



Ephesians 6

Ephesians 6:1-3

1Children, obey your parents in the Lord, for this is right. 2"Honor your father and mother"—which is the first commandment with a promise— 3"that it may go well with you and that you may enjoy long life on the earth."

The Walk in Wisdom theme from Eph 5:15 continues. " **15Be very careful, then, how you live—not as unwise but as wise,**

V1—**Children, obey your parents in the Lord, for this is right.**

children - term denotes a dear relationship rather than age. Children would have been in the worship gathering that heard this letter. The local congregation is composed of whole families who gathered together to praise God, hear his Word, and take the Supper.

obey your parents – to obey, follow, be subject to. Example of submission (Eph 5:21) in Christ. For children at home, obedience and respect. For grown children, respect and care given to parents.

In the Lord – Ultimate obedience is given to Christ. Shows the spirit in which this obedience is given; part of life in Christ.

For this is right – Right = righteous character of God (Rom 3:26) and Christ (2 Tim

Walk in Wisdom: Children & Fathers

4:8), a person who is righteous, good, or just (Rom 5:7; 1 Tim 1:9; 1 John 3:7). Right for children to do this, in light of God's own righteousness.

V. 2 — "**Honor your father and mother**"—**which is the first commandment with a promise**—

Honor your father and mother – The mother was equal to the father and "had full claim on the obedience of the children (Ex. 20:12; Deut 5:15)." Honor given always. (Hoehner, 788-789)

Which is the first commandment with a promise. -- First in ranking of importance, as it concerns your neighbor; parents come first. Also the first commandment children learn: "A child's honor and obedience to the parents is the first important step in learning to honor and obey God. If a child dishonors and disobeys the parent, he or she will most likely have the same attitude toward God" (Hoehner p. 789).

V. 3— "**that it may go well with you and that you may enjoy long life on the earth.**"

That it may go well with you – Death was the penalty for those who struck or cursed parents (Ex 21:15,17). Those who dishonor father or mother shall be cursed (Deut 27:16). The stubborn, defiant, disobedient son shall be killed (Deut 21:18-21). Those who disobey and dishonor will be cursed and put to death. The obedient live and are blessed.

This promise is fulfilled "even then when the temporal prosperity is of another nature than the children of this world desire, even then when the duration of life is shortened because its continuance is without any real value" (Stoekhardt, quoting Hofmann, p. 250)

Long life on the earth – "Just as in the Old Testament children who honoured or obeyed their parents were blessed with the promise of a full life, so, too, in the age of the new covenant this general principle holds true for obedient Christian children" (O'Brien, p. 444)

"...children are to obey and honor both fathers and mothers because it is right. This responsibility must be viewed in the larger context, that is, believers who are filled by the power of the Spirit. It is the child who is filled by the Spirit who will respond in obedience to this command." (Hoehner, p. 794)

Paul's pattern is to address the ones under authority first, and then to address the authority figure. Fathers will be addressed in verse 4.

Ephesians 6:4-5 — Wisdom Walk for Fathers & Slaves

Ephesians 6:4-9

4Fathers, do not exasperate your children; instead, bring them up in the training and instruction of the Lord.

5Slaves, obey your earthly masters with respect and fear, and with sincerity of heart, just as you would obey Christ. 6Obey them not only to win their favor when their eye is on you, but like slaves of Christ, doing the will of God from your heart. 7Serve wholeheartedly, as if you were serving the Lord, not men, 8because you know that the Lord will reward everyone for whatever good he does, whether he is slave or free.

9And masters, treat your slaves in the same way. Do not threaten them, since you know that he who is both their Master and yours is in heaven, and there is no favoritism with him.

Fathers, Be Filled with the Spirit

The importance of the means of Grace, God's Word & Sacraments can't be stressed enough. These means, along with prayer let fathers serve by the Spirit's power. "Not by Might, nor by power, but by my Spirit, says the LORD Almighty" (Zech 4:6)

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"Fathers must rely on the Holy Spirit to temper their conduct and attitude, thus enabling them to avoid provoking their children to anger. Also, the Holy Spirit gives them the wisdom and enablement they need to train and instruct. ... While encouragement and reason are highly commendable, they are insufficient because a person's power of reason is not adequate to raise godly children. Paul exhorts believing fathers to train and admonish their children in ways prescribed by the Lord in the power of the Holy Spirit. The present tense of the imperative emphasizes the continue action of this responsibility." (Hoehner, 799)

V. 4—**Fathers, do not exasperate your children; instead, bring them up in the training and instruction of the Lord.**

fathers – Fathers are singled out. See page three.

Do not exasperate your children.—Exasperate—irritate by nagging, demeaning, making children angry. "Your" emphasizes the responsibility. (Hoehner, p. 796)

instead, bring them up in the training and instruction of the Lord. - training (*paideia*) – Likely refers to the education that emphasizes activity and discipline. **instruction** (*nouthesia*), verbal encouragement or correction, literally "to exert influence on the mind." "Epicurus thinks that the word "signifies the gentlest sort of instruction in conduct, free from rebuke or reprimand and characterized by timely suggestions rather than sharp imperatives." (Hoehner, p. 798).

Instruction of the Lord – "In the Lord" modifies the training and instruction. All of this training and instruction is to be done in reference to Christ who is their Lord. The Father's training and instruction is not to be human-centered (anthropocentric) or child-centered (as many modern education theories) but Christ-centered. Instruction belongs to the Lord Jesus Christ, and is to be from Him, and by Him, and about Him, and in light of Him. "The fathers are the Lord's agents and, therefore, raise their children according to his mandates. Such training and admonition would be sensitive to the children's responses and needs." (Hoehner, p. 798-799)

V. 5—**Slaves, obey your earthly masters with respect and fear, and with sincerity of heart, just as you would obey Christ.**

See Excursus A – Slavery in Paul's Time This comes under "Submit to one another out of reverence for Christ" (Eph 5:21). This submission is part of the instruction about wise living (Eph 5:15-20), and the consequence of being filled with the Spirit (5:18). Subordinate group is addressed first.

