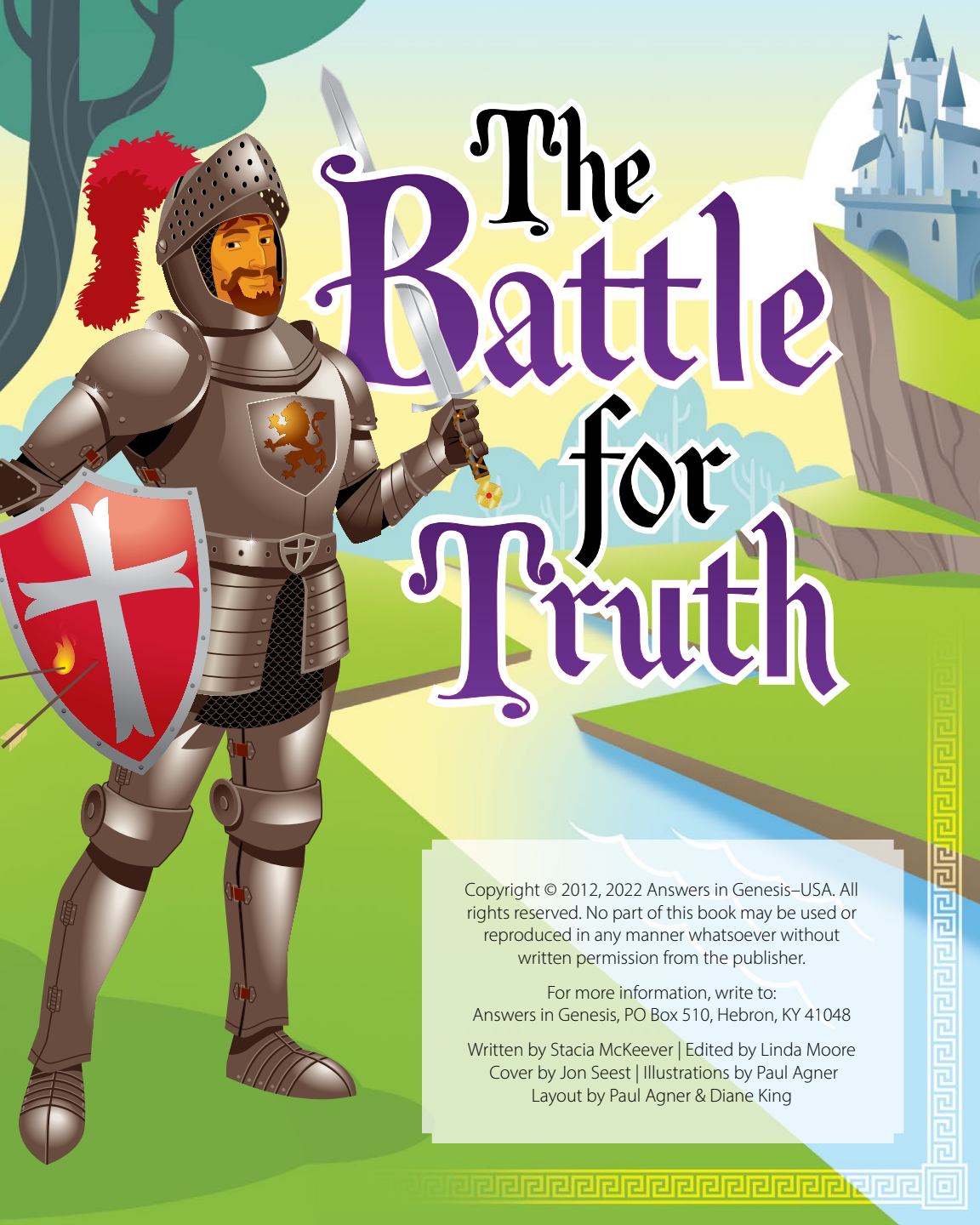




The Battle for Truth



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For more information, write to:

