

Ephesians 6:17—And take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God.

And take the helmet of salvation, (6:17a)

As the Roman soldier dressed for battle, he made certain that the “*helmet*” was in place. This piece of armor, made of leather or metal, shielded the crown of the head, the forehead, cheeks, and neck. It protected him against weaponry designed for decapitation.

This particular piece of armor reminds me of an event that occurred during my stint in the army. My drill instructor directed our platoon members to fight each other (two at a time and toe-to-toe) with long sticks padded on both ends. This arrangement would have been quite intimidating had it not been for the equipment issued beforehand. We each received a football helmet as the sole source of protection and were told that the last man standing was the winner. Since I appreciated the health the Lord had given me and desired to live a long and fruitful life, I was, to say the least, concerned about the outcome. However, the moment my head entered that football helmet I changed into a different creature. I could not believe my bolstered confidence; the helmet made me feel as if I could conquer the world. I was ready to go, so fight I did—with fervor and authority!

The “*helmet of salvation*” (Ephesians 6:17a) emboldens the believer. It supplies the hope and confidence necessary to stand poised in battle—the posture feared most by Satan and his henchmen. No soldier donning this helmet goes limp or turns passive while confronting the enemy. Yet, we must be careful. Such confidence must rest in God’s abilities—never our own. Only the omnipotent, Triune God is capable of standing toe-to-toe with a foe so fierce and deceitful.

Believers void of “*the helmet of salvation*” (Ephesians 6:17) cannot stand, for one stroke from the enemy’s sword of deception results in immediate decapitation (incapacitation). We best understand, therefore, how to secure our headgear.

“*Helmet of salvation*” is not necessarily referencing our salvation (born again) experience, but the assurance of that salvation. Only believers who understand their security in Christ can properly don this headgear. Once mounted and adjusted, it grants the hope and confidence necessary for victory (1Thessalonians 5:8-9). The opposite is also true. The saint who views himself as saved today, lost tomorrow, and saved the next, opens himself to incredible deception. In fact, he is incapable of looking Satan in the eye and, in God’s authority and strength, demanding that he flee. Thus, the helmet of salvation grants boldness and courage as Satan questions the stability of our relationship with the Father—one of Satan’s most treasured and frequently employed weapons. No saint of God lives abundantly who allows this matter to remain unsettled.

The enemy also desires that we perceive salvation as our responsibility to maintain. This lie is refuted by Hebrews 7:25:

Hence, also, He is able to save forever those who draw near to God through Him, since He always lives to make intercession for them . (Hebrews 7:25)

Jesus’ duty, obligation, and mandate, as high priest, is to “*save forever*” those who are His. We could lose our salvation only if Jesus died a second time—an impossibility according to Hebrews 10:10:

By this will we have been sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all. (Hebrews 10:10)

We are “sealed” in Christ (Ephesians 1:13), “kept for Christ” (Jude 1), and nothing can snatch us “out of the Father’s hand” (John 10:28-29):

In Him, you also, after listening to the message of truth, the gospel of your salvation — having also believed, you were sealed in Him with the Holy Spirit of promise, (Ephesians 1:13)

...to those who are the called, beloved in God the Father, and kept for Jesus Christ: (Jude 1)

and I give eternal life to them, and they shall never perish; and no one shall snatch them out of My hand. “My Father, who has given them to Me, is greater than all; and no one is able to snatch them out of the Father’s hand. (John 10:28-29)

and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God. (6:17b)

The Roman soldier’s double-edged sword, ranging from six to eighteen inches in length, was carried in a sheath attached to his belt for easy accessibility. In hand-to-hand combat it assisted him both defensively and offensively, so no soldier entered battle without it. Defensively it intercepted the enemy’s blows, while offensively it drew the enemy’s blood.

The believer’s sword, “*the sword of the Spirit*” (Ephesians 6:17b), is “*the word of God*” (Ephesians 6:17b). Interestingly, “*inspired*” in 2Timothy 3:16 can actually be translated “God-breathed”:

All Scripture is inspired by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, for training in righteousness; that the man of God may be adequate, equipped for every good work. (2Timothy 3:16-17)

Therefore, when Paul writes that “*all Scripture is inspired by God*” (2Timothy 3:16), he is actually communicating that all Scripture is God-breathed. If Scripture truly is the “breath of God,” then Isaiah 11:4 adds intriguing insight by stating:

...And He will strike the earth with the rod of His mouth, and with the breath of His lips He will slay the wicked. (Isaiah 11:4)

In Revelation 19:15 we also read:

And from His mouth comes a sharp sword, so that with it He may smite the nations;... (Revelation 19:15)

Christ’s weapon is the truth that He speaks. Thus, our “sword,” “*the word of God*” (Ephesians 6:17b), is “*two-edged*” (Hebrews 4:12) in that it feeds and encourages us and, at the same time, defeats the enemy. Satan, a liar (John 8:44), cannot stand against truth; for truth exposes him for who he is (John 3:19-20). Consequently, when Christ returns with His church at His Second Coming, the “*lawless one*” (the Antichrist) will be slain “*with the breath of His (Jesus’) mouth*”:

And then that lawless one will be revealed whom the Lord will slay with the breath of His mouth and bring to an end by the appearance of His coming;
(2Thessalonians 2:8)

Clearly, the “sword..., which is the word of God” (Ephesians 6:17b), functions both defensively and offensively. But to appreciate its value, one must understand the difference between knowing Scripture in the form of general information (*logos*) and applying it to daily living (*rhema*). Because “word” (Ephesians 6:17b) is *rhema* in the Greek, *Vine’s Dictionary* states:

Here the reference is not to the whole Bible as such, but to the individual Scripture which the Spirit brings to our remembrance for use in time of need, a prerequisite being the regular storing of the mind with Scripture. (Vine, 1996)ⁱ

Only as the believer saturates his mind with truth does the Spirit bring remembrance (in the form of *rhema*) regarding the specific verses that counter the enemy’s schemes (John 14:26; 16:13; Galatians 5:16)—as was the case with Jesus in Matthew 4:1-22. So Paul uses the Greek *rhema* in Romans 10:17:

So faith comes from hearing, and hearing by the word [rhema] of Christ.
(Romans 10:17)

Active faith that can withstand the enemy’s onslaught is bolstered as the Holy Spirit brings revelation (*rhema*) to the mind saturated with the written Word of God (*logos*). Hence, God’s children are to familiarize themselves with truth (Psalm 1; 2Timothy 2:15; 3:15-16; Hebrews 5:12-14) if they desire the Spirit to work mightily in their daily experiences.

One final thought and we will exit this powerful passage. Because we so easily forget God’s Word (Hebrews 2:1), meditating on truth must become a lifestyle. God longs that we permeate our minds with His Word (Psalm 1:1-3; 119:9-11; 2Timothy 2:15; 3:15-17; Hebrews 5:12-14; etc.), for continued growth is necessary for abundant living. Satan’s hobby is snatching truth from the mind of man (Matthew 13:19-22; Hebrews 5:12). He masterfully convinces the unwise and immature that God’s Word is irrelevant to the need of the day. When his lies are allowed to take root, the warrior stands helpless as his sword remains fixed in its sheath.

ⁱ Vine, W.E.; Unger, Merrill F., White, William Jr. (1996). *Vine’s Expository Dictionary*. Thomas Nelson. Nashville, TN. Used by permission. All rights reserved.