

*Safeguarding Your Mind*

There is a deadly snake found in the jungles of South America known as the bushmaster. It's large, fatally venomous, and very aggressive. There's no known antidote for its venom and the life expectancy of some one bitten by a bushmaster is no longer than 20 minutes.

The bushmaster is a very beautiful creature but even though it's dazzlingly beautiful, the bushmaster is deadly.

That sounds like the Bible's description of Satan, doesn't it?

In the middle ages most people were illiterate so the Catholic Church used miracle plays to teach Bible stories. In those dramas the character of the devil was always portrayed as a kind of monster, with horns and a tail.

Here's where that whole misconception came from. In the Old Testament book of Isaiah there's a prophecy against Babylon. And in this prophecy there is mention of a creature that would one day roam over the ruins of the fallen city. The Hebrew word for that animal is *sair*, which means wild goat.

The problem was at that time no one was sure what it's actual meaning was and so in some of the early translations of the Bible it was called a "satyr." (sa'ter)

A satyr was a Greek mythological figure, (like Pan) half man and half goat. And so it was assumed that the Bible was actually describing a figure of Satan.

Actually the Bible gives us just the opposite description. Satan may act like a beast but he's beautiful as a bushmaster, and even more deadly too.

The Bible tells us that he's a created being, full of wisdom and beauty. He comes as an angel of light.

Now we're also told that he's our enemy. That he actively seeks to destroy God's people and God's work on earth. That he and his demonic forces have their sights set on corrupting that which is good. On pulling you and me down and hindering us from being all that God has created us to be.

In the Bible we find that Satan:

Tempted Eve in the garden  
Stood against Israel and provoked David to sin  
Accused righteous Job before God  
Tempted Jesus and asked Him to worship him  
Bound a woman with a crippling disease for 18 years  
Put it in the heart of Judas to betray Jesus  
Filled Ananias heart to lie to the Holy Spirit  
Blinds the minds of unbelievers to the gospel  
Tries to devour Christians

He's called everything from "the father of lies," to "the deceiver," to "the enemy."

He's an enemy that is in a never ending war with God and with us as creations of God.

In and of ourselves we could never withstand this enemy. He's far too cunning, crafty and powerful for us to defeat. That's why we need God.

That's why God has provided the power and God has provided the protection to give us spiritual victory over Satan and the forces of evil.

We're studying Ephesians Chapter 6 in detail because it's here that God explains to us exactly what kind of protection He's made available to us.

### **Turn to Ephesians 6, pg 1042**

The Bible tells us that everything we have as Christians is "in Christ": blessings, wisdom, sanctification, redemption, forgiveness, our heavenly inheritance, access to God, are all found in Him.

And as we're finding out in Ephesians 6 our armor is in Him and through Him.

The Bible uses the pieces of the armor of a Roman infantryman and relates them to the spiritual protection that we have in Christ.

So far we've seen the belt of truth, the breastplate of righteousness, the shoes of the gospel of peace and the shield of faith. That brings us down to the 5th piece of armor.

#### *I. A Helmet Was A Crucial Piece Of Armor For A Soldier In Combat*

## Read vs 17

Now its obvious that a helmet would be a crucial piece of equipment for a soldier in hand to hand combat.

Originally only the high ranking officers wore helmets in the Roman army but by the time of the New Testament every Roman warrior was outfitted with a helmet.

Some were made of leather with metal inserts, some were made almost entirely of brass. There was a piece that went down the back and overlapped with the back of the breastplate and then there was a 6" to 8" high strip of feathers that went down the center. Kind of like a 1st century Mr. T.

One Roman historian says that the purpose of those high plumes was to make every soldier look even taller than he really was to help unnerve the enemy.

But primarily a helmet was to protect a soldier's head from the blows of the large heavy broad swords known as a *romphaia*. These were swords that were 3 or 4 feet long and had a long handle.

A warrior would grip this sword with two hands and swing it, hopefully bringing it down upon the head of his opponent.

The Roman helmet was designed to deflect the blows of this sword and hopefully to spare the soldier any serious injury.

Now again we find God drawing an analogy. As the helmet was to a Roman soldier so salvation is to us.

Now it's obvious that the point here isn't that the helmet is simply faith in Jesus Christ.

It is certainly true that the only ultimate defense against Satan is salvation. If we haven't trusted Jesus Christ as Savior we don't have any protection from the evil one.

But this letter to the Ephesians is directed to a church full of Christians. It's assumed that the people reading this letter have already received forgiveness through faith in Jesus.

