

## Armor of God in Ephesians 6, LeGrand Baker

This entry will be more meaningful, if one first reads “Coronation rites of ancient Israel” in *Who Shall Ascend into the Hill of the Lord*.

The sacred clothing worn by the High Priests consisted of white linen undergarments, and a richly decorated outer garment. The undergarments were a two part white linen suit consisting of a long sleeved shirt and breeches “to cover their nakedness.” (Exodus 28:42. see also Mosiah 10:5) Above that he wore a solid blue robe with a fringe of alternating golden bells and pomegranates that were made of blue, purple, and scarlet threads. His breastplate was a kind of pouch which held the Urim and Thummim. It was supported by shoulder straps attached to an apron called the ephod. The crown was a miter, a flat hat made of fine linen with a gold plate attached. Engraved on the plate were the words “Holiness to the Lord.” Around the waist was a sash<sup>1</sup> woven from the same kind of thread and in the same colors as the veil that separated the Holy of Holies from the rest of the Tabernacle. (Exodus 28:4 - 42)<sup>2</sup>

This same ritual clothing – or something very much like it – was apparently worn by the early Christians. Paul described the sacral garments as protective armor.

v. 11 Put on the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil.

v. 12 For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places.

That is why one needs protection. The person is the temple, and Paul uses the idea of being protected by sacred clothing the way one might think of the wall around other sacred space.

v. 13 Wherefore take unto you the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand.

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1 Our Old Testament calls it a “girdle,” in the Tanakh it is called a “sash.” Exodus 28:8

2 Exodus 28:4. The illustrations are from Moshe Levine, *The Tabernacle, Its Structure and Utensils* (Published for the Soncino Press Limited, London, Jerusalem, New York by “Melechet Hamishkan” Tel Aviv, Israel, 1989), p. 127 and 133.

Ricks Stephen D., and John J. Sroka, “King, Coronation, and Temple: Enthronement Ceremonies in History” in Donald W. Parry, ed., *Temples of the Ancient World*, Deseret Book, Salt Lake City, Utah, 1994, p. 256-257.

v. 14 Stand therefore, [One stands to make a covenant. (2 Kings 23:1-3)] having your loins girt about with truth,

This is probably a reference to the sash which was woven from the same colors as the veil – perhaps representing the veil. The idea that the sash represented truth comes easily when one remembers that when one approaches the veil behind which God is enthroned one must speak only the truth.

and having on the breastplate of righteousness;

The High Priest wore a breastplate in which he kept the Urim and Thummim – the source of revelation. It worked only on the principles of righteousness - “zedek” - temple correctness: doing the right things, saying the right words, dressed the right way, etc. (See “Righteousness” below.)

v. 15 And your feet shod with the preparation of the gospel of peace;

“Preparation of the gospel of peace” is a key idea. One’s feet walk the “way” or “path” up the “mountain” to reach its heights. The gospel of peace is one’s crowning achievement – the place where “peacemaker” is found in the beatitudes, and “peaceable” is found in Moroni 7.

v. 16 Above all, taking the shield of faith, wherewith ye shall be able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked.

The shield of “faith” is the shield of “*pistis*” – the tokens of the covenants.

v. 17 And take the helmet of salvation,

The flat hat worn by the High Priest was his crown representing his priesthood. A similar hat was probably worn by the king as a symbol of his kingship.

and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God:

v. 18 Praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit, and watching thereunto with all perseverance and supplication for all saints.

The sword is often symbolic of the words of ones mouth when those words are spoken in the power of the priesthood: “I shall make your mouth like a sharp sword,” (Isaiah in 1 Ne. 20:1-2) and the Lord's word is sharper than a two-edged sword (D&C 6:2 et al.)

That would probably read more effectively without the verse break:

and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God: Praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit, and watching thereunto with all perseverance and supplication for all saints.

That implies that the word of God is as a sharp sword when one prays “in the Spirit. I suspect that kind of prayer is the same as is described as “mighty prayer” in the scriptures:

...it came to pass that the disciples were gathered together and were united in mighty prayer and fasting. And Jesus again showed himself unto them, for they were praying unto the Father in his name; (3 Nephi 27:1b-2a)

Here are Paul’s words again, without the interruptions:

11 Put on the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil.

12 For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places.

13 Wherefore take unto you the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand.

14 Stand therefore, having your loins girt about with truth, and having on the breastplate of righteousness;

15 And your feet shod with the preparation of the gospel of peace;

16 Above all, taking the shield of faith, wherewith ye shall be able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked.

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

18 Praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit, and watching thereunto with all perseverance and supplication for all saints; (Ephesians 6: 10-18. It is also in D&C 27:15-18)

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