Slaves – Slaves were part of the worship assembly, and were one in Christ. This is unprecedented. Slaves are treated "as ethically responsible persons (cf. Col 3:22-25). There are as much members of the Christian congregations to which this circular letter was sent as their masters." (O'Brien, p. 449).

obey your earthly masters - Masters are lords, in a limited sense, in an earthly realm, in contrast to the Lord who rules over all in heaven (v. 9).

with respect and fear. In the OT this "usually refers to the fear of humans in the presence of God and his mighty acts. Paul is the only New Testament writer to use this expression (1 Cor. 2:3; 2 Cor 7:15; Phil. 2:12), ... [shows] an attitude of due reverence and awe in the presence of God, a godly fear of the believer in view of the final day (see also on 5:21, 33). It is not the slavish terror of the unbeliever; nor is it an attitude oriented solely to humans. ... a godly fear in view of the final day as the two earlier references indicate." (O'Brien, p. 449,450)

in sincerity of heart – singleness of purpose, no false or ulterior motives; conscientious and sincere. This happens as slaves recognize that they are serving Christ.

just as you would obey Christ – "The perspective of Christian slaves, however, has changed. They have been delivered from the bondage of human intimidation, and now are 'enslaved' to the Lord Jesus Christ. Their service to their masters, then, is to be rendered out of reverence and awe for him" (O'Brien, p. 450)

The distinction between SACRED and SECULAR break down when all we do is done "as to the Christ." Christ rules over all. "Ultimately ... the distinction between the sacred and the secular breaks down. ... [all] is done in order to please him" (O'Brien, p. 450).

Ephesians 5:6-9 — Be Filled with the Spirit: Speaking to One Another & Singing

V 6 – Obey them not only to win their favor when their eye is on you, but like slaves of Christ, doing the will of God from your heart.

when their eyes is on you - service done “only to attract attention, and which was not for its own sake or to please God or one’s conscience” (O’Brien, p. 451).

Obey them not only to win their favor – literally, **as man pleasers**, i.e., to win the approval of human masters, rather than for the approval of God.

but like slaves of Christ, doing the will of God from the heart – doing the will of God – “The divine will has already been understood in terms of God’s gracious saving plan in which it is his intention to sum up all things in Christ (1:5, 9, 11). In the latter half of Ephesians the divine will (5:17, 6:6) turns up in exhortatory contexts where the stress falls upon believers’ responsibility to work out that will day by day (see on 5:17). Here God’s will is performed by ‘slaves of Christ’ within the everyday life of the household.” (O’Brien, p. 451)

heart = literally ‘soul’ – since they are Christ’s, and ultimate allegiance is to Christ, serve sincerely and from the heart, doing the will of God. All of the above stresses an inner motivation that is un-reserved, and stands in contrast to the ‘eye-service’ and ‘men-pleasers.’

v 7 – Serve wholeheartedly, as if you were serving the Lord, not men,

wholeheartedly—Zeal, eagerness, wholeheartedness. Goodwill, affection.

As if you were serving the Lord, not men – Their eager service would benefit their human masters, but the slaves are reminded that they are serving the Lord and not simply humans. In every action they glorify God.

V 8—because you know that the Lord will reward everyone for whatever good he does, whether he is slave or free.

The Motive/Encouragement: the Lord in heaven will reward them. God will give the credit to whom the

credit is due, even when earthly masters withhold this, this applies to all, whether slave or free.

Stoeckhardt: “Christian servants are to know and consider that everyone who has done anything good will receive and obtain from the Lord the proper, commensurate reward of his particular work, whether he be bond or free. That guarantees the fact that the Lord will at last also duly reward the labor of servants, which is often so little esteemed among men” (p. 252)

This is an “assurance that when they, along with all other believers, stand before the judgment seat of Christ, they will be rewarded for the good deeds they have done (2 Cor. 5:10)” (O’Brien, p. 453).

V 9—And masters, treat your slaves in the same way. Do not threaten them, since you know that he who is both their Master and yours is in heaven, and there is no favoritism with him.

Slave owners used threats, beatings, sexual harassment, and break up of families to coerce obedience. Paul emphasizes a new way. The master’s actions and attitudes are governed by their relationship to Christ. Abandon use of threats. “... the clause rejects all forms of manipulating, demeaning, or terrifying slaves by threats. In the immediate context, slaves have already been instructed to show respect, sincerity of heart, and goodwill; now masters are urged to treat them in a similar manner” (O’Brien, p. 454)

Motivation: 1) both slaves and masters are fellow-slaves of the same Lord as his servants. Masters will have to render an account of their actions, and all they have, including how they have treated their slaves (Colossians 4:1) 2) The Lord before whom slaves and masters serve is impartial. “The higher social status that masters have gives them no advantage whatever. ... Let masters, then, treat their slaves in the light of the fact that they are fellow-servants of this heavenly Lord” (O’Brien, p. 455) “Christ’s lordship over the lives of both slaves and masters has the effect of changing the dynamic of the relationship between them and lifting their mutual attitudes and behavior to a new plane” (O’Brien, p. 456).

Fathers in Hebrew & Roman Society

“Although it was common for primitive societies to be matriarchal (lineages is traced through the mother), Israel followed the patriarchal structure with the father having absolute control over his children, even over his married sons and their wives if they lived with him. He could stone his brother, son, daughter, or wife if they enticed him to serve other gods (Deut 13:6-11).”

(Hoehner, p. 794-795)

“In the Roman family, the father had absolute control over all his family called *patria potestas*. The father’s control over the son was for life. He could imprison his son, scourge, shame and punish him, sell him into slavery up to three times, or have him killed. The son’s position in the community was of no conse-

quence; for instance, though he might be magistrate, he was still under his father’s authority. The father had more power over his son than a master had over his slaves. It would be unfair, however, to suggest that there was no tender loving care within families in the Roman times. Nevertheless, in this milieu Paul writes instructions to the believing fathers in Ephesus” (Hoehner, 795-6).

Ephesians 6:10-11 — Be Strong in The Lord ... Put on The Full Armor of God

Ephesians 6:10-12

10Finally, be strong in the Lord and in his mighty power. 11Put on the full armor of God so that you can take your stand against the devil's schemes. 12For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the powers of this dark world and against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly realms.

V 10—Finally, be strong in the Lord and in his mighty power.

Move to the ongoing spiritual battle we face.

