

God's Spiritual Armor is There for All

BY RITA BENNETT, WORSHIP COLUMNIST

On the 4th of July, on news channels everywhere, we saw missiles being fired from North Korea into the Sea of Japan.



Some fire-crackers!

Next, Israeli soldiers were kidnapped by Hezbollah members in Lebanon and the Gaza Strip.

The response from Israel is a shootout with Hezbollah that is going on as I write.

What is a Christian to do? One thing I know is that Heaven is neither Democrat nor Republican. It is not Protestant, Catholic, Jewish or Muslim.

Scripture does, however, teach us that for our salvation Jesus was born in a Jewish body. Everyone will have to make peace with Him before entering Heaven's Gates. The Gates, by the way, are decorated with the names of the 12 Tribes of Israel.

One of the best things to do daily is to follow the example of St. Paul the Apostle. One of his forms of prayer is "putting on the whole armor of God." You can do it for yourself, your loved ones, and even for soldiers in battle.

Saint Paul's life really got into warfare after he accepted the call to service for his Lord. In 2 Corinthians 11:23-33, he lists some of his sufferings: a few of them are "in prisons more frequent, in deaths often ... Three times I was beaten with rods, once I was stoned, three times

I suffered shipwreck, a night and a day I have been in the deep."

In 1998, I visited the Mamertine Prison in Rome where Paul was incarcerated. It is a stone dungeon. Originally there were no stairs, as the prisoner was let down through a "manhole" opening dangling from a rope tied around his waist.

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The dungeon was quite small, 14 by 16 feet square. For safekeeping the "dangerous evangelist" Paul was deposited in the lower of two prison cells before he was killed for his faith.

If you wondered why Paul talked about "putting on this spiritual armor," this little bit of history makes it easy to understand. He tells us Believers to prepare for battle since we too are in a spiritual war, a war against our faith, a war against our freedom.

He says, "Finally, my brothers and sisters, be strong in the Lord, and in the power of His might. Put on the whole armor of God, that you may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil. For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against pow-

ers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places" (Ephesians 6:10-12).

In the world, humankind is fighting against "flesh and blood." Lots of it. Yet most soldiers of the world, as well as soldiers of faith, do not know there is spiritual armor to help them.

We must be "strong in the Lord," not in our own human strength. Missiles, booby traps, rifles and drones will not defeat an invisible enemy who is stirring up trouble behind the scenes.

This Darth Vaderish spirit got his start as an angel in Heaven before his treasonous rebellion against God, the Almighty. Though Christ's death totally defeated him, the prince of darkness wants to drag multitudes into his cavernous kingdom before his demise.

The list of spiritual armor is the belt of truth, breastplate of righteousness, shoes of peace, shield of faith, helmet of salvation, sword of the Spirit, and prayer in the Spirit.

We will look at each piece of this armor in subsequent columns. Meanwhile please read Ephesians 6:10-18 and pray for our government and for leaders of the nations worldwide.

You too can be a healing, praying, powerful soldier.

Local author Rita Bennett is CEO of the Edmonds-based Christian Renewal Association. She can be reached at (425) 775-2965 or at www.EmotionallyFree.org, or by writing her at P.O. Box 576, Edmonds, WA 98020. Reprint ©2006 by Rita Bennett.