

“The Helmet of Salvation”

Ephesians 6:17

Introduction:

1. How many boys and girls ride bikes? Do you wear helmets? I hope you do. Why do you wear a helmet? That’s right—to protect your head. In the same way the helmet is probably the most important part of the armor. A soldier might be able to survive and continue to fight with wounds to other parts of the body, but most wounds to the head are either fatal or crippling.
2. “The Roman soldier’s helmet... was usually made of a tough metal like bronze or iron. ‘An inside lining of felt or sponge made the weight bearable. Nothing short of an axe or hammer could pierce a heavy helmet, and in some cases a hinged vizor added frontal protection.’ Helmets were decorative as well as protective, and some had magnificent plumes or crests.” [Stott]
3. Here Paul compares salvation to a helmet. Why is salvation in general such an important part of the armor of God? How can this helmet offer such protection?

Exposition: It might help if we consider the three “tenses” of salvation.

I. The past blessings of salvation

A. Election

1. For reasons known only to God, he decided to save a people from the wreck and ruin of human sin. God could have justly passed by all humanity, allowing all of us to perish, as he did the angels that rebelled against him. But to glorify the fame of his name, he chose to save some from the guilt and pollution of sin.

2. This election was of people in relation to Christ from before the creation of the world without any regard for anything they might do. Eph 1:3-4; 1 Th 1:4; 2 Th 2:13; Rm 8:33; 1 Cor 1:27-29; Js 2:5

Apply: Everyone who follows Christ should gain confidence from the Bible’s teaching of election. God wanted us to be his people, and we need to hear this when the enemy or our doubts cause us to wonder about that. Before the first seraph ever cried out, “Holy, holy, holy!” God had chosen us to salvation in Christ.

B. Redemption

1. Christ died on the cross and shed his blood as the ransom price, and so he redeemed us to carry out God's eternal purpose. In every way the Lord Jesus Christ has the honor of saving us. Eph 1:7

2. His redemption sets us free from the penalty and curse of sin, from our slavery to sin, and from bondage to the law. He has bought us and now we are his bondservants. See 1 Cor 6:19-20.

Apply: Redemption teaches us our liberty in Christ (Gal 5:1). When the enemy attempts to fill you with false information that you are in slavery, assert your freedom in Christ!

C. Regeneration and effectual calling

1. Securely bound in the darkness of sin and dead in sin, God made us alive with Christ. Eph 2:5

2. Being made alive spiritually, we receive the gifts of repentance and faith, by which we turn from the pursuit of sin and trust in the Lord Jesus for salvation.

Apply: A battlefield becomes filled with corpses, and the evil one may tempt you to think that you will share that fate. But do not give in to such thoughts. The great promise of salvation is that the free gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord. Rm 6:23

D. Justification – having believed, we are declared right with God (Rm 5:1). We have already talked about Christ as our righteousness in the message about the breastplate.

Apply: Again the great end is confidence. We are on God's side and **accepted** fully by him!

II. The present blessings of salvation

A. Adoption – adult sons in God's family

1. When God saved us, he did much more than guarantee us an eternal home in heaven. God also provides us with an honorable place in his family, placing us as adult sons. Gal 3:26-4:7

Apply: We ought to have a filial attitude at all times. "My Father loves and cares for me. I ought to live in such a way as to glorify my Father in heaven." This kind of approach is absolutely essential in spiritual warfare.

2. Since we are adult sons, we have been given the promised Holy Spirit, who now lives within us—to help us and assure us and to sanctify us. Rm 8:14-17; 2 Th 2:13

Apply: We must look at our struggle within the context of being Spirit-led sons of God. We are not slaves to sin or minor children under the law. We are adult sons! Live like an adult son, which means living a life of love to God, striving to conform to be like God in holiness.

B. Security – we are kept and we continue

1. One of the great energizing factors for any soldier is the expectation of success. An army that anticipates conquering will take the field more readily than one that expects defeat. The Lord Jesus has saved us with an eternal salvation. Jn 6:37-40,47; 10:27-30; Rm 8:29-30,35-39; Eph 1:13-14; Col 3:3-4; Heb 9:12,15; 10:14; 1 Pt 1:3-5

2. Now it is certainly true that only those who continue in the faith will be saved (Mt 24:13; Col 1:23; etc.). Although such verses teach the necessity of the saint's perseverance, they do not imply that a saint may not continue. All those who truly repent and believe will continue, because God keeps them (Ph 1:6; 1 Jn 5:4; Jude 1:1,24-25).

Apply: Therefore, with salvation as a helmet, we hope or confidently expect total victory. This fills us with energy to do battle—to press on after holiness (1 Jn 3:1-4).

III. The future blessings of salvation

A. Glorification – we have the prospect of eternal glory with the Lord

1. From God's point of view, this is so certain that he speaks of it in the past tense (Rm 8:29-30), though in the present state of things, we still wait for that time. Rm 8:18-19

2. Our glorification rests firmly on our union with Christ. Since he was raised from the dead, we too will be raised (1 Cor 15:20-23,42-49). In answer to Christ's prayer, we will see his glory (Jn 17:24). As Col 3:4 says, when he appears, we will appear with him in glory.

Apply: At times the battle is very rough. The enemy seems to have beaten you down into the mire and the mud. But do not give up (Mi 7:8).

B. Entrance into our inheritance

1. Sharing glory with the Lord is surely enough, isn't it? Not to God! You see, we are not only sons of God, but also heirs (4:7; Rm 8:17).

2. Since we are in Christ and heirs with him, we have an inheritance (Eph 1:14). What is it? Yes, yes, I know that it includes the new heavens and the new earth (2 Pt 3:13), but our God is a greater giver than that! He gives us all things (1 Cor 3:21-23). God Almighty gives us Himself (Ps 73:25-26)! **Marry the heir and have all!**