

Coherence of the Metaphor of God's Armor in Ephesians 6:10-20 and Its Implications for the Theological Construction of Spiritual Warfare

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Abstract

Paul in Ephesians 6:10-20 uses the metaphor of God's armor to explain the spiritual warfare believers face. Using the grammatical-historical method, the writer found that the metaphor of the armor of God that Paul put forward in Ephesians 6:10-20 has coherence (connectedness, unity) of meanings, ideas, and ideas between these metaphors. This coherence will contribute to efforts to build the theological construction of spiritual warfare and the life practices of believers to face spiritual warfare.

Keywords: Armor of God, Metaphor, Spiritual Warfare, Ephesians 6:10-20

Abstrak

Paulus dalam Efesus 6:10-20 menggunakan metafora perlengkapan senjata Allah untuk menjelaskan peperangan rohani yang dihadapi oleh orang percaya. Dengan metode gramatikal historikal, penulis menemukan bahwa metafora perlengkapan senjata Allah yang Paulus kemukakan dalam Efesus 6:10-20 juga memiliki koherensi (keterhubungan, kesatupaduan) makna, ide, serta gagasan di antara metafora tersebut. Dengan adanya koherensi tersebut maka akan memberikan sumbangsih bagi upaya untuk membangun konstruksi teologi peperangan rohani sekaligus praktik hidup orang percaya untuk menghadapi peperangan rohani.

Kata-kata Kunci: Perlengkapan Senjata Allah, Metafora, Peperangan Rohani, Efesus 6:10-20

Introduction

Biblical scholars have differing views regarding the armor of God in Ephesians. These views will be divided into four groups. The first group



emphasizes that God's armor is a protection. Zuck mentions that Paul talks about believers being equipped to fight the enemy (Eph. 6:10-20). To oppose the evil forces they are fighting, they need to put on the protection that God provides.¹ Alluding to the Book of Isaiah, O'Brien says that God's armor "represents the Lord of hosts as a warrior clad in armor when He goes to defend His people. The 'armor of God,' which readers are encouraged to put on when they participate in a deadly spiritual battle (Eph. 6:11), is Yahweh's, which He and His Messiah put on and which are now prepared for His people when they take part in the war."²

The second group emphasizes that the armor of God is related to putting on Christ. Baugh quotes Origen and Jerome's thoughts that: "Christ is 'the whole armor of God' so that 'putting on the whole armor of God' is the same as 'putting on the Lord Jesus Christ' (Rom. 13:14)."³ Ing argues that this armor "is Jesus Christ who is the believer's protector. Jesus Christ is the salvation, the truth, the Creator, the Perfecter, and the object of the believer's faith, the truth, the readiness, the Prince of Peace, the believer's sword, and the Word of God."⁴

The third group emphasizes that God's armor is related to spiritual power. Arnold argues, "Paul makes extensive use of the metaphor of military equipment throughout this passage to convey the idea of spiritual power."⁵ Swindoll argues that: "Paul is not referring literally to the armor placed by believers on his body. He likened the spiritual power of God to a common sight of his day – the full protective gear and offensive arsenal of a Roman soldier."⁶

The fourth group emphasizes that God's armor is related to the identity of believers' identity in Christ. Jakes argues that: "Every part of the armor of God relates to the believer's identity in Christ Jesus. The illustration of the external armor reflects the internal reality of being in

¹ Roy B. Zuck, *A Biblical Theology of the New Testament* (Malang: Gandum Mas, 2011), 364.

² Peter T. O'Brien, *Surat Efesus* (Surabaya: Momentum, 2013), 557.

³ S. M. Baugh, *Ephesians* (Bellingham: Lexham Press, 2016), 528–29.

⁴ Richard Ing, *Spiritual Warfare* (New Kensington: Whitaker House, 1996), 159.

⁵ Clinton E. Arnold, *Ephesians* (Michigan: Zondervan, 2010), 436.

⁶ Charles Swindoll, *Swindoll's Living Insights: New Testament Commentary Galatians-Ephesians* (Illinois: Tyndale House Publishers, Inc., 2015), 302.

Him.”⁷ O’Brien mentions that while Paul was detailing the armor to wear, he was developing ideas about the new man.⁸ The theologians above tend to see that all of the metaphors for God’s armor in Ephesians 6:10-20 (belt of truth, armor of justice, shoes willing to preach the gospel, shield of faith, helmet of salvation, and sword of the spirit) only have a single meaning and seem to be there will be no special meaning for each of these metaphors even though the author of Ephesians does not use the exact words for these metaphors, which of course contains a wealth of intentions, ideas, ideas, and the truth that the author wants to convey. This single meaning can be seen from the views of the four groups who conclude that the six metaphors of God’s armor in Ephesians 6:10-20 are tools of protection (first group), related to the person of Christ (second group), as spiritual strength (third group), and the identity of believers (fourth group).

Each group presupposes that a single meaning is applied to all the metaphors without considering the specific purpose of each. This risk reducing and obscuring authorial intent in the letter to the Ephesians. Each of the four approaches, therefore, tends to simplify definition instead of building purpose from the totality of the argument of Ephesians 6: 10-20. This occurs because they do not consider the similarities and connections between the metaphors. As a result, there is no evidence of a relationship between the metaphors for applying spiritual warfare in the lives of believers.

The above description raises several vital questions. Do all of the metaphors in Ephesians 6:10-20 only have a single meaning, idea, or notion? How does the metaphor of God’s armor apply to the spiritual warfare believers face in Indonesia? Referring to what has been explained previously, in this dissertation, the writer tries to find the meaning, ideas, notions, principles, and truths contained in each metaphor in Ephesians 6:10-20 and describes the coherence or connection between the metaphors and applies the coherence of the analogy in the spiritual warfare faced by believers.

⁷ T. D. Jakes, *Overcoming the Enemy* (Bloomington, Minnesota: Bethany House Publisher, 2000), 76.

⁸ O’Brien, *Surat Efesus*, 563.

Theory

Views On Spiritual Warfare

Spiritual warfare is one of the hot topics discussed by theological scholars. For this reason, this section will present various views on spiritual warfare from theological scholars, which can be used as material for consideration and a basis for the author to examine more deeply what is being discussed in this paper.

