
THE ARMOR OF GOD



Finally, my brethren, be strong in the Lord and in the power of His might. Put on the whole armor of God, that you may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil. For we do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this age, against spiritual hosts of wickedness in the heavenly places. Therefore, take up the whole armor of God, that you may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand. Stand therefore, having girded your waist with truth, having put on the breastplate of righteousness, and having shod your feet with the preparation of the gospel of peace; above all, taking the shield of faith with which you will be able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked one. And take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God; praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit, being watchful to this end with all perseverance and supplication for all the saints. Ephesians 6:10-18

Contents

| | |
|-------------------------------------------------------------|----|
| Chapter 1: Spiritual Armor for A Spiritual War | 2 |
| Chapter 1 Discussion: | 6 |
| Chapter 2: The Belt of Truth | 7 |
| Chapter 2 Discussion: | 12 |
| Chapter 3: The Breastplate of Righteousness | 13 |
| Chapter 3 Discussion: | 19 |
| Chapter 4: Shoes of the Gospel of Peace | 20 |
| Chapter 4 Discussion: | 28 |
| Chapter 5: The Shield of Faith | 29 |
| Chapter 5 Discussion: | 35 |
| Chapter 6: The Helmet of Salvation | 36 |
| Chapter 6 Discussion: | 40 |
| Chapter 7: The Sword of the SPIRIT | 41 |
| Chapter 7 Discussion: | 46 |

Chapter 1: Spiritual Armor for A Spiritual War

When the Apostle Paul introduced the Armor of GOD to the Ephesian Christians, he began by saying: **Finally, my brethren, be strong in the Lord and in the power of His might. Put on the whole armor of God, that you may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil. For we do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this age, against spiritual hosts of wickedness in the heavenly places.**¹

¹ Ephesians 6:10-12

So, the first point Paul made, when he commanded his brethren to **“be strong”** was that a Christian’s strength is not found in themselves. Instead we find our strength **“in the Lord and in the power of His might”**.

In fact, the Greek word we translate into the English words **“be strong”** is: **“en-doo-nam-o'-o”**. And the way Paul used that word, it would be better translated into English as: **“be strengthened or be empowered”**. So, Paul was indicating very clearly that our true **strength** or **power** comes from GOD not from us!

And this should remind us of the many Psalms that declare things like: **The LORD is my strength and my shield; My heart trusted in Him, and I am helped; Therefore my heart greatly rejoices, And with my song I will praise Him.**² Or: **The LORD is my strength and song, and He has become my salvation.**³

Truly all of the faithful servants of our GOD, whose lives were recorded in the Bible, found their strength **in Him!** And they accessed His strength by putting their **faith** and **trust** in Him and His Word!

In fact, we will learn through this study that the Armor of GOD is a metaphor that teaches us six different ways we must relate to GOD's Word to **“be strengthened”** in Him! And this is why Paul immediately follows the phrase: **“be strengthened in the Lord and in the power of His might”** with the command to: **“Put on the whole armor of GOD”**.

Also, the reason Paul gave for us to **“be strengthened”** by **“putting on the whole armor of GOD”** was: **“that you may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil”**. So, the enemy we must **“stand”** against is the devil. And Paul describes the tactics of the devil as **“wiles”**, or more literally: **“cunning arts, deceit, craft, or trickery”**.

The Bible is clear that the being we know as **“the devil”** has always used temptation, deception, and pride to trick GOD’s creation into **sinning** against Him. So, the word **“wiles”** fits perfectly with the subtle, deceptive tactics Genesis records the devil used against Eve, for example.

² Psalms 28:7

³ Psalms 118:14

Now, the word “**devil**” means: “**slanderer or false accuser**”, and Scripture teaches that the same proud, fallen cherub⁴ we know as “**the devil**” is also called: “**satan**”, which means “**adversary**”.

And about our adversary the devil, Scripture prophesies: **War broke out in heaven: Michael and his angels fought with the dragon; and the dragon and his angels fought, but they did not prevail, nor was a place found for them in heaven any longer. So, the great dragon was cast out, that serpent of old, called the Devil and Satan, who deceives the whole world; he was cast to the earth, and his angels were cast out with him.**⁵

Now, because this verse is about the future, we can see that satan currently has access to “**heavenly**” realms. Plus, we can see that satan has **angels** that are considered “**his**”. And this information helps us understand the next words Paul gave us in his letter to the Ephesian church.

Paul wrote: **For we do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this age, against spiritual hosts of wickedness in the heavenly places.**⁶

The devil is the leader of the spiritual hosts of wickedness in the “**heavenly places**”. And the principalities, powers, and rulers of the darkness of this age are **the angels who followed satan** when he rebelled against GOD in his foolish pride.

And the reason Paul called that entire hierarchy of fallen angels “**the spiritual hosts of wickedness in the heavenly places**” is: **angels are spirits**. As Scripture records: **Sadducees say that there is no resurrection—and no angel or spirit; but the Pharisees confess both.**⁷

Did you notice that Luke said: “**both**”, not: “**all three**”? So, when Luke said Sadducees say that there is no **resurrection**, that is **one** of the **two** things they

⁴ Ezekiel 28:12-19, Isaiah 14:12-22

⁵ Revelation 12:7-9

⁶ Ephesians 6:12

⁷ Acts 23:8

deny. And the second thing the Sadducees denied was that **angels (i.e. spirits)** existed.

Thus, Scripture declares: **Of the angels He says: “Who makes His angels spirits And His ministers a flame of fire.”**⁸ And, by the way: this passage in Hebrews is a quote of Psalm 104:4. So, the concept of angels being **spiritual beings** is well established. But some angels followed satan in rebellion against GOD while others were faithful to Him, and remained **“holy”** angels.

Obviously, we don't wrestle against GOD's holy angels, but we do wrestle against **fallen angels** who seek to lead **all** of GOD's creation into rebellion against Him. And, just as we **don't** wrestle against the holy angels, we **don't** wrestle against flesh and blood (i.e. people)!

But **this does not mean that all flesh and blood is on our side**, as the holy angels are. No, sadly some of Adam and Eve's “flesh and blood” descendants have been **tricked** by the devil to follow him and his angels into sinful rebellion against GOD. And our goal should be to rescue them by **speaking the truth in love**, not to fight against them!

So, Paul wrote: **A servant of the Lord must not quarrel** [or literally: fight or wage war] **but be gentle to all, able to teach, patient, in humility correcting those who are in opposition, if God perhaps will grant them repentance, so that they may know the truth, and that they may come to their senses and escape the snare of the devil, having been taken captive by him to do his will.**⁹

Yes, GOD wants us to patiently, gently, and lovingly try to teach those who are rebelling against GOD, so that they will repent and escape from the devil's trap. And, we will only do this when we realize: **we are in a spiritual war with satan, his lies, and his army of evil, rebellious angels**, not the people who have been tricked by those dark forces.

However, we must understand that Paul's primary message in Ephesians chapter 6 was not one of evangelism, but one of **self-defense**! Consequently,

⁸ Hebrews 1:7

⁹ 2 Timothy 2:24-26

he exhorted: **Therefore, take up the whole armor of God, that you may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand.**¹⁰

And those sobering words were penned by the same Apostle who wrote: **Therefore, let him who thinks he stands take heed lest he fall. No temptation has overtaken you except such as is common to man; but God is faithful, who will not allow you to be tempted beyond what you are able, but with the temptation will also make the way of escape, that you may be able to bear it.**¹¹

Truly, in this spiritual war we are engaged in, the opposite of “**standing**” is “**falling**”. And If we put on the whole armor of GOD, **we will not fall when the devil’s minions attack us!** Our faithful GOD has made a way for us to resist the devil, and He has given us **His mighty armor** to resist every attack!

But we must put on His armor and keep it on, as we heed Peter’s warning, that states: **Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil walks about like a roaring lion, seeking whom he may devour. Resist him, steadfast in the faith, knowing that the same sufferings are experienced by your brotherhood in the world.**¹²

The greatest trick the devil can play on a Christian is to convince them that it is impossible for them to fall, so they no longer have to be sober or vigilant! But we must not let satan trick us into thinking we can’t escape his traps, either! We **can** resist satan. We **can** stand firm. And we **can** find our strength in our Almighty GOD - when we **trust** in Him and His Word, and **put on His impenetrable, spiritual armor!**

Chapter 1 Discussion:

1. What are some of the ways satan tries to cause us to rebel against GOD (i.e. Sin)?
 - a. Think of: Eve, Cain, Babel, Solomon, Jeroboam, etc.
2. How did satan tempt JESUS?
3. How did JESUS resist satan?

¹⁰ Ephesians 6:13

¹¹ 1 Corinthians 10:12-13

¹² 1 Peter 5:8-9

4. How could Eve, Cain, Solomon, or any other recorded sinner in the Bible, have resisted satan?
5. What do all of satan's schemes have in common?
6. Please fill in the blanks:
 - a. We must k_____ GOD's Word to have it available to us in a time of need.
 - b. We must b_____ GOD's Word or we will never consider it to be helpful, reliable, or true.
 - c. We must o_____ GOD's Word if we don't want to follow satan into sinful rebellion.

Chapter 2: The Belt of Truth

The first item we must put on as part of the armor of GOD is: **the belt of truth**. And we call this item by this name because, Paul said: **“Stand therefore, having girded your waist with truth”**. Now, the word translated here as **“girded”** is **“per-id-zone'-noo-mee”**, and it means: **“to fasten garments with a girdle or belt”**.

So, **the verb Paul used refers to a belt**. And, a belt is worn around the **“waist”**, just as Paul said. Therefore, these two facts together cause those who know the Greek meanings of the words Paul used, to call the first item listed in the armor of GOD, **the belt of truth**.

