

SABBATH THOUGHT 2023-08-19—ARMOR OF GOD

May God bless you on His Sabbath day!

All of us need to be reminded and stay alert because we are fighting against a spiritual enemy—Satan and the demons. Their sole purpose is to cause all of mankind to reject the Holy Spirit of God and they hold a special malice for the children of God. The methods of their warfare against us vary from direct attacks to more subtle ones. Of the latter Paul says, “we are not ignorant of [*Satan’s*] devices.” (2 Cor. 2:11). But I wonder if that is the case today. For example, when Paul wrote that he was telling the Corinthians that they needed to forgive the man who had slept with his stepmother after he had repented. He said:

2 CORINTHIANS 2:6-11 Sufficient to such a man *is* this punishment, which was *inflicted* of many. 7 So that contrariwise **ye ought rather to forgive him, and comfort him**, lest perhaps such a one should be swallowed up with overmuch sorrow. 8 Wherefore I beseech you that **ye would confirm your love toward him**. 9 For to this end also did I write, that I might know the proof of you, whether ye be obedient in all things. 10 To whom ye forgive any thing, I *forgive* also: for if I forgave any thing, to whom I forgave *it*, for your sakes *forgave I it* in the person of Christ; 11 **Lest Satan should get an advantage of us**: for we are not ignorant of his devices.

Paul was effectively saying that unforgiveness is a device of Satan! So, too, are any unreconciled offenses. Had you considered that before? But Satan and his demons can attack us in ways that are more direct by influencing our thoughts, emotions, and dreams. Our main defense against such attacks is to keep our minds filled with thoughts of the Kingdom, growing in agape love, obedience, repentance, forgiveness, and doing good works. However, every child of God can be vulnerable at times and we all are subject to the weaknesses of the flesh. Again, Satan and the demons are unrelenting so do not be surprised when they attack. Instead, it is important to remember our strength lies in putting on the armor of GOD! While this is a very well known metaphor, have you noticed that Paul wrote this SPECIFICALLY as an encouragement against Satan and the demons? Notice:

EPHESIANS 6:10-18 Finally, my brethren, be strong in the Lord, and in the power of his might. 11 Put on the whole armour of God, that **ye may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil**. 12 **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**. 13 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. 14 Stand therefore, having your loins girt about with truth, and having on the breastplate of righteousness; 15 And your feet shod with the preparation of the gospel of peace; 16 Above all, taking the shield of faith, wherewith ye shall be able to quench all **the fiery darts of the wicked**. 17 And take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God: 18 Praying always with all

prayer and supplication in the Spirit, and watching thereunto with all perseverance and supplication for all saints;

These scriptures focus exclusively on defeating unclean spirits. Truth, righteousness, peace, and faith are of God so they are hated by the wicked. While this is old news for anyone who has a modicum of familiarity with the Bible, do you take it seriously? The demons are constantly looking for an advantage over us so we cannot let our guard down...ever. Remember Peter¹? If it was not for Jesus Christ, Satan would have ‘sifted him as wheat.’ While that may not sound too terrible, notice what happens when God sifts the nations:

AMOS 9:9-10 For, lo, I [God] will command, and I will **sift the house of Israel** among all nations, **like as corn is sifted in a sieve**, yet shall not the least grain fall upon the earth. 10 **All the sinners of my people shall die** by the sword, which say, The evil shall not overtake nor prevent us.

Do not be deceived; the wicked spirits would like to sift all of us to our destruction. To prevent it from happening depends upon us—and the armor of God! Putting on the armor of God makes us soldiers of our Lord Jesus who is our King with all authority in heaven and on earth². But we are merely soldiers—only God knows the entire war plan. As such, we only know a small part of the many battles that take place during the war and all of our armaments come from God alone. Nothing of ourselves can equip us to deal with such a strong spiritual enemy so our victory comes through power of God’s truth, peace, faith, salvation, His Word, and...PRAYER.

It is important to also realize that God not only provides us with the means to defend ourselves but also the weapons with which to fight. The armor protects against the weapons of the enemy but the sword allows us to carry the fight to him. We need both. No one can predict when and where the enemy attacks and the armor is our protection when it happens. However, God gives us the sword of His Word to take up against our foes. How can a soldier be victorious if all he has is for his defense? To win, we must actually FIGHT the enemy.

Each of us also must be WILLING to walk out onto the battlefield. God gives us the means to defend against and fight the enemy, but we must have the heart to engage them. Our spiritual fight is not for the fainthearted. Courage is required to step onto the battlefield and carry the fight to the enemy. God’s armor will defend against the enemy but we must also engage him with the sword of the Word of God.

The problem is that we cannot always SEE our enemy. Sometimes, after we step out onto the battlefield it seems we are the only one standing there. Where is the enemy? If there is no apparent enemy, then why do we even have a sword? This is when we must remember that our enemy could be somewhere else on the larger battlefield. No soldier can see

¹ Luke 22:31.

