



Bible Student's Notebook™

The Herald of His Grace

Issue 72

Armor-All

SPIRITUAL WARFARE – Part I

by – Clyde L. Pilkington, Jr.

"The Whole Armour of God"

"Finally, my brethren, be strong in the Lord, and in the power of His might. **Put on the whole armour of God**, that ye may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil. For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places. Wherefore **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. 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. And take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God" (Ephesians 6:10-17).

The armor presented to us by Paul in this passage is not complicated. It is not some difficult, strenuous process of spiritual hoop-jumping. Indeed, it is quite simple; our armor is the Lord Jesus Christ Himself.

We learn this simple truth by comparing this passage with an earlier one written by Paul:

"The night is far spent, the day is at hand: let us therefore cast off the works of darkness, and let us **put on the armour of light**. Let us walk honestly, as in the day; not in rioting and drunkenness, not in chambering and wantonness, not in strife and envying. But **put ye on the Lord Jesus Christ**, and make not provision for the flesh, to fulfil the lusts thereof" (Romans 13:12-14).

Paul tells the Romans to "put on the armor of light." He then defines this armor, by saying "put ye on the Lord Jesus Christ." Interestingly, in our text Paul had also just spoken to the Ephesians about being the "children of light" (Ephesians 5:8-14). He then moves on to the armor of God.

Simply stated, to put on the Lord Jesus Christ is to put on the armor of light. They are one and the same.

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Dear Free Ones:

Our Attitude

I know the topics we have been dealing with in some of the more recent issues of the *BSN* are certainly not mainstream. It has always been my desire to try to keep an open mind regarding truth. We have always encouraged our readers to be like the Bereans (Acts 17:10-11), and to “prove all things” (I Thessalonians 5:21). This spirit has led me through a lifetime of correcting and adjusting my doctrinal views.

As we have stated over and over in the *BSN*, we do not claim infallibility for the contents. It is simply a platform whereby I can share with those who have an interest things that I have currently come to see. A close look at the *BSN* will reveal many changes in understanding over the years.

It is important for me that the reader knows my attitude in sharing my understandings in the *BSN*. In our very first issue of the *BSN* we wrote in the editorial a section called *Attitude*:

“We have no corner on truth, nor does anyone else. None possesses ‘all truth’ infallibly ... We desire to avoid destructive ‘uniformity’ and allow for differences of opinion. We don’t expect our readers to agree with everything that will appear within the pages of this publication ...

“And do not be surprised if, from time to time, you read articles which reflect *change* from previous things which we have said or written.”

I know that some of the themes that we have been developing in the most recent issues of the *BSN* are viewed by some as our most extreme yet. I was raised and taught the traditional orthodox view of these doctrines. I was taught them in Theology class in Bible college, I was charged with them in my denominational ordination to the ministry. For years I defended them in my teaching and preaching. I say this as a way of reminding our readers that I am very familiar with the defense of the traditional religious view of these themes.

I appreciate the readers who have been giving our writings a “hearing” and a test from the Scriptures. We are all so tied to our current understandings that it takes much thoughtful meditation to actually hear

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This biweekly publication (24 times a year) is dedicated to:

- the proclamation of the riches of God’s abundant, exceeding grace (Romans 5:20; 11:6; Ephesians 1:7)
- the affirmation of God’s purpose to save all mankind through the death, burial, and resurrection of Christ (I Timothy 2:3, 4; 4:10; Titus 2:11)
- the “preaching of Jesus Christ, according to the revelation of the mystery, which was kept secret since the world began” (Romans 16:25)
- true freedom and liberty apart from the law (Galatians 5:1)
- the organic nature of the church, the body of Christ (I Corinthians 12)
- the distinct ministry of Paul, the apostle to the Gentiles (Romans 11:13)
- the importance of receiving all whom Christ has received (Romans 14-15)
- the recovery of rich Biblical truth that has too long remained hidden under the veils of traditionalism, prejudice, misunderstanding, and fear (Mark 7:7, 13).
- the completeness of the believer in Christ (Colossians 2:10), with ...
 - total forgiveness of sins (Colossians 1:14)
 - identity in His death, burial, and resurrection (Romans 6)
 - adult sonship position (Galatians 4)

This publication is a joint effort of a few members of the body of Christ. It is a product of our individual lives and ministries together. We do not claim infallibility for its contents. Our readers are asked to be as the Bereans and search the Scriptures (Acts 17:10-11; I Thessalonians 5:21).