But the word that the New King James translators rendered **“waist”** is translated in other passages of the Bible: **“loins”**. And this means that Paul wrote the equivalent of: **“gird your loins with truth”** as if it was a belt. And the reason this is important is because it connects this passage to another important, parallel text written by the Apostle Peter.

In his first epistle, Peter instructed: **Therefore gird up the loins of your mind, be sober, and rest your hope fully upon the grace that is to be brought to you at the revelation of Jesus Christ; as obedient children, not conforming yourselves**

to the former lusts, as in your ignorance; but as He who called you is holy, you also be holy in all your conduct.¹³

And when we put the words of Paul about **the belt of truth** together with the words of Peter, about “**girding up the loins of our minds**”, an amazing metaphorical picture comes into view, for us to study.

In 1st Kings, it is recorded: **The hand of the Lord was upon Elijah, and he girded up his loins, and ran before Ahab to Jezreel.**¹⁴ And when we read this passage, we easily understand almost all of it except the phrase: “**he girded up his loins**”. But part of the reason we don’t understand this phrase is because we no longer dress like many of the men and women of the Bible!

In Exodus it is written about the priests: “**And you shall make for them linen trousers to cover their nakedness; they shall reach from the waist to the thighs. They shall be on Aaron and on his sons when they come into the tabernacle of meeting, or when they come near the altar to minister in the holy place, that they do not incur iniquity and die. It shall be a statute forever to him and his descendants after him.”¹⁵**

Truly, other than in one verse in Daniel¹⁶, **trousers** or **pants** were only ever mentioned as clothing **for the priests** when they served in GOD’s presence. But, if **pants** or **trousers** were only typically worn by **priests** in the Bible, what did everyone else wear to cover their lower bodies? Well, the answer is: **the tunic**.

Yes, the very first type of clothing the Bible records **GOD** Himself making is translated into English from Hebrew and Greek as “**tunic**”. And the verse that records GOD making **tonics** of animal skins reports: **Also, for Adam and his wife the LORD God made tonics of skin, and clothed them.**¹⁷

But the same Greek word used in the Septuagint in Genesis chapter 3 is used in the gospels and the epistles to describe the common clothing of the people! For example, about our LORD’s clothes, it is written: **Then the soldiers, when they**

¹³ 1 Peter 1:13-15

¹⁴ 1 Kings 18:46

¹⁵ Exodus 28:42-43

¹⁶ Daniel 3:21 (Evidence of Babylonian clothing customs)

¹⁷ Genesis 3:21

had crucified Jesus, took His garments and made four parts, to each soldier a part, and also the tunic. Now the tunic was without seam, woven from the top in one piece. They said therefore among themselves, “Let us not tear it, but cast lots for it, whose it shall be,” that the Scripture might be fulfilled which says: “They divided My garments among them, And for My clothing they cast lots.” Therefore, the soldiers did these things.¹⁸

And the tunic was so common that JESUS taught: “To him who strikes you on the one cheek, offer the other also. And from him who takes away your cloak, do not withhold your tunic either.”¹⁹

So, the “**cloak**” was the outermost garment that we might call a “**coat**”. But the **tunic** was essentially a very long shirt that was worn under the “**cloak**”. And in Leviticus 16 (as recorded in the Septuagint) GOD described the tunic of the priest with three Greek words (**khee-tone'** [1], **hot'-eh** [2], and **pod-ay'-race** [3]), and together they literally mean “**tunic** [1] **that** [2] **reaches to the feet** [3]”.²⁰

Now please try to imagine that your main piece of clothing was a tunic, and you can **picture that as a very long t-shirt**. Then, picture that your tunic went down to some point between your knees and your ankles. Now, **please picture trying to run in a garment like that!** Or, in other words, please picture trying to run in a long dress!

Can you imagine how **running** in a long, possibly foot length dress might actually be difficult? Well, that is where the phrase “**girding up the loins**” comes from! You see, if you had a very long shirt that reached down to your ankles, or somewhere close to your feet, as the tunic of Elijah likely did, you would need to “**gird up your loins**” before you ran.

And the way you would do that was: you would **gather** all of the long, loose material of your tunic up into your hand, you would **twist** it, to keep it together, you would **pull** the gathered tunic fabric up between your legs, and **tuck** what

¹⁸ John 19:23-24

¹⁹ Luke 6:29

²⁰ Leviticus 16:14 LXX

you had gathered into your belt. And by doing this, you would **“gird up your loins”** and form what amounted to an ancient pair of temporary shorts!



So, when Peter instructed us to **“gird up the loins of our minds”**, the image he was painting with words was: our minds are like a man wearing a long tunic. And our thoughts are like the material of that tunic that hangs down. So, we need to **take control of our thoughts**, if we want to run the (metaphorical) race that GOD has set before us!

And, if we think of Peter's metaphorical words in combination with Paul's metaphor of **the belt of truth**, we see that the only way to metaphorically **“gird up the loins of our minds”** is to have **a belt of truth** to tuck our thoughts into! Therefore, the metaphor of **the belt of truth** would indicate: **“bringing every thought into captivity to the obedience of CHRIST”**²¹

The **spiritual war** we are fighting (and the **spiritual race** we are running²²) can't be won by anyone who does not first learn to **take every thought captive to the truth of GOD's holy Word!** His truth must **guide** our thinking in every area, and His Word must be the absolute and final **authority** in our lives.

Also, when Scripture mentions **“the truth”** that we must use to **“take every thought captive”**, it always contrasts **“the truth”** to unrighteousness, lawlessness,

²¹ 2 Corinthians 10:5

²² Hebrews 12:1

and ungodliness. Therefore, in the Bible, **the Truth** is very closely associated with **the Commandments of our GOD!**

For example, it is written: **He who says, “I know Him,” and does not keep His commandments, is a liar, and the truth is not in him.**²³ And: **Brethren, if anyone among you wanders from the truth, and someone turns him back, let him know that he who turns a sinner from the error of his way will save a soul from death and cover a multitude of sins.**²⁴

Obviously, those two passages indicate: **“the truth”** being in a person will cause them to **keep the commandments**, and if a person wanders from **“the truth”**, they are a **sinner** walking in **a way** or **path** characterized by **“error”**; and that path leads towards **“death”**.

And we see very similar principals being taught in other passages that speak of **“the truth”**. For example Scripture says: **For if we sin willfully after we have received the knowledge of the truth, there no longer remains a sacrifice for sins.**²⁵ – and: **all will be condemned who did not believe the truth but had pleasure in unrighteousness.**²⁶ Plus, Scripture speaks of: **“those who are self-seeking and do not obey the truth, but obey unrighteousness”** and how they will receive: **“indignation and wrath.”**²⁷

In all of these passages, and many more, **the truth** is connected to the commandments of GOD, and His moral laws; while it **is contrasted against** sin, unrighteousness, error, and **lawlessness in general**.

So, **putting on the belt of truth** involves us recognizing that GOD was speaking the truth when He told us that sins like idolatry, blasphemy, stealing, lying, murder, adultery, and drunkenness were wrong.

And **putting on the belt of truth** also means that we agree that it is good to do the things GOD commands us to do, such as keep the Sabbath, celebrate His feasts, and love Him with all our being!

²³ 1 John 2:4

²⁴ James 5:19-20

²⁵ Hebrews 10:26

²⁶ 2 Thessalonians 2:12

²⁷ Romans 2:8

And when we **agree with GOD** by recognizing: all of the things that He says are “wrong” - truly **are** wrong; and, all of the things that He says are “right” - truly are right; we can **take every thought captive**, and **be obedient** to JESUS CHRIST our LORD! And this step in putting on the armor of GOD is called **repentance!**

You see, the word **repentance** in the Greek language is: **met-an'-oy-ah**. And this word means: **a change of mind or a change of thinking**. So, to put on the belt of truth, we must **change our thinking** that once incorrectly assumed: “*a little lie won't hurt anyone*”, or: “*if no one sees me take that, I can get away with it*”.

When we **put on the belt of truth** (and change the way we think, by thinking like GOD's Word teaches us to think) we will say: stealing is wrong, lying is wrong; and all sinners who refuse to repent and trust in JESUS will end up in hell, **because the Bible says so.**

And this means that the belt of truth is put on by **agreeing with** all that the Bible says, and accepting that **the Bible is the ultimate standard of Truth** we must use to judge all **other** claims of truth.²⁸

Chapter 2 Discussion:

1. What might people who don't have the belt of truth fastened around them think about certain specific sins; to justify them?
2. How does “repentance” fasten the belt of truth around us in some practical, specific ways?
3. If someone thinks: “as long as no one get's hurt something must be: OK”, have they put on the belt of truth? Why or why not?
4. Can someone know GOD's Word but not actually put the Bible on as the belt of truth? How?
5. What do we have to mix with GOD's Word to put the Bible on like a belt, and the foundation of the Armor of GOD?
 - a. Hint: check Hebrews 4:2
 - b. How does the answer to question 5 above reveal why Hebrews 11 mentions one particular word so many times?

²⁸ John 17:17

Chapter 3: The Breastplate of Righteousness

If you fully understood chapter 2, and correctly answered the questions presented in the discussion section of that chapter, you have seen that **putting on the Belt of Truth** requires two specific things: **faith** and **repentance**.

First, we must **believe** that **GOD's Word is THE TRUTH**, and then we have to **repent**, and intentionally change the way we think about every subject GOD's Word addresses. And this means that the foundation of our Salvation in JESUS and the foundation of the Armor of GOD are the same!