Answers in Genesis, PO Box 510, Hebron, KY 41048

Written by Stacia McKeever | Edited by Linda Moore

Cover by Jon Seest | Illustrations by Paul Agner

Layout by Paul Agner & Diane King





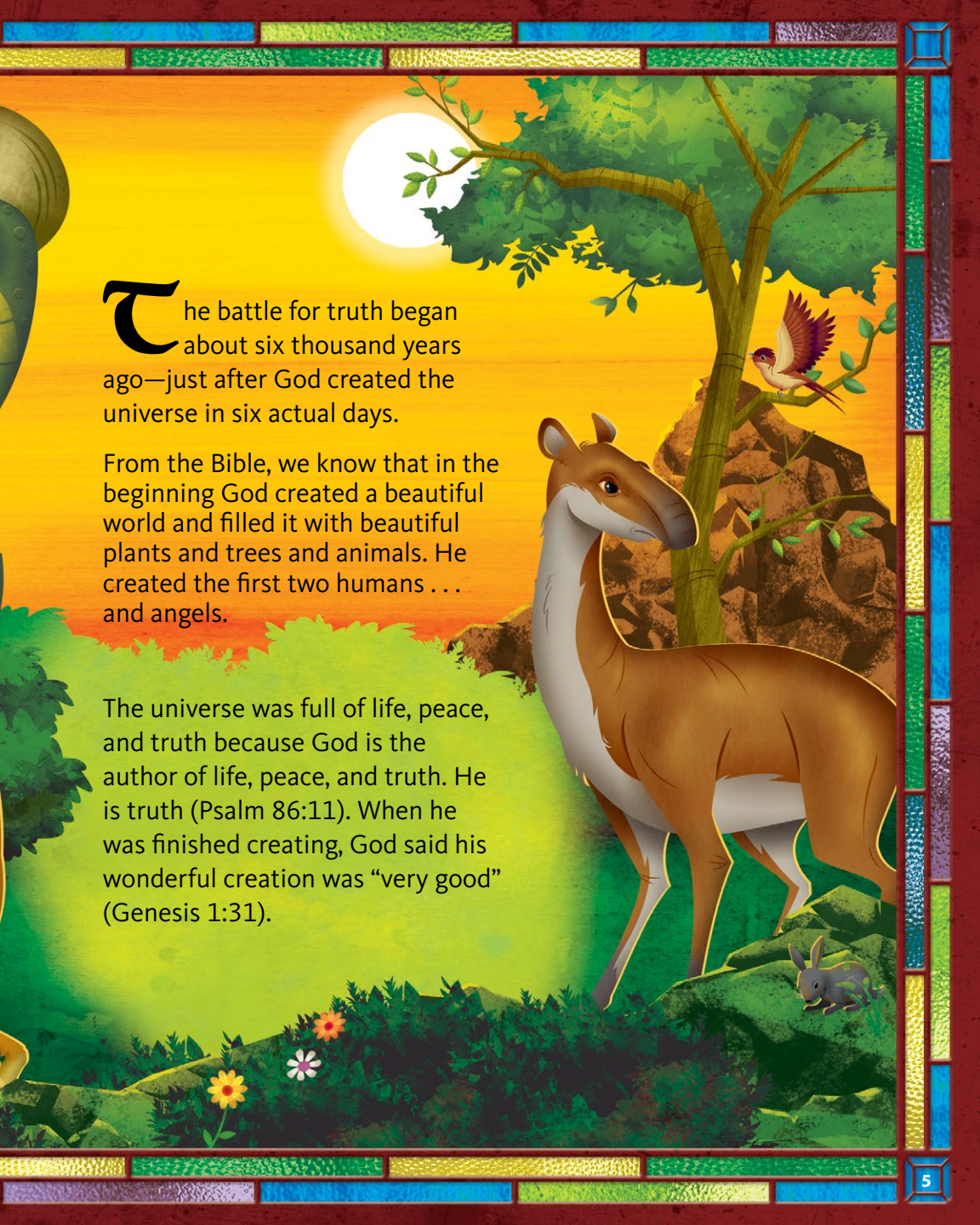
The Battle FOR Truth

Truth

What is truth? How can we
know what is true?

There's a battle going on between truth
and error. It's not a battle we can see,
but it's very real nonetheless, and we
need to be ready to stand strong in it!





The battle for truth began about six thousand years ago—just after God created the universe in six actual days.

