

The Shoes of the Preparation of the Gospel of Peace

The third piece of armor Paul mentions in Ephesians 6 is the shoes of "the preparation of the gospel of peace." What purpose did shoes serve for a Roman soldier? What purpose do these spiritual shoes serve for us?

The brethren gathered around, desperately trying to convince Paul to abandon his plans to travel to Jerusalem. They had heard the prophecies about the fate that awaited him on this journey—Paul himself said that he did not know what to expect, "except that the Holy Spirit testifies in every city, saying that chains and tribulations await me" (Acts 20:23). Paul's brethren and fellow workers couldn't bear the thought of their friend willingly walking into this, and begged him to reconsider.

But God, through His Holy Spirit, had summoned Paul to Jerusalem (Acts 20:22)—and Paul was intent on answering that call. Knowing that the upcoming trip could very well mean the end of his life, he says to his would-be dissuaders, "What do you mean by weeping and breaking my heart? For I am ready not only to be bound, but also to die at Jerusalem for the name of the Lord Jesus" (Acts 21:13).

Paul did not just write about the armor of God; he also wore it. At this time in his life he was able to call upon the shoes of the preparation of the gospel of peace. He found protection and strength in the knowledge of what God's gospel meant for him and for the others he shared that good news with. His footing was sure and unshakable, and he was prepared to carry the gospel wherever God sent him.

Shod With the Gospel of Peace

Shoes, like the belt, may initially seem superfluous in a discussion about spiritual armor. They're great to have, sure, but aren't they more of a convenience than a necessity? Are they really that important?

In this lesson, we'll learn why our spiritual shoes matter and why we need to make sure we're equipped with them before we get onto the battlefield.

What purpose do shoes serve?

Imagine a fully armed soldier. He has his sword, his shield, his helmet, his breastplate and his belt...but his feet are completely bare. The picture probably seems strange, and it should! Just by thinking about it, we can tell something is missing.

But the problem goes beyond just looking odd. A shoeless soldier could run into real trouble in the heat of battle. Unless he is fighting on AstroTurf, he is going to encounter some debris. It may be nothing more than twigs and pebbles, but to a bare foot that can cause serious pain—and one of the last things you want to deal with in the middle of a fight is worrying about where you step.

In short, shoes allow us to step freely and without fear while we turn our full attention to the battle at hand.

What is the gospel of peace? Are there different gospels in the Bible?

Matthew 4:23

And Jesus went about all Galilee, teaching in their synagogues, preaching the gospel of the kingdom, and healing all kinds of sickness and all kinds of disease among the people.

Mark 1:1

The beginning of the gospel of Jesus Christ, the Son of God.

Mark 1:14

Now after John was put in prison, Jesus came to Galilee, preaching the gospel of the kingdom of God...

Acts 20:24

But none of these things move me; nor do I count my life dear to myself, so that I may finish my race with joy, and the ministry which I received from the Lord Jesus, to testify to the gospel of the grace of God.

Romans 10:15

And how shall they preach unless they are sent? As it is written: "How beautiful are the feet of those who preach the gospel of peace, who bring glad tidings of good things!"

The gospel of the Kingdom, the gospel of Jesus Christ, the gospel of the Kingdom of God, the gospel of the grace of God, the gospel of peace—these are some of descriptions attached to the word *gospel* throughout the New Testament. Do all these different qualifiers mean that there are multiple gospels set forth in the Bible?

No. The Greek word translated gospel—*euangelion*—simply means "good news." This raises a question: The good news of what? The first description used in the Gospels also summarizes all the others: The gospel of the Kingdom. The good news of the Kingdom of God includes the good news about Jesus Christ the King, His grace (unmerited pardon) and His plan of salvation for all mankind. This plan gives us peace now, and will bring peace to the whole world! This is the message God's people are eager to share with others. Our loving Father is preparing us all for a future beyond imagination and description.

What does the gospel of peace have to do with shoes?

Romans 10:14-15

How then shall they call on Him in whom they have not believed? And how shall they believe in Him of whom they have not heard? And how shall they hear without a preacher? And how shall they preach unless they are sent? As it is written: "How beautiful are the feet of those who preach the gospel of peace, who bring glad tidings of good things!"

God's Church is sent to announce the good news of God's Kingdom, which will spread His way of peace around the whole world. Having our shoes on, we are ready to move, to spread these glad tidings to others.

In the apostle Paul's day, he walked countless miles in delivering the good news. Today, transportation and communication have changed, but we must also be constantly ready to do our part to spread the good news.

Romans 3:17

And the way of peace they have not known.

In spite of all human attempts at peace, it's clear from the daily news reports that this world does not know the road to peace.

1 John 2:6

He who says he abides in Him ought himself also to walk just as He walked.

Following Christ's steps is the way to real peace.

How do these spiritual shoes help us stand firm?

John 14:27

Peace I leave with you, My peace I give to you; not as the world gives do I give to you. Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid.

The sandals of the Roman soldier "often were fitted with nails, or armed with spikes, to make the hold firm in the ground" (*Albert Barnes' Notes on the Bible*). God's good news and our mission—our marching orders—to preach it serve as our firm foundation. When we truly allow ourselves to take comfort in the good news promised by God, there is nothing from outside ourselves that can trouble our hearts or give us reason to be afraid. Christ has overcome the world (John 16:33), and so we have nothing to fear from it.

Luke 10:19-20

Behold, I give you the authority to trample on serpents and scorpions, and over all the power of the enemy, and nothing shall by any means hurt you. Nevertheless do not rejoice in this, that the spirits are subject to you, but rather rejoice because your names are written in heaven.

Just as shoes allow us to walk on otherwise painful terrain without fear, so the preparation of the gospel of peace allows us to traverse the otherwise painful trials and tribulations of life without fear, knowing that what awaits is greater than anything we could possibly suffer in this world (Romans 8:18).

Why is it called a gospel of peace?

Isaiah 2:2-4

Now it shall come to pass in the latter days that the mountain of the Lord's house shall be established on the top of the mountains, and shall be exalted above the hills; and all nations shall flow to it. Many people shall come and say, "Come, and let us go up to the mountain of the Lord, to the house of the God of Jacob; He will teach us His ways, and we shall walk in His paths." For out of Zion shall go forth the law, and the word of the Lord from Jerusalem. He shall judge between the nations, and rebuke many people; they shall beat their swords into

plowshares, and their spears into pruning hooks; nation shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war anymore.

Isaiah 9:6-7

For unto us a Child is born, unto us a Son is given; and the government will be upon His shoulder. And His name will be called Wonderful, Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace. Of the increase of His government and peace there will be no end, upon the throne of David and over His kingdom, to order it and establish it with judgment and justice from that time forward, even forever. The zeal of the Lord of hosts will perform this.

The Bible makes it clear that, when God's Kingdom is established and the entire world begins to live God's way faithfully, the resulting peace will be universal. There will be no more war or fear, only the worldwide peace that comes from God's way of life.