But what if we **believe** GOD's Word, and we even allow the Holy Scriptures to change how we **think**, but we don't **put GOD's Word into practice**? Well James (or more literally Jacob) warned: **Therefore, lay aside all filthiness and overflow of wickedness, and receive with meekness the implanted word, which is able to save your souls. But be doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving yourselves. For if anyone is a hearer of the word and not a doer, he is like a man observing his natural face in a mirror; for he observes himself, goes away, and immediately forgets what kind of man he was. But he who looks into the perfect law of liberty and continues in it, and is not a forgetful hearer but a doer of the work, this one will be blessed in what he does.**²⁹

Truly, the words of our brother Jacob (commonly mislabeled "James") show us why Paul made the second item in the Armor of GOD, the Breastplate of Righteousness! You see, we must first **know** the word of GOD, by "**receiving it with meekness [humility]**". Then we must **mix faith** with It, and truly believe the commands, the warnings, and the promises. But then we must **obey** the Word of GOD and put it into practice! And **if we put the Bible into practice in our lives, we will put on the Breastplate of Righteousness!**

Now, the word Paul used, when he described this essential piece of armor was: "dik-ah-yos-oo'-nay", which means: "**the state of him who is as he ought to be, or righteousness**", as well as: "**the state of being right and acceptable to GOD**".

²⁹ James 1:21-25

And, Peter used this same word when he exclaimed: **“In truth I perceive that God shows no partiality. But in every nation whoever fears Him and works righteousness is accepted by Him.”**³⁰ And the righteousness Peter was referring to *at this point in Acts chapter 10* involved three verbs we see in many other places in Scripture. The first verb was **praying**, the second verb would be **giving**, and the third verb was **fasting**.

You see, right before Peter said **“whoever fears GOD and works righteousness is accepted by Him”** Cornelius had just told Peter that an angel had visited him, while he was **praying** and **fasting**, and the angel told Cornelius that His **giving** of alms to the poor had come up before GOD in remembrance.³¹

And we see this same pattern in the LORD's 'Sermon on the Mount', as JESUS said: **“But when you do a charitable deed, do not let your left hand know what your right hand is doing, that your charitable deed may be in secret; and your Father who sees in secret will Himself reward you openly.”**³²

Then, immediately after teaching about **giving**, JESUS taught about **prayer**, saying: **“But you, when you pray, go into your room, and when you have shut your door, pray to your Father who is in the secret place; and your Father who sees in secret will reward you openly.”**³³

Then, in a way that defies all coincidence, just after teaching about prayer, JESUS taught about **fasting**, by saying: **“But you, when you fast, anoint your head and wash your face, “so that you do not appear to men to be fasting, but to your Father who is in the secret place; and your Father who sees in secret will reward you openly.”**³⁴

So, while **righteousness** most definitely involves **obeying all of GOD's progressively revealed Word**, it clearly includes **giving** from our abundance to help others who need some of what we have been blessed with, **praying** to

³⁰ Acts 10:34-35

³¹ Acts 10:30-31

³² Matthew 6:3-4

³³ Matthew 6:6

³⁴ Matthew 6:17-18

GOD in all things without giving up, and **fasting** to put GOD first, above all other things, including the very food we need to physically survive!

But with these three **fundamental disciplines of righteousness** understood, we should mention that John used the same Greek word Paul used when he wrote: **Little children, let no one deceive you. He who practices righteousness is righteous, just as He is righteous. He who sins is of the devil, for the devil has sinned from the beginning. For this purpose the Son of God was manifested, that He might destroy the works of the devil. Whoever has been born of God does not sin, for His seed remains in him; and he cannot sin, because he has been born of God. In this the children of God and the children of the devil are manifest: Whoever does not practice righteousness is not of God, nor is he who does not love his brother.** ³⁵

Clearly **sin is the opposite of righteousness**, and those who practice sin do not practice righteousness! In fact, John wrote this passage to correct the extraordinarily dangerous and demonic error that wrongly claims: **“we can practice sin and still be righteous”**.

Yes, many have been wrongly taught by idle talkers and deceivers that: *“GOD initially **imputes** or **imparts** the righteousness of CHRIST to all who believe on Him: therefore, we can practice sin, but still be considered righteous before GOD³⁶”*. Or, in other words, many have been taught the lie: *“GOD cannot see when a believer is sinning.”* However - because the HOLY SPIRIT knew this destructive, lawless heresy was coming - He inspired John to write the words above!

Just as Jacob (i.e. James) taught – we must obey the Word and not be hearers only, in a similar way John made it clear that we must put the Word of GOD into practice to put on the Breastplate of Righteousness! Then, and only then, will we be righteous as JESUS is righteous! And this is why John also wrote: **God is light and in Him is no darkness at all. If we say that we have fellowship with Him, and walk in darkness, we lie and do not practice the truth. But if we walk in the**

³⁵ 1 John 3:7-10

³⁶ This is a lie from the mind of satan himself!

light as He is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanses us from all sin.³⁷

Truly, JESUS did not die so that we could live in the darkness of unrighteousness, He died to wipe away our sins so we could be **filled with the HOLY SPIRIT** Who guides us to walk in the light of righteousness! And when we actually walk in that light, and put on **the armor of light**³⁸ (with its **breastplate of righteousness**), the blood of JESUS **cleanses** us from all sin!

But this leads us to another Biblical fact about the Breastplate of Righteousness, and that fact is: only the blood of JESUS can truly “**cleanse**” us! And we know this because JESUS warned: “**Whoever therefore loosens one of the least of these commandments, and teaches men so, shall be called least in the kingdom of heaven; but whoever does and teaches them, he shall be called great in the kingdom of heaven. For I say to you, that unless your righteousness exceeds the righteousness of the scribes and Pharisees, you will by no means enter the kingdom of heaven.**”³⁹

Yet, Paul said about himself and the Pharisees: “**My way of life from my youth, which from the beginning was spent among my own nation in Jerusalem, all the Jews know, since they have known me for a long time, if they are willing to testify, that according to the strictest sect of our religion I lived a Pharisee.**”⁴⁰

You see, Paul considered Phariseeism **the strictest sect of Judaism**, meanwhile, JESUS said **their righteousness was not sufficient** for them to reach the kingdom of Heaven!

And the problem with the Pharisees was summarized by JESUS, when He exclaimed: “**Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you are like whitewashed tombs which indeed appear beautiful outwardly, but inside are full of dead men’s bones and all uncleanness. Even so you also outwardly appear righteous to men, but inside you are full of hypocrisy and lawlessness.**”⁴¹

³⁷ 1 John 1:5b-7

³⁸ Romans 13:12

³⁹ Matthew 5:19-20

⁴⁰ Acts 26:4-5

⁴¹ Matthew 23:27-28

History records that the name "**Pharisee**" is derived from the Aramaic word for "**separated**".⁴² And, just as Scripture records how the Pharisees were "offended"⁴³ when JESUS said: "**Whatever goes into the mouth does not defile a man; but what comes out of the mouth, this defiles a man.**"⁴⁴, History also records that the Pharisees were zealous for fleshly ordinances of the law, such as circumcision, foods, ritual washings, and genealogies.⁴⁵

Therefore, we know for certain that the Pharisees "**separated**" themselves from the population around them by observing certain Levitical rituals along with various "**traditions of the elders**", all concerned with **fleshly cleansing** - like a person only washing the outside of a filthy cup⁴⁶, or whitewashing themselves like tombs full of unclean things.⁴⁷

And because the Pharisees were the most influential leaders in Israel in the first century, they misled many people away from JESUS and the Gospel. So, Paul wrote: **What shall we say then? That Gentiles, who did not pursue righteousness, have attained to righteousness, even the righteousness of faith; but Israel, pursuing the law of righteousness, has not attained to the law of righteousness. Why? Because they did not seek it by faith, but as it were, by the works of the law. For they stumbled at that stumbling stone.**⁴⁸

Therefore, we must understand that we cannot put on the Breastplate of Righteousness through the Levitical works of the Law dedicated to cleansing the flesh (**concerned only with foods and drinks, various washings, and fleshly ordinances imposed until the time of reformation**).⁴⁹ Instead, we must seek the internal, complete cleansing that can only come through the blood of JESUS CHRIST!

And this is why Paul wrote the following passages:

⁴² <https://biblehub.com/greek/5330.htm>

⁴³ Matthew 15:12

⁴⁴ Matthew 15:11

⁴⁵ Philippians 3:4-7, 1 Timothy 1:3-7, Acts 15:5, Hebrews 13:9, Philippians 3:17-19, etc.

⁴⁶ Matthew 23:25-26

⁴⁷ Matthew 23:27-28

⁴⁸ Romans 9:30-32

⁴⁹ Hebrews 9:10

But now the righteousness of God apart from the law is revealed, being witnessed by the Law and the Prophets, even the righteousness of God, through faith in Jesus Christ, to all and on all who believe. For there is no difference; for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, being justified freely by His grace through the redemption that is in Christ JESUS.⁵⁰

“I do not set aside the grace of God; for if righteousness comes through the law, then Christ died in vain.”⁵¹

Is the law then against the promises of God? Certainly not! For if there had been a law given which could have given life, truly righteousness would have been by the law. But the Scripture has confined all under sin, that the promise by faith in Jesus Christ might be given to those who believe. But before faith came, we were kept under guard by the law, kept for the faith which would afterward be revealed. Therefore, the law was our tutor to bring us to Christ, that we might be justified by faith. But after faith has come, we are no longer under a tutor.⁵²

And: Beware of dogs, beware of evil workers, beware of the mutilation! For we are the circumcision, who worship God in the Spirit, rejoice in Christ Jesus, and have no confidence in the flesh, though I also might have confidence in the flesh. If anyone else thinks he may have confidence in the flesh, I more so: circumcised the eighth day, of the stock of Israel, of the tribe of Benjamin, a Hebrew of the Hebrews; concerning the law, a Pharisee; concerning zeal, persecuting the church; concerning the righteousness which is in the law, blameless. But what things were gain to me, these I have counted loss for Christ. Yet indeed I also count all things loss for the excellence of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord, for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and count them as rubbish, that I may gain Christ and be found in Him, not having my own righteousness, which

⁵⁰ Romans 3:21-24

⁵¹ Galatians 2:21

⁵² Galatians 3:21-25

is from the law, but that which is through faith in Christ, the righteousness which is from God by faith.⁵³

Obviously, Scripture is clear that **the Levitical works of the law cannot provide us with sufficient righteousness to enter the kingdom of Heaven** behind the veil! And **the foods, drinks, various washings, and fleshly ordinances of the Levitical Law** were only imposed **until** the time of reformation! But they were taken out of the way by the great reformation that occurred when JESUS opened the New and Living Way into the Holiest of All!