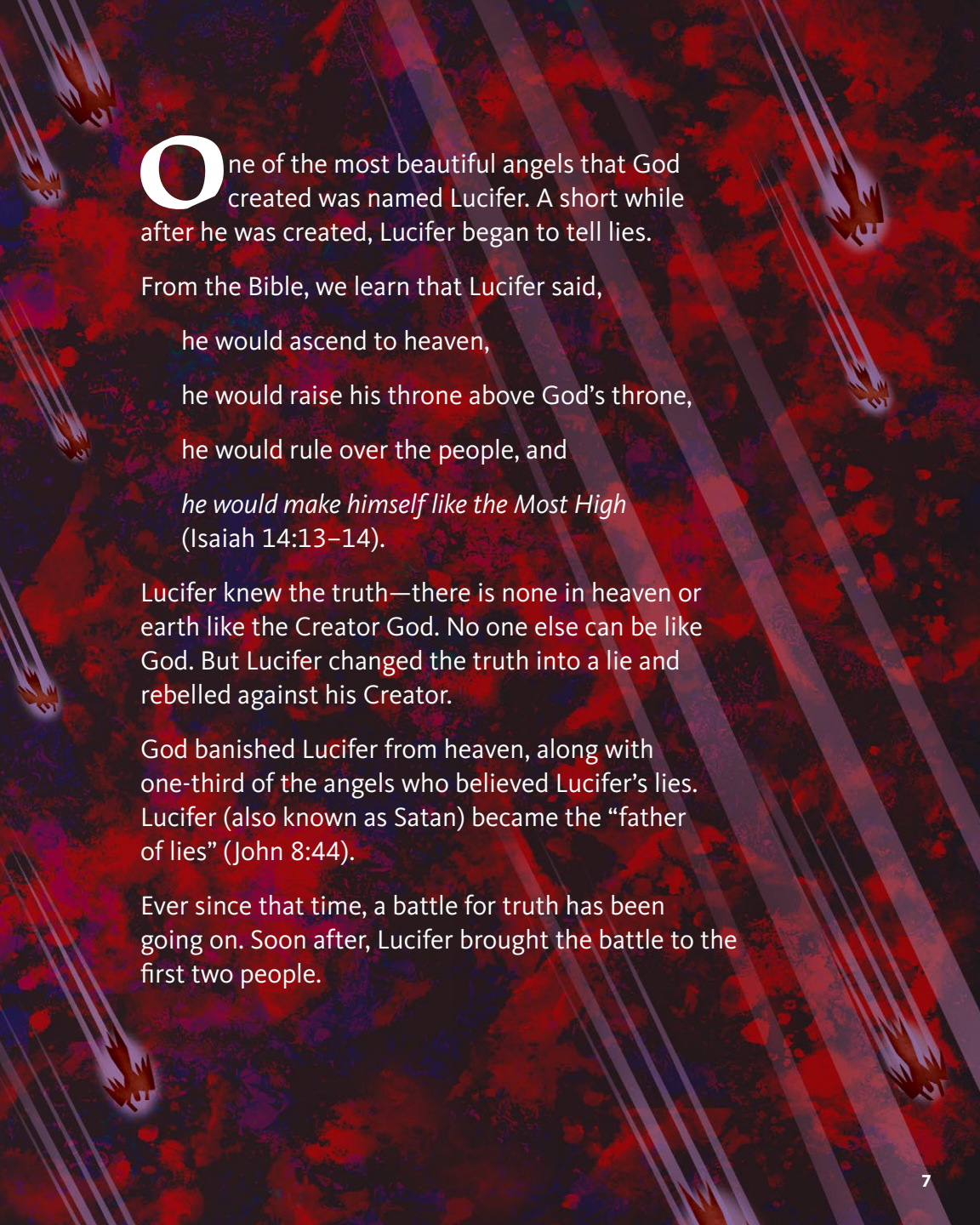
From the Bible, we know that in the beginning God created a beautiful world and filled it with beautiful plants and trees and animals. He created the first two humans . . . and angels.

The universe was full of life, peace, and truth because God is the author of life, peace, and truth. He is truth (Psalm 86:11). When he was finished creating, God said his wonderful creation was “very good” (Genesis 1:31).



The Battle Begins





One of the most beautiful angels that God created was named Lucifer. A short while after he was created, Lucifer began to tell lies.

From the Bible, we learn that Lucifer said,

he would ascend to heaven,

he would raise his throne above God's throne,

he would rule over the people, and

he would make himself like the Most High
(Isaiah 14:13–14).

Lucifer knew the truth—there is none in heaven or earth like the Creator God. No one else can be like God. But Lucifer changed the truth into a lie and rebelled against his Creator.

God banished Lucifer from heaven, along with one-third of the angels who believed Lucifer's lies. Lucifer (also known as Satan) became the “father of lies” (John 8:44).

Ever since that time, a battle for truth has been going on. Soon after, Lucifer brought the battle to the first two people.