This publication is not connected with any “Movement,” “Organization,” “Mission,” or separate body of believers, but is sent forth to and for all “saints.”

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PATRIARCHS

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(recompiled and edited)

When Paul opens his discussion to the Ephesians concerning the armor, he does so by telling them to “be strong *IN the Lord, and in the power of His might.*” He did not tell them to “be strong *FOR the Lord.*” It is in His person and identity that we are fortified from the satanic wiles and fiery darts that battle against our spiritual life.

In this light, the armor, like the “*fruit of the spirit,*” is plainly the life of Christ manifesting His nature and identity in and through us as His body.

Now let us give some brief scriptural examples for each of these pieces of armor, as they relate to the person of our Lord Jesus Christ.

TRUTH (loins)

“Jesus saith unto him, ‘I am the way, **the truth**, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me’” (John 14:6).

“If so be that ye have heard Him, and have been taught by Him, as **the truth is in Jesus**” (Ephesians 4:21).

RIGHTEOUSNESS (breastplate)

“That no flesh should glory in His presence. But of Him are ye in Christ Jesus, Who of God is made unto us wisdom, and **righteousness**, and sanctification, and redemption: That, according as it is written, ‘He that glorieth, let him glory in the Lord’” (I Corinthians 1:30-31).

“Even the **righteousness of God** which is by faith of Jesus Christ unto all and upon all them that believe: for there is no difference” (Romans 3:22).

“And be found in Him, not having mine own **righteousness**, which is of the law, but that which is through the faith of Christ, the righteousness which is of God by faith” (Philippians 3:9).

PEACE (feet)

“Therefore being justified by faith, we have

peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ” (Romans 5:1).

“For He is our **peace**” (Ephesians 2:14).

FAITH (shield)

“Knowing that a man is not justified by the works of the law, but by the **faith** of Jesus Christ, even we have believed in Jesus Christ, that we might be justified by the **faith** of Christ, and not by the works of the law: for by the works of the law shall no flesh be justified” (Galatians 2:16).

“And be found in Him, not having mine own righteousness, which is of the law, but that which is through the **faith** of Christ, the righteousness which is of God by faith” (Philippians 3:9).

SALVATION (helmet)

“For they that sleep sleep in the night; and they that be drunken are drunken in the night. But let us, who are of the day, be sober, putting on the breastplate of faith and love; and for an helmet, the hope of salvation. For God hath not appointed us to wrath, but to obtain **salvation** by our Lord Jesus Christ, Who died for us, that, whether we wake or sleep, we should live together with Him” (I Thessalonians 5:7-10).

“Therefore I endure all things for the elect’s sakes, that they may also obtain the **salvation** which is in Christ Jesus with eternal glory” (II Timothy 2:10).

WORD OF GOD (sword)

“And the **Word** was made flesh, and dwelt among us, (and we beheld His glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father,) full of grace and truth” (John 1:14).

“For the **word of God** is quick, and powerful, and sharper than any twoedged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul

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Standing Room Only

SPIRITUAL WARFARE – Part II

by – Clyde L. Pilkington, Jr.

“Having done all, to stand.”

“Finally, my brethren, be strong in the Lord, and in the power of His might. Put on the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil. For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places. Wherefore 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. 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. And take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God” (Ephesians 6:10-17).

We often hear this passage from Ephesians taught as an offensive warfare. We are said to be advancing the cause of Christ, storming the gates of hell, and launching attacks against darkness and evil forces. The idea is that we are on the attack and have Satan and evil on the move, gaining new territory for the Lord.