Chapter 3 Discussion:

1. After we learn and believe GOD's Word, what four letter word describes the next thing we must do with the Bible? _ _ _ _
2. Name some specific sins (or types of sinners) listed in the Holy Scriptures that carry warnings like: **"I tell you beforehand, just as I also told you in time past, that those who practice such things will not inherit the kingdom of God."**⁵⁴
3. Do any of the warnings listed in the following passages exclusively have to do with "foods, drinks, various washings, or fleshly ordinances"?
 - a. Matthew 19:17-19
 - b. Mark 7:20-23
 - c. Romans 13:8-10
 - d. 1 Corinthians 6:9-10
 - e. Galatians 5:19-21
 - f. Ephesians 5:5-6
 - g. 1 Timothy 1:8-11
 - h. Hebrews 13:4
 - i. James 2:8-12
 - j. Revelation 9:20-21
 - k. Revelation 21:8
 - l. Revelation 22:15
4. How does 1 John 3:4-14 apply to the Breastplate of Righteousness?

⁵³ Philippians 3:2-9

⁵⁴ Galatians 5:21

5. How do Matthew 5:20 and Romans 9:30-32 apply to the Breastplate of Righteousness?
- a. After answering questions 3 and 4 and reading Romans 10:1-13, in general, how many ways are there to fall short of the Righteousness of GOD, and fail to put on the Breastplate of Righteousness?

Chapter 4: Shoes of the Gospel of Peace

The Biblical connection between feet and the Gospel of Peace was established long before Ephesians chapter 6. And we know this because the prophet Isaiah wrote: **How beautiful upon the mountains are the feet of him who brings good news, who proclaims peace, who brings glad tidings of good things, who proclaims salvation, who says to Zion, "Your God reigns!"**⁵⁵

Yes, two of GOD's prophets, Paul and Isaiah, connected **the gospel** (or good news) of peace and the **feet** of those who proclaim that good news. And this connection exists in Scripture because **righteous people who know the good news (i.e. gospel) don't keep it to themselves!** Instead they put their feet to work, and everywhere they travel, they share the good news that **salvation** is available through faith in JESUS CHRIST, and man can have **peace** with GOD through the MESSIAH's precious blood!

Therefore, all who put on the full Armor of GOD, have: **sandals tied onto their feet in preparation to proclaim the good news of peace.**⁵⁶ No matter where GOD leads them, no matter who they meet, they are ready to bring the Gospel to everyone they encounter. They are ready to proclaim that all people everywhere can have peace with GOD through JESUS His Son. And they are ready to explain how salvation can be found in no other name than JESUS CHRIST, the MESSIAH of Israel!

Truly, those who have their feet prepared to bring the Gospel of GOD's grace to a dying world, know that JESUS their King promised: **"Assuredly, I say to you,**

⁵⁵ Isaiah 52:7

⁵⁶ Ephesians 6:15

there is no one who has left house or brothers or sisters or father or mother or wife or children or lands, for My sake and the gospel's, who shall not receive a hundredfold now in this time—houses and brothers and sisters and mothers and children and lands, with persecutions—and in the age to come, eternal life.”⁵⁷

But they also know that JESUS warned: “For whoever is ashamed of Me and My words in this adulterous and sinful generation, of him the Son of Man also will be **ashamed** when He comes in the glory of His Father with the holy angels.”⁵⁸

And because of this passage, our brother Paul announced: **For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ, for it is the power of God to salvation for everyone who believes, for the Jew first and also for the Greek. For in it the righteousness of God is revealed from faith to faith; as it is written, “The just shall live by faith.”**⁵⁹

Friends, you can tell a lot about a person's faith by observing if they are **ashamed** to share the Gospel with others! But we must not be ashamed, even when we think other people don't want to hear the Gospel, because: “**it is the power of GOD to salvation for everyone who believes**”! Or in other words: No one can be saved if we don't share the Gospel with them!

Thus, Paul explained: **If you confess with your mouth the Lord Jesus and believe in your heart that God has raised Him from the dead, you will be saved. For with the heart one believes unto righteousness, and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation. For the Scripture says, “Whoever believes on Him will not be put to shame.” For there is no distinction between Jew and Greek, for the same Lord over all is rich to all who call upon Him. For “whoever calls on the name of the LORD shall be saved.” How then shall they call on Him in whom they have not believed? And how shall they believe in Him of whom they have not heard? And how shall they hear without a preacher? And how shall they preach unless they are sent? As it is written: “How beautiful are the feet of those who preach the gospel of peace, who bring glad tidings of good things!”**⁶⁰

⁵⁷ Mark 10:29-30

⁵⁸ Mark 8:38

⁵⁹ Romans 1:16-17

⁶⁰ Romans 10:9-15

Here in Romans, Paul quoted the passage we read before in Isaiah, just after he explained that no one can **call** on the name of JESUS unless they **believe** the good news about Him first. And, no one can believe the good news about JESUS, if they never **hear** the truth of the Gospel. However, they will never hear the Gospel and believe it's message, if no one **announces** it to them! In fact, Paul points out that no one would go to announce the message of the Gospel unless they are **sent!**

And this is why JESUS commanded: “**Go into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature. “He who believes and is baptized will be saved; but he who does not believe will be condemned.”⁶¹**

Plus, He also said: “**All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth. “Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all things that I have commanded you”⁶²**

So, **the Shoes of the Gospel of Peace** are the component of the Armor of GOD that should lead churches to **send** missionaries around the world, **publish** globally accessible Gospel messages in print and online, **translate** Bibles into every language spoken on earth today, and **reach out** to every tribe, tongue, people, and nation with the good news about JESUS!

But today, while we have **the world-wide web, a global mail delivery system, readily accessible mass-media, complete Bibles translated into 683 languages, and over 3350 languages with access to at least some Scripture in their own tongue**⁶³, for most people, the problem isn't access to the Gospel! Instead the problem is access to **the TRUE Gospel!**

Truly, as we learned in Chapter 3, people can be taught **a false Gospel** that puts them under the Levitical works of the law performed in the flesh; and this was **the false Gospel** that Peter, Paul, and the rest of the Apostles were battling in the First Century.

⁶¹ Mark 16:15-16

⁶² Matthew 28:18-20a

⁶³ <http://www.wycliffe.net/statistics>

Thus, when certain Pharisees who had believed on JESUS said about the Gentiles who believed: **“It is necessary to circumcise them, and to command them to keep the law of Moses.”**⁶⁴, Peter strongly disagreed with them!

In fact, Peter answered them by saying: **“Men and brethren, you know that a good while ago God chose among us, that by my mouth the Gentiles should hear the word of the gospel and believe. “So, God, who knows the heart, acknowledged them by giving them the Holy Spirit, just as He did to us, “and made no distinction between us and them, purifying their hearts by faith. “Now therefore, why do you test God by putting a yoke on the neck of the disciples which neither our fathers nor we were able to bear? “But we believe that through the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ we shall be saved in the same manner as they.”**⁶⁵

And after Peter rebuked those believing Pharisees, Luke records how a letter was written that said: **The apostles, the elders, and the brethren, To the brethren who are of the Gentiles in Antioch, Syria, and Cilicia: Greetings. Since we have heard that some who went out from us have troubled you with words, unsettling your souls, saying, “You must be circumcised and keep the law”–to whom we gave no such commandment– it seemed good to us, being assembled with one accord, to send chosen men to you with our beloved Barnabas and Paul, men who have risked their lives for the name of our Lord Jesus Christ. We have therefore sent Judas and Silas, who will also report the same things by word of mouth. For it seemed good to the Holy Spirit, and to us, to lay upon you no greater burden than these necessary things: that you abstain from things offered to idols, from blood, from things strangled, and from sexual immorality. If you keep yourselves from these, you will do well. Farewell.**⁶⁶

Here in Acts - within the recorded context of the Pharisees demanding that the Gentiles “be circumcised and keep the law” - the APOSTLES used terms like **“test GOD”**, **“yoke”**, and **“burden”** before repudiating the demands of those Pharisees!

⁶⁴ Acts 15:5

⁶⁵ Acts 15:7-11

⁶⁶ Acts 15:23-29

And, because GOD gave the Gentiles the HOLY SPIRIT when they were purified by faith in JESUS CHRIST, the Apostles all universally recognized and clearly stated that mandatory **cleansing** through the Levitical works of the Law was no longer required. Instead, they simply listed four physical things that had to be avoided because they **spiritually defile** a person and make them **spiritually unclean**.

