

Ephesians 6:17 by Wayne Barber

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Ephesians 6:17: SPIRITUAL WARFARE, PART 5

by Dr. Wayne Barber

Ephesians 6:17

And take THE HELMET OF SALVATION,
and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God.

Imagine going into a battle where the enemy is so numerous you can't even count them. On top of that, they are totally invisible. You can't see them. The deadly weapons they hurl at us are all packaged into something as innocent as a thought, and we've got to deal with this every moment of our life. Satan has influenced and infected this world. Darkness is all around us. As a result, he seeks to take our minds. The battlefield is the mind, and he seeks to lead us astray from the truth of God's Word. (Ed note: see Torrey's Topic "[Warfare of saints](#)")

Well, we've got good news. We have been transferred out of his kingdom according to Colossians 1:13 (note). The word "domain" (study of exousia) in that verse means his "right and might". He has no rights over us and no might over us. This is not a power struggle. It is a truth struggle. It takes place in our mind. We've got to learn to stand on what God said.

THIS IS NOT A POWER STRUGGLE
IT IS A TRUTH STRUGGLE

[Ephesians 5:8](#) (click message) says,

"for you were formerly darkness, but now you are Light in the Lord; walk as children of Light"

Imagine the confrontation we are having with darkness. We have been made light. You think we are not irritating the enemy around us? We have been made light. We are told to walk as children of light.

Now look at Ephesians 6:17. Paul mentions the second coupling there. He says, "And **THE HELMET OF SALVATION**" (Click picture to enlarge) That term is really intriguing to me. I looked at it and knew that he was quoting out of Isaiah 52 and 59 about the Lord Jesus, our mighty warrior. Think with me for a second. The Roman soldiers wore helmets that were very heavy (Ed note: nothing short of an axe or hammer could pierce a heavy helmet). They were bronze. They had felt inside so the soldier would be able to bear the weight of it. The soldiers had to put something soft on top of their head. The purpose, of course, was to protect the head. They had face plates which came way down and protected the face when they went into battle. The helmet of salvation is mentioned in another book. I think by mentioning it there, he brings light of what the helmet of salvation is here. First of all, my intention has got to be to obey God. Why? Because my loins are girded about with truth. Our righteousness cannot come any other way. It is produced by faith. I also know I have a firm grasp on the gospel. That is the only way the good news of the gospel works itself out. I've got to be obedient. That is the shield. But secondly, I've got my helmet on.

Look over in 1Thessalonians. Let me show you the context which is so important. Paul has just explained in 1 Thessalonians 4 that "we are going to be raptured" writing that...

"we who are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air, and thus we shall always be with the Lord. (1 Th 4:17 - note)

Paul doesn't use the word "rapture". The Greek verb is harpazo, which means to be snatched out.

In 1Thessalonians 5, Paul writes...

"Now as to the times and the epochs, brethren, you have no need of anything to be written to you.² For you yourselves know full well that the day of the Lord will come just like a thief in the night." ³ While they are saying, "Peace and safety!" then destruction will come upon them suddenly like birth pangs upon a woman with child; and they shall not escape. ⁴ But you, brethren, are not in darkness, that the day should overtake you like a thief; ⁵ for you are all sons of light and sons of day. We are not of night nor of darkness; ⁶ so then let us not sleep as others do, but let us be alert and sober. ⁷ For those who sleep do their sleeping at night, and those who get drunk get drunk at night. ⁸ But since we are of the day, let us be sober, having put on the breastplate of faith and love, and as a helmet, the hope of salvation. ⁹ For God has not destined us for wrath, but for obtaining salvation through our Lord Jesus Christ, ¹⁰ who died for us, that whether we are awake or asleep, we may live together with Him.¹¹ Therefore encourage one another, and build up one another, just as you also are doing. (See notes 1Th 5:1; 5:2; 5:3; 5:4; 5:5; 5:6; 5:7; 5:8; 5:9; 5:10; 5:11)

Do you see the little bit of coloring he adds to that word 'salvation'? It is not just salvation. It is everything that is based in salvation, which includes all the promises of salvation and the ultimate promise, which is our hope. In 1 Thessalonians 5:9 Paul writes that

God has not destined us for wrath, but for obtaining salvation through our Lord Jesus Christ,

