

The Helmet of Salvation Ephesians 6:17

Introduction

"Bryan" McQueen was serving with US forces in Afghanistan last year when two gunmen opened fire on McQueen and some fellow soldiers from the 1st Security Force Assistance Brigade.

McQueen was shot in the head with a round fired from a truck-mounted machine gun. However, his Enhanced Combat Helmet stopped the bullet, saving his life in an attack that took the life of another soldier.

Lt. Col. Ginger Whitehead, product manager for Soldier Protective Equipment. "There is no doubt that Staff Sgt. McQueen would not have survived the impact had he not been wearing that helmet."

The bullet tore a large hole in the ballistic material, but the Enhanced Combat Helmet (ECH) stopped the round as it was designed to do.

"There is nothing that I have experienced in my life that can relate to it," McQueen said, describing the sensation of being shot in the head. "If I had to guess, I would say if you stood there and let a horse kick you in the back of the head. . . [that might compare] It was a lot of force."

His helmet saved his life

July 4, 2011— -- A New York man died Sunday while participating in a ride with 550 other motorcyclists to protest the state's mandatory helmet law.

Police said Philip A. Contos, 55, hit his brakes and his motorcycle fishtailed. Contos was sent over the handlebars of his 1983 Harley Davidson and hit his head on the pavement. He was pronounced dead at the hospital.

"The medical expert who pronounced him deceased stated that he would've no doubt survived the accident had he been wearing a helmet," state Trooper Jack Keller said

Two stories - one with a helmet / one without

In this next section of the spiritual armor - - - the Apostle Paul moves on to the helmet of salvation

Paul reflects the essential nature of this piece of armor in writing to the Thessalonians

I Thessalonians 5:8 - 'But since we are of the day, let us be sober, having put on the breastplate of faith and love, and as a helmet the hope of salvation.'

The helmet is the hope of salvation - - - which the believer carries with him

Iain Duguid: 'Helmets provide the soldier with protection against bullets and blows; in a similar way, the hope of salvation provides a real protection for the Christian in times of difficulty or distress. It defends the Christian against discouragement or despair. Why should you be discouraged by your present challenging circumstances when you have such a glorious and secure inheritance awaiting you?'

The helmet of salvation is vital - - - because - - - while the believer [for the time being] lives in a world where there is spiritual conflict raging every day - - - he faces temptations / he faces trials / she faces obstacles / they face the weaknesses of the flesh / etc. - - - but the helmet reminds the believer - - - this is but for a time - a day of glory is just around the corner

We have to remember that Scripture refers to aspects of our salvation in 3 tenses - past, present, future

The past - you have been saved - [if you have responded to the revelation of Christ as sin-bearer / atonement for your sins with faith] - - you have been saved [Eph. 2:8, 9]

But there are present and future aspects of salvation as well

In the present - sanctification [is the ongoing outworking of salvation]

In the future glorification [is the completion of salvation / the redemption of our bodies]

Paul said that we live - 'in the hope of eternal life, which God who cannot lie promised long ages ago.' [Titus 1:2]

Eternal life is part of our salvation - - that is yet to come - - we wait for it in hope

Romans refers to another future aspect of salvation

Romans 16:20 - 'The God of peace will soon crush Satan under your feet.'

The hope of salvation - is that Satan will ultimately be crushed under our feet - - - no longer to afflict or bother us - that is yet future

This morning we will look at the crucial role this helmet of salvation plays in the life of the Christian believer

I. The Helmet of Salvation - v. 17

Here we come to the helmet in the Christian soldier's armor

For the Roman soldier - this was often a leather head covering - - - plated with metal on the outside - to shield the head from blows

The head is a pretty important part of the body that needs protection

David defeated Goliath - - - who was covered in body armor and had a shield bearer - - - but David - took Goliath down with one stone striking him on his exposed forehead

We need this piece of armor - - - which refers to the Christian's confidence in God fulfilling His promises related to salvation

With the helmet - - - we endure now - - - because we believe in the end - God will fulfill His word - he will bring us to glory without fail

David Jeremiah: 'the day is coming when all struggles will be over and we will inherit our eternal promise of salvation in Christ. At the moment when the battle is raging intensely, we wonder if it will ever subside. We wonder whether we will have the strength to carry on with wisdom and skill into the future, and the answer is, Yes! - if we have put on the helmet of salvation.'

