

THE UNSEEN: What the Bible says about the Supernatural

The Full Armor of God

August 28, 2022 - WG

THE FULL ARMOR OF GOD

INTRO: The **demise** of the **Roman military**.

Before the demise of the Roman military...

During the time of the twelve Caesars (44BC until 96AD—the time of the NT) first 12 emperors

by Gaius Suetonius Tranquillus.

- Most powerful military force the world had ever seen.
- The genius of Rome was not intellectual, political, or architectural. They left behind very few great works of music or prose.
- Their great power was in the LEGIONS!
- Their power was in the coordinated method of the legions working together
- Not a scene where you gathered as many as you could and then all ran to the middle, Rome moved in units and coordination.
- At the heart of this was a discipline that was practiced daily
- Roman military officers (Centurions) would conduct daily morning inspections
- As the inspecting officer would stand in front of the men, each soldier would strike his right fist to the armor breastplate that covered his heart
- The armor was strongest there, to protect the heart from swords, arrows and spears
- As the soldier struck his armor, he said “INTEGRITAS!”

“Integritas” → Latin for “wholeness, completeness” → “I’m whole, I’m complete. I am Rome!”

*At the time of Jesus, Rome ruled the world, primarily because of their **military dominance**. They were an **unstoppable force** for **hundreds of years**. But by the **4th century**, things were beginning to **fall apart**.*

What happened? Many reasons to be sure but one had to do with the military.

*As one **4th century Roman general** describes it...*

“When **because of negligence and laziness**, parade ground drills were abandoned, the customary armor began to feel heavy since the soldiers rarely, if ever, wore it. Therefore, they first asked the emperor to set aside the breastplates and mail and then the helmets. So our soldiers fought the Goths without any protection for the heart and head and were often beaten by archers. Although there were many disasters, which led

to the loss of great cities, no one tried to restore the armor to the infantry. They took their armor off and when the armor came off—so too came their integrity.”

***Recap UNSEEN—**

Week One: The reality of the Battle

Week Two: The Identity of the enemy

The Satan (the adversary)

The Devil (the Accuser)

Week Three: The primary tactic of the enemy: LIES!!

Week Four: The provision and game plan to combat the enemy.

Context: Paul is under guard by Roman soldiers. Possibly chained to one?

Ephesians 6:10-17 NIV Finally, **be strong** in the Lord and in his mighty power. ¹¹ Put on the **full armor of God**, so that you can take your **stand** against the devil’s schemes. ¹² For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the powers of this dark world and against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly realms. ¹³ Therefore put on the **full armor of God**, so that when the day of evil comes, you may be able to **stand** your ground, and after you have done everything, to **stand**.

¹⁴ **Stand** firm then, with the **belt of truth** buckled around your waist, with the **breastplate of righteousness** in place, ¹⁵ and with your **feet fitted** with the readiness that comes from the **gospel of peace**. ¹⁶ In addition to all this, take up the **shield of faith**, with which you can extinguish all the flaming arrows of the evil one. ¹⁷ Take the **helmet of salvation** and the **sword of the Spirit**, which is the **word of God**.

¹⁸And pray in the Spirit on all occasions with all kinds of prayers and requests. With this in mind, be alert and always keep on praying for all the Lord’s people.

Be strong is the command and the WHAT

“Be strong” → “Keep on being strong” “Build up your strength”

Put on the armor of God is the HOW

“Full armor of God” → “God’s full armor” or “The full armor God gives”

“Struggle...” is the **WHY** we do this

Not flesh and blood but against powers! The Unseen!

Spiritual forces of EVIL

STAND is the descriptor of our part

Take your STAND

“Histemi” Common word for stand/stood (109/153) 4 times here
2nd time (v. 13) is stand against. “Anthistemi” Preface where we get anti
To set oneself against. To oppose.
Stand and keep on standing. (active aorist infinitive) Last one also imperative.

BELT OF TRUTH

Main Purpose: Agility and freedom to move about.

Application: Is there anything that is keeping you from moving freely? Is there something in your life holding your back from following Jesus wholeheartedly?

Where is the truth deceived? *BELT*

John 8:32 NIV Then you will know the **truth**, and the **truth** will set you **free**.

We are “**set free**” by **truth**, able to **move with agility, freedom, and confidence**.