What God's telling us follows right along with what's already been said.

Each piece of the armor relates directly to what we have in Christ and each piece must be appropriated. The day we recognize that we've sinned against God and place our faith in the death, burial, and resurrection of Christ we have salvation. But, now we're being told we need a helmet.

*I. A Helmet Was A Crucial Piece Of Armor For A Soldier In Combat*

*II. Our Helmet Is Our Confidence Of Our Future Glorification*

So what's this about? There's two other passages in the Bible that talk about the helmet of salvation. If we want to really understand we need to look at those cross references.

The first is one that we looked at before in the beginning of the study and that's Isaiah 59. **Turn to Isaiah 59, pg. 657**

Isaiah 59 deals with the return of Christ at end of the age as the Lord comes to destroy the enemies of Israel and save the remnant of Jewish people remaining at that time.

**Read vs. 15 - 17**

This is the Lord Jesus Christ, returning to fight the armies of the anti-christ, putting on pieces of armor; the breastplate of righteousness and the helmet of salvation.

As Jesus returns as a military warrior He has two important pieces of armor. The breastplate of righteousness shows that He's acting in a completely righteous manner and the helmet of salvation shows that his goal, his object in returning is the salvation of Israel.

The helmet of salvation is the guarantee of Israel's salvation. So here's the Messiah acting in righteousness and providing salvation.

Now for a believer there's a similar promise of salvation that we are to put on.

Go with me now to **I Thessalonians 5, pg 1050**

Both the Thessalonian letters deal with the return of Jesus Christ and the end of the age.

In I Thessalonians 4 we're given a description of the rapture - when Christ shall return in the air for his church.

This is an event that could happen at any time and when it does, the Bible says believers will be caught up to be with the Lord.

While believers are with the Lord in heaven the tribulation takes place on earth.

The tribulation is the time when a world leader known as the anti-christ is revealed and what is called the Day of the Lord takes place. This is a time of great, divine, cataclysmic judgments.

I Thessalonians 5 describes the darkness of that day and shows that believers are children of light. Believers won't go into that tribulation period. But while we're waiting for Jesus' return we're to live as the children of light.

### **Read 6- 8**

Notice the wording in verse 8. Our helmet is to be the "hope of salvation." As we've noted many times before, the word "hope" is often used in the Bible as a noun. Here's a good example.

God's not telling us that we should all hope for salvation, but he's saying that salvation itself is our hope. The word *elpis* means "a settled confidence."

Now why is it that we can have this settled confidence?

### **Read 9 & 10**

God has not appointed believers in Jesus Christ to wrath.

There are those who believe in a pre-tribulation rapture. That's the belief that Christ will remove believers before the tribulation. There are those who believe the rapture will occur in the middle of that tribulation period. And then still others believe and teach that the rapture will take place after the tribulation, meaning that the church would go through the entire time.

One of the main problems with the mid-tribulation and post-tribulation views is that they fail to recognize the nature of the tribulation.

It is a time of God's wrath. Not natural calamities, or merely the consequences of man's unbridled sin, but it's actually the judgment of almighty God. Eleven times in the book of Revelation the tribulation is called the "wrath of God."

God has not appointed us to wrath. God will not subject the chaste virgin bride of Christ to divine wrath. Rather in Christ there is salvation.

Now at this point in I Thessalonians 5 the focus is not on salvation in the past tense but rather on the future.

We will not see the wrath of God poured out in the day of the Lord.

Just like the Isaiah passage gave Israel's hope, or their guarantee of salvation, I Thessalonians 5 gives our hope.

And the salvation being spoken of here is not just forgiveness of sins, although that's its basis, but it's the future tense of salvation that includes our ultimate glorification and deliverance from the very presents of sin.

Romans chapter 8 talks about the revealing of the sons of God.

The day when those who have trusted Christ will receive their new bodies and be like Christ. It says, *we also who have the firstfruits of the Spirit, even we ourselves groan within ourselves, eagerly waiting for the adoption, the redemption of our body.*

The Bible says tells us when we see Christ we'll be made like him. At the rapture we'll receive new bodies, we will be rid of our sin nature forever and our salvation will be complete and we'll with the Lord forever.

The helmet of salvation is a helmet of hope. It's a helmet of confidence that our salvation will reach its goal or its completion.

We have the assurance that Satan's opposition is only temporary because when we receive Christ we receive eternal salvation. It's full, it's complete, and it's free.

