

Messianic Rabbi: Stop Attacking Believers and Start Attacking Sin

One of the most popular series of verses in the New Testament is found in Ephesians 6:10-17. These verses are often rightly quoted when discussing spiritual warfare.

They describe the believers' weapons of warfare and instructions for how they are to be used both defensively and offensively. Yet almost every teaching that I have ever heard or read on the subject of the armor of G-D has been either completely or partially out of context.

When Paul penned the words, we read in Ephesians 6:10-11 (TLV): "Finally, be strong in the Lord and in His mighty power. Put on the full armor of God, so that you are able to stand against the schemes of the devil."

He began with the word "finally." The reason he began with the word finally is that he is starting the summation of his letter to the Ephesian believers. He is tying up all of what he has been saying into concluding instructions.

In order for those of us reading about the armor of G-D today to understand the full intention and purpose of the armor, we cannot start in Ephesians Chapter 6; we have to turn back in our Bibles to Chapter 2. Why Chapter 2 instead of Chapter 1? Because Chapter one is Paul's greeting to the Ephesians. Paul's instructions do not start until Chapter 2.

When we read Chapters 2-5, we find that in each chapter Paul is teaching against a form of division within the body of Messiah in Ephesus (which extends all the way to those of us in the body of Messiah today). In Chapters 2 and 3, Paul writes about the division between Jewish believers and Gentile

believers. In Chapter 4, Paul writes about unity in the body of Messiah in general.

In Chapter 5, Paul begins by writing about divisions caused by sins of sexual immorality and the intense divisions in the body of Messiah that result from those destructive sins. He closes Chapter 5 by writing about divisions caused by marriage relationships that are not following this biblical model. Chapter 6 begins with Paul teaching about division caused by ungodly relationships between parents and their children. After this in Chapter 6, he writes about divisions caused by unrighteous actions in a workplace environment.

It is only after Paul writes correctively to the believers in Ephesus about each of the areas within their community that division and disunity existed that he instructs the Ephesian believers to put on the full armor of G-D.

In context, the full armor of G-D is what G-D provided to believers in order to fight against attacks of the enemy within the body of Messiah so we could stand against the schemes of the enemy to divide us.

Paul's instructions have never been more important than they are today. As we look around us, we see the enemy is doing everything he can to divide the body of Messiah. He is attacking us today in the same ways the deceiver attacked the believers in Ephesus. He is trying to divide Jewish believers from Gentile believers. He is trying to get the body fighting among ourselves, He is trying to divide us through sexual sins of adultery, fornication, homosexuality and abortion. He is trying to attack our marriages and our families. He is trying to divide believers in the marketplace, on our jobs and on the new marketplaces of social media.

Our response to each of these attacks of division must be to put on the full armor of G-D, because our fight isn't against those in the body of Messiah. Our fight is against our

adversary, the devil and the only way to defeat a spiritual being is with spiritual weapons. The full armor of G-D is not designed to fight against attacks from outside forces attacking the believer. It was provided to fight against attacks within the body caused by the adversary's stirring up of disunity among the body of Messiah. When I read these words from Ephesians 6:13, "Therefore, take up the full armor of God, so that you may be able to resist when the times are evil, and after you have done everything, to stand firm," I think about just how vital these words Paul wrote are for us today. The times are evil, so we must use the full armor of G-D even more so that we can fight against these attacks against unity in the body of Messiah.

So please put on your armor and join the fight. Stop attacking other believers and start attacking the sins of division that are attacking them. {eoa}

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