And they confirmed this message years later when Luke recorded: **And when we had come to Jerusalem, the brethren received us gladly. On the following day Paul went in with us to James, and all the elders were present. When he had greeted them, he told in detail those things which God had done among the Gentiles through his ministry. And when they heard it, they glorified the Lord. And they said to him, “You see, brother, how many myriads of Jews there are who have believed, and they are all zealous for the law; “but they have been informed about you that you teach all the Jews who are among the Gentiles to forsake Moses, saying that they ought not to circumcise their children nor to walk according to the customs. “What then? The assembly must certainly meet, for they will hear that you have come. “Therefore do what we tell you: We have four men who have taken a vow. “Take them and be purified with them, and pay their expenses so that they may shave their heads, and that all may know that those things of which they were informed concerning you are nothing, but that you yourself also walk orderly and keep the law. “But concerning the Gentiles who believe, we have written and decided that they should observe no such thing, except that they should keep themselves from things offered to idols, from blood, from things strangled, and from sexual immorality.”⁶⁷**

And because of these passages and many, many more, Paul warned: **Indeed I, Paul, say to you that if you become circumcised, Christ will profit you nothing. And I testify again to every man who becomes circumcised that he is a debtor to keep the whole law. You have become estranged from Christ, you who attempt to be justified by law; you have fallen from grace.**⁶⁸

⁶⁷ Acts 21:17-25

⁶⁸ Galatians 5:2-4

And Paul made it clear that: **mandatory** circumcision and **mandatory** compliance to the food laws of Leviticus 11, were incompatible with the true Gospel in the following passages:

For he is not a Jew who is one outwardly, nor is circumcision that which is outward in the flesh; but he is a Jew who is one inwardly; and circumcision is that of the heart, in the Spirit, not in the letter; whose praise is not from men but from God.⁶⁹

Where is boasting then? It is excluded. By what law? Of works? No, but by the law of faith. Therefore we conclude that a man is justified by faith apart from the deeds of the law. Or is He the God of the Jews only? Is He not also the God of the Gentiles? Yes, of the Gentiles also, since there is one God who will justify the circumcised by faith and the uncircumcised through faith.⁷⁰

But as God has distributed to each one, as the Lord has called each one, so let him walk. And so I ordain in all the churches. Was anyone called while circumcised? Let him not become uncircumcised. Was anyone called while uncircumcised? Let him not be circumcised. Circumcision is nothing and uncircumcision is nothing, but keeping the commandments of God is what matters.⁷¹

Yet not even Titus who was with me, being a Greek, was compelled to be circumcised. And this occurred because of false brethren secretly brought in (who came in by stealth to spy out our liberty which we have in Christ Jesus, that they might bring us into bondage), to whom we did not yield submission even for an hour, that the truth of the gospel might continue with you.⁷²

Now when Peter had come to Antioch, I withstood him to his face, because he was to be blamed; for before certain men came from James, he would eat with the Gentiles; but when they came, he withdrew and

⁶⁹ Romans 2:28-29

⁷⁰ Romans 3:27-30

⁷¹ 1 Corinthians 7:17-19

⁷² Galatians 2:3-5

separated himself, fearing those who were of the circumcision. And the rest of the Jews also played the hypocrite with him, so that even Barnabas was carried away with their hypocrisy. But when I saw that they were not straightforward about the truth of the gospel, I said to Peter before them all, “If you, being a Jew, live in the manner of Gentiles and not as the Jews, why do you compel Gentiles to live as Jews? “We who are Jews by nature, and not sinners of the Gentiles, “knowing that a man is not justified by the works of the law but by faith in Jesus Christ, even we have believed in Christ Jesus, that we might be justified by faith in Christ and not by the works of the law; for by the works of the law no flesh shall be justified.⁷³

For in Christ Jesus neither circumcision nor uncircumcision avails anything, but faith working through love.⁷⁴

Therefore remember that you, once Gentiles in the flesh—who are called Uncircumcision by what is called the Circumcision made in the flesh by hands— that at that time you were without Christ, being aliens from the commonwealth of Israel and strangers from the covenants of promise, having no hope and without God in the world. But now in Christ Jesus you who once were far off have been brought near by the blood of Christ. For He Himself is our peace, who has made both one, and has broken down the middle wall of separation, having abolished in His flesh the enmity, that is, the law of commandments contained in ordinances, so as to create in Himself one new man from the two, thus making peace, and that He might reconcile them both to God in one body through the cross, thereby putting to death the enmity. And He came and preached peace to you who were afar off and to those who were near. For through Him we both have access by one Spirit to the Father. Now, therefore, you are no longer strangers and foreigners, but fellow citizens with the saints and members of the household of GOD.⁷⁵

⁷³ Galatians 2:11-16

⁷⁴ Galatians 5:6

⁷⁵ Ephesians 2:11-19

In Him you were also circumcised with the circumcision made without hands, by putting off the body of the sins of the flesh, by the circumcision of Christ, buried with Him in baptism, in which you also were raised with Him through faith in the working of God, who raised Him from the dead. And you, being dead in your trespasses and the uncircumcision of your flesh, He has made alive together with Him, having forgiven you all trespasses, having wiped out the handwriting of requirements that was against us, which was contrary to us. And He has taken it out of the way, having nailed it to the cross.⁷⁶

For there are many insubordinate, both idle talkers and deceivers, especially those of the circumcision, whose mouths must be stopped, who subvert whole households, teaching things which they ought not, for the sake of dishonest gain.⁷⁷

I know and am convinced by the Lord Jesus that there is nothing unclean of itself; but to him who considers anything to be unclean, to him it is unclean.⁷⁸

All things are lawful for me, but all things are not helpful. All things are lawful for me, but I will not be brought under the power of any. Foods for the stomach and the stomach for foods, but God will destroy both it and them. Now the body is not for sexual immorality but for the Lord, and the Lord for the body.⁷⁹

But food does not commend us to God; for neither if we eat are we the better, nor if we do not eat are we the worse.⁸⁰

So let no one judge you in food or in drink, or in part of a festival or a new moon or sabbaths, which are a shadow of things to come, but the substance is of Christ.⁸¹

⁷⁶ Colossians 2:11-14

⁷⁷ Titus 1:10-11

⁷⁸ Romans 14:14

⁷⁹ 1 Corinthians 6:12-13

⁸⁰ 1 Corinthians 8:8

⁸¹ Colossians 2:16-17

Now the Spirit expressly says that in latter times some will depart from the faith, giving heed to deceiving spirits and doctrines of demons, speaking lies in hypocrisy, having their own conscience seared with a hot iron, forbidding to marry, and commanding to abstain from foods which God created to be received with thanksgiving by those who believe and know the truth. For every creature of God is good, and nothing is to be refused if it is received with thanksgiving; for it is sanctified by the word of God and prayer. If you instruct the brethren in these things, you will be a good minister of Jesus Christ, nourished in the words of faith and of the good doctrine which you have carefully followed.⁸²

The Holy Spirit indicating this, that the way into the Holiest of All was not yet made manifest while the first tabernacle was still standing. It was symbolic for the present time in which both gifts and sacrifices are offered which cannot make him who performed the service perfect in regard to the conscience— concerned only with foods and drinks, various washings, and fleshly ordinances imposed until the time of reformation.⁸³

Do not be carried about with various and strange doctrines. For it is good that the heart be established by grace, not with foods which have not profited those who have been occupied with them.⁸⁴

Yes, when we combine these verses with the Book of Hebrews, the Epistles of Paul, and Acts 10, 11, 15, and 21, it is clear that the Gospel is incompatible with continued **mandatory** circumcision or continued **mandatory** dietary laws from Leviticus 11.

Chapter 4 Discussion:

1. Now that we have seen the first false gospel the Apostles had to combat, that sought to put converts under the Old Levitical Covenant and its temporary system of cleansing, what other false gospels are there that we must avoid, as we put on **the Shoes of the Gospel of Peace**?

⁸² 1 Timothy 4:1-6

⁸³ Hebrews 9:8-10

⁸⁴ Hebrews 13:9

- a. A false gospel of L_____, that teaches: some of GOD's laws that have nothing to do with the foods, drinks, various washings, or fleshly ordinances of the Old Covenant, are abolished.
- b. A false gospel of U_____I imputed Righteousness, that teaches: GOD can no longer see the ongoing sins of a believer.
- c. A false gospel of P_____, that teaches: JESUS died to give us fame, fortune, health, or our best life now.
- d. A false gospel of Biblical A_____, that adds to the 66 books of the Bible through: tradition, the writings of false prophets, or the edicts of popes.
- e. In a world where these false gospels abound, what can we do to reach out to our community with the true Gospel that JESUS and His Apostles taught?

Chapter 5: The Shield of Faith

Now that we have put on truth like a belt, righteousness like a breastplate, and our feet are ready to take the Gospel wherever GOD leads or plants us, **the enemy will press in hard against us** because we are rescuing people from his clutches with the true Gospel of JESUS CHRIST!

Therefore, since our walk with JESUS is based on faith⁸⁵, Scripture warns us in many different ways that we must tightly **hold on to our faith** if we desire to quench the fiery darts of the wicked one. And please make no mistake, when Paul said this, he was indicating that we need to be **defensive of our faith with – our faith!**⁸⁶

Now this may seem to be circular reasoning, but the fact is that **defending our faith with faith is not actually the logical fallacy of circular reasoning**. And we can say this because: **faith is an ever-growing thing!** And, compared to when we first believed on JESUS, we have seen Him **prove** Himself to us over and over again!

⁸⁵ 2 Corinthians 5:7

⁸⁶ Ephesians 6:16

For example, how much evidence did you have that JESUS existed when you **first** believed? **Did you know then** that many of the Apostles and Disciples of JESUS died while steadfastly preaching that they saw JESUS alive from the dead! Did you realize **when you first believed**, that: because the Apostles were **the first-hand original eyewitnesses of His death, burial, and resurrection**, but they never changed their testimony (even when facing death, torture, or imprisonment), this proved the events they recorded were 100% worthy of trust?

If you are like me, you most likely started with **a small amount of faith**, but your faith **grew** as you **learned** more and more about JESUS, the Bible, Archeology, Biblical Prophecy, Biblical Apologetics, and much more! And while your **intellectual** faith grew, I am willing to guess that, like me, your **experiential** faith in JESUS multiplied, **building** up your faith even more!

