

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 9: God's Splendid Armor



Introduction

Admittedly, it is difficult at times to maintain faith in the invisible. It seems easier at times to trust the phenomenal realm, “the level of reality we perceive with our five senses, the realm where we can see, hear, feel, smell, or taste. It is the realm of empirical experience, the realm investigated by the natural sciences” (Sproul). Yet the Apostle Paul affirms that believers “walk by faith, not by sight” (II Cor. 5:7), and the honor role of faith presented by the author of Hebrews includes a long list of God’s children who understood that “faith is the assurance of things hoped for, the conviction of things not seen” (Heb. 11:1). He makes it abundantly clear that “without faith, it is impossible to please Him” (vs. 6). So, we *can* know something of the noumenal realm.



Introduction

If our study of the invisible war against Satan has taught us anything, it is that an unseen battle is taking place in the heavenly places, and we are unable to see our enemies or the strategies they are employing against us. Hidden from our view, the only source of information about the existence and ploys of the devil comes from God's own self-disclosure – the Word of God. As we listen to Him and believe what He has told us, we find our faith begins to grow, just as Paul told us it would: "So faith comes from hearing, and hearing by the word of Christ" (Rom. 10:17). R.C. Sproul notes that it was Adam Smith who referred to God's providence as "the invisible hand." By faith, we can "recognize His active presence in human affairs."

Introduction

Since the war in the heavenlies is invisible to our physical eyes, we should immediately presuppose that God's protective armor is also invisible. Therefore, Paul speaks metaphorically to us in a way that provides real help and assurances against our unseen enemy. Yet to speak metaphorically is not to say that it is untruthful or non-existent, but that we must be involved in looking for the ideas symbolized by the surface story.

The "whole armor of God" is not visible, but it is real. Today, we will probe the Scriptures to discover its availability and use as we engage in what John Bunyan called "The Holy War."



The Christian's Armor

- “Put on the **whole armor of God**, that you may be able to stand against the schemes of the devil” (Eph. 6:11, ESV).
“Put on **God’s splendid armor** in order to be able to stand firm” (translation by Marcus Barth).

- “Therefore take up the **whole armor of God**, that you may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand firm” (Eph. 6:13, ESV).
“Take up **God’s splendid armor** so that you are able to put up resistance...and to stand firm” (Marcus Barth).



The Meaning of *Panoply*

- **Panoply**, *n.*, is from *pan* [all or every] + *oply* [weapon] = “the full equipment of the heavily armored foot-soldier” (Kittel). The word is used three times in the New Testament (Lk. 11:22; Eph. 6:11,13).
- Arndt and Gingrich define *panoply* as *full armor*, while Liddell and Scott describe it as the “a full suit of armor; full armor of a hoplite (a heavy-armored foot-soldier of ancient Greece).
- The OED defines it as “full armor; a complete suit of armor, frequently with **connotations of brightness and splendor.**”
- We have two full descriptions of the equipment of the Roman legionary around the New Testament period (Kittel).

A Description by Flavius Josephus



Flavius Josephus
37 AD – 100 AD

“The [Roman, Titus’] infantry are armed with cuirass (**breast-plate and back-plate**) and **helmet** and carry a **sword** on either side; that on the left is far the longer of the two, the **dagger** on the right being no longer than a span (about 9 inches). The picked infantry, forming the general’s guard, carry a **lance** and round **shield**, the regiments of the line a **javelin** and oblong **buckler**; the equipment of the latter further includes a **saw**, a **basket**, a **pick** and an **axe**, not to mention a **strap**, a **bill-hook**, a **chain** and three day’s **rations**, so that an infantry man is almost as heavily laden as a pack mule” (*The Jewish War*).

Josephus' Panoply

- Breast-plate & back-plate
- Helmet
- Sword
- Dagger
- Lance
- Shield
- Javelin
- Buckler
- Saw
- Basket
- Pick
- Axe
- Strap
- Bill-hook
- Chain
- Rations (3 days)



Bill-hooks



The Panoply: Polybius (c. 200-118 B.C.)

“The next age group, the *hastati*, are ordered to wear a complete **panoply**. The Roman panoply consists in the first place of a long **shield** (*scutum*). The surface is convex; it measures two and a half feet in width and four in length, and the thickness at the rim is a palm’s breadth. It consists of two layers of wood fastened together with a bull’s hide glue; the outer surface is then covered with canvas and then with calf-skin. The upper and lower edges are bound with iron to protect the shield both from the cutting strokes of swords and from wear when resting on the ground. In the center is fixed an iron boss (*umbo*), which turns aside the heavy impact of stones, pikes and weighty missiles in general. Besides the shield they also carry a **sword**



The Roman Panoply

(*gladius*) which is worn on the right thigh and is called a Spanish sword. This has a sharp point and can deal an effective blow with either edge, as the blade is very strong and unbending. In addition, the *hastati* carry **two throwing spears** (*pila*), a **bronze helmet**, and **greaves** (*ocreae*, to protect the shin). The spears are of two kinds, the slender and the thick. Of the thicker kind some are round and a palm's breadth in diameter; others are a palm square. The slender spears which they carry as well as the thicker variety are like **medium-sized hunting spears**, the length of the wooden shaft being about four and a half feet. The iron head is barbed and is of the same length as the shaft. They take great pains to ensure the utility of this weapon by attaching the



The Roman Panoply

iron firmly to the shaft. It is fastened into the wooden shaft half-way up its length and riveted with a series of clasps, so that in action it will break rather than come loose, although its thickness at the socket where it meets the wood measures only a finger and a half. Finally, the *hastati* wear as an ornament a **plume** (crest) of three purple or black feathers standing upright about a foot and a half in height. These are placed on the helmet, and the general effect combined with the rest of the armor is to make each man look about twice his real height, and gives him an appearance which strikes terror into the enemy. Besides this armament, the private soldiers also wear a brass **breastplate** a span square, which is placed in front of the heart, and called a heart-



The Roman Panoply

protector (*pectorale*). This item completes their **panoply**, but those who are rated at a property qualification of above 10,000 drachmae (the wealthy) wear instead a coat of **chain-mail** (*lorica*). The *principes* and *triarii* are armed with the same weapons, except that instead of the throwing-spear, the triarii carry long thrusting-spears (*hastae*).

