

The Attackers: Divine Mandate for National Deliverance, 2 Chron 7:13–15; the Roman Soldiers Panoply Illustrates the Spiritual Panoply of the Christian Warrior: Belt of Truth, Breastplate of Righteousness, Boots of the Gospel, and Shield of Faith, Eph6: 14–16a

2 Chronicles 7:13 - “When I close up the sky so that it doesn’t rain, or command locusts to devour the land’s vegetation, or send a plague among My people,

v. 14 - if My people, who belong to Me, humble themselves, pray, seek to please Me, and repudiate their sinful practices, then I will respond from heaven, forgive their sin, and heal their land.

v. 15 - “Now I will be attentive and responsive to the prayers offered in this place.” (NET)

- (1) The armor and weapons of the Roman foot soldier are referred to in Latin as *armatura*; the Greek word is *panoplia*.
- (2) Roman *armatura* consisted of quite a number of items, but Paul selected six of them to illustrate the biblical doctrines that protect the believer’s soul and enable him to do battle in the Invisible War.
- (3) The first mentioned by Paul is the *balteus* (*cingulum militare*) to which was attached a sheath and a short dagger (*pugio*). This belt was worn around the waist with a strap that went over the shoulder. The device was fastened to the breastplate. Suspended from the belt were the scabbard for the sword and loops for ropes and rations, all easily accessible.
- (4) Thick strips of leather hung down from the belt to circle and protect the soldier’s lower body. On these strips were placed ribbons and medals that proclaimed heroics in battle. In addition, items of golden and silver booty were attached.
- (5) The *balteus* was the basic item first donned by the Roman soldier and from it the rest of the panoply then followed.
- (6) Paul refers to the *balteus* as the “belt of truth” and it therefore refers to the doctrines of the Word of God stored in the soul.
- (7) The second item to be put on is the *lorica segmentata*:¹ the breastplate; also called cuirass \kwi-ras\ and corselet \kor'-slet\. There are differences. The *lorica* was constructed of leather and overlaid with metal strips while the cuirass covered both chest and back.
- (8) It was constructed to fit the muscular definition of the wearer and was attached in the front with studs and slots. There were hinges in the back to allow for flexibility of movement.
- (9) Paul refers to this piece of armament as “righteousness.” He does not mean imputed righteousness here but rather the experiential righteousness of the believer whose integrity is imperative to successful combat in the Invisible War.

¹ See “Roman Breastplate.”

- (10) The Roman cuirass was made of metal; the enlisted man's was made of iron or bronze and the commissioned officer's was plated with silver and gold whose rank and decorations were inscribed into the metal.
- (11) In *Aeneid* \i-nē'-id\, Virgil refers to the breastplate as *stadios* (στάδιος) which means "to stand upright." The breastplate could stand by itself and was often used a campstool by the soldier.

The believer, to be effective in the angelic conflict, must become spiritually self-sustaining.
- (12) The third thing Paul notes is footwear: the *caligae*, Roman boots.² Probably the most important piece of equipment the foot soldier has is his footwear. If the feet are injured or blistered and cause major pain and discomfort, it creates serious distractions from the mission.
- (13) The Romans referred to their infantry as the *caligati*: "those wearing soldier's boots." These boots, similar to sandals, were made of hobnail-studded leather soles a half inch thick. They were held in place by leather thongs that wound around the ankles and the soles were padded with cloth or fur.
- (14) The fourth item Paul mentions in the Roman soldier's panoply is the *scutum*, or the shield, a major defensive weapon.³ A description of this piece of armor is found in Polybius's *History*:
- (15) Shaped like a door but convex, the Roman shield was able to deflect the darts, stones, and javelins thrown by opponents. This piece of armor was heavy and demanded constant training so the soldier could manage its weight and still remain adroit with the sword in close combat.
- (16) Two leather straps were attached to the shield. One was fitted to the warrior's forearm to aid in maneuvering the shield, the other served as a sling over the shoulder for carrying the device in marches.
- (17) Expert use of the shield in battle was so essential that the Romans published an instruction manual just for the shield. A soldier without a shield was almost a certain casualty.
- (18) Paul relates the shield to the believer's faith beginning with the faith-rest drill and, with proficiency through spiritual growth—faith in doctrinal principles to the point of cognitive invincibility.

² See "Roman Boots."

³ See "Roman Shield" and "Roman Shields."