However, Paul clearly presents our spiritual warfare as a defensive one. We are not told to advance, storm, or attack. These are all the nature of offense. It is the enemy that carries out the offensive role. The role God has given us is a simple one: stand.

“Stand against the wiles of the devil”

“Withstand in the evil day”

“Having done all, to stand.”

“Stand therefore”

God has given us our position and standing in the Lord Jesus Christ. This is our ground. God has not called us to make advances for Him, to gain new ground for Him. Instead, He has called us to simply stand where He has placed us.

Our enemy would seek to move us from our standing in Christ. The enemy seeks by crafty wiles and fiery darts to pull us away, to wrestle us from our divine position.

We are not required to be clever. We do not need strategic battle plans. We need only to stand where God has positioned us. “Having done all, to stand.” Our battles are all rooted in our position, standing, and identity in Christ. Pure and simple.

Standing is a recurring theme of Paul’s:

“... This grace wherein we stand...” (Romans 5:2).

“... Thou standest by faith...” (Romans 11:20).

“... The gospel ... wherein ye stand” (I Corinthians 15:1).

“... Stand fast in the faith ... be strong” (I Corinthians 16:13).

“Stand fast therefore in the liberty wherewith Christ hath made us free, and be not entangled again with the yoke of bondage” (Galatians 5:1).

“Stand fast in one spirit ...” (Philippians 1:27).

“... Stand fast in the Lord ...” (Philippians 1:4).

“... Stand perfect and complete in all the will of God” (Colossians 4:12).

“... Stand fast in the Lord” (I Thessalonians 3:8).

“... Stand fast ...” (II Thessalonians 2:15).

Christ is our ground, and our armor. Our victory is in Him.

“But thanks be to God, **which giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ.**

Therefore, my beloved brethren, be ye **stedfast, unmoveable**, always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as ye know that your labour is not in vain in the Lord.” (I Corinthians 15:57-58).

And note in this passage that the way we abound “in the work of the Lord” is by being stedfast and unmoveable. We abound by standing our ground. We stand still to abound. As David wrote to Israel, “Be still, and know that I am God” (Psalm 46:10).

As we daily wrestle our spiritual warfare, let us do so in the full confidence that the victory rests – not in us, but in the One Who is our ground

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what someone else is truly saying, and to give it proper consideration from the Scriptures.

Justin & Susannah

Our daughter Susannah and her husband Justin have just moved here to Windber, PA. It is a great joy for us to have them near us. They are only a few miles down the road. Their new address is: Mr. & Mrs. Justin Hawes, 3325 Dark Shade Dr., Windber, PA 15963.

and armor. The battle and victory both belong to Him.

“... For the battle is the **LORD**’s ...” (I Samuel 17:47).

We have an Old Testament example for our learning and admonition. David’s three mighty men are great unsung heroes. They stood the ground that God had given them, and God Himself brought the victory. Look at this wonderful description:

“And after him was Eleazar the son of Dodo the Ahohite, one of the three mighty men with David, when they defied the Philistines that were there gathered together to battle, and the men of Israel were gone away: He arose, and smote the Philistines until his hand was weary, and **his hand clave unto the sword: and the LORD wrought a great victory that day**; and the people returned after him only to spoil. And after him was Shammah the son of Agee the Hararite. And the Philistines were gathered together into a troop, where was a piece of ground full of lentiles: and the people fled from the Philistines. But **he stood in the midst of the ground, and defended it**, and slew the Philistines: **and the LORD wrought a great victory**” (II Samuel 23:9-11).

Let us take to heart Paul’s admonition:

“Having done all, to **stand.**” ■

Grandpa-To-Be

The news gets even better! I am going to be a grandpa for the first time! Justin and Susannah are pregnant. They are expecting their new arrival in February. Excitement is in the air, we can hardly wait!

Until next month, I remain your *fellow*,



Clyde L. Pilkington, Jr.

