

## GOD'S ECONOMY IN FIATH, Week 6

**Taking Up the Shield of Faith, Experiencing the Proving of Our Faith,  
and Receiving the End of Our Faith—the Salvation of Our Souls**

Scripture Reading: Eph. 6:12, 14-16; 1 Tim. 1:5; 2 Tim. 1:5; 1 Pet. 1:7, 9; 4:12, 16; Heb. 10:35, 37, 39

- Ephesians 6:12 For our wrestling is not against blood and flesh but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the world-rulers of this darkness, against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenlies.
- Ephesians 6:14 Stand therefore, having girded your loins with truth and having put on the breastplate of righteousness
- Ephesians 6:15 And having shod your feet with the firm foundation of the gospel of peace;
- Ephesians 6:16 Besides all these, having taken up the shield of faith, with which you will be able to quench all the flaming darts of the evil one.
- 1 Timothy 1:5 But the end of the charge is love out of a pure heart and out of a good conscience and out of unfeigned faith;
- 2 Timothy 1:5 Having been reminded of the unfeigned faith in you, which dwelt first in your grandmother Lois and your mother Eunice, and I am persuaded dwells also in you.
- 1 Peter 1:7 So that the proving of your faith, much more precious than of gold which perishes though it is proved by fire, may be found unto praise and glory and honor at the revelation of Jesus Christ;
- 1 Peter 1:9 Receiving the end of your faith, the salvation of your souls.
- 1 Peter 4:12 Beloved, do not think that the fiery ordeal among you, coming to you for a trial, is strange, as if it were a strange thing happening to you;
- 1 Peter 4:16 But if as a Christian, let him not be ashamed, but let him glorify God in this name.
- Hebrews 10:35 Do not cast away therefore your boldness, which has great reward.
- Hebrews 10:37 "For in yet a very little while the Coming One will come and will not delay.
- Hebrews 10:39 But we are not of those who shrink back to ruin but of those who have faith to the gaining of the soul.

**Day 1**

- Ephesians 6:16** Besides all these, having taken up the shield of faith, with which you will be able to quench all the flaming darts of the evil one.
- Hebrews 12:2** Looking away unto Jesus, the Author and Perfecter of our faith, who for the joy set before Him endured the cross, despising the shame, and has sat down on the right hand of the throne of God.

**I. As members of the Body of Christ engaged in warfare “against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenlies,” we need to **take up the shield of faith**, with which we “will be able to quench all the flaming darts of the evil one”— Eph. 6:12, 16:**

- A. The shield of faith is not something that we put on but **something that we take up in order to protect ourselves against the attacks of the enemy** and to quench all the flaming darts of the evil one—v. 16.
- B. We need to realize that **faith is a shield** placed between us and Satan:
  1. **Faith is a safeguard** against the flaming darts of the enemy—**accusations, temptations, proposals, doubts, questionings, lies, snares, and attacks**—2 Cor. 2:11.
  2. Satan's flaming darts come as thoughts injected into our mind; these thoughts may seem to be our own thoughts, but they are **thoughts coming from Satan**.

3. When the darts come, they hit the **shield**, and we are **able to quench** all the flaming darts of the evil one—Eph. 6:16.

C. **Faith** comes after truth, righteousness, and peace—vv. 14-15:

1. We need the truth to gird our loins, righteousness to cover our conscience, peace as the standing for our feet, and **faith to shield our entire being**.
2. If we have truth in our living, righteousness as our covering, and peace as our standing, we will **spontaneously have faith**—vv. 14-16.

## Day 2

<b>Mark 11:22</b>	And Jesus answered and said to them, Have faith in God.
<b>Romans 8:31</b>	What then shall we say to these things? If God is for us, who can be against us?
<b>Ephesians 3:20</b>	But to Him who is able to do superabundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power which operates in us,

- D. The shield of faith has **several aspects**: faith in **God** (Mark 11:22), faith in **God's heart** (Rom. 8:31-39), faith in **God's faithfulness** (1 Cor. 1:9; 1 John 1:9), faith in **God's ability** (Eph. 3:20), faith in **God's word** (John 6:63, 68; Acts 20:32), faith in **God's will** (Eph. 1:9, 11), and faith in **God's sovereignty** (Rom. 9:19-29).