Be strong – Passive command, be strengthened, be made strong. Like the passive in prayer, 3:16 “**that you may be strengthened with power through his Spirit.**” “Believers do not empower themselves, even if they listen to Paul and make use of the spiritual resources at their disposal. They are strengthened by Jesus Christ (O’Brien, p. 460, 461).

in the Lord – Jesus Christ supplies all that is needed in spiritual warfare. We live in the sphere of Christ and we “no longer fall under the tyranny of the prince of the power of the air (2:2), but have come under Christ’s loving rule and headship” (O’Brien, 461).

Be strong in the LORD – Encouragement in battle or struggle. David “found strength in the LORD” (1 Sam 23). God says of the people whom he would bring back from exile, “I will make them strong in the LORD” (Zech 10:12). Joshua, was urged to “be strong and of good courage” (Josh 1:6, 7, 9).

and in his mighty power – Refers to “God’s all-powerful strength

which raised Christ from the dead and exalted him to the place of honour, far above all rule and authority (1:19-20)” (O’Brien, p. 461)

V. 11 Put on the full armor of God so that you can take your stand against the devil's schemes.

So that you can take your stand against the devil's schemes - Believers “are engaged in a deadly spiritual warfare on the side of God against the devil, and if they are to prevail they must put on God’s full armour” (O’Brien, p. 462).

Put on the full armor of God – We are strong by putting on the full armor of God. This echoes previous statements about putting on the new self created to be like God in true righteousness and holiness (4:24). “As the old person is under the rule of this present evil age, so the new person is part of the new creation and the life of the age to come. It is God’s mighty work, not ours; yet the fact that this new identity is *put on* shows that his new creation is gladly appropriated by the believer. Divine activity and human response are carefully balanced (cf. Phil 2:12-13), while the concluding phrase, ‘in the righteousness and holiness that come from the truth’, shows that there are significant ethical implications to this donning of the new person” (O’Brien, p. 331).

The full armor of God – The “**full armor**” highlights ‘the danger and seriousness of the threat facing the readers and therefore more strongly emphasize[ing] the importance of total dependence on God’s strength’ (O’Brien, p. 462). “**of God**” emphasizes that this is the armor God supplies, or the armor that God himself uses, or being armed with God himself. The armor given to believers is God’s own. See Isaiah 11:5, Isaiah 52:7, Isaiah 57:19. “... some of the weapons believers are to don, namely, truth, righteousness, and salvation, suggest that we put on God himself, or at least his characteristics, and this idea is close in meaning to the distinctive exhortation of Ephesians 5:1, ‘Be imitators of God’. The armor language is a way to talk about identification with God and his purposes” (O’Brien, p. 463).

so that you can take your stand against the devil's schemes - Put on the armor of God to “stand” as opposed to surrender to the evil’s insidious plan, and his evil opposition. The word for “schemes” implies that the devil’s attacks are “constantly repeated or of incalculable variety” (O’Brien, p. 463). **The devil's schemes** — devil’s methods – Uncontrolled anger (4:26), falsehood (4:25), stealing, (4:28), unwholesome talk (4:29), conduct that is characteristic of the old way of life (4:22). Anything opposed to the spread of the gospel (1:10).

Is this intended to frighten? But Paul inspires confidence and not fear. The confidence is due to Christ’s victory won for us (Eph 1:19-22; Eph 4:8).

“Not only has the authority of the powers been broken, but also their final defeat is imminent, and the very existence of the church, comprising Jews and Gentiles reconciled through the death of Christ to God and to one another in the same body, is evidence that the purposes of God are moving triumphantly to their climax (3:10). The powers cannot finally hinder the progress of the gospel, and all things will ultimately be subject to Christ. It is because of God’s victory in his Son that believers are in the battle at all. We are not urged to win the victory; rather, to withstand the devil’s insidious wiles and to stand firm, a posture that will involve both defensive and offensive positions (see below.)” (O’Brien, p. 465).

Take the victory Christ won and put it on to stand firm in battle.

Ephesians 6:12 — Struggle Against Powers of Dark World & Spiritual Forces of Evil

12*For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the powers of this dark world and against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly realms.*

“The supernatural, powerful, and cunning nature of the opposition makes the use of God’s amour absolutely necessary” (O’Brien, p. 465).

struggle – this word is used at no other time in the Bible, commonly used for the sport of wrestling. This term can also be transferred to hand-to-hand combat. It’s a close struggle in mind, not lodging spears or missiles from a distance. (O’Brien, p. 465).

Not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the powers of this dark world and against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly realms – Not that Christians won’t be tempted to sin by other humans, perhaps even by fellow Christians. The main point here “is that the Christian life as a whole is a profound spiritual warfare of cosmic proportions in which the ultimate opposition to the advance of the gospel and moral integrity springs from evil, supernatural powers under the control of the god of this world” (O’Brien, p. 466).

Rulers and authorities – those powers over whom Christ rules, both in this age and the age to come (O’Brien, p. 466) “These potentates are not earthly figures but supernatural beings whose essential character is wickedness. Although they are powerful, and are described as in the heavenly realms, this ought not to frighten believers: we have been given every spiritual gift in Christ in the heavenly places (1:3), made alive and seated with him in this domain (2:6), so that our struggle is against *subjected* powers. They may rule the realm of darkness and evil, but Christians have been transferred out of this realm (5:8, 16; cf. Col. 1:13)” (O’Brien, p. 467).

The devil and his minions rule the lives of those who belong to his ‘tyranny of darkness’ (Col 1:13). These people are referred to as the sons of disobedience (Eph 2:2)

The devil and his minions also use their powers to “exploit culture and social systems in their attempts to wreck the creative and saving work of God” (O’Brien, p. 468)

“These powers of evil are personal, demonic intelligences.” Many other scholars come up with different conclusions, including identifying the powers with “human traditions and sociopolitical structures.” That “is not to deny that these supernatural intelligences work through such agencies; after all, the New Testament speaks of

the whole world lying in the power of the evil one. Satan and his hosts exist for the purpose of bringing their evil and destructive influences to bear on the world and humanity at every level. The evil one works through the events of history, including a visit hindered by him (1 Thess. 2:18), the circumstances surrounding Job’s life (Job 1-2), the casting of believers into prison (Rev 2:10), the inherent distresses of life (cf. Rom 8:38), and illness which is occasionally due to their demonic activity (Matt. 9:32; 12:22; Luke 9:42), ... Heresy is assigned to their activity (1 Tim. 4:1; cf 1 John 4:1), while according to Colossians 2:20-21 the elemental spirits of the universe made use of the legal demands of the false teacher(s) in order to bring Christians into bondage. Social, political, judicial, and economic structures can be used by Satan and his evil authorities to serve their malevolent ends. The last and greatest enemy to which humanity is exposed by Satan and his lieutenants is death. Men and women, ‘through fear of death are in lifelong bondage to him who has the power over death, that is, the devil’ (Heb. 2:14). ‘Death is, accordingly, the supreme focus of these enemy forces. They smell of death. They revel in it. They spread it.’” (O’Brien, p. 469-470).