The Faith Fight

SPIRITUAL WARFARE – Part III

by – Clyde L. Pilkington, Jr.

“... Fight the good fight of faith ...” (I Timothy 6:12)

As believers we are in the midst of a faith fight. Paul encourages us to “... Fight the good **fight of faith** ...” (I Timothy 6:12).

The enemy would have us occupy our life and mind with anything other than faith. He would have us abandon faith for feelings, human viewpoint, religious tradition, ease of circumstances, or man's wisdom – *anything* other than trusting God.

This is a fight that goes all the way back to the garden God planted in Eden. He then gave instruction concerning life in the garden:

“And the LORD God commanded the man, saying, Of every tree of the garden thou mayest freely eat: but of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, thou shalt not eat of it: for in the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die” (Genesis 2:16-17).

Then the Serpent enters the picture presenting a counter viewpoint:

*“Ye shall **not** surely die ...” (Genesis 3:4)*

Now there were two conflicting viewpoints in the garden. One was divine, the other was satanic. The couple had a choice. They had two statements before them. Thus, the battle of faith began for mankind.

We would do well to make special note that the Serpent's strategy appealed to sensory perception.

*“And when the woman **saw that the tree was good for food**, and that it was **pleasant to the eyes**, and a tree to be **desired to make one wise**, she took of*

the fruit thereof, and did eat, and gave also unto her husband with her; and he did eat” (Genesis 3:6).

The “good fight of faith” has ever been the same. God declares the truth. The enemy lies while appealing to our senses. All that needs to take place for the “faith fight” to begin is a declaration from God. Then the battle begins, through the emergence of satanic counter-information.

Thus, as we learn the statements of God we are launched into an arena of warfare as old as mankind himself.

Accordingly, James speaks of:

*“... the **trying** of your faith ...” (James 1:3)*

Mark it well; we do not learn truth from God that goes unchallenged! Man was created and placed at the center of a theater of existing conflict. When we choose to embrace the Word of God, we must anticipate the reaction of the enemy.

The Lord Jesus Christ said to Simon Peter:

*“... Behold, Satan hath desired to have you, that he may sift you as wheat: But I have prayed for thee, that thy **faith fail not** ...” (Luke 22:31-32).*

Concerning which, Peter later wrote in his first epistle:

*“Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour: whom **resist steadfast in the faith** ...” (I Peter 5:8-9).*

Peter also puts our faith high in a value perspective:

*“That the trial of your faith, **being much more precious than of gold that perisheth**, though it be tried with fire, might be found unto praise and honour and glory at the appearing of Jesus Christ” (I Peter 1:7).*

Peter places our faith trials above the value of gold. What a viewpoint! That is the viewpoint of faith. We would surely not grumble, murmur, and complain about receiving an abundance of gold. Neither would faith grumble, murmur, and complain over the valuable trials of our faith!

Faith is that by which God has called us to live:

“The just shall live by faith” (Romans 1:17).

“The just shall live by faith” (Galatians 3:11).

“The just shall live by faith” (Hebrews 10:38).

Faith is to be our lives. It is the essence of how and why we live. It is the basis of divine life freely operating in our daily walk – the manifestation of the life of God in our very members.

Just what is faith?

*“Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, **the evidence of things not seen”***
(Hebrews 11:1).

Faith is the absence of sight, or other human senses:

*“For we walk by faith, **not by sight”** (II Corinthians 5:7).*

Neither is it found in human intellect and wisdom:

*“That your faith should **not stand in the wisdom of men**, but in the power of God”*
(I Corinthians 2:5).

Abraham is presented by Paul as our father in the area of faith.

*“That he might be the **father of all them that believe**” (Romans 4:11).*

*“Who also walk in the steps of that **faith of our father Abraham**” (Romans 4:12).*

This is rightfully so, for the Scriptures say of Abraham:

“He staggered not at the promise of God through unbelief; but was strong in faith, giving glory to God” (Romans 4:20).