The Battle Comes to Earth

God created the first two people, Adam and Eve. He gave them a command to obey: they may eat fruit from any tree in the garden except the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. The punishment for disobeying was death (Genesis 2:16–17).

A short while after God created Adam and Eve, Lucifer took the form of a serpent and entered the garden of Eden. He wanted to tempt Eve to change the truth of God for a lie, just as he had done.

First, he used God's words but changed them just a little bit. He asked Eve if God really said she couldn't eat from any tree in the garden (Genesis 3:1). (God had said they could eat from any tree—except one.)

And then he told her that she would not die but that her eyes would be opened and she would be like God, knowing good and evil (Genesis 3:4–5). Lucifer lied to Eve about what God had said. Can you spot his lie?

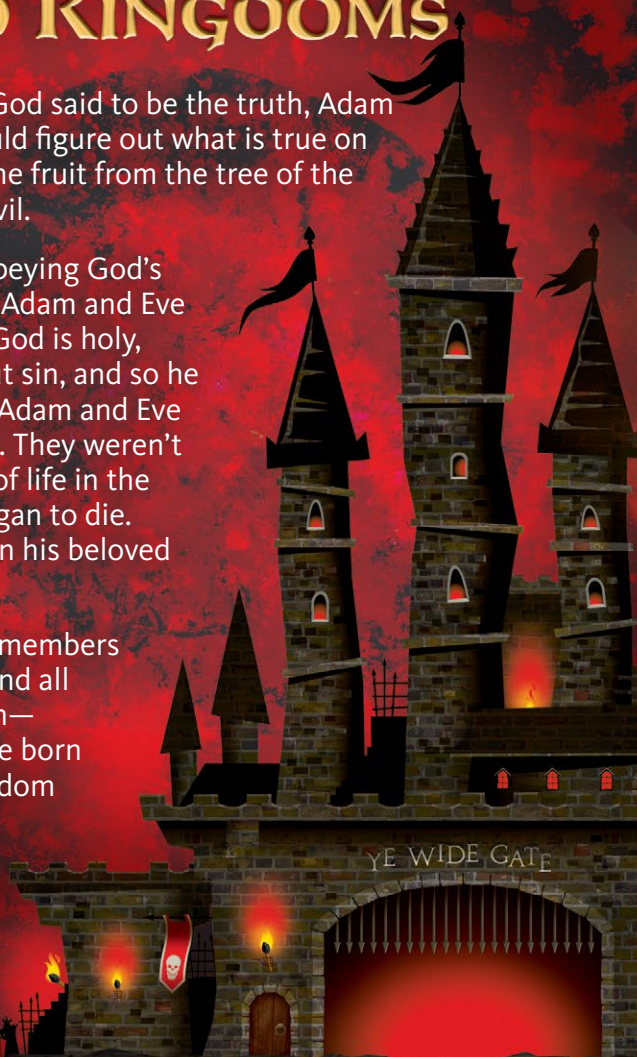


The Battle Between Two Kingdoms

Instead of trusting what God said to be the truth, Adam and Eve believed they could figure out what is true on their own. And they ate the fruit from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil.

After they sinned by disobeying God's command, God punished Adam and Eve just as he had promised. God is holy, which means he is without sin, and so he must punish sin. He sent Adam and Eve out of the garden of Eden. They weren't able to eat from the tree of life in the garden anymore. They began to die. God also placed a curse on his beloved creation (Genesis 3).

Now Adam and Eve were members of Satan's bad kingdom, and all humans from that time on—including you and me—are born as citizens of Satan's kingdom (Colossians 1:13–14).



Satan is fighting to keep
us all in his bad kingdom.
But our loving Creator
God has made a way for
us to be citizens of his
good kingdom *forever!*



Switching KingdomS



Everyone is born into Satan's kingdom, and every person sins, or disobeys God's commands (Romans 3:23). We all deserve to be eternally separated from God in a terrible place called hell when we die (John 3:16–21; Romans 6:23; Revelation 21:8). This is the place that God prepared for Satan and his followers, and this is where those who stay in Satan's kingdom will go when they die (Matthew 25:41).

But God offers us a wonderful gift—life with him in his heavenly kingdom forever! Since the punishment for our sin is death (Romans 6:23), we need someone to pay that penalty for us. So God sent his Son, Jesus Christ, to earth about two thousand years ago. Jesus lived a perfect life. But he was put to death on a cross to pay the penalty for sin on behalf of mankind. He rose from the dead after three days, showing that God had accepted his sacrifice.

