

**The Attackers: Development & Construction of the Roman Shield; Paul's Metaphor: The Shield of Faith Is the FLOT Line; Satan's "Flaming Arrows" Are His Attacks of Adversity & Prosperity; the Shield Stresses Use of the Faith-Rest Drill**

12. To do this, we must pick up and hold fast the shield of faith. The shield that Paul observes from his safe house in Rome is that provided to the Roman soldiers assigned to guard him.
13. The shield was known to these soldiers as their *scutum*. Paul calls it by its Greek word *thurēos*.<sup>1</sup> Its construction and application is described in this excerpt from the *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament*:

Θυρέος is the four-cornered long shield which covers the whole man like a door ...originally half-moon, later round, ... finally rectangular, level or concave. The Romans c. 340 B.C. exchanged the round shield for the long shield. The latter came to characterize the Roman legionary. (pp. 312–13)

For curvature the shield of the Roman legionary was made of two wooden pieces glued together and covered with linen and then with calf leather. Polybius and Livy give the following measurements: breadth in the curve, 2½ feet; length 4 feet. The thickness could be up to a hand's breadth. A strong boss<sup>2</sup> gave it added power of resistance. (p. 313)

In the New Testament, θυρέος is used only figuratively in Ephesians 6:16. All the attacks of Satan are hurled back by the fellowship with God granted to believers. The metaphor is not consistent, since the shield does not in fact quench fiery darts, but at best can only cause them to fall harmlessly to the ground. (pp. 313–14)

"The burning arrow is a powerful weapon, made of turned iron, which has iron an ell [45"] long, on it a ball whose weight is increased by lead; it has ... fire attached, being surrounded by tow [fibers] and daubed with pitch [tar]; when kindled it destroys the enemy either by wounding or burning."

Ammianus Marcellinus<sup>3</sup> \am-ē-ā'-nas mär-sa-lī'-nas\ [c.330–395] gives the following description of smaller burning arrows: the arrow is made of cane articulated between tip and shaft by fissured iron; it is curved like a weaver's spindle on which linen threads are spun, and stands fine and abundantly open with its cavity, and takes into its belly fire with combustible material. And when, shot fairly slowly from a not too taunt bow, for it would be extinguished by too rapid flight, it strikes somewhere, it burns stubbornly, and if water is poured on it, causes stronger bursts of flame, and can be put out by no other means than sand spread over it.<sup>4</sup> (p. 314)

14. The writer of the article asserts that Paul's metaphor, describing how the shield of faith quenches the flaming arrows of Satan, is in error.

<sup>1</sup> "Θυρέος, stone put against a door to keep it shut. Oblong shield (shaped like a door), hence, of the Roman *scutum*" (Henry George Liddell and Robert Scott, *A Greek-English Lexicon* [New York: Oxford, 1968], 811).

<sup>2</sup> "On the middle (of the shield) was a boss, very useful in causing stones and darts to glance off" (Noah Webster, vol. 1 of *An American Dictionary of the English Language* [1828; repr., San Francisco: Foundation for American Christian Education, 1995], s.v. "buckler").

<sup>3</sup> "Roman soldier and historian. Of noble Greek family; served under Constantius II in Gaul and Persia. Author of Latin history of Roman Empire from Nerva to death of Valens \vā'-lenz\ (96–378), constituting a continuation of Tacitus' history; of 31 original books, 18 are extant, covering period from 353 to 378" (*Merriam-Webster's Biographical Dictionary*, s.v. "Ammianus Marcellinus").

<sup>4</sup> Albrecht Oepke, "θυρέος," in *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament*, ed. Gerhard Friedrich, trans. and ed. Geoffrey W. Bromiley (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1967), 5:312–15.

15. The *scūtum* did not accomplish this on battlefields occupied by Roman legionaries. Paul's metaphor does hold up when observed from the believer's occupation of the battlefields of the Invisible War.
16. The way the propaganda and duplicity of cosmic ideology is quenched by the believer is said to be made possible by **πίστις (pístis)**: faith.
17. *Pístis* is used ordinarily in two major ways: faith or that which is believed, i.e., doctrine.
18. Paul's use here has to do with a way of thinking. Having faith is often assumed to be a form of emotion, an empty hope for a beneficial outcome without having anything to support such an opinion.
19. But faith is a system of thinking based on information that the believer trusts to be valid, immutable, and powerful. With this trust, he is able to withstand all the challenges offered by *cosmos diabolicus*.
20. There are three systems of thought to which one can subscribe to reach conclusions, make decisions, and resolve issues: **(1) Rationalism:** knowledge obtained through reason. Philosophers are rationalists. **(2) Empiricism:** knowledge obtained through experience. Scientists are empiricists. **(3) Faith:** The acceptance of an established criterion as the basis of reality. For believers, that criterion is the Bible.
21. A very high percentage of everything a person knows was obtained through faith. For example, there is no way to prove addition, yet this process of combining numbers to determine a sum is learned in the first grade and no one questions that 2 plus two equal four.
22. The believer is saved by grace through faith in Jesus Christ, a Person whose accomplishments are only known to us through the testimony of Scripture.
23. Yet we place confidence in our eternal future by believing on Someone we have never seen and Who died around two-thousand years ago.
24. So our faith has objects: faith in Christ for salvation and faith in the veracity of the Bible for our spiritual growth.
25. Faith in the Bible is an ongoing growth process. As we grow in grace, the power of the Word increases as we retain its enlarging inventory in our souls.
26. The shield of faith stresses the utilization of the faith-rest drill which involves the claiming of promises, concentrating on biblical doctrines and rationales, and reaching doctrinal conclusions.