No need in trying to differentiate these terms, and figure out how the evil powers rank in relation to the devil. That’s pure speculation. We realize that these evil powers are in league with the devil and serve his wishes. Many Christians today don’t seem to recognize that they are in a spiritual battle. If they are, they seem to think that it can be fought on a human level. But it is a battle against powers that are beyond us, so we need the spiritual armor of God.



“The Armor of God”—Duncan Long, used by permission

Ephesians 6:13-14 — Put on Full Armor ... So That When The Day of Evil Comes

Ephesians 6:13-16

13Therefore put on the full armor of God, so that when the day of evil comes, you may be able to stand your ground, and after you have done everything, to stand. 14Stand firm then, with the belt of truth buckled around your waist, with the breastplate of righteousness in place, 15and with your feet fitted with the readiness that comes from the gospel of peace. 16In addition to all this, take up the shield of faith, with which you can extinguish all the flaming arrows of the evil one.

V 13 — ***13Therefore put on the full armor of God, so that when the day of evil comes, you may be able to stand your ground, and after you have done everything, to stand.***

when the day of evil comes – see below.

and after you have done eve-

rything, to stand. – “The Roman centurion, according to Polybius, was to be the kind of person who could be relied upon, when under pressure, to stand fast and not to give way. The same determination is necessary in the spiritual warfare. When they have done everything, that is, made all the necessary preparations for the battle and are fully armed, Christians are to stand firm against the onslaughts of the evil powers. ... The devil and his angels are strong but not omnipotent. After the Christian is strengthened in the Lord by putting on the full armour of God, then he or she is able to stand fast against the evil powers” (O’Brien, p. 472).

V. 14—***14Stand firm then, with the belt of truth buckled around your waist, with the breastplate of righteousness in place,***

The armor which the believer wears is Christ’s armor that the Messiah wore in battle to defeat our enemies. We wear his armor because we are in Christ. Consider the passages from Isaiah

belt of truth buckled around your waist -

Isaiah 11:4-5 ⁴ but with righteousness he will judge the needy, with justice he will give decisions for the poor of the earth. He will strike the earth with the rod of his mouth; with the breath of his lips he will slay the wicked. ⁵ Righteousness will be his belt and faithfulness the sash around his waist.

Isaiah 59:17 He put on righteousness as his breastplate, and the helmet of salvation on his head; he put on the garments of vengeance and wrapped himself in zeal as in a cloak.

belt of truth—“‘Truth’, which occupies a prominent place in Ephesians, refers to the truth of God (4:24; 5:9), revealed in the gospel (1:13; 4:15, 21, 24), which has its outworking in the lives of believers who are members of the new humanity (4:25; 5:9). Here in Ephesians 6 both aspects of truth belong together. As believers buckle on this piece of the Messiah’s armour, they will be strengthened by God’s truth revealed in the gospel, as a consequence of which they will display the characteristics of the Anointed One in their attitudes, language, and behavior.” (O’Brien, p. 474).

When the Day of Evil Comes

Jeremiah 17:17, 18 - 17 Do not be a terror to me; you are my refuge in the day of disaster (day of evil). 18 Let my persecutors be put to shame, but keep me from shame; let them be terrified, but keep me from terror. Bring on them the day of disaster; destroy them with double destruction.

Obadiah 13 You should not march through the gates of my people in the day of their disaster (day of evil), nor look down on them in their calamity in the day of their disaster, nor seize their wealth in the day of their disaster.

Daniel 12:1 1 "At that time Michael, the great prince who protects your people, will arise. There will be a time of distress (day of evil) such as has not happened from the beginning of nations until then. But at that time your people—everyone whose name is found written in the book—will be delivered.

How do we understand the “day of evil? Consider these options: 1) Evil day – synonymous with ‘evil days’ of Eph 5:16, referring to the whole of this present age between the two advents of Christ. 2) Single day of great tribulation just prior to Christ’s return, when sa-

tanic opposition reaches a climax. 3) Critical time in believers’ lives when demonic hostility is at its worst. 4) Combination of 1 and 2, understanding the present age as the evil day that will climax into a final outbreak of evil in the future. 5) “A combination of the first and third views, in which the present age refers to the present ‘evil days’ (5:16), while the singular evil day points to specific times of satanic attack that come with extraordinary force and when the temptation to yield is particularly strong (Burce, Arnold, Hoehner). (O’Brien, p. 471).

Ephesians 6:14-17—Put on The Armor of God

V. 14—Continued . . .

with the breastplate of righteousness in place, - the LORD puts on the 'breastplate of righteousness' when he needs to come deliver his people and punish his people's enemies. "According to Ephesians 6 believers need to be armed with God's own righteousness if they are to be protected against the blows and arrows of their spiritual enemies" (O'Brien, p. 474) Does this refer to God's justifying, forensic righteousness? Or does it refer to the ethical righteousness of believers in their lives? If this refers to justification, then justification results in putting on the "new man" in our lives. "But putting on God's righteousness believers are committed to being imitators of him (5:1) and acting righteously in all their dealings" (O'Brien, p. 475).

V. 15—**15and with your feet fitted with the readiness that comes from the gospel of peace.**

Feet fitted with ... the gospel of peace - Isaiah 52:7 How beautiful on the mountains are the feet of those who bring good news, who proclaim peace, who bring good tidings, who proclaim salvation, who say to Zion, "Your God reigns!"

Eph 2:17 - shows that verse 15 is talking about putting on the Messiah's armor. - 17He came and preached peace to you who were far away and peace to those who were near.