What an example our father of faith has left us. He did not stagger. Instead he was strong in faith. It is not that he had strong faith, but that he found his strength in faith – he “was strong in faith.”

What does faith ultimately do? It gives God glory – “giving glory to God.” God is glorified when we believe Him over everything else beckoning us.

Faith is what pleases God:

*“But **without faith it is impossible to please Him**: for he that cometh to God must believe that He is, and that He is a rewarder of them that diligently seek Him”*
(Hebrews 11:6).

In our spiritual warfare, faith is the victory!

*“This is the victory that overcometh the world, **even our faith”** (I John 5:4).*

Ultimately faith is not really about us – it is not about the quality or quantity of our faith. Instead it is about the source and object of faith – the Lord Jesus Christ! Faith is simply looking to Him, trusting the Father for the very issues of life.

*“**Looking unto Jesus the author and finisher of our faith**; who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God”* (Hebrews 12:2). ■

Where People Are

by – Clyde L. Pilkington, Jr.

“Rejoice with them that do rejoice, and weep with them that weep” (Romans 12:15).

Here Paul, the apostle, encourages us to respond to people where they are. We are to relate to the situation and state in which we find others. He goes on to say,

“Be of the same mind one toward another. Mind not high things, but condescend to men of low estate. Be not wise in your own conceits” (Romans 12:16).

We are exhorted to “descend to men of low estate.” For us to be otherwise would be conceited, or self-centered.

Christ lived in this truth. He was the Master at identifying with people. A prime example can be seen when the Lord Jesus Christ was at the tomb of Lazarus. The Lord of Life came to the weeping loved ones of Lazarus and wept with them. Thus, the shortest verse in the Bible,

“Jesus wept” (John 11:35).

The context shows just how Jesus responded to Mary and Martha.

“When Jesus therefore saw her weeping, and the Jews also weeping which came with her, he groaned in the spirit, and was troubled, And said, Where have ye laid him? They said unto him, Lord, come and see. Jesus wept. Then said the Jews, Behold how he loved him!” (John 11:33-36).

Jesus would soon raise Lazarus from the dead, but in the mean time He would simply identify with those in sorrow, and meet them where they were. Meeting people where they are is a divine undertaking. ■

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and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart. Neither is there any creature that is not manifest in His sight: but all things are naked and opened unto the eyes of Him with Whom we have to do” (Hebrews 4:12-13).

We Know No Man After The Flesh

by – Daniel Andersen

“Wherefore henceforth know we no man after the flesh: yea, though we have known Christ after the flesh, yet now henceforth know we Him no more” (II Corinthians 5:16).

Paul is stating that the things so highly valued, the things of the flesh, are no longer a part of his conscious estimation of his fellow human beings in his daily encounters and consideration of them. He can only think of his fellow human beings as those for whom Christ died and who, regardless of the many distinctions constantly imposed upon human attitudes and relationships in the realm of the flesh, have all been brought into the common bond of the state of death due to the work of Christ. All are the same in the state of death. There is no difference between rich and poor, high and low (financially, socially, educationally), Israelite and Gentile, “red, yellow, black and white,” Caucasian and Oriental, descendant of a *Mayflower Pilgrim* and offspring of an African slave. It is a view sorely needed today in a world so full of strife, bitterness, and contention among individuals, groups, and nations on the basis of race, or ancestry, or national identity. I daresay there is no greater force for a compassionate, unifying outlook upon all peoples than the realization that, in giving Himself up in death, the Lord Jesus Christ embraced all humanity to Himself and all are reckoned to have died in Him. Certainly God’s people should be in the vanguard of developing attitudes and measures that reach out in love and concern for all peoples, reflecting the love of Christ in the giving of Himself.

Be Reconciled to God, p. 14. ■

found in our ability. Neither the battle, ground, nor armor is ours. It is all about Him. We rest fully in the person, work, nature, and identity of God’s Beloved Son, the Lord Jesus Christ!

“Finally, my brethren, be strong in the Lord, and in the power of His might.” ■

The key to spiritual warfare and victory is not to be