It is not just at salvation. It is also at "the day of redemption" (Eph 4:30), the day when Christ comes to snatch His church out of this earth. Now, the hope of our salvation, is relegated to the final hope of being taken up with Christ. This final culmination is everything God has promised. The word "salvation" covers from "A-Z", "Z" being the coming of the Lord Jesus for His church. (Ed note: see Torrey's Topic "[Salvation](#)") Paul is saying when you have this kind of hope, when you are daily looking forward to the coming of the Lord Jesus Christ, this attitude becomes your "helmet" and prepares you for battle. This helmet protects the essential part of you because you are not basing your life on the promises of the world. You are basing your life on the promises of God. It all culminates in the coming of the Lord Jesus for His church. Realization of this truth will do something in your life!

Years ago, I had the opportunity to go to a home for retarded children. I want to tell you something. When it came to worshipping Jesus, they put us all to shame. I got up in front of them, not knowing what to say. What do you say to a group of kids like that, especially when they are slow learners? I got up in front of them and quoted [John 3:16](#):

"For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish but have everlasting life."

One of those precious, precious children started saying, "Jesus, Jesus" and started pointing up. Tears just started streaming down his face. I looked around the room and God began to quickly give me what the agenda was for the day. He was saying, "Don't preach anything. Just take the Scriptures, the promises, the hope of our salvation and just keep repeating it over and over again." It got to the point that they were all standing up, pointing to the heavens, reaching, saying, "Jesus, Jesus, Jesus." We are so subdued in our services. Those little "retarded" kids knew how to praise their Lord Jesus Christ.

Most of the time in America we are preaching to "juries", not congregations. People say, "Well, I will listen to him. I don't know. I've read a few books and I don't think it is worth what he is saying." Very rarely do you have the privilege of just preaching to hearers of a true congregation.

Do you know what I have discovered? Everybody loves to study Revelation. They love to debate it. How many of us really believe He is coming soon? If you do, then every day as you go out into the war zone of this world, committed to obeying Christ which is a "shield", you have a motivation that says,

"I will not bring shame to you, Lord. You may come today, and I do not want to be found disobeying or dishonoring your word."

Friend, when those two things are linked together, you've got one incredible weapon against the flaming missiles of deceit that the enemy hurls at us constantly in this world. But we had better have those two before we come to the last one.

Before I get to that, look in 1John 3:1, 2, 3. John says the same thing I just said. Notice what John is saying is almost like what Paul has done in the book of Ephesians. He tells us who we are, He tells us whose we are, then he tells us the war zone that we are in and how to have victory in it. In verse 1 he says,

"See how great a love the Father has bestowed upon us, that we should be called children of God; and such we are. For this reason the world does not know us, because it did not know Him. 2 Beloved, now we are children of God, and it has not appeared as yet what we shall be. We know that, when He appears, we shall be like Him, because we shall see Him just as He is. 3 And everyone who has this hope fixed on Him purifies himself, just as He is pure."

Have you ever thought about that phrase? Does it ever bring tears to your eyes? Do you ever just ride down the road and say, "I am a child of the King!" 1John 3:3 says,

"And everyone who has this hope fixed on Him purifies himself, just as He is pure."

Do you think it is strange that the people of the world don't understand us? Why? Because they are living in a world infected with darkness, programmed by it. We have been made light. What a difference!

"Do you mean the urgency and imminency of Christ coming for His church is a purifying factor in my life?"

That is exactly right. When I am submitted to truth, committed to righteousness produced by Him, when I have a grasp on salvation, then I can take up that shield, which is my willingness to obey truth regardless. Then I can have the inner motivation of having on the helmet, the hope of my salvation. It is like a warrior going out to battle with a helmet on because everything about me is protected. I am not going to be led astray by the promises of the world. I am going to stand firm on the promises of God.

The URGENCY & IMMINENCY of Christ's coming
for His church is a purifying factor in my life

What does God say? Stand on it. No matter what kind of garbage comes to you from the world, remember the pagan Gentile nations' darkened mentalities, depraved moralities. That is the world out of which we came. We had better live in the kingdom God has placed us into.

Finally in verse 17 Paul says to take

"and the [sword](#) of the Spirit, which is the word of God."