All believers are urged to have their feet prepared through the preparation that comes from the gospel. The gospel of peace is the peace that comes knowing this truth: "Your God reigns!" God has comforted his people; God has announced that their sins are paid for, that the Lord has redeemed Israel (Isaiah 40)

readiness - The noun is taken from a verb that has connotations of a solid foundation. "The language is used metaphorically to signify that those who are properly equipped with God's armour have their feet fitted, prepared, and ready in their spiritual warfare" (O'Brien, p 476).

that comes from the gospel of peace - The readiness we have comes from the gospel of peace, and this readiness is both A) Defensive and B) Offensive. On the one hand, we have a great DEFENSE "that comes from God's powerful message of peace, a readiness that enables Christians" to stand firm. (O'Brien, 476). The gospel gives us the strength to stand against temptation. It is the power of God for eve-

ryone who believes (Rom 1:16). Standing firm also entails "carrying the attack into enemy territory, of plundering Satan's kingdom by announcing the promise of divine rescue to captives in the realm of darkness" (O'Brien, p. 476).

The Gospel of Peace - "As the messenger of Isaiah who brings consolation to Jerusalem (cf Isa. 40:9-11) comes within earshot of the city, the first word that he cries out is 'Peace!' (52:7). This is followed by the synonymous 'good tidings' and 'salvation', the content of which is then amplified by: 'Your God reigns'. Yahweh's glorious return to Zion (v. 9), which is the ground of his people's bursting forth into songs of joy, is explained in terms of his acting mightily on behalf of his people (he has 'comforted his people' and 'redeemed Jerusalem' v. 9), and this, in light of Isaiah 49:3, leads to blessing for the world (he has bared his arm 'in the sight of all nations', so that 'all the ends of the earth will see the salvation of our God', v. 10). The peace which Yahweh's messenger brings deals with both vertical and horizontal relationships. This is precisely the focus of Ephesians 2:14-18, where God's Messiah by his death makes peace: he destroys the alienation between Jew and Gentile, creates in himself one new humanity out of the two, and in this body reconciles them both to God (vv. 15-16)" (O'Brien, p. 478).

V 16—In addition to all this, take up the shield of faith, with which you can extinguish all the flaming arrows of the evil one.

the shield of faith - The shield is not the small round one, but "the large shield carried by Roman soldiers which covered the whole person" (O'Brien, p. 479). God is the shield for his people - Gen 15:1; Ps 5:12, 18:2, 30, 35; 28:7, etc. He is a 'shield to those who take refuge in him.' (Prov 30:5).

Faith itself is a shield (O'Brien, p. 479). Through faith believers take hold "of God's resources, especially his power, in the midst of the evil one's attacks. To take the shield of faith, then, is to appropriate the promises of God on our behalf, confident that he will protect us in the midst of the battle. According to 1 Peter 5:8-9, firm faith, described as 'a flint-like resolution', is called for in resisting the devil." (O'Brien, 479-480).

Roman shields, made of several layers of leather, would often be soaked to quench any flaming arrows shot at them. These flaming arrows are as varied as all "the devil's schemes" (v. 11). They include every temptation to ungodly behavior (Eph 4:26-27), doubt, and despair, but also external assaults, such as persecution or false teaching. . . . But these flaming arrows cannot harm those whose trust and confidence are 'in the Lord and in his mighty power' (v. 10). They are able to resist and overcome these satanic attacks" (O'Brien, p. 480).



Ephesians 6:17 — In This Same Way, Husbands Ought to Love Their Wives

Ephesians 6:17-

17Take the helmet of salvation and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God.

18And pray in the Spirit on all occasions with all kinds of prayers and requests. With this in mind, be alert and always keep on praying for all the saints.

19Pray also for me, that whenever I open my mouth, words may be given me so that I will fearlessly make known the mystery of the gospel, 20for which I am an ambassador in chains. Pray that I may declare it fearlessly, as I should.



“Sword of The Spirit”—Duncan Long, Used by Permission

V 17—Take the helmet of salvation and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God.

Isaiah 59:17 He put on righteousness as his breastplate, and the helmet of salvation on his head; he put on the garments of vengeance and wrapped himself in zeal as in a cloak.

Take the helmet of salvation -

“The helmet used by the Roman soldier was made of bronze and had cheek pieces so as to give protection to the head” (O’Brien, 481)

The helmet refers to the Messiah’s armor (See Is 59:17). Now the Messiah gives it to

believers to wear. “This helmet is salvation itself (the genitive is one of apposition: ‘the helmet which is salvation’), and believers are urged to lay hold of it as they engage in the spiritual warfare” (O’Brien, p. 481)

“God has rescued them from death, wrath, and bondage, and transferred them into a new dominion where Christ rules. The position of power and authority with Christ to which they have been raised is greater ‘than that possessed by their mighty supernatural enemies’. As they appropriate this salvation more fully and live in the light of their status in Christ, they have every reason to be confident of the outcome of the battle” (O’Brien, p. 481).

And the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God – The helmet referred to a defensive weapon, the sword is an offensive weapon. “The term used refers to the short-handled sword, which was an important offensive weapon in close combat. In the expression ‘the sword of the Spirit’, the former is not identified with the Spirit (i.e., a genitive of apposition); rather, ‘of the Spirit’ is probably a genitive of source, indicating that the Spirit makes the sword powerful and effective, giving to it its cutting edge (cf. Heb. 4:12). This sword of the Spirit is identified with ‘the word of God’, a term which in Paul often signifies the gospel. However, he normally uses *logos* (‘word’) instead of *rhema*, which appears here. The two terms are often interchangeable, but the latter tends to emphasize the word as spoken or proclaimed (as in 5:26). If this distinction holds here, then Paul is referring to the gospel (cf. Rom 10:17), but stressing the actual speaking forth of the message, which is given its penetration and power by the Spirit” (O’Brien, 482)

Isaiah 11:4-5 4 but with righteousness he will judge the needy, with justice he will give decisions for the poor of the earth. He will strike the earth with the rod of his mouth; with the breath of his lips he will slay the wicked.

Revelation 19:15 . 15 Out of his mouth comes a sharp sword with which to strike down the nations. “He will rule them with an iron scepter.” He treads the winepress of the fury of the wrath of God Almighty.