World System Model

Satan is an outward and inward reality. So, it is not a question of whether humans 'believe' in satan but of how the archetype and current reality of evil manifests itself in individuals and society.⁹ Satan has become the corporate personality of the world, the symbolic repository of the entire complex of evil that exists in the present order. Satan has taken on the suprapersonal, non-physical aspect, the spiritual agent, the collective shadow, the total of all the individual darkness, evil, irredeemable anger, and fear of an entire race, and all the echoes and reverberations of all time of those who have chosen evil. The image of Satan is an archetypal representation of the collective weight of fallen humanity, which constrains society towards evil unknowingly.¹⁰ The emphasis of the world system model concerning spiritual warfare points to the system of satanic domination in various spheres of life. It results in social injustice, oppression, violence, crime.

Classic Model

The spiritual war is a cosmic war between good and evil: it is fought daily between God and Satan, between the Christian church and a world system ruled by a spiritual enemy, and in every child of God, between the Holy Spirit and the desires of the worldly flesh.¹¹ Believers live in evil days. Paul warns against the irrational and relentless nature of

⁹ James K. Beilby and Paul Rhodes Eddy, *Understanding Spiritual Warfare Four Views* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2012), 58.

¹⁰ Ibid., 57.

¹¹ Védaste Habamenshi et al., "Deliverance, a Spiritual Battle against the Power of Darkness: The Context of Christian Churches in Rwanda," *International Journal of CHUR Research Academy (IJCHURA)* 1, Special Issue (December 1, 2018): 106, https://www.researchgate.net/publication/330959116_Deliverance_a_Spiritual_Battle_against_the_Power_of_Darkness_The_Context_of_Christian_Churches_in_Rwanda.

evil. In the clash of two kingdoms, believers are not thrown off by the confused fog of war and the fact that they are taking the beating.¹² From the day of the fall until now; there has been a war between the two kingdoms. Satan uses his God-given authority to oppose God. As previously mentioned, Satan appears to have been given some power as the archangel of the Lord. This authority was not taken away from him when he fell.¹³ From the explanation above, it can be concluded that the emphasis on the classical model in terms of spiritual warfare relates to moral conflict in the lives of believers, where this conflict occurs between two kingdoms, namely the kingdom of God and his followers and Satan and his followers.

Elementary Exemption Model

According to the New Testament, the main reason the Son of God came to earth was to drive out “the prince of this world” (John 12:31), to “destroy the works of the devil” (1 John 3:8), and to “destroy that which has the power of death,” that is the devil, to “liberate those who have been enslaved all their lives by the fear of death” (Heb. 2:14-15). Jesus lived, died, and rose again to establish a new government that would eventually “put all his enemies under his feet” (1 Cor. 15:25).¹⁴ In short, Jesus came to an end victoriously the cosmic war that had raged long ago and to free Satan and all creation from captivity. The centrality of cosmic conflict in Jesus’ ministry is reflected in the first messianic prophecies in Scripture; the first prophetic period focuses on His victory over the serpent (Gen. 3:15).¹⁵

The basic level of the liberation model emphasizes the war God wages against cosmic forces, namely Satan and humans, to declare His will on earth as it is in heaven. This war aims to free those oppressed and enslaved by Satan to be brought into the kingdom of God. This war is related to the coming of Jesus to destroy the work of Satan and to put all enemies under His feet.

¹² Beilby and Eddy, *Understanding Spiritual Warfare Four Views*, 96.

¹³ Charles H. Kraft, *I Give You Authority* (Minnesota: Chosen, 2018), 24.

¹⁴ Beilby and Eddy, *Understanding Spiritual Warfare Four Views*, 129.

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, 98.

Strategic Level Liberation Model

Strategic-level spiritual warfare requires a power confrontation with high-ranking authorities as Paul explains in Ephesians 6:12. These demonic entities are assigned to geographic regions and social networks. They are also referred to as territorial spirits. Their job is to keep large numbers of people, networked through cities, neighbourhoods, regions, countries, civic groups, industry, government, business, educational systems, religious alliances, media, or other social institutions, in spiritual captivity.¹⁶ The results of this oppression include but are not limited to the rampant injustice, oppression, misery, hunger, disease, natural disasters, racism, human trafficking, economic greed, wars, and the like that are now sweeping the world. Strategic-level spiritual warfare (SLSW) as “praying against territorial spirits, seeking to ‘map out’ their strategies in specific locations by distinguishing their names and what they use to keep people in bondage, and then bind them so that evangelism may not be hindered.”¹⁷ The battle plan focuses on the powerful weapon of prayer. It provides training sessions to prepare strong warriors to fight against the evils of darkness.¹⁸ From the description above, it can be said that Strategic Level Spiritual Warfare emphasizes the confrontation of believers against the devil and all his followers who control various territories. This confrontation is carried out by using prayer as the primary weapon in warfare, accompanied by actions to map the enemy's strength. Strategic-level spiritual warfare also pays special attention to efforts to train believers, specifically in terms of prayer, to prepare for spiritual warfare.

Method

This research uses an exegetical investigation, in which the author attempts to explore and discover the essential truth contained in the letter Ephesians 6:10-20 regarding the coherence of the metaphor of God's armor and its force on the theological construction of spiritual warfare. Hayes and Holladay explain that the term ‘exegesis’ itself comes from the Greek word ‘exegeomai’, which in its basic form means ‘to bring

¹⁶ Beilby and Eddy, *Understanding Spiritual Warfare Four Views*, 179.

¹⁷ Don Fanning, “Strategic Level Spiritual Warfare,” *The Center for Global Ministries*, 2008, 8.

