

PP This is War!-Breastplate of Righteousness

Part 3-Ephesians 6:14a (p. 979 pew Bible)

5/5-6/2018

We have a spiritual enemy, and his schemes are revealed by his many names the bible gives
He is best known as '*Satan*' which means adversary and accuser

PP *"Now the salvation and the power and the kingdom of our God and the authority of His Christ have come, for the accuser of our brothers has been thrown down, who accuses them day and night before our God."* **Revelation 12:10**

Against this, the breastplate of righteousness is needed to protect the Christian

PP 1-What was the breastplate in Roman armor?

The breastplate was made in many different ways

They sometimes stitched *Leather pieces* together and overlaid it slices of animal hooves, horns or pieces of metal

Some were made of *chainmail*, others with *plate armor*, pieces of iron bound together with hooks or straps

There was *scale armor* that was made by overlapping bronze or iron scales

Underneath the breastplate was the subarmalis, a pad to prevent chafing and absorb the blows

There were rings along the bottom of the breastplate to tie it to the belt, so that it would stay in place during battle

The breastplate covered from the neck down to the upper thighs, protecting the heart, lungs and intestines from a killing blow

PP 2-What is the significance of the Breastplate of righteousness?

"and having put on the breastplate of righteousness," **Ephesians 6:14**

I'd like to ask you...Do you truly know your weaknesses?

Where is the devil trying to take the killing blow in your Christian walk with God?

Is it your mind, that constantly doubts whether you could really be saved?

Is it your emotions, which are inflamed with fears and anxieties, which run after pleasures?

Is it your will, that one day you walk with God, the next far from Him?

All of these, mind, emotions and will, are lived out of our hearts, what the devil aims to harm

The breastplate of righteousness protects your vital spiritual organs from his evil schemes

Paul emphasizes this again in verse 14, '*having put on*', that no one can put it on you but you

But what this breastplate is begins by understanding two kinds of righteousness

PP The '*righteousness*' of God is the perfect union between who God is and what God does

It is the same word for justice, so what God does is always just

Isaiah brings about this relationship clearly and shows God Himself donning this breastplate

PP *"So justice is driven back, and righteousness stands at a distance; truth has stumbled in the streets, honesty cannot enter. Truth is nowhere to be found...The LORD looked and was displeased that there was no justice...He was appalled that there was no one to intervene; so His own arm worked salvation for Him, and His own righteousness*

sustained Him. He put on righteousness as His breastplate, and the helmet of salvation on His head.” **Isaiah 59:14-17**

We are seeing a prophecy of Jesus Christ Who would don this breastplate as *‘His own arm, worked salvation for Him’*

Salvation was the most urgent and critical need, for Isaiah said earlier in that chapter:

PP *“your iniquities have separated you from your God; your sins have hidden His face from you, so that He will not hear...For our offenses are many in your sight, and our sins testify against us. Our offenses are ever with us, and we acknowledge our iniquities.”*
Isaiah 59:2, 12

Sin is the opposite of righteousness and presents a fatal problem for all humanity

PP *“For what partnership has righteousness with lawlessness? Or what fellowship has light with darkness?”* **2 Corinthians 6:14**

You and I are born rebels, sinners from birth, we are not righteous, and in fact, the raging contagion of sin extends into our whole person so that our whole persons are defiled
If one could examine God under the \$27 million Lawrence Berkely Electron Microscope, somehow bouncing electrons over Him, there would not to the most infinite level be found one single contaminant or sin or defilement

If God is to act in union to His character, He could never ignore our sins and offenses
He must punish all sin, for it does not deserve reward, it is wrong and earns a penalty
God would actually be unrighteous if He ever, even one time, gave a pass to sin
Sin is intolerable to Him, it is the greatest blight against His absolute purity, it is high treason

How then can sinful people be near, or in a relationship with a pure, holy Being such as God
After all, if you were getting surgery, would you want the surgeon to use surgical instruments that happened to be lying around, uncleaned, from the patient before?

Would you want to drink a glass of spring water with a little mercury in it?

Or a salad with one corner of one leaf containing salmonella?

If you could, wouldn't you insist on perfectly clean surgical equipment, water that is mercury-free, or a whole different batch of salad leaves?

In all areas of our lives we desire purity, and God desires it as well, in us, so something must makes us clean, pure and deal with this great problem of our sin

We cannot do this for ourselves, or for each other

A sinner can clean the stains of his own sin no more than a muddy cloth can clean the dirty lens of a pair of eyeglasses

Something perfectly clean is needed, something powerful enough to take away every stain on our soul that the smallest sin left behind

That something is a Someone, Jesus, Who *‘put on righteousness as His breastplate, and the helmet of salvation on His head’* and went to war against sin and the devil

What did He do?