We all need to have **full faith** in **God**, in **God's heart**, in **God's faithfulness**, in **God's ability**, in **God's word**, in **God's will**, and in **God's sovereignty**. If we have such faith, Satan's flaming darts will not be able to damage us.

The **flaming darts** are Satan's **temptations**, **proposals**, **doubts**, **questions**, **lies**, and **attacks**. Every temptation is a deceit, a false promise. Satan often makes proposals to us. For this reason, **we need to get into the Word**. If we are not in the Word, we will have no covering against the devil's proposals. Doubts and questions are also the flaming darts of Satan. Note that a question mark looks very much like a serpent. It was Satan who asked Eve, "Did God really say?" (Gen. 3:1). When the devil questions us in this way, our response should be to flee, without even talking to him. Many times Satan attacks us with lies, **but the shield of faith guards us against these flaming darts**.

If we would have the faith to be defended against Satan's flaming darts, **we need a proper spirit with a conscience void of offense**. However, faith is not mainly in our spirit nor in our conscience but in our will, the strongest part of our heart. Romans 10:10 says that we believe with our heart. According to our experience, this faith in our heart is related mainly to the exercise of our will. No one with a weak will can have strong faith. In James 1:6 we are told that he who doubts is like the surge of the sea driven by the wind. Such a person has a vacillating will. Hence, **if we would have faith, we need to exercise our will**. (*The Conclusion of the New Testament: Experiencing, Enjoying, and Expressing Christ, Volume 2, chapter 344*)

## Day 3

<b>1 Peter 1:7</b>	So that the proving of your faith, much more precious than of gold which perishes though it is proved by fire, may be found unto praise and glory and honor at the revelation of Jesus Christ;
<b>1 Peter 4:12</b>	Beloved, do not think that the fiery ordeal among you, coming to you for a trial, is strange, as if it were a strange thing happening to you;

## II. First Peter 1:7 speaks of the **proving of our faith**:

- A. The proving of faith is the **testing for approval**; the Greek word rendered “proving” means “testing for approval.”
- B. We are put into trials because **our faith needs to be tested**, approved—4:12.
- C. No one who has believed in the Lord and has received grace can avoid the testing of faith—John 3:15, 36; 1:16.
- D. The Bible shows that there is **no faith without testing**; all faith must be tested—1 Pet. 1:7; 4:12:
  1. God tests our faith in order that we may grow in faith and in life—Eph. 4:15:
    - a. No Christian can grow **without first having his faith tested**.
    - b. When our faith is tested, **we spontaneously grow**—1 Pet. 2:2; 2 Pet. 3:18; 1 Cor. 3:6-7.
  2. God tests our faith to satisfy Himself—**proving that we have genuine faith**—1 Pet. 1:7:
    - a. It is **genuine faith that satisfies God**—1 Tim. 1:5; 2 Tim. 1:5.
    - b. A faith that is approved is a **glory to God’s name**—1 Pet. 4:11; John 12:28:
      - (1) God’s name is glorified in this world **through an approved faith**—1 Pet. 1:7.
      - (2) When we pass through **tribulations, persecutions, obstacles**, and **darkness**, and we **still believe** after these tests and still stand fast after these trials, **this faith will glorify God’s name**—2:12; 4:12, 16.
- E. The approval of faith **comes out of the proper faith**; the stress here is not on faith but on the proving of faith by trials that come through sufferings—1:7.
- F. In verse 7 Peter says that the proving of our faith is “**much more precious than of gold which perishes though it is proved by fire**”:
  1. The words much more precious than of gold...by fire do not modify faith; they modify proving.
  2. This means that the **proving of our faith is much more precious than the proving of gold**:
    - a. The comparison here is that between the proving of our faith and the proving of gold.
    - b. Gold is proved by the purifying fire; in like manner, our **faith is proved by trial**.
- G. It is the **trying**, the **proving**, of faith, not the faith itself, that may be found unto praise—vv. 7-8:
  1. This is like the school’s examination of the student’s studying: what is found to be approved is the examination, not the student’s studying itself.

