

# THE SHIELD OF FAITH

## Ephesians 6.16: The shield of faith that quenches all the enemy's fiery darts

**Theme:** The shield of faith can quench all the enemy's well-aimed, personal attacks against you, but you must raise up that shield to block each fiery dart.

For the Roman soldier, the shield was a moveable piece of defensive armour.

- The soldier would see an incoming “dart” (arrow, small spear) and raise up his shield to block it.
- These “fiery darts” speak to us today of the enemy's personal, well-aimed attacks against us (he knows your weaknesses; he knows where to attach you... and he shoots at you constantly).
- Faith is the only way to stop these attacks—to block them before they do their damage.
  - ✓ And faith can stop all of these attacks: (1Cor 10.13) No temptation has to get through our defense.
  - ✓ So, let's talk about how faith is a shield for us against the personal, well-aimed attacks of the enemy.

### I. The Fiery Darts of the Enemy

- A. The picture Paul is drawing for us here is one of a personal, well-aimed, deadly attack of the enemy.
- B. The fiery darts the Roman soldiers had to face were arrows or small spears, dipped in some flammable liquid, set on fire, and then shot or thrown at the individual soldier.
  1. They were often well-aimed (“personal”) attacks: The enemy would take specific aim at a specific soldier, try to find a weakness in his armour, and then shoot.
  2. The shield a Roman soldier carried was about 4ft tall and 2ft wide, and he could use it block those fiery darts shot at him.
- C. Today, in our spiritual warfare, we have to face a very similar attack.
  1. The enemy knows us well—he knows our weaknesses, our “soft spots” (how to get to us).
  2. And he will continually attack us in those areas or weakness with one main goal...
- D. Each fiery dart is an attack of the enemy to get you to believe that God cannot be trusted.
  1. Remember how he attacked Eve in the Garden: Genesis 3...
    - a) (Gen 3.1) He attacked Eve's trust in God's **goodness**.
      - (1) The implication of Satan's message to Eve was that was unkind in not allowing man to satisfy his God-given appetites.
      - (2) He was implying that God was mean. He shot a dart at Eve's trust in God's goodness.
    - b) (Gen 3.4) He attacked Eve's trust in God's **government**.
      - (1) The implication of this “fiery dart” was that disobedience is no big thing. One piece of fruit can't really kill you.
      - (2) He shot a dart at Eve's trust in God's government, that God's rule is a very serious thing.
    - c) (Gen 3.5) He attacked Eve's trust in God's **goals**.
      - (1) The implication here was that God was holding Eve back from attaining something, that God was selfish and jealous and didn't want her getting all she could have in this life.
      - (2) He shot a dart at Eve's trust in God's goals for her.
    - d) (Gen 3.6) And instead of trusting God (instead of raising up the shield of faith), Eve allowed the fiery darts of the wicked one to enter in and do their damage.

2. Christ had to face the very same temptations: Matthew 4...
  - a) (Mat 4.1-3) Satan attacked God's **goodness**, implying that the Father was withholding something good that would satisfy a normal, God-given appetite.
  - b) (Mat 4.5-6) Satan attacked God's **government** in Jesus' life by implying that putting God to the test was no big deal.
  - c) (Mat 4.8-9) Satan attacked God's **goals** for Jesus by offering Him what the Father will give Him eventually... but Satan offered it to him now and by means that were not of the Lord.
  - d) But where Eve (and Adam) failed, the Lord won the victory. How...?
    - (1) (Mat 4.4, 7, 10) He used the shield of faith: "It is written..."
    - (2) Jesus responded to the well-aimed, personal attacks of the enemy that were designed to get Him to not trust God by exercising trust and confidence in God's Word.