Hebrews 12:1 Therefore, since we are surrounded by such a great cloud of witnesses, let us throw off everything that hinders and the sin that so easily entangles. And let us run with perseverance the race marked out for us, **2** fixing our eyes on Jesus, the pioneer and perfecter of faith. For the joy set before him he endured the cross, scorning its shame, and sat down at the right hand of the throne of God.

BREASTPLATE OF RIGHTEOUSNESS

Scale, chain, or plated breastplate. This is plated.

Roman breastplates were specifically designed to be **strongest at the heart**.

Main Purpose: Move forward with courage (no retreat)

Imputed Righteousness—Our Justification in Christ Romans 8:1

Imparted Righteousness—Our walk in Christ (with power of Holy Spirit)

Application: Where is your testimony destroyed? *BREASTPLATE*

Righteousness is living in **right relationship with God and people**.

Righteousness is the **external expression of the heart** in relation to others.

The **human heart**, left to itself, is “**deceitful**” (Jer 17:9) and often leads to the **fracturing of relationships**, with God and people. **The devil twists this truth and lies to us**, telling us this will **never change**. But **in Christ, we are made new...**

2 Corinthians 5:21 NIV God made him who had no sin to be sin for us, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God.

SHOES OF THE GOSPEL OF PEACE

Main Purpose: *Roman soldiers wore military sandals, called caligae (ca-lee-guy), which had small nails on the bottom. They were essentially battle cleats, giving the soldiers enough grip to stand their ground or march forward.*

Application: Where is the unity divided? SHOES

Ephesians 2:14,15-16 NIV For he himself is our peace... His purpose was to create in himself one new humanity out of the two, thus making peace,¹⁶ and in one body to reconcile both of them to God through the cross, by which he put to death their hostility.

SHIELD OF FAITH (PICS)

Shield at least 2.5 ft and sometimes longer. Very important part.

Main Purpose: Faith protects us, particularly in community.

Roman shields were designed to connect with other soldier's shields

EX - Gladiator scene. Slaves vs the Chariots. They work together with the shields.

The Strength of the Legion

PUSH FOR LIFE GROUPS

Application: Where is the faith doubted? SHIELD

Hebrews 11:6 (NIV)

6 And without faith it is impossible to please God, because anyone who comes to him must believe that he exists and that he rewards those who earnestly seek him.

Trust in God's Character—Psalm 84:11 11 For the Lord God is a sun and shield; the Lord bestows favor and honor; no good thing does he withhold from those whose walk is blameless.

Trust in God's Word—2 Peter 1:3-4 3 His divine power has given us everything we need for life and godliness through our knowledge of him who called us by his own glory and goodness. 4 Through these he has given us his very great and precious promises, so that through them you may participate in the divine nature and escape the corruption in the world caused by evil desires.

Trust in God's Timing—Jeremiah 29:11 11 For I know the plans I have for you,” declares the Lord, “plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future.

HELMET OF SALVATION

Main Purpose: Protect thoughts. Whatever lies the enemy tries to convince you of, may our thoughts be anchored on the reality that God has saved us through Christ.

Application: Where is the grace discouraged? *HELMET*

1 Thessalonians 5:8-9 8 But since we belong to the day, let us be self-controlled, putting on faith and love as a breastplate, and the hope of salvation as a helmet. 9 For God did not appoint us to suffer wrath but to receive salvation through our Lord Jesus Christ

You are totally forgiven:

1 John 1:9 If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness

Psalm 103: 10 he does not treat us as our sins deserve or repay us according to our iniquities. 11 For as high as the heavens are above the earth, so great is his love for those who fear him; 12 as far as the east is from the west, so far has he removed our transgressions from us.

You are totally secure: Romans 8:38-39 38 For I am convinced that neither death nor life, neither angels nor demons, neither the present nor the future, nor any powers, 39 neither height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord.

Ephesians 1:13-14 13 And you also were included in Christ when you heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation. Having believed, you were marked in him with a seal, the promised Holy Spirit, 14 who is a deposit guaranteeing our inheritance until the redemption of those who are God's possession—to the praise of his glory.

Colossians 3:2 NIV Set your minds on things above, not on earthly things.

Romans 12:2 NIV Do not conform to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind.