Now let us consider the relationship between the testing of our faith and overcoming. God wants to test our faith in order to make sure that our faith is **indeed faith**. All genuine faith is long-lived. All short-lived faith is not faith at all. **Genuine faith is always long-lived**. It will believe after three days, a month, a year, ten years, or even fifty years. Genuine faith can withstand one obstacle, five obstacles, or ten obstacles. Genuine faith will believe after it is tested once, five times, or seven times. Any faith that is short-lived and that falls and evaporates with a slight shake is not faith at all. All faith is necessarily long-lived.

In the Bible we see that overcoming is a **matter of believing God’s Word**. God says that His Son is our life, our Head, our victory, our sanctification, and our power. We know that He has borne our burden and is responsible for all of our affairs. We know that He supplies us with endurance and meekness, and we know that He is supplying us within with everything that we need. Thank and praise the Lord! We know, and we believe. But such faith has to pass through the test. (*The Overcoming Life, chapter 8*)

### Day 4

- |                      |  |
|----------------------|--|
| <b>1 Peter 1:6-7</b> | In which time you exult, though for a little while at present, if it must be, you have been made sorrowful by various trials, So that the proving of your faith, much more precious than of gold which perishes though it is proved by fire, may be found unto praise and glory and honor at the revelation of Jesus Christ; |
| <b>1 Peter 1:9</b>   | Receiving the end of your faith, the salvation of your souls.  |

2. If the proving of our faith is positive, the **proving will result in praise, glory, and honor at the revelation of Jesus Christ**—vv. 7-8:
  - a. The Lord is with us today (Matt. 28:20) but in a hidden, veiled way.
  - b. His coming back will be **His revelation**, when He will be seen openly by all—Rev. 1:7.
  - c. At that time not only He but also the **proving of our faith will be revealed**.

### III. The proving of our faith being found unto praise, glory, and honor results in receiving the end of our faith—the **salvation of our souls**—1 Pet. 1:9:

- A. The salvation in verse 5 is **full salvation, ultimate salvation**, the **salvation of the Triune God**; it refers specifically to the **salvation of our souls** from the dispensational punishment of the Lord's governmental dealing at His coming back.
- B. This is the salvation—the salvation of our souls—which is ready to be revealed to us at the last time, the grace to be brought to us at the revelation of Jesus Christ in glory; the **salvation of our souls is the end of our faith**—vv. 9, 13; Matt. 16:27.
- C. Our soul will be saved from sufferings into the **full enjoyment of the Lord at His revelation**, His coming back—25:31:
  1. For this salvation we must **deny our soul**, our soulish life, with all its pleasures in this age so that we may **gain it in the enjoyment of the Lord in the coming age**—10:37-39; 16:24-27; Luke 17:30-33; John 12:25:
    - a. To lose the soul-life means to **lose the enjoyment of the soul**, and to save the soul-life means to **preserve the soul in its enjoyment**—Matt. 16:25.
    - b. We will either lose our soul-life today and **gain it in the coming age**, or save our soul-life today and **lose it in the coming age**.
    - c. If we would enter into the Lord's joy in the coming age, we need to **pay the price in this age by losing our soul-life**—25:21, 23.

The salvation in verse 9 is full salvation, the salvation which is in three stages—the initial stage, the progressing stage, and the completing stage. We are of three parts: spirit, soul, and body. Our spirit has been saved through regeneration. Our body will be saved, redeemed, through the coming transfiguration. **Our soul will be saved from sufferings into the full enjoyment of the Lord at His unveiling, His coming back.** For this we have to **deny our soul**, our **soulish life**, with all its pleasures in this age, that we may gain it in the enjoyment of the Lord in the coming age. At the Lord's unveiling, some believers through His judgment seat will enter into the joy of the Lord, and some will suffer in weeping and gnashing of teeth. **To enter into the Lord's joy is the salvation of our souls.** This salvation is more precious than the salvation of the body, which the children of Israel expect to receive.