We can see the importance of the salvation helmet - by looking at one of the great types of salvation in the OT - that of Israel being delivered by God out of slavery to the Egyptians

Exodus 14

The book of Exodus began with the background of how Israel came to be enslaved to the Egyptians

They became a numerous people over 400 years of slavery

They cried out to God in their bondage for deliverance

God raised up Moses - - -to be a deliverer - - - God unleashed a series of plagues on the land - - - eventually - forcing pharaoh to let the people go [frogs / locusts / hail / death of 1st born]

In Exodus 14 - - - we see a familiar theme in the Exodus account and the wilderness wanderings

The people of Israel - - lose sight of where this is all headed - - - they forget their destiny - - - they forget the solid nature of the promises given them - - - and so they falter repeatedly

This incident takes place at the Red Sea - - - with pharaoh's army in pursuit

Exodus 14:1-10

God had the Israelites circle near the Red Sea [vv. 1-4] – to make it look like they don't know what they are doing – this will serve as a lure to pharaoh and his army who will desire to bring them back into bondage

Israel - all of a sudden finds themselves seemingly trapped between the Red Sea and the Egyptian army which is closing in on them

This was a trial / a test / an obstacle / a temptation to doubt - - - all rolled up into one

By appearances - it looked like they might lose everything right here - be dragged back into slavery

But - we walk by faith - not by sight

Iain Duguid: 'Your story is not just about you. It is part of the much larger conflict against the spiritual powers in the heavenly realms, a battle in which God demonstrates His supreme power through our great weakness, frustrating Satan at every turn in his inability to maintain his hold on such desperately broken and fallen creatures.'

When you face a trial - - - [Whatever it is - in some way] you're trapped between pharaoh's army and the Red Sea - - - will you trust God - - - or push the panic button? / revert to old sins?

One college student put it: 'Will you freak or seek?'

Those wearing the helmet of salvation - - - don't freak - - - they look to God

That is what Moses will do

Exodus 14:10-14

They begin complaining to Moses for bringing them out of Egypt

'Moses!' – we told you to leave us alone in Egypt'

Moses says, 'put your helmets on - God has got this!'

They cross the Red Sea on dry land

The Egyptians will try to follow suit

Exodus 14:21-25

The chariot wheels aren't steering properly – the whole army goes into confusion and realizes that Israel's God is working again

They recognize His power now – they know this is none other than the God who brought the ten plagues upon their land

God tells Moses to stretch out his staff back over the Sea so the water would return

Moses does so – and the Egyptians are washed away in the Sea

In this great deliverance - - there is a picture of the Christian's salvation

When you are stuck before the Red Sea - - - and pharaoh behind - remind yourself:

Romans 16:20 - 'The God of peace will soon crush Satan under your feet.'

Satan is headed for the abyss - where he can bother no one

Our story is not about us - - - it's about God - - - and how He displays His supreme power thru the redemption of sinners who were once held captive to Satan

When you and I put on the helmet of the hope of salvation - we show our confidence in that supreme power

J.H. Jowett: 'Let us begin the day by saying, "Now my soul, live today in hope of the glory of God! Live today in the hope of being presented spotless before His throne! Live today in the hope of being filled unto all the fullness of God. Let us put that helmet on, and let us do it deliberately, prayerfully, and trustfully, and in life's evil day we shall be able to stand, and having done all to stand.'

II. David's Hope - Psalm 18:1-3

David wrote some of the most tremendous Psalms expressing trust and confidence in God and His ability to deliver him in the various contexts of life

Psalm 18:1-3

David says, 'God is my rock! / God is my salvation!'
He reminds himself of this truth -- - He sings about it!