## II. That Faith that Protects You Like a Shield

- A. The faith that protects us like a shield is trust in God—trust in His promises and His ability to keep those promises.
  1. We are not talking about saving faith, but rather the faith of the believer in everyday life.
  2. (Rom 4.20-21) The shield that protects us against the personal attacks of the enemy is faith: the fully-persuaded trust and confidence in what God has promised and in His ability to do that!
- B. But this kind of faith must be exercised. Faith is not involuntary.
  1. Think about the physical attacks of fiery darts against Roman soldiers: The soldier had to see the dart coming; and he then had to move his shield in order to apply it to the specific attack.
  2. We have to be vigilant and watchful: We have to always be ready for an attack. You know your weakness. You know where you're vulnerable. Don't let the enemy take you by surprise. Be watchful. Don't ever think you can let your guard down.
  3. Then, when the attack comes, you have to be able to move the shield of faith and apply it to the specific attack (you have to know where to go in the Bible to find the "it is written" about the specific attack the enemy is throwing at you).
    - a) The enemy will tempt you to question God's **goodness** in your personal life.
      - (1) He will make you look at the circumstances and "limitations" of your life, and tempt you to stop trusting in God's goodness.
      - (2) God said to Adam and Eve: Don't eat that fruit. He placed limitations on them. And there are always limitations placed on us, either through specific commands in Scripture or just through the circumstance of our lives.
      - (3) Does that mean God is not being good to us? Should we question God's goodness?
      - (4) No. We should trust in God's promises (like Romans 8.28) and have confidence that God is good and His goodness toward us in Christ is perfect.
      - (5) But, that requires that you see the attack (recognize it), and exercise faith in the promises.
    - b) The enemy will also tempt you to question God's **government** in your personal life.
      - (1) Never doubt the serious consequences of sin and disobedience. You may not understand the "why" of everything God has told you to do or not to do... but, never doubt how serious your submission and obedience are.
      - (2) When Satan tempts you to do wrong, and you think, "Oh, it's no big deal..." You need to raise up your shield of faith and understand that even the smallest of sins has the most dire of consequences.

- c) The enemy will tempt you to question God's **goals** for you and your life.
- (1) He has promised you certain things in Christ, and those cannot be obtained any other way but by God.
  - (2) (Php 1.6) What God started in us, God will finish. He is able to do that, and what is required of us is that we simply be faithful to Him (follow Him).
  - (3) Don't let Satan make you doubt those goals. Don't let Satan make you think that by the effort of the flesh you can reach those goals faster. Trust in God and in God's timing.
  - (4) And that requires faith: Know the promises and voluntarily trust in them (confidence).
4. Faith is not involuntary.
- a) You have to be watchful, knowing that the enemy is going to attack you in your area of weakness.
  - b) When you see the attack coming, you have to move the shield into place and apply it. Jesus shows us how to do that: "It is written..."
    - (1) We need to know the Scripture so that we can know the promises God has given us.
    - (2) And then we need to know how to apply the Scripture to the attacks of the enemy.
    - (3) Those attacks will come in three areas (God's goodness, His government, His goals), but they will all have the same effect: Satan wants you believe that God cannot be trusted.
    - (4) You have to chose to believe He can: You can fully trust God's goodness, government, and goals. The choice to raise up that shield of faith... is yours.

### **Conclusion:**

#### **There is one more aspect of the shield of faith that bears mentioning: Solders could interlock their shields.**

- In the heat of battle each individual soldier had to be watchful for the darts aimed at him, and he had to use his own shield to defend himself.
- However, the Romans would often design their shields to interlock with one another.
  - ✓ This way they could make an wall of shields and advance toward the enemy even under fire.
- The application for us this:
  - ✓ Yes, we each need to be able to exercise personal faith (fully-persuaded trust in God's promises and His ability to fulfill those promises) because the enemy will attack each of us personally.
  - ✓ But, it's a whole lot easier to quench the fiery darts of the enemy and advance the cause of Christ when you're laboring with other believers of like faith (who are also fully persuaded of God's promises and His power to fulfill those promises).
  - ✓ Learn the Bible. Learn how to apply the Bible. Have confidence in the Bible. And spend time with others who are doing the same.