Yes, most of us can think of times when we **felt** GOD's presence, **saw** His deliverance, **witnessed** Him answer prayer, **experienced** His faithfulness, and **joined the ranks** of those whose mustard-seed-like faith was rewarded with bigger, better, **faith-building memories** of how awesome our GOD truly is!

Most of us, *like the Apostles*, began following JESUS **knowing very little**, but we felt the HOLY SPIRIT drawing us to Him. And later, as we walked through life with Him by our side, we **saw proof** that He is with us. And - **like the Apostles** - who eventually **saw** JESUS calm the storm, walk on water, raise the dead, and defeat death Himself, **we have seen proof** that our King is working in our lives!

In fact, the greatest miracle our Savior performs for all those who truly follow Him is: **He turns sinners into saints!** Yes, when we think back to who we were in the past, and where we are now - by His grace and deliverance - we know beyond a shadow of a doubt, **JESUS is alive and working in our hearts!**

And we can truly relate to the words of the Apostle Paul, who wrote: **I thank Christ Jesus our Lord who has enabled me, because He counted me faithful, putting me into the ministry, although I was formerly a blasphemer, a persecutor, and an insolent man; but I obtained mercy because I did it ignorantly in unbelief. And the grace of our Lord was exceedingly abundant, with faith and love which are in Christ Jesus. This is a faithful saying and worthy**

of all acceptance, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners, of whom I am chief. However, for this reason I obtained mercy, that in me first Jesus Christ might show all longsuffering, as a pattern to those who are going to believe on Him for everlasting life. Now to the King eternal, immortal, invisible, to God who alone is wise, be honor and glory forever and ever. Amen.⁸⁷

GOD's amazing grace revealed in the blood of JESUS our awesome Savior **opened the New Covenant on-ramp of the New and Living Way**, so that we could follow JESUS on the Highway of Salvation! And every experience we have with GOD's faithful love towards us is like a mile-marker on that highway, building up our faith in Him, just as time in His word builds our faith! Therefore: **"...the righteousness of God is revealed from faith to faith; as it is written, "The just shall live by faith."⁸⁸**

And because **faith is like a road**, and time on that road builds up our faith intellectually and experientially, **we can defend our faith with faith!** But, the flip side of the proverbial coin (when it comes to faith being like a road) is: it is possible to make wrong turns, take the wrong exit, or crash when we are driving on roads.

For example, in Acts, Luke records about Paul and Barnabas: **And when they had preached the gospel to that city and made many disciples, they returned to Lystra, Iconium, and Antioch, strengthening the souls of the disciples, exhorting them to continue in the faith, and saying, "We must through many tribulations enter the kingdom of God."⁸⁹**

Also, Paul wrote to the Colossian Christians: **You, who once were alienated and enemies in your mind by wicked works, yet now He has reconciled in the body of His flesh through death, to present you holy, and blameless, and above reproach in His sight– if indeed you continue in the faith, grounded and steadfast, and are not moved away from the hope of the gospel which you**

⁸⁷ 1 Timothy 1:12-17

⁸⁸ Romans 1:17

⁸⁹ Acts 14:21-22

heard, which was preached to every creature under heaven, of which I, Paul, became a minister.⁹⁰

So, the Apostles most certainly pictured “**the faith**” as a **road** or “**Way**”. And, just as a person has to “**continue**” on a road to reach their destination, we must **continue in the faith** to reach our goal of the Kingdom of Heaven! Therefore, Scripture indicates that we can **wreck** our faith⁹¹, **fall away** from the faith⁹², **wander from** the faith⁹³, and **deviate** from the faith⁹⁴.

Truly, out of all of those descriptions, **wrecking** sounds like the worst thing that can happen to a person's faith; but – in a way very similar to cars - **people don't wreck their faith without something else going wrong first.**

If someone were to drive when they were not sober, they might wreck because they were **intoxicated**. If someone were to drive before they knew how to operate a car, they might wreck because they were **inexperienced**. Or, if someone were to text while they were driving, they might wreck because they were **distracted**.

So, these analogies help us to understand **the dangers of spiritual intoxication, spiritual inexperience, or spiritual distractions**. Now, with these three analogies that describe how people might **wreck** their faith in mind, we should compare this analogy to one JESUS gave about faith, that likened people to **four different soils**.

JESUS said: “**Listen! Behold, a sower went out to sow. “And it happened, as he sowed, that some seed fell by the wayside; and the birds of the air came and devoured it. “Some fell on stony ground, where it did not have much earth; and immediately it sprang up because it had no depth of earth. “But when the sun was up it was scorched, and because it had no root it withered away. “And some seed fell among thorns; and the thorns grew up and choked it, and it yielded no crop. “But other seed fell on good ground and yielded a crop that**

⁹⁰ Colossians 1:21-23

⁹¹ 1 Timothy 1:19

⁹² 1 Timothy 4:1

⁹³ 1 Timothy 6:10

⁹⁴ 1 Timothy 6:20-22

sprang up, increased and produced: some thirtyfold, some sixty, and some a hundred.”⁹⁵

And later JESUS described the seed and the first soil – that we will call “**the robbed ground**” - by saying: “**Now the parable is this: The seed is the word of God. “Those by the wayside are the ones who hear; then the devil comes and takes away the word out of their hearts, lest they should believe and be saved.”⁹⁶**

This soil represents someone who **received** the Word of GOD but satan comes and **steals the word out of their hearts with lies**, so the Word will not bear fruit in their lives leading to salvation. And the lies Satan tells this type of person can be **compared to an intoxicating substance** causing a driver to wreck their car.

Yes, false teaching **intoxicates** a person, **steals** the truth away from them, and **leaves** them dead in their sins, often while making them believe that nothing is wrong. So, we must study the true faith preserved in the Word of GOD, and reject the lies of satan.

If satan told you there was no GOD, and mankind evolved from a non-living chemical compound billions of years ago, **what words of Scripture** would you use like a shield of faith to defeat those fiery darts?

If satan told you there was no resurrection, and when we die, we simply cease to exist; **where would you turn to in the Bible** to defend your faith? What shield would you rely on?

Well, if you turn to the many verses of the Holy Bible that defeat those lies, you might make it to the second stage soil, that we will call: “**the rocky ground**”. And about this soil, JESUS said: “**But the ones on the rock are those who, when they hear, receive the word with joy; and these have no root, who believe for a while and in time of temptation fall away.”⁹⁷**

The word JESUS used, that is translated above as “**temptation**” is: “ **pi-ras-mos'** ” – and it means: “**an experiment, attempt, trial, a proving**”. And, Jacob (i.e.

⁹⁵ Mark 4:3-8

⁹⁶ Luke 8:11-12

⁹⁷ Luke 8:13

James) used the same word when he wrote: **Blessed is the man who endures temptation; for when he has been approved, he will receive the crown of life which the Lord has promised to those who love Him.**⁹⁸

You see, the fact is that every Christian's faith must be **tested**! And only after we have been **tested**, can we **prove** that we love JESUS! But the second soil did not root down into GOD's Word, so they fell away when they were tested. And this "rocky soil" can be compared to the **inexperienced** driver that crashed because they didn't spend the time to learn how to operate their vehicle.

Truly, to **have** and **use** the Shield of Faith, we must **take the time to get to know GOD and His Word**! Or when the day of testing comes, **we will crash and burn** like an inexperienced driver!

But this leads us to **the distracted driver**, and the third soil. And about this "**choked out soil**", JESUS explained: "**Now the ones that fell among thorns are those who, when they have heard, go out and are choked with cares, riches, and pleasures of life, and bring no fruit to maturity.**"⁹⁹

The fact is, JESUS, Paul, Peter, John, and many other servants of JESUS plainly said things like: "**Every tree that does not bear good fruit is cut down and thrown into the fire.**"¹⁰⁰

Or said more plainly, in a non-metaphorical way, Paul wrote: "**GOD... will render to each one according to his deeds**": **eternal life to those who by patient continuance in doing good seek for glory, honor, and immortality; but to those who are self-seeking and do not obey the truth, but obey unrighteousness—indignation and wrath, tribulation and anguish, on every soul of man who does evil, of the Jew first and also of the Greek; but glory, honor, and peace to everyone who works what is good, to the Jew first and also to the Greek. For there is no partiality with God.**"¹⁰¹

So, not bearing good fruit, because we are **distracted** by the cares, riches, and pleasures of this life is just as deadly as crashing a car! And this is why Hebrews

⁹⁸ James 1:12

⁹⁹ Luke 8:14

¹⁰⁰ Matthew 7:19

¹⁰¹ Romans 2:5-11

warns: **For the earth which drinks in the rain that often comes upon it, and bears herbs useful for those by whom it is cultivated, receives blessing from God; but if it bears thorns and briers, it is rejected and near to being cursed, whose end is to be burned.**¹⁰²

So, we must recognize that **satan will try to snatch GOD's Word away from us with intoxicating false teaching.** He will try to keep us from rooting deeply into the Word of GOD, so - during a time of testing - we will fall away from the faith we have **little experience in practicing.** Or **he will try to distract us with the cares, riches, or pleasures of this life,** so we will fail to produce fruits worthy of repentance!

Therefore, we must put up the shield of (the true) Faith, we must resist the devil, and we must be like the fourth, good and fruitful soil: **"...who, having heard the word with a noble and good heart, keep it and bear fruit with patience."**¹⁰³

Chapter 5 Discussion:

1. Can you think of any other metaphors that help you understand the relationship every Christian must have with their faith?
2. What popular lies can the shield of faith extinguish?
3. Based on Matthew 12:30, how many teams are there?
4. Which team do most modern American institutions play for?
5. What evidence can you use to prove your faith is logical?
6. Why is that evidence not taught in the educational system of America?
7. Based on your own personal observations of people close to you, which type of soil do you think represents the majority of Christians these days?
8. How many Christians outside of your own church do you know that are fourth soil Christians?
 - a. If most of the Christians you know are not fourth soil Christians, why do you think they aren't concerned with bearing fruit?
 - b. How could the Shield of Faith help that situation?