¹⁸ Chuck Lowe, *Roh-Roh Teritorial Dan Penginjilan* (Surabaya: ANDI, 2010), xvii.

out' or 'to bring out.'¹⁹ When applied to writings, the word means reading or exploring the meaning of those writings. This word means "leading out of."²⁰ When used for a document, this word means reading "out" the meaning of a document, not "putting" personal ideas into it. Hermeneutics includes the principles of interpretation (about how the interpretive process works), and exegesis applies those principles. Hermeneutics provides the tools to discover the meaning of texts, and exegesis uses those tools.²¹

The methodology used in this research is the lexical study (study of words and their meanings), historical-grammatical analysis (analysis of the structure of words, sentences and grammar as well as the context of the text), and synthesis analysis (analysis of the relationship between words and words, words and sentences and also sentences with sentences in context). With the methodology used in this research, it is hoped that the author can answer the main problems.

In connection with the research in Ephesians 6:10-20, the writer applies hermeneutic principles by using several exegesis approaches, namely lexical studies,²² historical-grammatical analysis based on Blomberg's concept,²³ and synthesis.²⁴ In connection with the coherence of the metaphor of God's armor, the author wants to investigate the overall meaning, ideas, thoughts and principles when Paul talks about the belt of truth, the armor of justice, the sandals of willingness to preach the gospel, the shield of faith, the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the spirit. The author wants to investigate whether the meaning of each metaphor of God's armor is separate from one another. Does the meaning of each metaphor stand alone? What is the coherence or integration of the meaning of the ideas, concepts and principles of these metaphors? If we look at what Paul said about the metaphor of God's armor in

¹⁹ John H. Hayes & Carl R. Holladay, *Pedoman Penafsiran Alkitab* (Jakarta: BPK Gunung Mulia, 2015), 1.

²⁰ Hasan Sutanto, *Hermeneutik: Prinsip dan Metode Penafsiran Alkitab* (Malang: SAAT, 2002), 3.

²¹ Andrew David Naselli, *How to Understand and Apply the New Testament* (New Jersey: P&R Publishing, 2017), 2.

²² Grant R. Osborne, *Spiral Hermeneutika: Pengantar Komprehensif Bagi Penafsiran Alkitab*, trans. Elifas Gani (Surabaya: Momentum, 2012), 115-18.

²³ Stanley E. Porter and Beth M. Sytovell, *Biblical Hermeneutics* (Illinois: IVP Academic, 2012), 39, 46-47.

²⁴ Hasan Sutanto, *Hermeneutik: Prinsip Dan Metode Penafsiran Alkitab* (Malang: Literatur SAAT, 2002), 238.

Ephesians 6:10-20, we cannot find in the text a detailed explanation of the meaning of these metaphors. However, this does not mean that these metaphors do not have meaning, so this makes the author investigate and find the coherence of the meaning, ideas, thoughts and principles of these metaphors of God's armor. The coherence of the metaphor of God's armor is explained based on biblical studies so that it can contribute to thought in the world of theology and can be used as a reference to enrich the understanding of every believer or God's church regarding the Biblical truth regarding God's armor and spiritual warfare.

The Belt of Truth Metaphor

Lexical Studies and Historical Grammar Analysis

Simply put, the word 'beloved with truth' (τὴν ὁσφὸν ὑμῶν ἐν ἀληθείᾳ) in Ephesians 6:14 can have several meanings, namely²⁵

1. truth is an instrument that binds,
2. truth is a force that binds or unites,
3. something that is bound with or, in truth,
4. truth is the place or location where something is placed.

To clearly understand the meaning of the word 'beloved with truth', one must pay attention to the context in which this word is used.

Socio-Cultural Context

The 'belt of truth' metaphor put forward in Ephesians 6:14 had a close relationship with the life of society at that time. Patzia explains, "In a culture where people wore long loose robes, clothes were tied close to the body when swift action was needed."²⁶

Military Context

When a Roman legionary was required to do something active, such as fight or use his weapon, he had to keep loose-fitting clothing on. Otherwise, his pleats and folds will impede his movement and prevent him from effectively using the rest of his gear. The first thing he had to do

²⁵ Timothy Friberg, Barbara Friberg, dan Neva F. Miller, *Analytical Lexicon of the Greek New Testament* (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Baker Books, 2000), 147.

²⁶ Arthur G. Patzia, *New International Biblical Commentary: Ephesians, Colossians, Philemon* (Peabody, Massachusetts: Hendrickson Publisher, 1990), 287.

was tie his belt tightly around his waist so that his tunic no longer fluttered freely and could not hinder his further movements.²⁷

Reference Context

Regarding the metaphors used by the apostle Paul in Ephesians 6:10-20, Janzen argues, "Starting from Ephesians 6:14, Paul uses allegories and echoes of Isaiah which appear mainly in the context of divine warfare. This cannot be a coincidence or an accidental use of language. Instead, I argue that Paul has deliberately chosen language that helps to recognize that the true enemies of the Church are similar to those of Yahweh in the OT period."²⁸

Range of Meaning

When Paul speaks of righteousness (ἀληθεία, aletheia, Greek) in Ephesians 6:14, it is related to righteousness in Eph. 1:13 (gospel truth); 4:15, 21, 24; 5:9.²⁹ Substantially, the range of meaning of the girdle of truth metaphor refers to Christ Jesus in whom there is actual absolute truth. Jesus Christ and his truth are a powerful weapon for believers to win in spiritual warfare.

The Metaphor of the Armor of Justice

Lexical Studies and Historical Grammar Analysis

The word 'θώρακα' (armor) in Ephesians 6:14 'armored with justice' in Greek 'τὸν θώρακα τῆς δικαιοσύνης'. θώρακα has the meanings: (1) as a protective part of a breastplate (Rev. 9:9b; possibly 9:9a); figuratively speaking, righteousness (Eph. 6:14) or faith (1 Tim. 5:8) that provides spiritual protection; (2) the part of the body covered by the breastplate, the chest (possibly Rev. 9:9a).³⁰ The word δικαιοσύνη has the meaning: 1) the quality, state, or practice of judicial responsibility, focused on fairness, fairness, equality. 2) the quality or state of juridical righteousness focusing on redemptive acts, truth. 3) the

²⁷ Derek Prince, *Spiritual Warfare* (Kensington: Whitaker House, 1998), 51.

²⁸ Gerald Janzen, "Divine Warfare and Nonresistance," *Direction* 32, no. 1 (2003): 29, https://www.richardmburgess.com/assets/docs/is_11_Janzen_-_Divine_Warfare_and_Nonresistance_335182417.pdf.