Now this gets exciting. There are two words for sword. There is the word [rhomphaia](#), ([click for armor](#)) which in the Septuagint is the word for the sword that David used to cut off Goliath's head. It was a huge thing. It was about 5 feet 8 inches long. You also see that sword in Revelation, the sword of judgment that is going to fall on the earth.

There was another sword that they used in hand-to-hand combat and that is the word used here. It is the word [machaira](#)

which describes a small sword.

In the Old Testament when Joab went to avenge the killing of his brother at the gate. Abner came out and he coaxed him out into the gate to talk to him which was dumb because Abner left his refuge which was the city. He came out and Joab stuck that little knife into him (2Samuel 3:27) David said, "Oh, he died a fool's death." That is that little sword. That little sword is handy. It is quick. You have got to have the shield, which is your intention to obey God, before this sword ever becomes helpful to you. If all you have is the sword and no intention to obey it, forget it. You are dead in the water when it comes to warfare. That is why they are coupled together. You've got to have the shield, then you have to have the intention of saying,

"God, I am going to look forward to the hope of your coming. I am not going to be found ashamed."

Then you have the sword to go along with it.

Look at Hebrews 4:12 where *machaira* is used again. Is it just the thoughts that come in? Is that our problem? No, that is the devil's weapon but that is not our problem. Let me show you in verse 12...

For the word of God is living and active and sharper than any two-edged sword, [*machaira*], and piercing as far as the division of soul and spirit, of both joints and marrow, and able to judge the thoughts and intentions of the heart.

The writer has three couplets. The spirit gives life to the soul. Marrow gives life to the bone. The intentions of a man give life to his thoughts. Stay with me. What is my shield? It is my intention to obey God. Now if you've made up your mind and purposed in your heart, "I am going to obey you," that is a shield, friend. Now, if that intention is not there it renders the thoughts active in your life. That is why the thoughts are able to lodge and stay because you have not made up your mind to obey God at any cost. You don't have your loins girded about with truth. You are not committed to Christ and everything that He is and to what He says. Where is Christianity in the 20th century? Right there. They have no shield, but they have their sword. Oh, they can quote Scripture. They will beat you over the head with it. But friend, the flat of the blade has no cutting power whatsoever until I have the shield up, which is the intention of my heart to obey God. Then I can nail that thought with the cutting edge of that sword and the point.

As 1Cor 2:15 says, the

"spiritual (man) appraises all things."

He examines it. He says, "Okay, let's examine this in light of the Word of God. Is this what God says? Or is this another lie of the one who was a liar and a murderer from the beginning, Satan himself? Is this just simply a part of that infected darkness that is all around us?"

Friend, if you don't have your shield up, your sword means nothing. In my heart I wanted to obey Christ. Therefore, my intention was right and I could stop the thought. If your intention is not there, the thought is going to lodge in your mind and you are going to wake up the next day feeling like that thought is really the truth. It hasn't got a thing to do with truth. You haven't made up your mind to gird your loins with truth. Therefore, you don't have a shield. When you pick up the Word it doesn't mean anything. It is like a rubber knife. It has no cutting edge to it whatsoever.

I trust that you know the truth of God is never to pursue a career. It is pursuing a calling. If you get hung up in pursuing a career, you have missed the whole point of your purpose for being on this earth. Oh, careers are a part of it, but it is a calling. It is seeking to be able to cut between what is truth and what is error.

Lustful thoughts—men, are you having trouble with that? If you find a man who says he doesn't deal with it, he is lying or he is dead. Why can't we just be honest? Folks, we deal with this stuff every day! It is in your mind. Why do you think I try to pump, "Surrender to Christ and get into His Word"? I have said those two things so many times. If I die tomorrow, just put it on my tombstone. That is all I have tried to say. Don't put your faith in me. I am a pilgrim like you are. If you knew my struggles, you wouldn't listen me. If I knew yours, I wouldn't bother you either. We are all in the same boat.

SURRENDER TO CHRIST

&

GET INTO HIS WORD

If you put the last three (parts of the spiritual armor) together, they couple to the first three. It is a truth struggle all the way. You better have your loins girded about so that you can have your shield of faith. See how they fit? They are coupled together. That is our armor.