

The Attackers: the Roman Soldiers Panoply Illustrates the Spiritual Panoply of the Christian Warrior (continued): Helmet of Salvation, & the Sword of Truth; Believers Minus the Panoply Fight the Wrong Battles: Settled Law Will Not Be Changed without a Change in Popular Thought; the Mandate to Pick Up & Put On the Panoply, Eph 6:13

- (19) The fifth piece of armament is *galea*, or the helmet.¹ It was generally made of bronze and fitted over an iron skullcap, lined with leather or cloth for greater comfort. It covered the back of the soldier's head and was reinforced with a back plate that protected his neck.
- (20) The helmet had no visor but instead, above the eyes, was a metal peak that jutted out in front offering protection for downward cuts by the enemy. Hinged bronze cheek pieces held the helmet in place. The plumes were never worn in battle but only for parades or dress occasions.
- (21) Paul referred to salvation as the believer's helmet. The soul's base of operations is the head where it coordinates with the brain and thus the helmet refers to eternal security that protects the soul.
- (22) The sixth and final item of armament is the *gladius*, or the sword, the basic weapon for close combat.² It was completely different from the long swords used by most of the enemies of Rome.
- (23) The *ῥομφαία (romphaía)* was developed by the Trachians \thrā'-shē-ans\. It ranged between four and six feet and its length demanded hacking blows against an opponent. It was ineffective against the Romans since its blade was dulled against the iron and steel of the Roman shield.
- (24) Further, as the opponent pulled the blade back for another blow he exposed his side to the quick and lethal thrust of the Roman *gladius*, the legionary protected by faith in his *scutum* to deflect a final blow from the *romphaía*.
- (25) Paul's refers to the *gladius* by its Greek name *μάχαιρα (máchaira)*. The introduction of this weapon into the legionary's panoply shifted the balance of power to the Romans. This weapon was approximately 20 inches long, double-edged to a point. It enabled the soldier to thrust and rip his opponent without losing balance.
- (26) Those who mastered the technique of the *gladius/máchaira* exerted much less stress in battle and were able to endure long scrums and wear down their opponents.
- (27) Paul identified this offensive weapon as a perfect example of the overwhelming offensive power possessed by the believer: "the sword of truth, which is the Word of God."

¹ See "Roman Helmet."

² See "Roman Sword," and "Roman Swords."

- (28) The truths of Scripture can be thrust at the exigencies of life while remaining safely behind the shield of faith and with absolute confidence in one's helmet of eternal security.
- (29) In times of increased and intensive hostilities from the Dark Side it is best that believers, inexperienced in the cosmic battle or oblivious of its presence, not join in the fighting.
- (30) Presently, biblically illiterate people – including both believers and unbelievers – are fighting the wrong battles. They pick hot-button issues such as abortion, suppression of speech, gun rights, or civil unions and organize opposition against them.
- (31) These are brush fires and each has its constituency backed by powerful special interest groups. The secret to overwhelming organized opposition from the Dark Side is for the Christian church to rally 'round biblical standards and convey them to a lost and dying world. This won't happen overnight.
- (32) The odds of attracting large numbers to the fight are slim and none because so many have taken sides in the cultural war. But the gospel of Christ is our only offensive weapon. Once a soul is won then the sword of truth must penetrate into the human spirit with divine viewpoint.
- (33) What so many in Christendom do not grasp is that the war rages. They need to get in the fight or get out of the way. And they cannot fight effectively until they know the enemy.
- (34) Paul clearly reveals the identities of our opponents in:

Ephesians 6:12 - Because our combat is not against blood and flesh, but against general officers, against commissioned officers, against special-forces guerrillas and fifth-column spies of the Dark Side, against the demonic rank-and-file warriors of evil who populate the atmosphere.

- (35) To be effective in this conflict the believer must prepare his soul to enter the battlefields of the Invisible War, which Paul exhorts us to do in:

Ephesians 6:13 - Therefore, take up the full armor of God, so that you will be able to resist in the evil day, and having done everything, to stand firm. (NASB)

1. We have already noted that this verse begins with preposition **διὰ (diá)**, translated "because." It is followed by the demonstrative pronoun **οὗτος (hoútos)**, translated "this": "Because of this."
2. This is the purpose of what Paul covered in verse 12: our combat is not against things visible. It is against the invisible demonic assault armies described by a table of organization.
3. The challenges common to a believer's normal day involve thought, system, and people, and sometimes disasters. But these are the visible expressions of the invisible conflict that continuously rages around us.
4. Although our battles are obviously pitted against blood and flesh, people are not the primary enemies. They are manipulated in one way or another by demon influence at best and demon possession at worst.

5. For this kind of warfare, our souls need a wardrobe designed to withstand the assaults from the Dark Side. To adequately dress our souls, we have to produce the action of “taking up the full armor of God.”
6. The verb here is the aorist active imperative of ἀναλαμβάνω (*anambánō*): “to take up to oneself a personal or material object.” The active voice indicates that this must be a willing volitional decision on the part of the Christian warrior.
7. In this verse, and later in verse 16, we have the technical use of the word for putting on weapons, an action adopted from military jargon.
8. Just as the Roman soldier systematically put on his panoply, likewise for the Christian soldier. But the act must be volitional.
9. The verb is a constative aorist; it contemplates the action of putting on one’s spiritual armor in its entirety and gathers it into a single whole. When the believer’s soul is at ease, his panoply is not in place. The constative aorist views the action of taking it up and putting it on when circumstances require it.
10. The active voice requires the believer to be alert and prepared to assume Code Red on a moment’s notice. The believer must be prepared to instantly dress his soul in full panoply.
11. To do this, there must *be* a panoply in his *kardia* that is immediately available “to pick up and put on.” This action is commanded by the imperative mood, and is translated, “Because of the demonic enemy, pick up and put on.”