²⁹ Friberg, Friberg, and Miller, *Analytical Lexicon of the Greek New Testament*, 42.

³⁰ Friberg, Friberg, and Miller, 200.

quality or characteristic of upright behaviour, honesty, and truthfulness.³¹

Military Context

The Roman soldier wore two metal plates that protected his upper body in front and behind him. These plates were sandwiched together under his arms. The armor covers the heart, lungs and other essential limbs. No soldier in Paul's time would go into battle without armor. Without wearing, it does not only mean stupid but, at the same time, can be deadly.³²

Reference Context

Paul's emphasis on the "armor of justice" lies in identifying the breastplate with "righteousness" (τῆς δικαιοσύνης, *tēs dikaiosynēs*; a genitive of apposition). The language reminds Yes. 59:17 LXX, where the Lord has endured the injustice of His people against one another long enough and is "surprised that no one intervenes" (Isa. 59:16), He finally comes Himself, dressed as a warrior, to "provokes the wrath of his enemies" (Isa. 59:18) and redemption for those who would turn from their transgressions (Isa. 59:20).³³

Range of Meaning

The justice referred to in Ephesians 6:14 refers to the model of life, attitude of life, or character of believers according to God's truth. God has carried out His justice by placing all human sins on Christ to be borne on the cross so that through Christ's sacrificial work, sinful humans are justified by God.

Metaphors Shrouded in Willingness to Preach the Gospel of Peace

Lexical Studies and Historical Grammar Analysis

In Greek, Ephesians 6:14, ὑποδησάμενοι τοὺς ἐτοιμασίᾳ τῆς, "and have equipped our feet with the readiness of the gospel of peace."³⁴ The

³¹ Danker, *A Greek - English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature*, 247–48.

³² James Robinson, *Memenangkan Perang* (Jakarta: Immanuel, 1992), 113–14.

³³ Frank Thielman, *Ephesians* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2010), 425.

³⁴ Andrew T. Lincoln, *Ephesians*, Vol. 42: *Word Biblical Commentary* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2017), 448.

word ‘readiness’ (ἐτοιμασία) has the meaning as the quality of readiness, readiness, preparation (Eph. 6:15).³⁵ The word gospel (εὐαγγέλιον) means God’s good news to man, good news as a proclamation; details relating to the life and ministry of Jesus, the good news of Jesus; a book dealing with the life and teachings of Jesus, a Gospel story dealing with the life and teachings of Jesus.³⁶ The word peace used in Ephesians 6:15 is εἰρήνης (eirênês).³⁷

Military Context

A soldier wears unique sandals or military boots that protect his feet without slowing them down. Roman soldiers had special shoes made of soft leather with studded soles. This allows them to move farther and faster and gives them mobility in battle; they can dig and hold their ground when fighting hand to hand.³⁸

Reference Context

Spiritual warriors, said Paulus, must also have leg equipment. In particular, they must put their feet on the “gospel of peace” (ἐτοιμασία τοῦ εὐαγγελίου τῆς, hetoimasia tou euangeliou tês eirênês). However, what does this mean? On some level, there may be an allusion to Isa. 52:6-7, where the foot of a messenger (in the LXX, it is God) brings good news of peace.³⁹

Range of Meaning

Wearing shoes willing to preach the gospel can be interpreted as an act of readiness or readiness to continue to stand on the gospel, which is the basis of all activities and movements of believers, especially in facing various attacks from the evil one in spiritual warfare. Neufeld argues that: “Ephesians introduces a new element to the divine armor in

³⁵ Friberg, Friberg, and Miller, *Analytical Lexicon of the Greek New Testament*, 176.

³⁶ Danker, *A Greek - English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature*, 402–3.

³⁷ Friberg, Friberg, and Miller, *Analytical Lexicon of the Greek New Testament*, 132.

³⁸ Bruce B. Barton and Philip W. Comfort, *Ephesians* (Illinois: Tyndale House Publishers, Inc., 1996), 133.

³⁹ Thielman, *Ephesians*, 426.

verse 15. Believers must have ready feet (hetoimasia) to proclaim the good news of peace.”⁴⁰

Shield of Faith Metaphor

Lexical Studies and Historical Grammar Analysis

The word shield used in Eph. 6:16 in Greek θυρεόν (thyreon), comes from the word “θυρεός” (thyreos), which originally meant a large rectangular stone used to seal the entrance. It means shield, large, oval, and four-pointed (Eph. 6:16).⁴¹ Fundamentally, the word faith (πίστις) relates to:⁴²

1. Which generates trust and confidence;
2. A state of trust based on trusted reliability, trust, confidence;
3. What is believed, the body of faith/belief/teaching.

Military Context

The metaphor of the shield of faith (Eph. 6:16) put forward by Paul is closely related to the military equipment that soldiers or soldiers had at that time. Boles explains, “Roman shields were made of a wooden frame with seven layers of oxhide, which could easily parry and quench the fiery arrows fired by enemies. These arrows dipped and burned, could bring terror and destruction to such shieldless soldiers.”⁴³

Reference Context

Shields (θυρεός) were an essential part of the defensive weapons used in all armies in ancient times. The word is commonly used throughout the OT as a metaphor to describe God's power and protection over His people. When God called Abraham, he said to him, “Do not be afraid, Abram. I am your shield (Gen. 15:1). God's people need not fear because the Lord “is a shield to all who take refuge in him” (2 Sam. 22:31; Ps. 18:30; see also Deut. 33:29; Ps. 5:12; 18:2; 28:7; 33:20). Throughout the armor section, Paul tends to draw his parables directly

⁴⁰ Thomas R. Yoder Neufeld, *Ephesians* (Scottsdale, PA: Herald Press, 2001), 300.

⁴¹ Friberg, Friberg, and Miller, *Analytical Lexicon of the Greek New Testament*, 200.

⁴² Danker, *A Greek - English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature*, 818–20.