Now we can receive the gift of salvation if we are truly sorry for our sins and turn from them (repent) and believe that Jesus died in our place (Acts 20:21; Ephesians 2:8–9; Romans 10:9–10). We become children of God—citizens of his kingdom—and we'll live forever with him in heaven!



The ARMOR Of God

Sword Of
The Spirit

Those who have received the gift of eternal life can enjoy being part of God's good kingdom. But until we get to heaven, there are still many battles we must fight against the enemy of truth. Thankfully, God, in his goodness, has given us armor to wear that helps us stand strong.

Helmet Of
Salvation

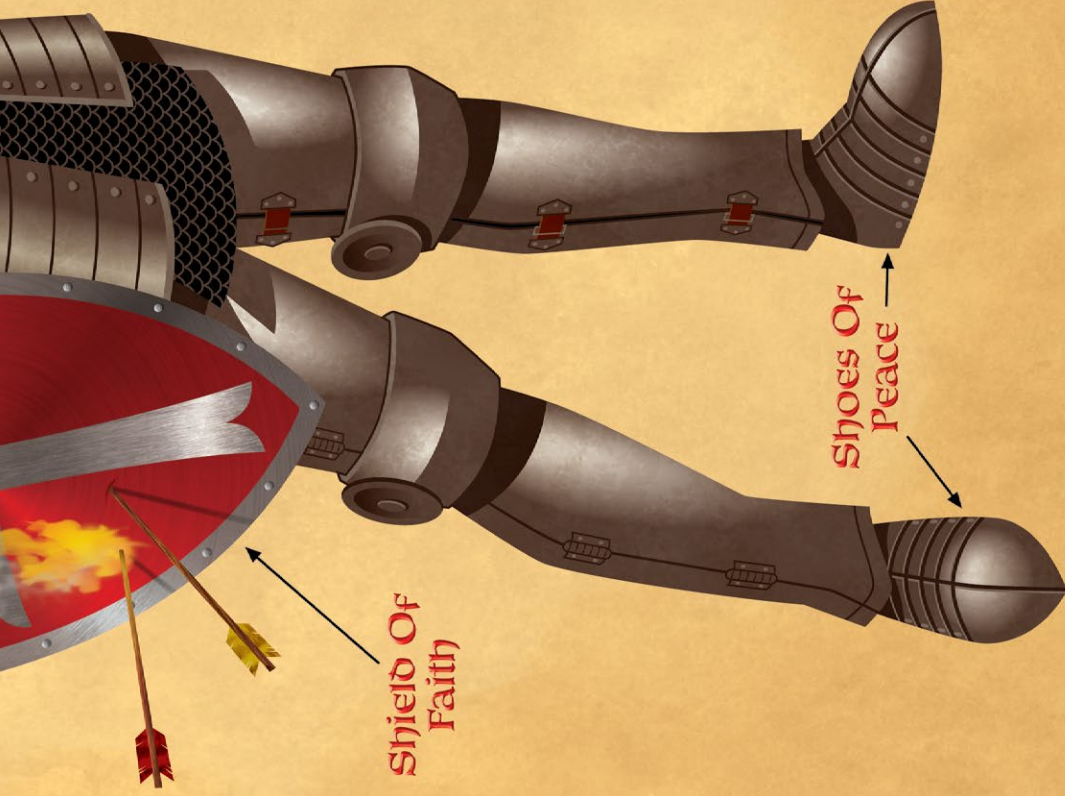
Breastplate
Of
Righteousness

Belt Of
Truth



In a letter that he wrote to Christians living in Ephesus (a city in Asia), the Apostle Paul encouraged them to put on the armor of God, and he described each piece (read Ephesians 6:10–18). The people were familiar with armor because they were surrounded by Roman soldiers and understood what each piece was for.

However, the armor Paul described wasn't the kind we can see and feel. Instead, God's armor is special, invisible spiritual armor. And it's very important that we wear it. Let's take a look at the armor of God!

