (2) those that breed fear and horror.

“Goodwill told him (Christian), ‘Not far from the gate there is a strong castle, whose captain is Beelzebub. From that castle, both he and those with him shoot arrows at those who come up to the gate with the intent to kill them before they enter’” (*The Pilgrim’s Progress*).



How Satan's Darts Work

“There is a secret disposition in the heart of all to all sin. Temptation doth not fall on us as a ball of fire on ice or snow, but as a spark on tinder, or as lightning on a thatched roof, which presently is on a flame. Hence in Scripture, though tempted by Satan, yet the sin is charged on us. ‘Every man is tempted when he is drawn away of his own lusts and enticed’ (James 1:14). Mark! It is Satan who tempts, but our own lust *draws us*....The heart of man is marvelously prone to take fire from these darts. ‘For lack of wood, the fire goes out’ (Prov. 26:20).”

- William Gurnall (1616-1679)

Three Primary Darts

“Do not love the world, nor the things in the world. If any one loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him. For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh and the lust of the eyes and the boastful pride of life, is not from the Father, but is from the world” (1 Jn. 2:15-16).

1. The lust of the flesh
2. The lust of the eyes
3. The boastful pride of life

Every temptation is the temptation to doubt and distrust God.

A Few of Satan's Specific Arrows

- Doubt and depression
- Blasphemous thoughts
- Imaginations (inciting and stirring up our desires, passions, & lusts)
- The world's power and treasures
- Pride and love of human praise
- Disobedience
- Rebellion
- Fear and worry

The Shield

- The Greek word for shield is ***thureos*** and is “the four-cornered long shield which covers the whole man like a door” (Kittel). It is taken from the word ***thuros*** meaning a *door*.
- “These shields were a kind of ‘door’ for protection against enemy-missiles dipped in pitch or similar material and set on fire before being discharged. When these darts collided with the shields, their points were blunted, their flames extinguished” (Hendriksen).





Roman Shield

- Not the small round shield
- The long oblong one measuring 4 ft. by 2.5 ft.
- The shield covered the whole person
- Its Latin name is *scutum* and consisted of two layers of wood glued together and then covered with linen and hide



Polybius (c. 203 B.C. - 120 B.C.)

“The Roman panoply consists firstly of a shield (*scutum*), the convex surface of which measures two and a half feet in width and four feet in length, the thickness at the rim being a palm’s breadth. It is made of two planks glued together, the outer surface being then covered first with canvas and then with calf-skin. Its upper and lower rims are strengthened by an iron edging which protects it from descending blows and from injury when rested on the ground. It also has an iron boss fixed to it which turns aside the more formidable blows of stones, pikes, and heavy missiles in general.”

The Shield of Faith

- The first two words in verse 16 should be translated “in addition to all” rather than “above all.”
- The shield is mobile. The first three pieces of armor (truth, righteousness, and the gospel) are to be “**put on.**” The next three are to be “**taken up.**” They are not fastened to the body like the first three; they are separate from you.
- Putting on the last three pieces reminds us that an actual fight or battle is about to ensue.
- A shield protects the whole man, covering most of the body.
- Shields are fire resistant and dull the points of the arrows.

How Faith Extinguishes Fiery Arrows

1. “Now faith is the assurance of things hoped for, the conviction of things not seen” (Heb. 11:1). “Faith has a piercing eye.”
2. Faith lays hold of the promises of God in times of doubt and depression.
3. Faith lays hold of the power of God in times of temptation (e.g., Jesus in the wilderness being tempted by the Devil).
4. The believer puts himself or herself more and more into the Father’s sovereign hands.
5. “Truth becomes powerful when it passes through faith” (Phillips Brooks). Faith always applies the truth of the Word of God.



How Faith Extinguishes Fiery Arrows

6. Faith sees the world and its pleasures as a leaky vessel which is sinking. “The pleasure of sin never survives this world” (Gurnall).
7. Faith means the ability to apply quickly what we believe so that we can repel everything the devil does or attempts to do to us.
8. Faith never points to itself; it always points to its object: the Triune God and His Word.
9. “Faith persuades the soul of God’s fatherly care and providence over it” (Gurnall).
10. The only way to extinguish Satan’s fiery darts is to believe God. Faith never points to itself and cannot protect us in and of itself.

God, Not Faith, Is Our Shield

- “After these things, the word of the Lord came to Abram in a vision: ‘Fear not, Abram, **I am your shield**; your reward will be very great’” (Gen. 15:1).
- “Happy are you, O Israel! Who is like you, a people saved by the Lord, the **shield of your help**, and the sword of your triumph!” (Dt. 33:29).
- “The Lord is my rock and my fortress and my deliverer, my God, my rock, in whom I take refuge, **my shield**, and the horn of my salvation, my stronghold and my refuge, my savior; you save me from violence” (II Sam. 22:2).

God, Not Faith, Is Our Shield

- “But you, O Lord, are a **shield about me**, my glory, and the lifter of my head” (Ps. 3:3).
- “As for God, his way is perfect; the word of the Lord is flawless. **He is a shield** for all who take refuge in him” (Ps. 18:30).
- “The Lord is my strength and **my shield**; in him my heart trusts, and I am helped” (Ps. 28:7).
- “O Israel, trust in the Lord! He is their help and **their shield**” (Ps. 115:9).
- “Every word of God is flawless; **he is a shield** to those who take refuge in him” (Prov. 30:5).

The Screwtape Letters: Screwtape's Counsel to Wormwood

“The Enemy (God) has guarded him from you through the first great wave of temptations. But, if only he can be kept alive, you have time itself for your ally. The long, dull, monotonous years of middle-aged prosperity or middle-aged adversity are excellent campaigning weather. You see, it is so hard for these creatures to *persevere*. The routine of adversity, the gradual decay of youthful loves and youthful hopes, the quiet despair (hardly felt as pain) of ever overcoming the chronic temptations with which we have again and again defeated them, the drabness which we create in their lives and the inarticulate resentment with which we teach them to respond to it – all this provides admirable opportunities of wearing out a soul by attrition” (C.S. Lewis).