

Imitation Armor

Ephesians 6:14-20

November 15, 2020

Review

Chained to a Roman guard
Inspired by the imagery of the Old Testament
Isaiah 11 and Isaiah 59 picture God in armor
Ephesians 6 is more than God simply giving us defensive equipment
It is a call to stand in God's stead as His ambassador-warriors

The Meanings in the Armor Metaphor

I will draw meaning from OT usage more than Roman guard parallels
I will stay consistent with the idea that as ambassador-warriors we are imitating God
More specifically, we are imitating Jesus Who gave us an earthly model
The six armor parts each have an OT referent and each are apt descriptions of Jesus
The six armor parts can be viewed as three couplets presenting three big ideas
Integrity, trust, and bearing witness

Integrity: the belt and the breastplate

The belt of truth is drawn from Isaiah 11:1-9
"Truth" is capturing the idea of "righteousness and faithfulness": Isaiah 11:5
"Truth" as integrity, a person without duplicity, pure heart leading to right actions
This makes metaphorical sense, as lying hobbles a person
The breastplate of righteousness is drawn from Isaiah 59:17
"Righteousness" is capturing the idea of right action, doing the right thing
This makes metaphorical sense as right action protects one's heart
Jesus, our High Priest without sin: see Hebrews 4:15

Trust: the shoes and the shield

Feet shod with the readiness given by the gospel of peace is from Isaiah 52:7
"Gospel of peace" in context refers to the announcement, "Our God reigns"
This makes metaphorical sense that such confidence steadies our feet
The shield of faith is not in Isaiah, but in Wisdom of Solomon 5:17
But take a look at Genesis 15: 1-6 and the relation of faith and shield
"Faith" here refers to unshakeable trust in God
This makes metaphorical sense as trust douses fiery accusations and attacks of evil
Jesus' earthly life was lived by trust in and submission to the Father
At His greatest vulnerability He chose obedience as a sign of trust
Even His cry "Why have you forsaken me" was a cry of trust (read all of Psalm 22!)

Bearing Witness: the helmet and the sword

The helmet of salvation is drawn from Isaiah 59:17

“Salvation” in this sense carries the idea of deliverance from enemies
To wear the helmet, in imitation of God, is bring salvation/deliverance to others
This makes metaphorical sense as a protected head allows the agent to fight on
The “sword of the Spirit” is defined by Paul as the word of God
This linkage can be seen in Isaiah 11:4 and 59:21
God’s word executes judgement and establishes blessing
This makes metaphorical sense as a sword can both break down and defend
These two ideas suggest bringing deliverance into the dark
How? By bearing witness to the light of Christ (Eph 5:8)
Jesus is the Light of the World (John 8:12) and we are too (Matt 5:14)

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Praying at All Times

How do we not fall asleep like the disciples in the Garden?
Watch and pray as a constant mode of alert attention
The mindset of being on high alert
That we might be bold in serving our ambassadorial role, as Paul requests: vs.19-20
Our primary mindset: not that we have a battle to win but a victory to complete

Up, In, and Out

Up: Unshakeable, unwavering trust in God
In: Integrity in all of our dealings with one another
Out: Bearing witness to light of Jesus with our words and embodied actions