¹⁰² Hebrews 6:7-8

¹⁰³ Luke 8:15

Chapter 6: The Helmet of Salvation

Just as Paul referred to the words of Isaiah when he wrote about **“feet shod with the preparation of the gospel of peace”**, Paul was referring to Isaiah when he wrote about the breastplate of righteousness and the helmet of salvation.

Yes, Isaiah wrote: **Truth has been taken away, and they have turned aside their mind from understanding. And the Lord saw it, and it displeased Him that there was no judgment. And He looked, and there was no man, and He observed, and there was none to help; so He defended them with His arm, and established them with His mercy. And He put on righteousness as a breastplate, and placed the helmet of salvation on His head; and He clothed himself with the garment of vengeance, even as His cloak, as one about to render a recompense, even reproach to His adversaries. So shall they of the west fear the name of the Lord, and they that come from the rising of the sun shall fear His glorious name; for the wrath of the Lord shall come as a mighty river, it shall come with fury. And the deliverer shall come for Zion's sake, and shall turn away ungodliness from Jacob.**¹⁰⁴

By the way, this passage in Isaiah explains why Paul called the Armor of Ephesians chapter 6, **the Armor of GOD**, because this passage describes **GOD wearing** two of the pieces of that metaphorical armor! And when it comes to the helmet of salvation, we need to look at one more passage beyond Ephesians 6 and Isaiah 59.

In Paul's first letter to the Thessalonians, he wrote: **But let us who are of the day be sober, putting on the breastplate of faith and love, and as a helmet the hope of salvation.**¹⁰⁵

In that passage Paul simplified the armor, and included only the three most fundamental perspectives of the Christian life. And Paul wrote about those same perspectives in 1st Corinthians, saying: **And now abide faith, hope, love, these three; but the greatest of these is love.**¹⁰⁶

¹⁰⁴ Isaiah 59:15-20 LXX

¹⁰⁵ 1 Thessalonians 5:8

¹⁰⁶ 1 Corinthians 13:13

So, why do we say that the three most important perspectives in a Christian's walk with JESUS are **faith, hope, and love**? Well, because **faith is our perspective towards GOD's Word, hope is our perspective towards the future, and love is our perspective towards GOD and those who are created in His image.**

Truly, **love** is the most important of these three Christian perspectives, because "love is the fulfillment of the law"¹⁰⁷, but we won't love GOD or our neighbor if we don't first have **faith** in His Word. Likewise, we won't be able to put on the helmet of the **hope** of salvation, if we don't have faith in the truth of the Holy Bible!

But next we must ask, how can hope become like a helmet of salvation for our minds? And the answer to that question can be stated, when we read how John wrote: **Beloved, now we are children of God; and it has not yet been revealed what we shall be, but we know that when He is revealed, we shall be like Him, for we shall see Him as He is. And everyone who has this hope in Him purifies himself, just as He is pure.**¹⁰⁸

Truly, hope is the most purifying force in a Christian's arsenal. How can satan tempt you with a few passing pleasures of sin, when delayed gratification can lead to eternal pleasure at GOD's right hand? How can satan trick you into loving this present fallen world, when you know that if you set your hope on the Kingdom of Heaven, you will eventually live in GOD's loving presence forever?

Satan is like a fake watch salesman peddling knock-off watches on the corner of a dark, shabby street. Sure, you might be tempted to buy the fake, but you know it will eventually fail, and you will be out 50 bucks, with nothing to show for it. So, the wise person, **who wants a watch that will last forever**, resists the devil's temptations, and waits for the real thing! (Even when the devil comes as an angel of light!)

Or said another way: He who has a **Biblical heavenly hope secured firmly on their head like a helmet of salvation**, purifies themselves as JESUS is pure, because they desire to live with JESUS forever, **above all else!**

¹⁰⁷ Romans 13:10

¹⁰⁸ 1 John 3:2-3

And this is why Peter writes: **Therefore gird up the loins of your mind, be sober, and rest your hope fully upon the grace that is to be brought to you at the revelation of Jesus Christ; as obedient children, not conforming yourselves to the former lusts, as in your ignorance; but as He who called you is holy, you also be holy in all your conduct, because it is written, “Be holy, for I am holy.”**¹⁰⁹

Sinners hope in their next temporarily pleasurable form of rebellion against GOD's Word, like a junkie hopes in their next fix. But, on the contrary, **Saints fix their hope completely** on the grace they will receive when JESUS sends out His angels to gather together His elect from the four winds! And **hope empowers the saints to escape** from the former lusts that once controlled their thinking!

Thus, Paul explained: **We who have the firstfruits of the Spirit, even we ourselves groan within ourselves, eagerly waiting for the adoption, the redemption of our body. For we were saved in this hope, but hope that is seen is not hope; for why does one still hope for what he sees? But if we hope for what we do not see, we eagerly wait for it with perseverance.**¹¹⁰

And that heavenly hope truly did empower Paul to persevere, because he also described: **But what things were gain to me, these I have counted loss for Christ. Yet indeed I also count all things loss for the excellence of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord, for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and count them as rubbish, that I may gain Christ and be found in Him, not having my own righteousness, which is from the law, but that which is through faith in Christ, the righteousness which is from God by faith; that I may know Him and the power of His resurrection, and the fellowship of His sufferings, being conformed to His death, if, by any means, I may attain to the resurrection from the dead.**¹¹¹

And then he wrote: **Not that I have already attained, or am already perfected; but I press on, that I may lay hold of that for which Christ Jesus has also laid hold of me. Brethren, I do not count myself to have apprehended; but one thing I do, forgetting those things which are behind and reaching forward to those things which are ahead, I press toward the goal for the prize of the upward call**

¹⁰⁹ 1 Peter 1:13-16

¹¹⁰ Romans 8:23-25

¹¹¹ Philippians 3:7-11

of God in Christ Jesus. Therefore let us, as many as are mature, have this mind; and if in anything you think otherwise, God will reveal even this to you.¹¹²

Can you imagine for just a moment how satan might try to tempt Paul to sin? What earthly forbidden pleasure could compare to the hope Paul was pressing towards above all else? Truly, **Paul had the impenetrable helmet of salvation firmly fixed on his head**, and he let nothing get in the way of his quest to attain to the resurrection of the dead through JESUS CHRIST our LORD!

And because of this hope of the resurrection that Paul compared to a trophy, our brother asked: **Do you not know that those who run in a race all run, but one receives the prize? Run in such a way that you may obtain it. And everyone who competes for the prize is temperate in all things. Now they do it to obtain a perishable crown, but we for an imperishable crown. Therefore I run thus: not with uncertainty. Thus I fight: not as one who beats the air. But I discipline my body and bring it into subjection, lest, when I have preached to others, I myself should become disqualified.¹¹³**

This is the spiritually mature mindset of the most prolific writer in the Final 27 Books. He was not setting his hope on health, wealth, fame, glory, or anything this world has to offer. Instead he lived his life like a runner competing in a race. And, only when his life was almost over, did he say: **For I am already being poured out as a drink offering, and the time of my departure is at hand. I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith. Finally, there is laid up for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, will give to me on that Day, and not to me only but also to all who have loved His appearing.¹¹⁴**

If **Paul did not give up running his race until he crossed the finish line** of physical death, we must follow his Apostolic example! And the only way we will follow his example is if we **think like Paul thought about life**, and treat this life as a race or a fight, that we must keep running or fighting until the end. That is

¹¹² Philippians 3:12-15

¹¹³ 1 Corinthians 9:24-27

¹¹⁴ 2 Timothy 4:6-8

perseverance, and only those who set their minds on heavenly things, run and fight in that way!

Therefore we also, since we are surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which so easily ensnares us, and let us run with endurance the race that is set before us, 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 has sat down at the right hand of the throne of God.¹¹⁵

Brothers and Sisters, **even JESUS endured the things He suffered by looking forward in hope** towards the joy set before Him! So, let us all follow in His glorious footsteps, and seek every day to secure **the helmet of the hope of salvation** firmly on our heads!

Chapter 6 Discussion:

1. What promises of GOD about the Kingdom of Heaven motivate you to resist temptation when it creeps up on you?
2. What do you think most Christians you know outside of your church fix their hope on?
3. What does the world around us fix their hope on?
4. After reading Matthew 6:33, what are some practical ways we can put this verse into practice.
 - a. Where might we post some verses in our homes, cars, and church building that help us obey Colossians 3:2?
 - b. It is hard to keep a heavenly perspective when we still live in this fallen world, so: how can we obey 2 Corinthians 5:7 in practical, day to day ways?
 - i. What should we watch?
 - ii. What should we listen to?
 - iii. What might we want to avoid?
 - iv. How do we feed our heavenly hope, or starve it?

¹¹⁵ Hebrews 12:1-2

Chapter 7: The Sword of the SPIRIT

So far, we have prepared our minds for the metaphorical race of the Christian life when we put on **the belt of truth**. And we put that belt on by **repenting** of our old way of thinking, while **placing our trust** in GOD's Word as the ultimate authoritative source of truth in this world.

We put on **the breastplate of righteousness** when we choose to follow JESUS in obedience to the Word of GOD. And we learned that only those who **practice righteousness** are actually righteous as JESUS is righteous, while those who practice sin are of the devil.

Then, we learned that JESUS commanded us to **go** into the world we live in **sharing** the good news of GOD's Word with every person we encounter. And those who love their neighbor will always wear **the shoes of the gospel of peace**, so they can **proclaim** that all those who choose to repent and put their faith in JESUS will be saved from their slavery to sin.