“The Isaiah passage is referring to the future smiting of the nations by the Messiah as depicted in Revelation 19:15. Here in Ephesians it is the ongoing warfare with evil powers in the heavenlies that is in view, and once again a weapon carried by the Messiah into battle is available for Christians to use. In their warfare with the powers of darkness, they are to take hold of the word of God, the gospel (cf. 1:13, 6:15), and to proclaim it in the power of the Spirit. This sword is to be used both for self-defense – ‘the gospel empowered by the spirit is the means by which the well-armed Christian is protected’ –and when believers ‘go on the attack and make new conquests in God’s cause’. What is in view here is not some ad hoc word addressed to Satan, as though what we speak against him will defeat him. Rather, it is the faithful speaking forth of the gospel in the realm of darkness, so that men and women held by Satan might hear this liberating and life-giving word and be freed from his grasp”



Ephesians 6:18-20 — Pray

V18 — And pray in the Spirit on all occasions with all kinds of prayers and requests. With this in mind, be alert and always keep on praying for all the saints.

pray ...on all occasions ...keep on praying – because the struggle against the devil is constant.

“standing firm and praying belong together ... Paul wants his readers to understand that prayer is ‘foundational for the deployment of all the other weapons’, and is therefore crucial if they are to stand firm in their spiritual struggle. [Paul has prayed for them (1:15-23), (3:14-21)]. The apostle wants them to realize that a life of dependence on God in prayer is essential if they are to engage successfully in their warfare with the powers of darkness” (O’Brien, p. 484).

“The effect of this accumulation of terms for petitionary prayer ... is to underscore emphatically the importance in the Christian’s warfare of believing and expectant prayer” (O’Brien, p. 484).

In the Spirit – inspired by and guided by the Holy Spirit through whom they have access to the Father (2:18). Even when we don’t know what to pray for, the Spirit intercedes for us with groans and sighs that words cannot express (Rom 8:26-27).

Be alert – in order to pray like this, believers need to stay alert. We are to watch and pray as Jesus told his disciples (Mark 14:38). “...the term used here, ‘be alert, vigilant’, together with its synonym, ‘stay awake, be watchful’, was employed regularly in catechetical contexts of the children of light being awake and renouncing the spiritual sleep of the darkness of this age, with their minds directed towards Christ’s coming and the consummation of the hope” See Rom 12:12, Col 4:2 Acts 1:14, 2:42; 6:4 for link between perseverance and prayer. “Here believers are to persevere so as to overcome fatigue and discouragement, and not to fall into spiritual sleep or complacency” (O’Brien, p. 485).

for all the saints - All those who are joined into the community of God’s people (Eph 1:15; 2:14-18; 3:8). The spiritual warfare that Paul is speaking about involves all of God’s people, individually and corporately, they are engaged. They need the intercession of fellow Christians to stand firm in the thick of battle.

all – note that this adjective is repeated four times (in the Greek), though not reflected in the NIV – “As believers

take up the helmet of salvation and the sword of the Spirit, they should pray at every opportunity, through every prayer and petition, with all persistence and petition for all the saints. In the midst of spiritual warfare Paul emphasizes the vital importance of prayer” (Hoehner, p. 859).

V 19 — Pray also for me, that whenever I open my mouth, words may be given me so that I will fearlessly make known the mystery of the gospel,

Paul knew that he needed divine resources in this spiritual warfare, to continue spreading the mystery of the gospel. His ministry sought to rescue men and women from the devil’s control, so he needed the support of his brothers and sisters through their prayers.

Words may be given – the giver of the words is God.

fearlessly – See 3:12 for discussion of the term. It meant freedom to speak with no restraints, hence, to speak freely, boldly, openly (Hoehner, p. 862)

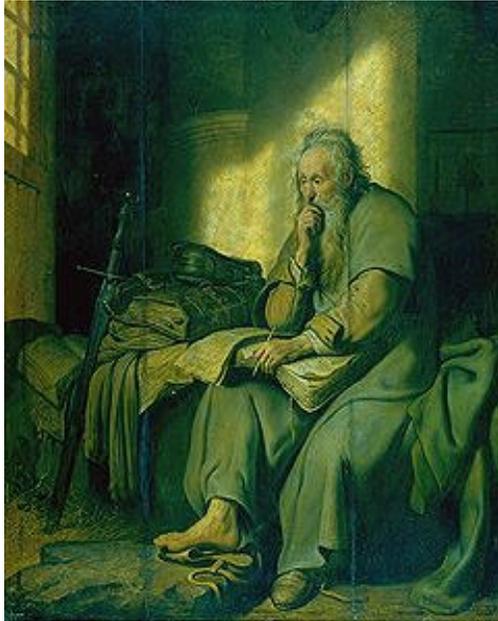
make known the mystery of the gospel – This would be of especial importance if Paul was awaiting to appear before Caesar himself. He needed the prayers of others to be bold in preaching the gospel.

V 20—for which I am an ambassador in chains. Pray that I may declare it fearlessly, as I should.

for which I am an ambassador in chains – The verb “**I am an ambassador**” means “to be the elder/eldest” or “to occupy first place” but also “to be sent,” “to be an ambassador.” Nor-

normally an ambassador would not be in chains. That would be a supreme insult to the one who sent the ambassador. “IF the historical context is that of his appeal to Caesar, then his imprisonment in Rome serves to open the door for him to address the emperor or his prefect. What he would have little hope of achieving otherwise, Paul might do as an accused prisoner, that is, as ‘an ambassador in chains.’” (O’Brien, p. 489)

Consider 2 Timothy 2:16-17, and the way in which the prayer was answered. “At my first defense, no one came to my support, but everyone deserted me. May it not be held against them. But the Lord stood at my side and gave me strength, so that through me the message might be fully proclaimed and all the Gentiles might hear it. And I was delivered from the lion’s mouth.”



Ephesians 6:21-24 — Closing Greeting ... Grace to All Who Love Our Lord Jesus

Ephesians 6:21-24

21Tychicus, the dear brother and faithful servant in the Lord, will tell you everything, so that you also may know how I am and what I am doing. 22I am sending him to you for this very purpose, that you may know how we are, and that he may encourage you.

23Peace to the brothers, and love with faith from God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ. 24Grace to all who love our Lord Jesus Christ with an undying love.

Excursus A — Slavery in Paul's Time

The following notes are not meant to be a complete treatment of slavery in the ancient world. Hoehner lists an entire page in his commentary dedicated to works written on the subject of slavery in Paul's time.