- Polybius, *The Rise of the Roman Empire*



Polybius' Panoply

- Shield
- Sword
- Two Throwing Spears
- Helmet
- Plume
- Greaves
- Breastplate
- Chainmail



King Leonidas I
Sparta, Greece

Goliath's Armor

“And there came out from the camp of the Philistines a champion named Goliath of Gath, whose height was six cubits and a span (about 9 feet, 2 inches). He had a **helmet** of bronze on his head, and he was armed with a **coat of mail**, and the weight of the coat was five thousand shekels of bronze (125 lbs.). And he had bronze armor on his legs (i.e., **greaves**), and a **javelin** of bronze slung between his shoulders. The shaft of his spear was like a weaver's beam, and his spear's head weighed six hundred shekels (15 lbs.) of iron” (I Sam. 17:4-7).

The Armor of Ephesians 6

1. Girdle of truth
 2. Breastplate of righteousness
 3. Feet shod with the preparation of the gospel of peace
 4. Shield of faith
 5. Helmet of salvation
 6. Sword of the Spirit
 7. All-prayer
- Missing Roman Armor: lance, dagger, javelin, buckler, back-plate, bill-hook, chain-mail, bow and arrow, chariot, cavalry, artillery (battering rams, stones, etc.), battle-axe, sling, greaves, and other equipment.



Translating the “Whole Armor”

- Does this mean “completeness”?
- First, the word *panoply* is used rather than just *opla*, i.e., “weapons.” With *opla*, the text would read, “The weapons of God.”
- The only weapons Paul mentions are those given by God to believers.
- The list in Ephesians does not include all of the man-made weapons which have been used in war between the various nations (e.g., Egyptian, Babylonian, Assyrian, Canaanite, Greek, Roman, etc.).
- A complete inventory of an arsenal is not presented in Ephesians 6.
- In our text, only infantry weapons are enumerated.



Translating the “Whole Armor”

- No scheme or strategy involving the cooperation with others is mentioned. Paul’s list is an individual’s panoply.
- Weapons increase self-assurance and terrify enemies as well as protect the warrior in battle (i.e., they have a moral or psychological function). Consider the language: truth, righteousness, gospel, faith, salvation, and the Word of God. The emphasis is on “taking up” (not wielding them to kill the enemy).
- Ephesians 6 emphasizes the **quality** of the weapons rather than their **complete** number.
- Therefore, *panoply* “is more accurately rendered here by **SPLENDID ARMOR** than by ‘whole armor.’”



Yahweh's Splendor

- The following O.T. text is a splendid public display of Yahweh's beauty, honor, zeal, radiant light or glory, power, vengeance, and terror.
- "He (Yahweh) put on righteousness as a breast-plate, and a helmet of salvation on his head; he put on garments of vengeance for clothing, and wrapped himself in zeal as a cloak. According to their deeds, so will he repay, wrath to his adversaries, repayment to his enemies; to the coastlands he will render repayment. So they shall fear the name of the Lord from the west, and his glory from the rising of the sun; for he will come like a rushing stream, which the wind of the Lord drives" (Is. 59:17-19).



Why Take Up the Armor?

- The obvious answer to this question is that if we don't arm ourselves with every weapon available for spiritual warfare, we will be defeated by our enemy, Satan, and his crafty methods.
- “Put on the full armor of God that you may be able to **stand firm** against the schemes of the devil” (Eph. 6:11).
- “‘Taking up’ is sometimes a technical military term. It describes the last preparation and final step necessary before the actual battle begins” (Barth). Get ready for battle before you get out of bed.
- “Take up the full armor of God, that you may be able to **resist** (to hold the post) in the evil day, and having done everything, to **stand firm**” (Eph. 6:13).



Why Take Up the Armor?

- The armor enables us to be invincible, with God's power, and prevents us from fleeing in the face of every single attack.
- Leaving the armor hanging on the walls or racks will not help us when we are being assaulted and ambushed. We will not have time to return for our armor when the battle has already begun and the danger is right in front of us.
- Our real enemy is not "flesh and blood," but demon warriors. We must shift our thinking from seeing *people* as our enemies (useless!), rather than Satan's wiles *behind* the people.
- All other methods of fighting against Satan are no more than straw.



Why Take Up the Armor?

- Putting on the armor each day reminds us to be alert and watchful. There is no such thing as a holiday in the spiritual realm.
- With it, we will be able to fight valiantly to the end and be victorious.
- Our own reason, understanding, and intuition are inadequate, as is every other human attribute, including will-power. Satan will beat us every time.
- God alone knows our enemy and He knows exactly what provision we need to face every wicked scheme.



“Keep a cool head. Stay alert. The Devil is poised to pounce, and would like nothing better than to catch you napping. Keep your guard up” (1 Pt. 5:8, *The Message*).