When I read these directives telling me to take the helmet of salvation I see God telling me to protect my mind from Satan's crushing broad sword. I can have the confidence that I'm forgiving of my sins. I can have the assurance that I can stand against every satanic attack.

I can know beyond a shadow of a doubt that there's a future goal I'm moving toward. There's an end to this battle.

Romans 13:11 *Now our salvation is nearer than when we first believed.*

Now, why do we need this kind of assurance? What kind of sword does Satan try to clobber us with? Satan tries to appeal to our minds, to our intellect, to get us off course and to pull us down to defeat and ruin.

There's a number of ways that Satan attacks but most of them are linked with discouragement.

That's why we find commands like Galatians 6:9, *And let us not be weary in well doing.*

Paul told the Corinthians *to be steadfast, immovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord.* The Bible compares this life to a race, a course, a battle.

Were saved by faith in Christ and our salvation from start to finish is by grace through faith, not by works lest any man should boast.

But if we're serious about serving the God who gave Himself for us, the going can get tough. And sometimes we just become weary. The heat and the burden of the race get us down. The fight is so long and drawn out, the warfare is constant.

And the evil one is constantly saying to us, "What's the use? Why knock yourself out? No one else is living this way."

He challenges us to look out over the world and we wonder where's all the preaching and mission work, and evangelism gotten us? He challenges us to look out at our own country with all it's problems and wonder where's the biblical influence gotten us?

Satan's very methodical. He sows the seeds of discouragement and how quickly we can buy into his deception.

This problem isn't a recent phenomenon by any means.

Look with me at Psalm 73 where David, an otherwise godly man, questions why do the wicked prosper. **Page 518**

### **Read vs. 1-7 & 12-14**

The Message paraphrases those last 4 verses:

*What's going on here? Is God out to lunch?  
Nobody's tending the store.  
The wicked get by with everything;  
they have it made, piling up riches.  
I've been stupid to play by the rules;  
what has it gotten me?  
A long run of bad luck, that's what—  
a slap in the face every time I walk out the door.*

That type of mentality is a death blow to a life of faith, isn't it? We need protection from satanic discouragement.

And that's where the helmet of salvation comes in; the helmet of hope.

David took it up and put it on right there in verse 17. **Read 17-19**

I was a fool to envy unbelievers, living in sin because this life is all they've got. Their end is judgment and desolation.

And then he says - **Read vs 26**

The helmet of salvation is the helmet of hope.

*I. A Helmet Was A Crucial Piece Of Armor For A Soldier In Combat*

*II. Our Helmet Is Our Confidence Of Our Future Glorification*

*III. The Helmet Of Salvation Protects Us From Discouragement And Insecurity*

Satan succeeds at times in persuading us to become so preoccupied with the details of life that we lose sight of the whole picture.

We're so influenced by the heat and the burden of the race, the length and the severity of the battle that we forget who we are, we forget what we are destined for. And Satan says, "What's the point of struggling? Just go with the flow. Don't try to swim upstream."

This is a reoccurring theme all through out the Bible. I Corinthians 15:32 The Apostle Paul writes: *If I fought wild beasts in Ephesus for merely human reasons, what have I gained? If the dead are not raised, "Let us eat and drink, for tomorrow we die."*

He's saying, "Man, I wouldn't go on with this fight if I didn't know what was coming. What's the point of fighting? What keeps me going? It's that I know this redemption, this salvation, this ultimate victory is coming. If it weren't he says "lets eat drink and be merry for tomorrow we die. Let's quit worrying about all this God stuff and just grab what ever little pleasure we can."

But Paul didn't give up. He didn't fall to the crushing blow of Satan because he had on the helmet of salvation.

In II Corinthians chapter 4 this man who was a Jewish scholar who became a totally devoted follower of Jesus pulls out this laundry list of suffering and trouble he's faced trying to serve God.

He says we are hard pressed on every side, we are perplexed, we're persecuted, we're struck down.

But he says even with all that we weren't distressed, we weren't in disgrace, we weren't destroyed.

Why? Verse 14, *Knowing that He who raised up the Lord Jesus will also raise us up with Jesus...*

See, the thing that sustained this man in the level of commitment that he had, was that some day he would be raised to glory with Jesus Christ. The future dimension of salvation becomes a powerful force in the living of our life right now.