WORKING IX TO V IN A SLAVE'S WORLD

The positions that slaves held were not limited to manual labor, or the hard tasks that no one else wanted. In some cases, free people sold themselves into slavery in order to advance in life, and gain training, and achieve skills and positions which would benefit them, especially after they regained their freedom upon completion of their years of slavery. While there were advantages to be achieved through a limited period of slavery, it should not be forgotten that most who lived in slavery experienced inhumane degradation and deprivation.

Some of the areas in which slaves would work are listed as follows:

- agriculture
- industry
- potters
- miners (gold and silver)
- public cooks
- fullers (laundry; bleaching)
- couch makers
- bakers
- business agents
- teachers
- accountants and physicians in large households
- municipal clerks
- Imperial staff, managing Imperial properties
- Imperial Palace staff – physicians, chamberlains, butlers (furniture and lighting), jewelry buys, tailors, valets, wine bulters, tasters, stewards

CAUSE FOR SLAVERY

Slavery existed long before Greco-Roman period, and was part of the Hebrew culture, and addressed in Mosaic law that gave regulations for slaves and masters (Exod 21:1-11, 32; Leviticus 25:6, 39-55; Deut 15:12-18).

The cause for Slavery was often due to debt or capture in war. Some considered slaves to be property, like chattel or an inanimate tool rather than a complete human being (Aristotle *Ethica Nicomachea*, cited by Hoehner, p. 801)

Greeks thought that a person became a slave because fate had deprived that person of half his worth (Home *Odyssea* 17.322-23, Cited by Hoehner, p. 801).

“In both Ephesians and Colossians the apostle is making no social comment on a prevailing custom. He is addressing himself to Christian readers. The issue was not that of an acceptance of an institution sanctioned by law and part of the fabric of Greco-Roman society; nor was it a question of how to react to a demand for its abolition. Rather, it concerned the tension between the freedom given to Christ (cf. Col. 3:11) and the ‘slavery’ in which Christian slaves are to continue to serve their earthly masters (cf. 1 Cor. 7:21-24)” (O’Brien, p. 448)

THE SLAVE AND GREEK & ROMAN LAW

Florentinus, a second century jurist describe slavery as “an institution of the *ius genium* [common law of the peoples] whereby someone, contrary to nature, is subject to the *dominium* [ownership] of another.” (Iustiniani Digesti 1.5.4.1, Cited in Hoehner, p. 801)

Roman law considered slaves to be persons in contrast to the lower estimation that the Greeks who considered them a lower class of humans.

“In Hellenistic writings slaves were thought to have no deliberative faculty ... and were considered stupid, unable to live by themselves; thus, the institution of slavery was really beneficial to them. According to Greek law four differences distinguished a freedperson from a slave: (1) freedpersons were their own representative in legal matters whereas slaves had to be represented by their owner or by some other person legally empowered by their owner; (2) freedpersons were not subject to seizure as property whereas slaves were subject to seizure and arrest by anyone; (3) freedpersons could earn their own living as they desired whereas slaves had to do what their owner ordered; and (4) freedpersons could live where they wished whereas slaves had to live where their owner desired.” (Hoehner, p. 801)

NOT THE SAME AS SLAVERY IN UNITED STATES

“However, as degrading as such slavery was, it must be realized that it was not the same as the slavery that existed in the United States. First, the color of skin was not a factor. Slaves came

from various nations and more than likely their appearance was no different from that of freedpersons. Second, freedpersons could sell themselves into slavery knowing that they could later regain freedom. Dio Chrysostom explicitly states that they sold themselves “under contract,” which probably meant that there was a time limit on their slavery. There were various reasons for becoming a slave, such as “to find a life that was easier than they had as freedmen, to secure special jobs, and to climb socially.” For instances, Epictetus reports that when he was a slave he was provided with food, clothes, and shelter, and taken care of when sick. These benefits were not provided when he became a freed person. Furthermore, Crook states that in the Digest mention is made of “self-enslavement in order to secure the post of *servus actor*, the chief accountant of a big private household (and with normal *luc* to become later their freedman procurator in the same post and finish up a rich citizen with free-born children).” In addition, Petronius of the Neronian era writes of a king’s son who sold himself into slavery in order to become a Roman citizen so as not to have to pay taxes as a provincial. Third, slaves could become highly trained and educated. In fact, some slaves became tutors (paidagago”, Gal 3:24) and taught morals and manners to the sons of their owner’s family. Some became professors of higher education (*litterator*, *grammaticus*, *rhetor*), and others, physicians. Aulus Gellius, from the second century A.D., mentions slaves who became philosophers, most notable of whom was Epictetus. Fourth, slaves could eventually become free and hence become Roman citizens. The jurist Gaius states that there were three requirements for this: (1) he must be for thirty years of age; (2) he must have been held by a Roman citizen; and (3) he must be freed by one of three recognized modes. The first was by *vindicta*—a fictitious claim made by a friend of the master (and the master puts up no defense) in which he asserts that the slave was a freedperson who was wrongfully held as a slave. The second was by enrollment (with the master’s consent) on the census list of Roman citizens. The third was by the manumission testament of the master. [normally this was for the benefit of the master. Release the slave when he is too old or sick to be of any use. Even after manumission, a slave might still work for the master a few days a week or month. In Contrast to Jewish law that stated that once a man was released he was released] ...these are some of the differences between the slavery that existed in the first century and that which existed in the United States. (Hoehner, p. 802-803)

CRUEL TREATMENT OF SLAVES

“The emperor Augustus ordered that the legs of a slave named Thallus be broken because he had taken a bribe for betraying the contents of a letter. Caligula had the hands of a slave cut off for stealing a piece of silver. He hung them around his neck and paraded him around the dining hall with a placard stating the reason for the punishment. ... Seneca portrays a master who gorged himself at dinner while sur-

rounded by slaves whose lips could not move and the slightest noises—coughs, sneezes, or hiccups—were punished by a lash of the whip. Juvenal reports about the master whose delight it was to have his slaves flogged, branded for stealing as few as two towels, and chained and imprisoned.” (Hoehner, p. 803).

Philip Matyszak quotes Seneca in *Ancient Rome: On Five Denarii a Day*, citing the cruelty of a slave owner named Vedius Pollio. In this particular case, Augustus, known for cruelty to his own slaves, sided on the part of a slave who cried for mercy. The motives of Augustus are not known for sure, but Seneca thinks that Augustus was moved by the “novelty of the cruelty.”