⁴³ James K. Boles, *Galatians & Ephesians* (Joplin, Mo.: College Press, 1993), Eph. 6:16.

from the OT. However, as most commentators suggest, he may have had Roman soldiers in mind when he developed this metaphor (the shield of faith).⁴⁴

Range of Meaning

That shield is faith, with which, as in 1 Thess. 5:8, when Paul speaks of 'faith and love' as a breastplate, he means dependence on God. "True refuge in an evil day", says Moule, is always there not in introspection but in the outward gaze toward God, which is the essence of faith (see Ps. 25:15).⁴⁵ Faith is related to the correct knowledge of Christ (Eph. 1:17), both about His person, His power, and all His works. The actual knowledge of Christ is a solid shield so that every believer can break the various fiery arrows of the evil one.

Helmet of Salvation Metaphor

Lexical Studies and Historical Grammar Analysis

The word 'τὴν περικεφαλαίαν' comes from the word περικεφαλαία, ας, ῆ, which means head covering; as a military head covering helmet; metaphorically, of the spiritual protection afforded by salvation (Eph. 6:17); wearing a helmet marks the beginning of the battle.⁴⁶ The word τοῦ σωτηρίου (salvation) comes from the word σωτήριος, which means: what is related to the means of salvation save, bring salvation, deliver (Tit. 2:11); neutral as substantive τὸ σωτήριον messianic salvation (Luke 3:6); with metonymy, the Messiah himself mediates salvation or liberation (Luke 2:30).⁴⁷

Military Context

A Roman soldier would not go into battle without a helmet. That would be stupid. Helmets are made of leather, with some metal patches on top or solid cast metal. The helmet protected the head from arrows, but its primary function was to deflect blows from the broadsword. Two swords were carried in battle: the machaira, the dagger mentioned in

⁴⁴ Arnold, *Ephesians*, 456–57.

⁴⁵ Francis Foulkes, *Ephesians: An Introduction and Commentary* (England: InterVarsity Press, 1989), 180.

⁴⁶ Friberg, Friberg, and Miller, *Analytical Lexicon of the Greek New Testament*, 309.

⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, 373.

Eph. 6:17, and a broadsword three to four feet long. It had a large handle held in both hands like a baseball bat.⁴⁸

Reference Context

Paul uses Isaiah in Eph. 6:17 to show how the messianic helmet Christ wears to complete His judgment on His enemies (cf. Eph. 1:19-22; 4:8-10) saves His people (Eph. 2:5, 8; Eph. 5:23) and for them to be a strength of salvation in the Gospel (Eph. 1:13), where they can stand fast.⁴⁹

Range of Meaning

Substantially the helmet of salvation refers to the work of Christ, who has saved believers through His sacrifice on the cross. This salvation accomplished by Jesus is a spiritual blessing that believers receive (Eph. 1:3, 7; 2:1-7, 15-18; 3:18-19).

Spirit Sword Metaphor

Lexical Studies and Historical Grammar Analysis

The word 'τὴν μάχαιραν' (sword) comes from the word μάχαιρα, ης, ῆ, which means: a large knife to kill and cut; in the NT, sword; metaphorically, for the penetrating power of the words spoken by God (Eph. 6:17).⁵⁰ In simple terms the meaning of 'ῥῆμα' is what is said, word, utterance, expression, or any statement; an event that can be talked about, thing, object, material, event.⁵¹

Military Context

The word Paul chose for "sword" (μάχαιρα) is the word most commonly used for a sword in ancient Greek. This is the sword every Roman foot soldier wore. A short sword often denotes it and can even refer to a knife. This sword is to be distinguished from the greatsword (ρόμφαίον).⁵²

⁴⁸ John MacArthur, *The Believer's Armor* (Chicago: Moody Press, 1986), 135.

⁴⁹ Baugh, *Ephesians*, 555.

⁵⁰ Friberg, Friberg, and Miller, *Analytical Lexicon of the Greek New Testament*, 255.

⁵¹ Danker, *A Greek - English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature*, 905.

⁵² Arnold, *Ephesians*, 461.

Reference Context

The earlier reference to Isaiah 11:5 in Ephesians 6:14 relates to the belt of righteousness. Paul seems to use once again the image of Isaiah 11, which refers to the Spirit of God overshadowing the Messiah who will smite the earth with His words and with the breath of His mouth will kill the wicked (verse 4). Isaiah passage refers to the Messiah who in the future will smite all nations as described in Revelation 19:15.⁵³

Range of Meaning

In Ephesians, this refers to the constant warfare with the evil powers in the air, and once again, the weapons used by the Messiah in war are available for Christians to use. In their spiritual warfare with the powers of darkness, they must take hold of the word of God, the Gospel (cf. Eph. 1:13; 6:15), and proclaim it by the power of the Spirit.⁵⁴ When believers use God's word responsibly in spiritual warfare, they will be victorious against various attacks by the Devil with all his deceptions.

Metaphor Coherence Analysis of God's Armor

The metaphor of the girdle of truth is closely related to the armor of justice (Ephesians 6:14) because the truth in question refers to Jesus Christ, God's absolute righteousness. Justice in Eph. 6:14 points to God's just action through the sacrifice of Jesus Christ on the cross to redeem believers from the power of sin so they can have a life model, attitude to life, or character qualities following God's truth. Witherington III argues, "Truth leads to the actual state/nature, integrity and loyalty. It is remembering Ishaiah 11:5; the reference to righteousness must refer to the subjective virtue or attribute of the believer," (cf. Rom. 10:3; Matt. 5:20).⁵⁵

The metaphor of the belt of truth, the metaphor of the shoes of willingness to proclaim the Gospel of peace (Eph. 6:15) and the metaphor of the sword of the spirit, namely the Word of God (Eph. 6:17) are interrelated because in substance these three metaphors have the

⁵³ O'Brien, *Surat Efesus*, 586.

⁵⁴ Ibid., 586-587.

