

The Weapons of Christian Warfare

Ephesians 6:10-24

"Having your loins girt about with truth...breastplate of righteousness, your feet shod with the preparation of the gospel of peace" (Eph. 6:14-15). The word "having", instead of "taking", indicates the essentials of a soldier's battle equipment: a supportive belt, a protective breastplate, and hobnailed shoes.

"Above all, taking the shield of faith...helmet of salvation...sword of the Spirit" (Eph. 6:16-17) reveals battle readiness. A soldier must always wear the belt, breastplate, and shoes. But when the alarm for war is sounded he immediately takes up the helmet, sword, and shield.

Offensive Weapon

A Sword of the Spirit

The word for "sword" (Gk. *Machaira*) indicates a short, two-edged, dagger-like sword, usually 18-24 inches long. It was the principle weapon of a soldier in hand-to-hand combat.

This sword could, with a number of strong, successive thrusts into gaps in his adversary's armor, kill a soldier in hand-to-hand fighting.

Sword of the Spirit (Gk. *Rhema*) refers to a detailed knowledge of Scripture; our ability to select and to use an appropriate verse to subdue the enemy's advance. This was the method used by our Lord with Satan in the wilderness (Mt. 4).



Defensive Weapons

B Helmet of Salvation

A Roman helmet was made of a cap of leather to which metal plates were fastened. Helmets were also made of cast iron or bronze, forming a headdress, decorated with plumes.

The helmet would protect the soldier's head from the crushing downward blows of a broadax or broadsword in hand-to-hand battle.

"Helmet of salvation" is best understood when coupled with "a helmet, the hope of salvation" (1 Thess. 5:8). Our minds, although buffeted by trial and temptation, are garrisoned by the knowledge of our final, eternal salvation.

C Breastplate of Righteousness

The breastplate was molded metal, covering a soldier from the neck to the thighs; a similar piece covered his back. The front and back were fastened together with leather cord or metal clasps.

The metal breastplate would protect the heart, lungs, abdomen, and other vital organs of the torso.

The heart and the will of the believer are most vulnerable. These must be protected with the impenetrable steel of the imputed righteousness of God and practical righteousness. Both protect the soul against the enemy's fiercest attacks.

D Shield of Faith

This battle shield measured 4 1/2 feet by 2 1/2 feet. It was made of thick plank wood. It was covered with thick, treated leather and braced together with metal.

The metal would deflect arrows, while the thick leather and plank wood would extinguish the fiery pitch of the arrows.

Fiery darts were used prior to the actual battle, as a diversion, while the enemy advanced. They are a deception of the devil. The shield of faith quenches these arrows, and enables us to resist every advance of the enemy.

E Belt of Truth

A thick leather belt, 6-8 inches wide, with a broad strap hooked to the front and back. A swordsman would attach his sword to this strap, a Bowman his quiver and military battle decorations.

Its purpose was to draw together the long flowing red tunic, enabling mobility and free movement in battle.

He who goes into battle must first of all be clothed with truthfulness, integrity of character, and sincerity. A soldier equipped with the truth of God and truthfulness will be fitfully armed against every tactic of the enemy.

F Shoes...The Gospel of Peace

A soldier's footwear consisted of thick leather sandals with thongs at the ankles and the instep. The soles were thickly studded with nails for traction and mobility in close combat.

A soldier's footwear would provide sure footing and mobility in hand-to-hand battle with the enemy.

The "gospel of peace" means peace with God. This always makes one ready. If a soldier is in doubt about his salvation, he will be unable to fight the enemy. Peace with God will provide the mobility needed in our battle with the enemy.