The full salvation of the Triune God includes the **Father's regeneration**, the **Spirit's sanctification or application**, and **Christ's redemption**. This full salvation is revealed in 1:3-23. These verses reveal the full salvation of God in three aspects according to the Trinity. The Father's regeneration brings something into us, and it also brings us into something. Do you know what the Father's regeneration brings into us and what it brings us into? **The regeneration of the Father brings eternal life into us.** Furthermore, the Father's regeneration brings us into the hope, the **inheritance of eternal life**. Therefore, eternal life has been brought into us, and we have been brought into the hope, the inheritance, of eternal life. We now have eternal life, and we are also enjoying the inheritance of this eternal life. This is the Father's regeneration with its results, its issue. The result of the Father's regeneration is to bring eternal life into us and to bring us into the full enjoyment of God as our life supply. This life supply is the living hope. This life supply is also the inheritance incorruptible, undefiled, and unfading. This marvelous inheritance is kept in the heavens for us so that we may enjoy it and participate in it daily, hourly, continually. (*Life-Study of 1 Peter, chapter 6*)

### Day 5

<b>1 Peter 1:7-9</b>	So that the proving of your faith, much more precious than of gold which perishes though it is proved by fire, may be found unto praise and glory and honor at the revelation of Jesus Christ;
<b>Hebrews 10:39</b>	Whom having not seen, you love; into whom though not seeing Him at present, yet believing, you exult with joy that is unspeakable and full of glory,
<b>Matthew 16:25</b>	For whoever wants to save his soul-life shall lose it; but whoever loses his soul-life for My sake shall find it.

2. At the Lord's revelation, through His judgment seat, some believers will enter into the joy of the Lord, and some will suffer in weeping and gnashing of teeth—vv. 21, 23; 24:45-46; 25:30; 24:51.
3. **To enter into the Lord's joy is the salvation of our souls**—Heb. 10:39:
  - a. The saving, or gaining, of our soul depends on **how we deal with our soul in following the Lord after we are saved and regenerated**.
  - b. If we lose our soul now for the Lord's sake, **we will save it**, and **it will be saved**, or gained, **at the Lord's coming back**—Luke 9:24; 1 Pet. 1:9.
  - c. The **gaining of the soul will be the reward** of the kingdom to the overcoming followers of the Lord—Heb. 10:35; Matt. 16:22-28.

### Day 6

<b>1 Peter 1:5</b>	Who are being guarded by the power of God through faith unto a salvation ready to be revealed at the last time;
<b>Romans 8:19</b>	For the anxious watching of the creation eagerly awaits the revelation of the sons of God.
<b>Romans 8:23</b>	And not only so, but we ourselves also, who have the firstfruits of the Spirit, even we ourselves groan in ourselves, eagerly awaiting sonship, the redemption of our body.

- D. The **power of God** is **able to guard us unto this salvation so that we may obtain it**; the power of God is the cause of our being guarded, and faith is the means through which the power of God becomes effective in guarding us—1 Pet. 1:5.
- E. We should eagerly expect this marvelous, full, and ultimate salvation and prepare ourselves for its **splendid revelation**—Rom. 8:19, 23.

In verse 5 Peter says, "*Who are being guarded by the power of God through faith unto salvation, ready to be revealed at the last time.*" If we would enjoy our heavenly inheritance today and participate in it, we need to be guarded. This means that we need to be **kept in the right position**. Sometimes we are distracted and moved away from the position necessary to enjoy the heavenly inheritance. In the past we all have experienced, at least to some extent, that when we are carried away from the Lord by something, we lose the enjoyment of the inheritance of eternal life. Therefore, we need to be **guarded, protected**.

Thank the Lord that **we are being guarded by the power of God through faith**. The power of God is the means by which we are being guarded. Faith is the secondary means through which the power of God becomes effective in guarding us. Thus, the power of God is on God's side, and the faith is on our side. This indicates that **we need to cooperate with the power of God**. If we cooperate in this way, we shall be kept in the right position to enjoy our heavenly inheritance.

According to verse 5, we are being guarded, garrisoned (a military term), by the power of God through faith unto salvation. **The result of this guarding is salvation**. In this verse three prepositions are used concerning our coming salvation: by, through, and unto. By refers to cause, through to the means, and unto to the result. (*Life-Study 1 Peter, chapter 5*)