⁵⁵ Ben Witherington III, *The Letters to Philemon, the Colossians, and the Ephesians: A Socio-Retorical Commentary on the Captivity Epistles* (Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 2007), 352.

same emphasis, namely pointing to everything related to the absolute truth of God and His word. Roebert emphasized that: "God's Word must be within, must control actions and attitudes, and affect the entire lifestyle of believers."⁵⁶

Preaching the gospel of peace is also closely related to conveying the news about God's justice revealed in Jesus Christ. The gospel is the good news that God revealed His love for humans, so He sent Jesus Christ into the world to save them from the penalty of sin. Morris emphasized that: "God not only saves sinners, but He saves them in a way that is following the truth."⁵⁷

The shield of faith metaphor and the helmet of salvation metaphor are closely related to other metaphors. Faith means belief in God in Jesus Christ and depending totally on Him, and at the same time, faith relates to the salvation of believers. Salvation can only be received by believers in Jesus Christ because He is the source of that salvation, and to obtain that salvation, believers must have an act of faith. Faith is also related to the truth or word of God, where the act of faith of believers must be based on the truth of God's word. Robison asserts that: "again, the key to using the Word effectively is faith. Words spoken in faith can move mountains (Mark 11:23)."⁵⁸

Based on the description above, it can be concluded that every metaphor of God's armor in Eph. 6:10-20 has a relationship with one another. These metaphors' coherence points to the truth, works and attributes of God in Jesus Christ. Jesus Christ is the truth of God; God's justice; The essence of preaching the Gospel; The faith centre of the believer, the Source of salvation for believers, and the Word who became flesh.

Spiritual Warfare Theological Construction

In this section, the author wants to discuss several essential elements in building a theology of spiritual warfare based on the review of the metaphor of God's armor that the author has previously described.

⁵⁶ Ed Roebert, *Peperangan Rohani* (Yogyakarta: ANDI, 2008), 78.

⁵⁷ Leon Morris, *Teologi Perjanjian Baru* (Malang: Gandum Mas, 2014), 95.

⁵⁸ Robinson, *Memenangkan Perang*, 120.

This discussion will provide a biblical understanding of the theology of spiritual warfare.

God's Truth in Spiritual Warfare Theology

This truth (*aletheia*) is not human nature, not even his actions, but the truth of God (Eph. 4:21), the truth that reveals itself in the Gospel message (Eph. 1:13), which is accepted by man and which becomes the power (Eph. 4:25; 5:9) that directs his life. Alternatively, as Berkeibach van der Sprenkel put it, the truth binds the soldier's entire armor and allows him to stand in it in truth. The preposition 'en' (*aletheia*) is instrumental and says what the soldier girded his loins with.⁵⁹ The truth that Paul meant when he advised believers (recipients of the letter) that they would wear the belt of truth (Eph. 6:14) was not an ordinary truth but an essential truth, namely the truth of God. Jesus Christ is God's anointed person and represents God's presence in the world because all the fullness of God is in Him (John 1:1; Col. 1:19), and in Him, the truth of God is evident. So, the truth of God can be seen in Jesus Christ, who has come into the world. When a believer is in Jesus Christ, the truth of God and lives out His nature and character, then being in Jesus Christ protects the believer from various attacks by the evil one. The truth of God in Jesus Christ is an integral part of spiritual warfare theology.

God's Justice in Spiritual Warfare Theology

In Paul's letters, the term 'dikaiosyne', which is here translated as 'justice', is often translated as 'justification', God's gracious initiative to make sinners right with Himself through Christ.⁶⁰ What Paul says about being clad in justice in Ephesians 6:14 is closely connected with Ephesians 2:1-8 because Paul clearly shows God's justice for sinful humankind. According to Paul, God's act of justice is based on His great love (Eph. 2:4) through the work of Jesus' death and resurrection so that believers no longer receive punishment for their sins and transgressions (Eph. 2:1) because on the cross, Jesus has borne all that punishment. The work of the cross of Jesus is clear evidence that God demonstrates His love and justice. Chamblin asserts, "There is no other event like the cross

⁵⁹ C. H. Abineno, *Pemberitaan Firman Allah Pada Hari Khusus* (Jakarta: BPK Gunung Mulia, 1981), 242.

⁶⁰ John Stott, *Efesus* (Jakarta: Yayasan Komunikasi Bina Kasih/OMF, 2013), 258.

which shows how seriously God takes sin and deals with guilt with justice, and that he does this to release the guilty and draw them into the closest communion with himself.⁶¹ Spiritual warfare theology has an essential element that relates to God's acts of justice (Eph. 6:14). God's just action in the cross of Christ makes believers have a godly life or good morality (new man or a new creation, Eph. 4:24; 2 Cor. 5:17; Col. 3:9-10) so that becomes a powerful weapon for them to face Satan in the face of spiritual warfare.

Evangelism in Spiritual Warfare Theology

As counterintuitive as it may seem, the Christian soldier is rewarded with peace, not war. He fights demons so he can bring peace. Satan is the cause of sin, insecurity, and division in the world. Christian warriors bring peace by fighting demons. The Gospel message is one of those states of peace, but when it comes to satan, it means a declaration of war.⁶² Paul has consistently used the preaching of the Gospel as a weapon to attack in spiritual warfare as he did in Ephesus (Acts 19:8-12). Thus, the preaching of the Gospel is an essential element in spiritual warfare theology because it is a weapon used by believers both to defend against various attacks by the evil one and to attack in the sense of bringing souls to come to Christ through the Gospel, which is preached to those who do not yet believe.

Beliefs of Faith in Spiritual Warfare Theology

Paul has made the word 'faith' an essential term in the Christian vocabulary. He uses it constantly (142 times; he uses the verb 'trust' 54 times and the adjective 'loyal' 33 times). Paul used this word so that his readers would have no doubts that faith is fundamental to Christians.⁶³ Theologically, when Paul advises believers (recipients of letters) to use the shield of faith in spiritual warfare, Paul wants to emphasize that faith in Christ Jesus is a solid protection for believers when facing various attacks by the evil one in spiritual warfare. Trust in Jesus Christ is a solid protection against all the fiery darts of the evil one (Eph. 6:16). Christ is the actual shield of faith. In Him, the evil one cannot touch

⁶¹ J. Knox Chamblin, *Paulus Dan Diri-Ajaran Rasuli Bagi Keutuhan Pribadi* (Surabaya: Momentum, 2011), 72.