When one of his slaves had broke a crystal cup, Vedius ordered him to be thrown to the huge lampreys which he had in his fish pond. ... The boy slipped from the captors’ hands and fled to [Augustus] Caesar’s feet asking nothing else other than a different way to die — he did not want to be eaten. Caesar was moved by the novelty of the cruelty and ordered him to be released, all the crystal cups to be broken before his eyes, and the fish pond to be filled in.

Seneca, *On Anger* 3.40 (Quoted by Matyszak, pp. 15,16)

Matyszak goes on to note: “Not all masters were as brutal as Pollio. The senator Pliny wrote to a friend saying that his villa was so designed that he had rooms to which he could withdraw ‘so I do not disturb my slaves when they are relaxing nor do they disturb me at my work’.” (Matyszak, p. 16).

BETTER TREATMENT OF SLAVES

During the Triumvirate of Lepidus, Antony, and Octavian, when a list of names was drawn up (conscriptio) to indicate enemies of the state (enemies of the triumvirate), there were accounts of slaves who felt such loyalty and devotion to their masters that they acted as if they were the person on the conscription list. This was no small sign of loyalty. Having your name on the conscription list meant that bounty hunters would seek your head in order to get paid by the triumvirate. To take another person’s place in death is an extreme sign of loyalty, and says something about the manner in which masters treated their slaves.

Some Greek literature contains the efforts of masters and philosophers who promoted the fair treatment of slaves, and campaigned to abolish cruelty to slaves. “Columella, a large estate owner in central Italy in the first century A.D., gave a lengthy discourse on the fair treatment of slaves. He

encouraged masters to have good relationships with their slaves, so be concerned about their well-being, their abilities, and their families. He practiced such himself. Seneca, too, enjoined masters to treat their inferiors as they would like to be treated by their own superiors. Nevertheless, even though there were advocates such as these, legislation restricting cruel treatment of slaves was sparse and the existing restrictions still were more for the benefit of masters rather than slaves. Even when the empire became Christian, Constantine (324-361) issued decrees to protect the masters who had beaten their slaves to death. Hence, a slave really had virtually no protection from the law. Slaves had no access to the courts and the death penalty awaited any slave who informed against the master. In the end, therefore, masters made up their own rules." (Hoehner, p. 803-804)

"The abolition of slavery is a modern phenomenon. Certainly Paul and the early Christian church did not advocate the abolition of slavery as an institution. Christianity's emphasis has always been on the transformation of individuals who will in turn influence society, not the transformation of society which will then transform individuals (1 Cor 1:18-2:16). Paul enjoins both slaves and masters to be servants of Christ as they carry out their duties. He depicts the slave as a free person in Christ and the free person as a slave of Christ (1 cor 7:22). Furthermore, both slaves and masters are equal brothers in Christ (Gal 3:28; 1 Tim 6:2; Phlm 16) though they each may function in different roles. Nowhere does Paul suggest that slaves should give orders to their masters or masters to be submissive to their slaves. He was concerned, however, that both masters and slaves carry out their responsibilities as to Christ"

"Why did not Paul advocate the abolition of slavery? First, he was more concerned with the big picture, eternity. He taught that suffering in this life was nothing in comparison with the joy of eternity (Rom 8:18-30). Second, in Rom 13 he advocated obedience to government. To propose the abolition of slavery would defy the government. Third, speaking speculatively, if he promoted the abolition of slavery, undoubtedly many slaves might have become Christians for the wrong reason. In the end, Christianity does not promise a release from the present circumstances but gives one power to endure those circumstances. Though Paul does not promote the abolition of the institution of slavery, he does instruct believers to avoid becoming slaves (1 Cor 7:23). Furthermore, Paul enjoins those slaves who are able to gain freedom to avail themselves of the opportunity (1 Cor 7:21)" (Hoehner, p. 804)

CICERO: Runaway Slaves in Ephesus

Between 25 October and 10 December 59

A slave called Licinus (you know him) belonging to our friend Aesopus has run away. He was in Athens with Pa-

tro the Epicurean passing as a free man, and passed from there to Asia. Later, on Plato of Sardis, an Epicurean, who is a good deal in Athens and was there then Licinus arrived, having later learned from a letter of Aesopus' that he is a runaway, arrested him and gave him into custody in Ephesus; but from his letter we are not sure whether the fellow was put into gaol or into the mill.

"However that may be, he is in Ephesus, so will you please search for him and take good care either to send him to Rome or to bring him with you? Don't consider what he's worth. Such a good-for-nothing can't be worth much. But Aesopus is so distressed by the slave's criminal audacity that you can do him no greater favour than by getting him back his property. (Quintus letter 2; 1.2.14) [Cited in St. Paul's Ephesus, p. 57, Jerome Murphy-O'Connor]

SEEKING REFUGE IN DIANA'S TEMPLE

Sometimes slaves would seek refuge, or asylum in the Temple of Diana, but simply running into the temple was not guarantee of asylum. If that had been the case, the temple gates would have been crowded with runaway slaves.

"Commonly, one who took refuge in a temple was required by the temple to undergo a kind of trial to determine whether his flight was 'just.' The god was not obliged to accept and protect every suppliant, only those who had a just claim." In the case of a slave the crucial question to which the priests had to find an answer concerned the slave's treatment by his master. Was he handled cruelly or unjustly? If so, the priest had to strive to secure an improvement in the slave's condition, e.g., by arranging his or her sale to a new master. Asylum amounted to no more than a cooling-down period or breathing space" ([Cited in St. Paul's Ephesus, p. 59, Jerome Murphy-O'Connor])

Cicero recounts one such case where the slave was given asylum. This resulted in the case being sent to Rome. The Ephesian elder responsible for protecting the slave, and upholding asylum, was called to Rome to answer before the Emperor.

In 70 B.C

Not long ago Marcus Aurelius Scaurus asserted that, while serving as quaestor at Ephesus, he was forcibly prevented from removing from the temple of Diana his won slave, who had there taken sanctuary. And on his application an Ephesian of the highest rank named Pericles was summoned for trial to Rome, on the grounds that he had been responsible for this act of injustices. (*Against Verres* 2.1.85) [Cited in St. Paul's Ephesus, pp. 57-58, Jerome Murphy-O'Connor]