In the Psalms - we see the personal side of David's relationship with God - worship / trust

In the narratives - we see the practical effects of a life of worship and trust

The reason David lived the way he did was because he worshiped the way he worshiped

David had been anointed king by Samuel- - - but he did not have a smooth or easy path to the kingship of Israel - - - it didn't take long before Saul wanted to kill David

This period of his life - where he was on the run from Saul - - - lasted for about ten years

David encountered many dangers, toils and snares along the way

One of those dangers was in **I Samuel 30**

I Samuel 30:1-6

This story - just gets a few verses in scripture - - but imagine the distress

David and his men found a temporary home among the Philistines for about a year and four months - - - during that time - - - his band of men go out making raids on the Amalekites / other Canaanite peoples

Their home base was Ziklag - - they return home to find their home destroyed

The Amalekites took captive the wives and the children of David and his men - - - and burned the city with fire - everything is gone!

These rugged soldiers are weeping - - - and then console themselves by talking of stoning David!

This was a pretty grim / bleak situation

It looks like the whole thing is about to fall apart

Maybe David is not destined for the kingdom after all??? / all the promises of God - - - who knows?

Right now - David needs to worry about one of his own men thumping him on the back of the head with a rock!

What can David do?

I Samuel 30:6 - 'But David strengthened Himself in the Lord his God'

He reminded himself of who God is and what God said He is going to do

In the following battle - - Saul was killed - - - and Judah brought David home as king - - - eventually became king over all Israel

Imagine if David had handled things differently - -- started complaining about his lot in life - - - about his trials

Imagine David: "I thought I was going to be king - - - and now look at this mess - - - where is God???"

“God - you should have left me alone back there with the sheep! - - I was fine! - - - why did you send Samuel to anoint me - - life has been nothing but trouble since!’

Some people do grumble against God

Ray Stedman: 'There is nothing that more clearly indicates that we have succumbed to the schemes of the devil than to complain about our lot in life.'

If Satan - can get you to complain and whine about your life - - - instead of focusing on the glory ahead - - he has scored a victory

We honor God by faith / trust - - - we dishonor Him by grumbling / disputing / complaining

Phil. 2:14-15 - 'Do all things without grumbling or disputing; that you may prove yourselves to be blameless and innocent, children of God above reproach in the midst of a crooked and perverse generation, among whom you appear as lights in the world.'

One of the ways we shine our lights in this world / in this conflict - - - is reflected here

When the Christian succumbs to grumbling and complaining - - - the world scoffs

“I don't need Jesus to do that - - - I can do that on my own!’

But - - - when we stand firm in the battle - - - show trust in God - - - that points them to a God who is real - - - and who makes a difference in our lives

David maintained his hope in God

Psalm 138:8 - 'The Lord will accomplish what concerns me.'

*** That is essentially the helmet of the hope of salvation - - - we endure now - - - because we believe in the end - God will fulfill His word - he will bring us to the glory of His kingdom ultimately

No matter what trials / sicknesses / obstacles / setbacks / griefs . . .

William Gurnall: 'It requires great faith to rest satisfied with the promise when the time of payment is unknown. But if we consider whom we trust there is no reason to fear He will fail or delay a minute longer than the set time of the promise.'

When will these promises all come to pass?

Romans 13:11 - 'And this do, knowing the time, that it is already the hour for you to awaken from sleep; for now salvation is nearer to us than when we believed.'

It is nearer than when we first believed

Conclusion

John Newton reflected the outlook of a Christian wearing the helmet of the hope of salvation

*Through many dangers, toils and snares - I have already come
Tis grace hath brought me safe thus far - and grace will lead me home.*

Maybe you have been beset by various trials and challenges - afflicted by various temptations and sins

Can you put on the helmet of salvation today?

Can you say: 'I believe Jesus died for me - and rose again - - and that my sins are covered at the cross - - - and I am destined for glory.'

We can affirm that together as we partake of the Lord's Supper