⁶² Warren W. Wiersbe, *Strategi Setan* (Yogyakarta: ANDI, 2010), 164.

⁶³ Morris, *Teologi Perjanjian Baru*, 110.

believers (1 John 5:18). Thus, the belief of faith is an essential element in spiritual warfare theology because Jesus Christ protects those who believe in Him.

Assurance of Salvation in Spiritual Warfare Theology

In spiritual warfare, Paul saw the importance of believers understanding their existence as people who have received salvation in Jesus Christ. The certainty of salvation in Jesus Christ is essential in spiritual warfare because it gives believers the courage to face the evil one in spiritual warfare. That is why Paul's advice to believers (recipients of the Ephesians) is obvious, namely that they receive the helmet of salvation (Eph. 6:17). Swindoll argues that: "Believers need to have certainty about their position with Christ. Why? Because Satan wants nothing better than to aim his arrows at believers' minds, convincing them that they do not belong to Christ and are not eternally saved. He is eager to deprive believers of hope of resurrection, glorification, and an eternal home in heaven."⁶⁴

The Use of God's Word in Spiritual Warfare Theology

The Sword of the Spirit, the Word of God in Eph. 6:17, is an offensive spiritual weapon (attack). Hoehner asserts, "The Sword of the Spirit is a weapon of attack, the spoken word of God to be used against the spiritual evil of the devil."⁶⁵ The word 'rhema' in the context of Eph. 6:17 is used by the apostle Paul to emphasize the importance of using God's Word in spiritual warfare. Thus, God's word is an essential element in spiritual warfare theology.

Some conclusions regarding the theological construction of spiritual warfare.

1. Spiritual warfare theology relates to the actions of believers who bind themselves to the truth and justice of God as revealed in Jesus Christ, grounded in the truth and justice of God and use the truth of God's word responsibly to defend and also fight against various forms of the Devil's wiles.

⁶⁴ Swindoll, *Swindoll's Living Insights: New Testament Commentary Galatians-Ephesians*, 212.

⁶⁵ Harold W. Hoehner, *Ephesians: An Exegetical Commentary* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2002), 853.

2. Spiritual warfare theology relates to the actions of believers as new human beings who live the gospel of Christ and bring the gospel of peace to the world so that many souls can accept Jesus Christ as Lord and Saviour who will free those who are being controlled by the devil's tricks so that they will eventually live in peace (peace) with God and others.
3. Spiritual warfare theology relates to the actions of believers who, through faith, accept and believe in their existence as individuals who have received the gift of salvation and God's promise of maintenance in Jesus Christ and always rely totally on God in prayer and supplication so that they can survive and fight the devil who always attack with his wiles.

The Practice of Church Life as a Weapon of Spiritual Warfare

Living Rightly as Children of God

Spiritually, the presence of the LGBT group must be understood as a form of Satan's deception in spiritual warfare that God's church must be aware of and respond to correctly according to the truth of God's word. Living righteously as God's children are related to the life attitude of believers who always maintain and practice a holy life according to God's purpose when choosing and predetermining them to become His children by Jesus Christ. Barton & Comfort confirms that: "Believers are separated, and must live without blemish, without fault, reproach, or blemish (see also Philippians 2:15).⁶⁶ Thus, living righteously as children of God is a powerful weapon to ward off every attack by the devil.

To be 'holy' means to be set apart for God to reflect His nature. Believers are chosen by God for a new life, a new purpose, and a certain future in eternity with Him. Becoming holy children of God means reflecting the truth and character of God that radiates in Jesus Christ (Eph. 4:21, 24; Rom. 8:29) or in other words becoming like Jesus. Ferguson emphasized that: "When someone enters the kingdom of God and becomes a child of God, his lifestyle will also change. As God works in and through the personality of believers, He begins to mark their personality with certain similarities. There are certain qualities of character that all of God's Children possess; there is always a certain

⁶⁶ Barton and Comfort, *Ephesians*, 13.

similarity in the family.” In terms of the lifestyle of believers, Paul advises so that they live as children of light and not obey all the deeds of darkness that lead to sin (Eph. 5:8-11). Believers must abandon their old lifestyle and follow the lifestyle of Jesus Christ, thereby reflecting a new identity as children of light worthy of being called God's family.

Bringing the Light of the Gospel of Christ

The history of evangelism in Indonesia has gone through many challenges. Various incidents in various places in the form of terror, persecution of believers, and closing and burning of churches, for various reasons, have aroused sentiments of hostility and hatred towards Christians and spread fear among believers. Ruck et al. revealed that: “Actually there is a fundamental problem, namely in non-Christian groups (especially Islam) who always see Christianity as a belief from Western countries.”⁶⁷ The church must realize that Satan works behind all these situations to hinder believers from disobeying Jesus' great commission to preach the Gospel to the world. Bringing the Gospel of Christ to the world as a manifestation of the practice of the spiritual life of believers is a powerful spiritual weapon in spiritual warfare to release and liberate as many people as possible whom the Devil still shackles.

Maintaining the Faith

The issue of religious pluralism is a severe challenge faced by the church today because pluralists view that salvation can be found in any religion. Satan can use this issue of pluralism in spiritual warfare to shake the Christian faith. Netland explained pluralism automatically believes that salvation (or enlightenment/liberation) must exist and be effective in each religion. No religion can claim to be normative and superior to other religions because all religions, in their own way, have a complicated history and culture that shape human responses to a divine reality.⁶⁸ The Christian faith firmly denies that salvation can be found in religious teachings. In facing spiritual warfare, every believer must maintain faith because faith in Jesus Christ is a solid protection against various attacks by “the fiery arrows of the evil one” (Eph. 6:16). The

⁶⁷ John Ruck, *Jemaat Misioner* (Jakarta: Yayasan Komunikasi Bina Kasih, 1997), 327.

⁶⁸ Harold Netland, *Encountering Religious Pluralism: Tantangan Bagi Iman Dan Misi Kristen* (Malang: SAAT, 2015), 55.

actions of believers to maintain faith are very important because then believers will be protected from the Devil who always attacks using various tricks (Eph. 6:11).

