

THE HOLY WARRIORS OF GOD, III: FAITH
(EPHESIANS 6:16)

I. The Christian as Peaceful Warrior

II. The Shield of Faith (Eph 6:16)

- A. Paul has introduced us to three pieces of armor:
1. The belt of truth
 2. The breastplate of righteousness
 3. The boots/shoes of readiness
- B. "In all circumstances..." (6:16a).
1. God is calling us to be alert on all occasions.
 2. This alertness is not the same as paranoia.
 3. Godly alertness involves...
 - a. Being aware of the satanic influences that are "out there."
 - b. Being aware of our own weaknesses.
 - c. Being careful about how we allow ourselves to be influenced.
- C. "Take up the shield of faith" (6:16b).
1. The Roman soldier had two kinds of shields:
 - a. A small, round, and convex shield (*aspis*)
 - b. A tall, door-like shield (*thureos*)
 2. Paul had (b) in mind.

—He specifically uses the term *thureos*.
 3. Faith functions like a full-body, *thureos*-shield in the Christian life.
 4. But what does Paul mean by "faith"?
 - a. The clue is to look at how "faith" has been used in Ephesians.
 - i. 1:15: "...I have of your *faith* in the Lord Jesus..."
 - ii. 2:8: "...by grace you have been saved through *faith*..."
 - iii. 3:12: "...access with confidence through our *faith*..."
 - iv. 3:17: "...Christ may dwell in your hearts through *faith*..."
 - v. 4:5: "one Lord, one *faith*..."
 - vi. 4:13: "until we all attain to the unity of *the faith*..."

- b. "Faith" in Ephesians can mean either (1) one's faith in Christ or (2) the Christian faith/religion.
- c. "Faith" in 6:16 is most likely our faith in Christ.
 - i. This is the more common usage.
 - ii. It is the heart of the Christian faith.

- D. What the shield of faith protects us from (6:16c).
1. It protects us from "all the flaming darts of the evil one."
 2. Satan's "flaming darts" are anything and everything that he can throw at us.
 - a. They are his psychological assaults:
 - i. Temptations
 - ii. Accusations
 - iii. Discouragements/demoralizations
 - b. They are his physical assaults—persecution.
- H. **The shield of faith in Jesus Christ gives comprehensive protection to the Christian from everything that Satan throws at him or her.**

III. "Be Thou My Battle Shield"

God calls his children to stand firm against the evil one with the shield of our faith in Christ lifted high. Faith in Christ can extinguish Satan's fiery arrows because faith in Christ takes Christ himself to be our protection. To hold up the shield of faith all the time, we must take our Lord Jesus with us to the frontlines of the battle. We must make Christ Jesus our shield from Satan's psychological and physical attacks.

- A. How does Christ Jesus shield us from Satan's psychological assaults?
1. His supreme glory supersedes the beauty of tempting, lesser gods.
 2. His atoning death defeats the accusations of the evil one (Rom 8:34).
 3. His favorable disposition toward us defeats our discouragement (Rom 8:35).
- B. How does Christ Jesus shield us from Satan's physical assaults?
1. He protects us from our physical enemies by human agencies (Rom 13:4).
 2. He promises to raise us from the dead (Jn 6:39).
- C. As our shield, Christ fulfills Psalm 28:7: "YHWH is my strength and my shield."

*Holding up the shield of faith is simple:
It's depending on Jesus Christ to be our protection from the cosmic powers.
It's saying to Jesus, "Be thou my battle shield."*