The Apostle Peter gives the same challenge: I Peter 5:10

*But may the God of all grace, who called us to His eternal glory by Christ Jesus, after you have suffered a while, perfect, establish, strengthen, and settle you. To Him be the glory and the dominion forever and ever. Amen.*

I'm suffering and to Him be glory? That's right, because life isn't about my petty little agenda. It's about something way bigger.

It's only because we know we're headed for God's eternal glory that we don't buckle under Satan's attacks, instead God can use our sufferings to strengthen us.

Even the Apostle John points us in the same direction. He wrote, *Beloved, now we are children of God; and it has not yet been revealed what we shall be, but we know that when He is revealed, we shall be like Him, for we shall see Him as He is.*

And then he says, *And everyone who has this hope in Him purifies himself, just as He is pure.*

This is the hope of salvation - the helmet of salvation.

The helmet of salvation is the confidence that there is coming in the future, a great, glorious, victory celebration. And that some day we will stand face to face with Jesus Christ.

Oh, how Satan wants to attack our mind. How he wants to cloud our brains so that our confidence fails and we're open to his deadly blows.

How do we know that we have that blessed hope, that future confidence of our full salvation?

Because 2000 years ago God came to earth and took on flesh. He emptied himself and made himself of no reputation. He became a man so that he could die as the sinless sacrifice for the sins of the world.

The Bible says, *These things have I written unto you that believe on the name of the Son of God that you may know that you have eternal life.*

Our sins have separated us from a holy God. God in Christ took the punishment for these sins. When we receive him as our Savior and trust His work on the cross, we have forgiveness and everlasting life.

That's one confidence that Satan doesn't want people to have. He works hard to make sure that believers doubt so that they have no helmet to protect them.

Bill McRae lists the five most common reasons people doubt their salvation. See if you fall into one of these categories.

1. Some just don't feel like a Christian. They look at their lives and they say I just don't feel forgiven. Remember our forgiveness is based upon the promises of God in his word - not on feelings.

*Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and you shalt be saved* is the promise. Feelings come and feelings go but the promises of God stand sure.

2. Some doubt their salvation because they can't really remember what happened at the time they received Christ.

This is especially true of people who were saved years ago and then got away from the Lord and now have come back. They wonder did I really receive Christ back there, was I ever really saved?

Again, the place to go is the promises of God. Regardless of what happened in the past if your trust is in Christ now, you're His child. You can look forward to the day when you'll be with Him.

3. Others doubt because of a lack of growth in their Christian life. The Bible presents high standards of Christian maturity. Satan loves to come along and say, "Look how far you've fallen short. For as long as you've supposedly been a Christian your life is a

sham.”

And so people doubt and because they doubt they don't have hope. Paul had to write to the Corinthians and chastise them for being immature in the faith. They were believers who should have been mature but had failed to grow. But he didn't say they weren't saved. Their lack of growth demonstrated immaturity. They had failed to take in the nourishment of the Bible and apply it to their lives. Now they needed to realize their position in Christ and grow from there.

4. Some doubt because they can't pinpoint a time. They can't remember the day or the hour they were saved. They didn't walk up the isle of a church or fill out a card. And so they wonder, “Can I really be saved if I don't know exactly when it happened?”

Remember the issue is never when you trusted, it's always who your trusting. If right now you believe that Jesus Christ died and rose again for your forgiveness and your hope of forgiveness is in Him alone then your saved.

And then the 5th most common reason that people doubt their salvation is because of their Christian experience.

They've never seemed to have a dramatic, miraculous answer to prayer. They've never had a gift of money that came in right at the time they needed to pay a crucial bill. They don't rejoice all the time. And so they reason maybe I'm not a Christian because I haven't had any dramatic experiences like I hear other people talk about.

How Satan would love to have us look to experiences as the test of our relationship with God.

Now see what he's done in each of these cases? He's putting up a smoke screen to hide the truth. He's getting people to look at all the side issues rather than setting their focus on the main issue. And what's the main issue? Jesus Christ.

And as long as he can keep people doubting and questioning he can keep them from wearing the helmet of salvation.

As long as you question your relationship with God there's no future hope. There's no way that your going to stand against the wiles of the devil. Your going to face discouragement. The battle is gong to be too much for you. The pull of our culture will get you in it's grips and you won't have any thing to anchor you.

Put on that helmet of salvation.

Do you know Jesus Christ as Savior? Have you trusted him as the lamb of God who came to take away the sins of the world? Do you believe he died for you?

Then stand firm in your hope. *Being confident of this very thing, that He who has begun a good work in you will complete it until the day of Jesus Christ.* Philippians 1:6