Passionate about Doing God's Work

Conflict within the church is one of the biggest challenges for church growth today. Often, the Devil works in such a way with his tricks through the conflicts that occur to destroy the church. Hammond and Wilkes assert that the apostle asked two sisters to stop fighting in the Philippian church (perhaps Paul's strongest and most spiritual church). Euodia and Syntyche may be the culprits, but if left unchecked, their stormy relationship can destroy the harmony in the whole church (Philippians 4:1).⁶⁹ When the saints (the body of Christ) maximize all their potential and gifts to move together to do God's work, it will make the devil's space even narrower to spread his influence on the church and the world.

Using God's Word

The church today is in the era of 'post-truth' where untruth is modified and spread in a structured and massive manner so that eventually, the untruth is accepted as truth. Concerning the post-truth era, Kalpokas explains that: "The term post-truth has been around for a long time: already in 2004, Keyes defined it as the blurring of the lines between lies and telling the truth, as well as facts and fiction."⁷⁰ However, genuine interest in the term has only increased since 2016. As Mair points out, what characterizes post-truth is qualitatively new political dishonesty, particularly in fabricating facts to support any narrative.⁷¹ Knowledge of God through His word closes the space in the hearts and minds of believers against various attacks by Satan and gives believers strength to use God's Word correctly to dispel every attack by Satan.

⁶⁹ Thomas Hammond and Steve Wilkes, "Church Conflict/Church Growth," *Journal of the American Society for Church Growth* 19, no. 1 (2008): 1–10, <https://place.asburyseminary.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1313&context=jascg>.

⁷⁰ R. Keyes, *The Post-Truth Era: Dishonesty and Deception in Contemporary Life* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 2004).

⁷¹ J. Mair, "Post-Truth Anthropology," *Anthropology Today* 33, no. 3 (2017): 3; Ignas Kalpokas, *A Political Theory of Post-Truth* (Switzerland: Palgrave Macmillan, 2009), 11.

Rely on God in Prayer

The church will always be faced with various occult practices because this is one of the evil's ways of hindering the development of the church and the growth of the faith of God's people. About occultism, Hawkins explains that "Occultism comes from the word 'occultus', which means knowledge and practices that are hidden, closed, secret, or esoteric in nature. Occultism consists of three basic categories, divination, magic or sorcery, and spiritism."⁷² The devil who is behind occult practices provides various deals such as healing, wealth, popularity, supernatural powers, and also position. However, all these things are only fake and are tricks of the devil which aims to bring people who are bound by occult practices to destruction. One form of manifestation of people who are involved in the occult world is that these people are possessed (controlled) by demonic powers and then display various phenomena. Facing these various occult practices and efforts to free those who are bound in the world of occultism, God's church must depend entirely on God in prayer so that it can ultimately win against the devil in spiritual warfare.

When Paul talks about prayer, the concept is closely related to faith. He linked it to the shield. It is explicitly mentioned as a means of overcoming the formidable attacks of evil: "Take up the shield of faith, with which you can quench all the fiery darts of the evil one" (Eph. 6:16). Prayer for Paul became a practice of faith. In this way, Satan is effectively resisted.⁷³ It can be concluded that even though Paul did not use the metaphor of God's armor directly linked to prayer, it does not mean that prayer is not part of God's armor. Faith and prayer are a unity that cannot be separated because prayer is the practice of faith. Discipline in prayer as proof of faith that depends totally on God dramatically determines believers' success when facing the evil one in spiritual warfare.

Based on the previous description of the practice of church life as a weapon of spiritual warfare, it is necessary to understand that the practice of church life is an integral part of the theology of spiritual warfare that the author has explained. That is why spiritual warfare

⁷² Craig S. Hawkins, *Seluk Beluk Sihir* (Yogyakarta: ANDI, 2005), 266.

⁷³ Clinton E. Arnold, *Power of Darkness: Principalities & Powers in Paul's Letters* (Illinois: InterVarsity Press, 1992), 158.

must be fully understood from theology and practice perspectives so believers can finally survive and fight against Satan, who always tries to attack with his various tricks. The practice of church life, which is a spiritual weapon, is related to living righteously as children of God, action to bring the light of the gospel of Christ to the world, keeping the faith, diligently doing God's work, using God's Word, and depend on God in prayer.

Conclusion

Based on the discussion about the metaphor of God's armor, it contains several essential truths in building a theology of spiritual warfare. These elements are God's truth, justice, the preaching of the Gospel, the assurance of faith, the certainty of salvation, and the use of God's Word. Jesus Christ is the truth and justice of God, Jesus Christ is the essence of preaching the Gospel, Jesus Christ is the centre of faith for believers, Jesus Christ is the source of salvation for believers, and Jesus Christ is the Word that has become flesh. Paul's advice to believers regarding spiritual warfare is based on the person of Jesus, namely His character, way of life, teachings and works.

Spiritual warfare theology relates to the actions of believers who bind themselves to the truth and justice of God as revealed in Jesus Christ, grounded in the truth and justice of God and use the truth of God's word responsibly to defend and also fight against various forms of the Devil's wiles. Spiritual warfare theology is related to the actions of believers as new human beings who live the gospel of Christ and bring the gospel of peace to the world so that many souls can accept Jesus Christ as Lord and Saviour who will liberate those who are being controlled by the devil's tricks so that they can finally live in peace (peace) with God and with others. Spiritual warfare theology relates to the actions of believers who, through faith, accept and believe in their existence as individuals who have received the gift of salvation and God's promise of maintenance in Jesus Christ and always rely totally on God in prayer and supplication so that they can survive and fight the Devil who always attacks with his ruse.

The Apostle Paul emphasized that believers (churches) will always face the evil one in spiritual warfare. Facing spiritual warfare, every believer must have spiritual weapons to face and repel Satan's various

attacks with his various tricks. There are six weapons that believers as a whole must have in spiritual warfare, namely:

- 1) Living righteously as children of God,
- 2) Bringing the light of the Gospel of Christ,
- 3) Maintaining faith,
- 4) Being active in doing God's work,
- 5) Using God's word
- 6) Depending on God in prayer.

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