He died on the cross to take away sin for all who believe and make them righteous

The miraculous happens every time a sinner trusts in Jesus for salvation

All of that person's sin-past, present, future, are laid on Jesus on the cross, and all His righteousness is given to that person, what is called *imputed righteousness*

PP *“For our sake He made Him to be sin Who knew no sin, so that in Him we might become the righteousness of God.”* **2 Corinthians 5:21**

He bore our sins, and God punished Him as if he had in effect committed all our sins, and declared us to be those who had in effect lived the sinless perfect life of Jesus
 The Father's Wrath poured on Jesus as if He committed all our sins, and His mercy poured out on us as if we had lived the perfect, sinless life of Jesus
 This wasn't slight of hand that tricks God into missing our sin
 All the way back to the garden, God allowed an innocent substitute to die for the guilty, but the sacrifice was always an animal, for there were never innocent, sinless people
 An animal substitute for sin lasted until the next sin, and then it was necessary again
 Only the perfect, sinless sacrifice of Jesus, our substitute can take away all sin, even future ones
 Cleaning us so purely, that we become the righteousness of God

PP I told you there are two sides to righteousness: *the being side and the doing side*
 Satan cannot take away your position of righteousness, but he can impact your practice of it
 He wants to create a breach between our *position and our practice* by drawing us into sin
 The breastplate of righteousness protects our vital spiritual organs so we live out who we are
 Because we are made right with God in our position, we can/must live right with God in practice
 To live any other way is to make an opening for the devil to capture us into sin
 In Japan, there is a temple to the Fox god who offers you a way to sin and get away with it by allowing you to receive forgiveness from him in advance of the sin you plan to commit
 Christian, do you treat God as if He is the *fox god*?
 I really want this pleasure, and I know God will forgive me later, so I'll borrow future forgiveness to pay for present sin
 When you go into Satan's territory as a willing traveler, don't be surprised to land in his prison

Do you remember the story where Queen Helen was captured and taken to the city of Troy?
 The Greeks pursued her abductors to Troy, and tried unsuccessfully for 10 years to overcome them, but finally, they left, seemingly giving up
 But the Greeks built a large wooden horse and left it outside Troy's gates, and inside was hidden a number of their soldiers
 The Trojans brought that horse inside their gates, and at night, those soldiers, now inside Troy, overcame the guards, opened up the gates, so their army could get in, conquered the city
 You see, the enemy within, let in the enemy without, and overcame an impregnable city
 Christian, if the rebellious flesh within lets in the enemy without, may never come back from being conquered
 Unrighteousness and disobedience opens that gate into our hearts and that enemy has the way to make strongholds of addictions, shame, despair, misery, and their like

PP *"Let not sin therefore reign in your mortal body, to make you obey its passions. Do not present your members to sin as instruments for unrighteousness, but present yourselves to God as those who have been brought from death to life, and your members to God as instruments for righteousness."* **Romans 6:12-13**

There is a way to defend yourself against the attack of the enemy, the breastplate of righteousness, and I want to show you an example of victory from Zechariah 3 (p. 794)

PP 3-How do wear the breastplate of righteousness in battle?

PP Zechariah 3:1-5 ESV (put this one slide and I will talk through it)

The scene in Zechariah 3 opens with Israel returned from Babylon, Satan having lost that battle to keep God's people in bondage

The Jews had returned to restore Jerusalem and rebuild the Temple of God, and Satan went on the attack to prevent that, for he jealously hates the worship of God

We have in Zechariah's vision, Joshua the High Priest who represented all God's people

It's a battle in the heavenly places, Joshua standing before the angel of the Lord, Jesus, Satan at

Joshua's right side, looking at Jesus, pointing at the priest in the filthy rags of a sinner

He is living his name sake for recall that '**Satan**' means adversary and accuser, the prosecuting attorney giving proof of Joshua's guilt

Never once did Joshua speak, for we have no defense of innocence in any of us

But watch what happened next, for it is the same exact thing that has happened for each Christian

Jesus rebuked Satan, acknowledging Joshua's sinfulness, saying He had plucked him out of the fire of God's just wrath, the judgment of His captivity that faithless Israel had landed into

All sinners are bound up and exiled into sin, and deserve God's wrath

But salvation plays out in this vision as Jesus removes Joshua's sins from him, and dresses him in the pure garments of righteousness

This is imputed, positional righteousness, but it is not yet enough

Zechariah knows that new garments of righteousness are not enough, for the accuser will be back

There must be no part of our new clothes of righteousness left off

He asked that a new turban be put on Joshua's head, signifying that he was now equipped to do the work of the High Priest, to serve God faithfully

Some here are struggling perhaps having done some pretty terrible things, perhaps even some criminal things and the devil will bring that up over and over

He wants every divorced person here to believe that they are now a second-rate Christian

That every woman that has had an abortion will be haunted by an angry scowl of God forever

That the abuse you suffered when you were young, or committed, is a stain on your soul that no amount of rubbing will ever get out

He'll tell you that if people saw the real you, they would flee in disgusted terror

PP "Who shall bring any charge against God's elect? It is God who justifies." Romans 8:33

For many Christians the enemy within, the flesh, has let the enemy without get in and overcome

But the truth is, **PP "if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation. The old has passed away; behold, the new has come." 2 Corinthians 5:17**

Jesus has stripped the devil of his authority in your life and in this scene Satan never spoke again

Friends, put on the breastplate of righteousness...how you might ask?

PP First, confess your sins as the Lord shows them to you, refusing to make light of them

We confess our sins because they interrupt our fellowship with God, but our relationship with Him is intact, steady and sure

But turn from them, or the devil has an enemy within opening gates for his strategies

PP Second, claim who you are in Christ every time the devil attacks you, by pointing to the finished work of Jesus on the cross, that made you new, clothing you in righteousness

This is how you tie the breastplate to the belt of truth, to keep it securely tight, no gaps

PP Third, God provided the power, and the armor, but we must **put it on in holy living**

PP *“put on the new self, created after the likeness of God in true righteousness and holiness.”*
Ephesians 4:24

Hook the breastplate to the belt of truth, know who you are in Christ and stand your ground in
obedience to God

Amen?

Pray