² Matt. 28:18.

much beyond what is in front of him. Perhaps the enemy is over the next hill or hidden on our flanks. What then? This is when we must give our own personal fight—our individual part of the war—completely over to the Great King who directs the whole battle. This is what prayer is about—communicating with the General of the Army.

Even if the enemy is right in front of us, we may not know what to do. While each of us has a part in God’s army, we may not always be able to directly strike at our foe. That can be very troubling. When that is the case, we must seek out others who are soldiers in this fight. One of the tactics of our enemy is to isolate us and attack in force. That is why together, we are encouraged. Together, our defense is stronger and our offense is superior. When we—together—call upon God for each other!

We must always be ready for battle but sometimes it is only God that can see and direct the fight against our enemy. That can be very unsettling especially if we are attacked when we are alone. But are we alone? God is making us into kings³ and do you know what every king and prominent soldier had in ancient times? An armor-bearer. While the title may sound rather mundane and passive, their role was anything but. The story of Jonathan tells of a fight with an entire garrison (over twenty soldiers) of the Philistines:

1 SAMUEL 14:6-14 And Jonathan said to **the young man that bare his armour**, Come, and let us go over unto the garrison of these uncircumcised: it may be that the LORD will work for us: **for there is no restraint to the LORD to save by many or by few.** 7 And his armourbearer said unto him, Do all that *is* in thine heart: turn thee; behold, I *am* with thee according to thy heart. 8 Then said Jonathan, Behold, we will pass over unto *these* men, and we will discover ourselves unto them. 9 If they say thus unto us, Tarry until we come to you; then we will stand still in our place, and will not go up unto them. 10 But if they say thus, Come up unto us; then we will go up: for the LORD hath delivered them into our hand: and this *shall be* a sign unto us. 11 And both of them discovered themselves unto the garrison of the Philistines: and the Philistines said, Behold, the Hebrews come forth out of the holes where they had hid themselves. 12 And the men of the garrison answered Jonathan and his armourbearer, and said, Come up to us, and we will shew you a thing. And Jonathan said unto his armourbearer, Come up after me: for the LORD hath delivered them into the hand of Israel. 13 And **Jonathan climbed up upon his hands and upon his feet, and his armourbearer after him: and they fell before Jonathan; and his armourbearer slew after him.** 14 And that first slaughter, which **Jonathan and his armourbearer made, was about twenty men**, within as it were an half acre of land, *which a yoke of oxen might plow.*

Although he is not named, Jonathan’s armor-bearer accompanied him and killed several of the Philistines while fighting alongside Jonathan. Together, the two of them defeated an entire garrison by killing twenty of them. Do we have an “armor-bearer?” Yes, they are called angels. Paul said the angels are “ministering spirits, sent forth to minister for

³ Rev. 1:6; 5:10.

them who shall be heirs of salvation” (Heb. 1:14). They do many things similar to an armor-bearer. This is part of God’s promise that “I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee.” (Heb. 13:5). He has given us angels to attend to us in every fight of every battle. And, most of all, God promises us the victory if we are willing to do one thing:

EPHESIANS 6:13 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.**

We must take up the whole armor of God—not some, but all of it. Only with the full armor can we stand against evil, stand against temptation, stand against threats, and stand against enemies. Also, we must stand in the sacrifice of Jesus Christ⁴, stand in God’s grace⁵, stand in the faith of Jesus Christ⁶, and stand in the power of God⁷! Those who do these things will also stand in the day of VICTORY:

REVELATION 15:2 And I saw as it were a sea of glass mingled with fire: and **them [the saints] that had gotten the victory** over the beast, and over his image, and over his mark, *and* over the number of his name, **stand** on the sea of glass, having the harps of God.

ISAIAH 25:8 **He [God] will swallow up death in victory;** and the Lord GOD will wipe away tears from off all faces; and the rebuke of his people shall he take away from off all the earth: for the LORD hath spoken *it*.

1 CORINTHIANS 15:54-57 Now when this corruptible shall have put on incorruptibility, and this mortal shall have put on immortality, then shall come to pass the saying that is written: “Death is swallowed up in victory.” 55 O death, where is your sting? O grave, where is your victory? 56 Now the sting of death *is* sin, and the power of sin *is* the law. 57 But **thanks be to God, Who gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ.**

When we gain the victory over temptations...victory over sin...and victory over all the wicked, we will finally be **raised from our knees** at the resurrection to STAND on our feet on the sea of glass in the presence of our Father and our Lord.

May God’s grace and peace be upon you!

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⁴ Gal. 5:1; Phil. 4:1; 1 Thess. 3:8.

⁵ 1 Pet. 5:12.

⁶ 1 Cor. 16:13.

⁷ 1 Cor. 2:5.