2 Corinthians 10:5 NIV We demolish arguments and every pretension that sets itself up against the knowledge of God, and we take captive every thought to make it obedient to Christ.

SWORD OF THE SPIRIT

Main Purpose: We cut down the lies of the enemy with the Word of God.

Application: Where is the Word disclaimed? ***SWORD***

Hebrews 4:12 For the word of God is living and active. Sharper than any double-edged sword, it penetrates even to dividing soul and spirit, joints and marrow; it judges the thoughts and attitudes of the heart.

Psalm 119:9, 11 How can a young person keep stay pure? By living according to your word. 11 I have hidden your word in my heart that I might not sin against you. NLT

PRAY IN THE SPIRIT

Ephesians 6:18 NIV And **pray in the Spirit** on all occasions with all kinds of prayers and requests. With this in mind, be alert and always keep on praying for all the Lord's people.

“Those who have wars continually pressing on them do not even sleep. Therefore, the holy apostle tells them under conditions of battle to keep awake and pray constantly, not giving in to the pains of the body but to bear them with the utmost fortitude.”

- **Theodoret** (5th c. theologian)

Yes, we live in a warzone of spiritual warfare. But as it's been said...

“We do not fight for victory. We fight from victory.”

We're already whole, already complete, already victorious, through Christ.

Colossians 2:15 NIV Having disarmed the powers and authorities, he made a public spectacle of them, triumphing over them by the cross.

James 4:7-8 NIV Submit yourselves, then, to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you. ⁸ Come near to God and he will come near to you.

Set up Communion??

Refer back to Roman soldier.

Can you strike your heart and say Integrity? I am wholly yours!

If not, now is the time to put your armor in place

- 1. Truth to claim or Lie to denounce?*
- 2. Behavior to stop or start?*
- 3. Relationship reconciled?*
- 4. Faith recommitted to?*

5. Thought patterns to renounce?

6. The Word of God claimed?

NOTES

During the time of the twelve Caesars (44BC until 96AD—the time of the NT), the Roman army would conduct morning inspections. As the inspecting Centurion would come in front of each legionnaire, the soldier would strike with his right fist the armor breastplate that covered his heart. The armor had to be strongest there in order to protect the heart from the sword thrusts and from arrow strikes. As the soldier struck his armor, he would shout "integritas" [in-teg-ri-tas], which in Latin means material wholeness, completeness, and entirety. The inspecting Centurion would listen closely for this affirmation and also for the ring that well kept armor would give off. Satisfied that the armor was sound and that the soldier beneath it was protected, he would then move on to the next man.

At about the same time, the Praetorians or imperial bodyguard were ascending into power and influence; drawn from the best "politically correct" soldiers of the legions, they received the finest equipment and armor. They no longer had to shout "integritas" to signify that their armor was sound. Instead, as they struck their breastplate, they would shout "Hail Caesar," to signify that their heart belonged to the imperial personage—not to their unit—not to an institution—not to a code of ideals. They armored themselves to serve the cause of a single man.

A century passed and the rift between the legion and the imperial bodyguard and its excesses grew larger. To signify the difference between the two organizations, the legionnaire, upon striking his armor would no longer shout "integritas," but instead would shout "integer" [in-te-ger].

Integer means undiminished—complete—perfect. It not only indicated that the armor was sound, it also indicated that the soldier wearing the armor was sound of character. He was complete in his integrity...his heart was in the right place...his standards and morals were high. He was not associated with the immoral conduct that was rapidly becoming the signature of the Praetorian Guards.

The armor of integrity continued to serve the legion well. For over four centuries they held the line against the marauding Goths and Vandals, but by 383 A.D., the social decline that infected the republic and the Praetorian Guard had its effects upon the legion.

As a 4th century Roman general wrote, "When because of negligence and laziness, parade ground drills were abandoned, the customary armor began to feel heavy since the soldiers rarely, if ever, wore it. Therefore, they first asked the emperor to set aside the breastplates and mail and then the helmets. So our soldiers fought the Goths without any protection for the heart and head and were often beaten by archers. Although there were many disasters, which led to the loss of great cities, no one tried to restore the armor to the infantry. They took their armor off and when the armor came off—so too came their integrity." It was only a matter of a few years until the legion rotted from within and was unable to hold the frontiers. The barbarians were at the gates.