Also, we learned how faith is like a road, and experience and time on that road can build up our faith in GOD's Word to the point that the Bible becomes **the shield of faith**. Therefore, we can **defend one part of our faith with other aspects of our faith**, without actually committing the logical fallacy of circular reasoning.

For example, we can defend our faith in JESUS by sharing **why** we trust the men who wrote down what they witnessed first-hand. And we can defend their words by explaining textual criticism, and **how** the Bible has been supernaturally preserved in a way that prevented people from changing GOD's Word.

Then, we learned about **the helmet of salvation**, or the helmet of the hope of salvation. And we saw that our eternal **hope** proclaimed in GOD's Word is what gives us strength to resist temptation, face every trial, and persevere to the end to be saved! In fact, we saw that JESUS and Paul both fixed their eyes on the joy that lay before them, and they overcame many seemingly insurmountable challenges with **the helmet of salvation** protecting them.

And with all five of those items of the Armor of GOD understood, we are ready for the final, most powerful item, that Paul listed when he wrote: “**take... the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of GOD**”¹¹⁶

Obviously, **the Sword of the Spirit** is a metaphor for using the Word of GOD to **combat the lies of the enemy**, but with this understood we can now see, that each and every item of the Armor of GOD is actually referring to how we must relate to the Holy Scriptures in different ways.

The Bible must become **our belt that takes every thought captive**, it must become **our lamp that leads us in paths of righteousness**, it must become **our script, as we speak about the gospel of peace to the world around us**, it must become **our shield that protects us from every lie the devil hurls our way**, it must become **our helmet and source of hope in this fallen world**, and it must become **our skillfully wielded weapon**, that we use for **casting down arguments and every high thing that exalts itself against the knowledge of GOD**.¹¹⁷

And nothing on earth is metaphorically sharper than the sword of the SPIRIT - **For the word of God is living and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the division of soul and spirit, and of joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart. And there is no creature hidden from His sight, but all things are naked and open to the eyes of Him to whom we must give account.**¹¹⁸

Truly, **JESUS will judge the world** by the words recorded in the Holy Bible. **Nations rise and nations fall** according to the words recorded in the Holy Bible. **People have died to record and preserve** the words recorded in the Holy Bible. And the words recorded in the Holy Bible can infallibly **judge the thoughts and intentions of the heart!**

So, it is no surprise to read: **Paul, as his custom was, went in to the synagogue, and for three Sabbaths reasoned with them from the Scriptures.**¹¹⁹

¹¹⁶ Ephesians 6:17

¹¹⁷ 2 Corinthians 10:5a

¹¹⁸ Hebrews 4:12-13

¹¹⁹ Acts 17:2

And it is no surprise that Paul wrote that the Overseer or Bishop must be: **holding fast the faithful word as he has been taught, that he may be able, by sound doctrine, both to exhort and convict those who contradict.**¹²⁰

Yes, with sound reasoning from the Scriptures, every argument against the truth can be defeated. So, Paul instructed Timothy: **In all things show yourself to be a pattern of good works; in doctrine showing integrity, reverence, incorruptibility, sound speech that cannot be condemned, that one who is an opponent may be ashamed, having nothing evil to say of you.**¹²¹

When we **conduct** ourselves in a manner **worthy** of the Gospel, and we **teach sound** doctrine from the Holy Scriptures the way the Apostles and JESUS taught, all those who oppose the truth of GOD's Word are put to shame. But as we learned earlier, **our goal is not to defeat other people, our goal is to help the HOLY SPIRIT rescue them from the lies of the devil, using the Word of GOD.**

And our Savior showed us how to **wield the sword of the SPIRIT**, in Matthew's gospel, because there, it is written: **And He answered and said to them, "Have you not read that He who made them at the beginning 'made them male and female,' "and said, 'For this reason a man shall leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh'? "So then, they are no longer two but one flesh. Therefore what God has joined together, let not man separate."**¹²²

When the Pharisees wanted to **argue** with JESUS about lenient divorces, our LORD directed them back to the Bible, by asking: **"have you not read?"** And then, by **quoting the Bible**, JESUS established that divorce was not part of GOD's original design!

And, in response to a trick question¹²³ asked by the Sadducees who don't believe in a future resurrection¹²⁴, Matthew also records JESUS saying: **"You are mistaken, not knowing the Scriptures nor the power of God. "For in the resurrection they neither marry nor are given in marriage, but are like angels of**

¹²⁰ Titus 1:9

¹²¹ Titus 2:7-8

¹²² Matthew 19:4-6

¹²³ Matthew 22:24-28

¹²⁴ Acts 23:8

God in heaven. “But concerning the resurrection of the dead, have you not read what was spoken to you by God, saying, ‘I am the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob’ ? God is not the God of the dead, but of the living.”¹²⁵

When people don't know the Scriptures from the very first Hebrew word of Genesis to the very last Greek word of Revelation, they can easily make **some very dangerous mistakes**. But JESUS corrected those mistakes with the sword of the SPIRIT when He once again asked them: **“have you not read?”**.

But in one of the fiercest spiritual battles ever recorded in the Gospels, we see JESUS use the sword of the Spirit against the devil and win three separate times! Scripture records: **Then Jesus was led up by the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted by the devil. And when He had fasted forty days and forty nights, afterward He was hungry. Now when the tempter came to Him, he said, “If You are the Son of God, command that these stones become bread.”¹²⁶**

Now, before we see how JESUS responded, we must note something important. This passage was written down for us, so that we would know how to follow our King's example!

You see: we learned back in chapter 5 about the noun form of a Greek word that is sometimes translated: **“testing”**, but other times it is translated: **“temptation”**. And the verb form of that word is used by Matthew in the verse above (that has been translated as: **“tempted”** in the NKJV).

But this Greek verb: **“pi-rad'-zo”**, literally means: **“to try, make trial of, or to test”**. Thus, **even JESUS was tested!** And Scripture explains: **For we do not have a High Priest who cannot sympathize with our weaknesses, but was in all points tested as we are, yet without sin.**¹²⁷

Obviously, if GOD tested His own Son, we will most certainly be tested. And this is why Paul wrote: **“Therefore, take up the whole armor of God, that you may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand.”¹²⁸** And with this

¹²⁵ Matthew 22:29-32

¹²⁶ Matthew 4:1-3

¹²⁷ Hebrews 4:15

¹²⁸ Ephesians 6:13

in mind, let's see how JESUS used the sword of the Spirit to respond to satan that day.

When satan said: **“If You are the Son of God, command that these stones become bread.”**, JESUS answered: **“It is written, ‘Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceeds from the mouth of God.’ ”**¹²⁹

JESUS did not fight satan with His **unlimited power!** He did not fight satan, the leader of all of the forces of evil, with **all of GOD's holy angels**. No JESUS whipped out a Bible verse, **like a warrior pulls out his sword!** And JESUS spiritually beat satan down with the Word of Truth, after saying three of the greatest words in the English language: **“IT IS WRITTEN!”**

So satan slithered away and planned his next attack. And, about their next encounter, Matthew recorded: **Then the devil took Him up into the holy city, set Him on the pinnacle of the temple, and said to Him, “If You are the Son of God, throw Yourself down. For it is written: ‘He shall give His angels charge over you,’ and, ‘In their hands they shall bear you up, Lest you dash your foot against a stone.’ ”** Jesus said to him, **“It is written again, ‘You shall not tempt the LORD your God.’ ”**¹³⁰

Sadly, satan often uses parts of the Bible to make us disobey other parts! And Paul explains: **For Satan himself transforms himself into an angel of light.**¹³¹ Therefore we must know **ALL of the Scriptures**, and keep every verse in context to correctly wield the sword of the SPIRIT!

And JESUS demonstrated that fact, when He quoted the passage that perfectly contradicted satan's misuse of the Bible! Plus, once again we see that simply **knowing, believing, and obeying GOD's Word can equip us for even the most dangerous of battles in the spiritual realm!**

And this principle is proved true once more, as Matthew writes: **Again, the devil took Him up on an exceedingly high mountain, and showed Him all the kingdoms of the world and their glory. And he said to Him, “All these things I will**

¹²⁹ Matthew 4:3-4

¹³⁰ Matthew 4:5-7

¹³¹ 2 Corinthians 11:14

give You if You will fall down and worship me.” Then Jesus said to him, “Away with you, Satan! For it is written, ‘You shall worship the LORD your God, and Him only you shall serve.’ ”¹³²

Three times satan tried to tempt JESUS to disobey the Father, and **three times** JESUS resisted the devil by **simply quoting the Bible**. So, I hope that we can all see: **we are unarmed against the wiles of the devil when we don’t know the Holy Scriptures!**

Chapter 7 Discussion:

1. If JESUS quoted from Deuteronomy three times to defeat the devil in those encounters, what should we think of the books of Moses?
2. What books of the Bible existed when Paul wrote: **All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness, that the man of God may be complete, thoroughly equipped for every good work.**¹³³
3. If Paul said all Scripture is inspired by GOD, and profitable for doctrine, why do so many Christians only think some Scripture is profitable for doctrine?
 - a. Who is behind that disarming of the Church?
4. If Scripture “thoroughly equips” the people of GOD, how equipped are we when we only know 27 of the 66 books?
5. How can the sword of the SPIRIT be used to defeat the lies of the devil that are leading people you love astray?
 - a. Name an error someone you love believes, and then name the specific verses that defeat that error.
 - b. Practice dismantling heresies with the Word of GOD like a soldier practices with his sword. Your spiritual life, and the lives of those you love, will depend on you knowing, believing, and obeying the Word of GOD - in a thorough, full-Armor-of-GOD way!

¹³² Matthew 4:8-10

¹³³ 2 Timothy 3:16-17