

THE ARMOR OF LIGHT

“The night is far spent, the day is at hand. Therefore let us cast off the works of darkness, and let us put on the armor of light” (Romans 13:12).

When is the last time you thought of light as being armor? Actually this word technically refers to implements or tools used to accomplish any particular task, but it came to be used for the implements of war.

Remember in the Star Wars movies, both the good guys and the bad guys carried light sabers. They used them both offensively and defensively. Obviously they could hack at each other with them. Darth Vader sliced off Luke Skywalker’s hand and wrist, and later Luke used his light saber to deliver what turned out to be a fatal blow to Vader. But Luke also used it defensively – when the bad guys were shooting at him, Luke could knock down their projectiles with his light saber.

What does this have to do with us? Paul said we are to put on the armor (tools, implements) of light. God hasn’t exactly given us a light saber, so how are we to comply with this Scripture? First, notice that Jesus is the light of the world. Our Savior said, “I am the light of the world. He who follows me shall not walk in darkness, but have the light of life” (John 8:12). So Jesus is the light. Step one in putting on the armor of light, then, would be to put on Christ. We do that in baptism (Galatians 3:27). Of course the Romans (to whom 13:12 was written) had already done that, so what else did Paul tell them (and us) to do?

Jesus also told His disciples, “You are the light of the world. A city that is set on a hill cannot be hidden. Nor do they light a lamp and put it under a basket, but on a lampstand, and it gives light to all who are in the house. Let you light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father in heaven” (Matthew 5:14-16). Now wait a minute! Is Jesus the light of the world, or are we? The answer is, “Yes!” Ultimately, Jesus is the source of this light; but as His followers, we reflect His light, just as the moon reflects the light of the sun.

Jesus “went about doing good” (Acts 10:38); and one of the ways we reflect His light is by doing good works. Paul concurred with this as he wrote to the Philippians, “For it is God who works in you, both to will and to do for His good pleasure. Do all things without complaining and disputing, that you may become blameless and harmless, children of God without fault in the midst of a crooked and perverse generation, among whom you shine as lights in the world” (Phil. 2:13-15 – better rendering “stars in the universe”).

Finally, hear the apostle Paul in 2 Cor. 4:3-6 – “But even if our gospel is veiled, it is veiled to those who are perishing, whose minds the god of this age has blinded, who do not believe, lest the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine on them. For we do not preach ourselves, but Christ Jesus the Lord, and ourselves your bondservants for Jesus’ sake. For it is the God who commanded light to shine out of darkness, who has shone in our hearts, to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ.” Here we see that the gospel of Christ is a brilliantly shining light. Paul even lists the gospel as one of the items of a Christian’s armor (Eph. 6:15). There he illustrates it as a soldier’s footwear, but here he speaks of the gospel as light. When we share the gospel, we are shining the light of Christ. Hebrews 6:4 refers to people who learned and obeyed the gospel as “enlightened.”

We use the light of Christ both offensively and defensively. Light dispels darkness. As we share the gospel, we are on offense, trying to win souls for Christ. But we also use the light defensively. The devil and his followers spread false doctrines and place temptations and stumbling blocks in our way. We resist and defend ourselves with God’s word, which is truth.

Luke Skywalker had his light saber, and we have the gospel. His weapon might be flashier, but ours has the power of God behind it. We definitely have the superior weapon. May God help us to use it effectively!