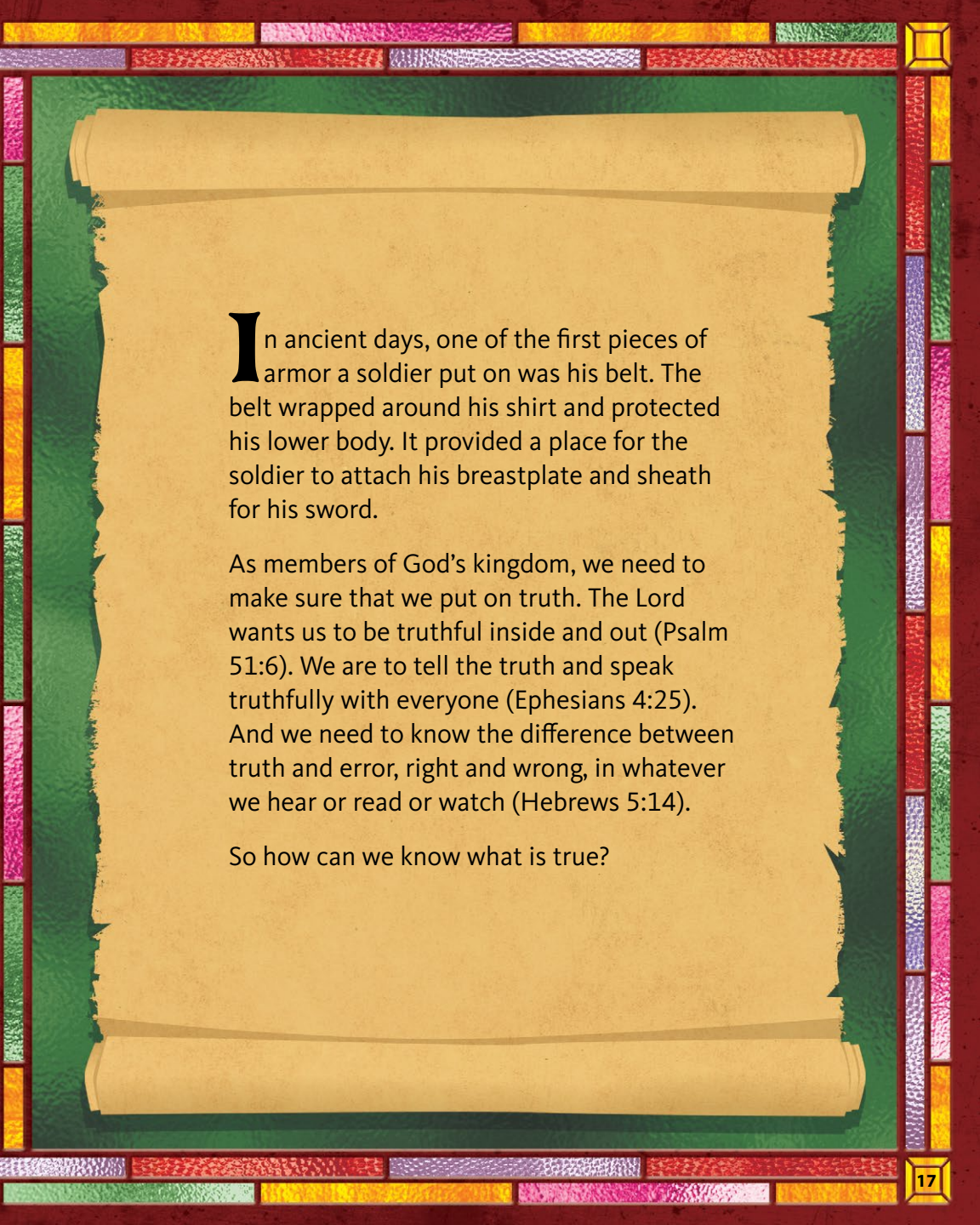


The Belt Of Truth



Ephesians 6:14





In ancient days, one of the first pieces of armor a soldier put on was his belt. The belt wrapped around his shirt and protected his lower body. It provided a place for the soldier to attach his breastplate and sheath for his sword.

As members of God's kingdom, we need to make sure that we put on truth. The Lord wants us to be truthful inside and out (Psalm 51:6). We are to tell the truth and speak truthfully with everyone (Ephesians 4:25). And we need to know the difference between truth and error, right and wrong, in whatever we hear or read or watch (Hebrews 5:14).

So how can we know what is true?



How can we know what is true?

Creation

SIN

HOLINESS

GRACE

6 LITERAL
DAYS

Truth

MERCY

JESUS



One of the characteristics of the Creator God of the Bible is that he is a God of truth (Deuteronomy 32:4; Psalm 33:4). He cannot lie (Titus 1:2), so we can trust whatever he says to be true (Psalm 119:160; John 17:17). Jesus said that he is the truth (John 14:6).

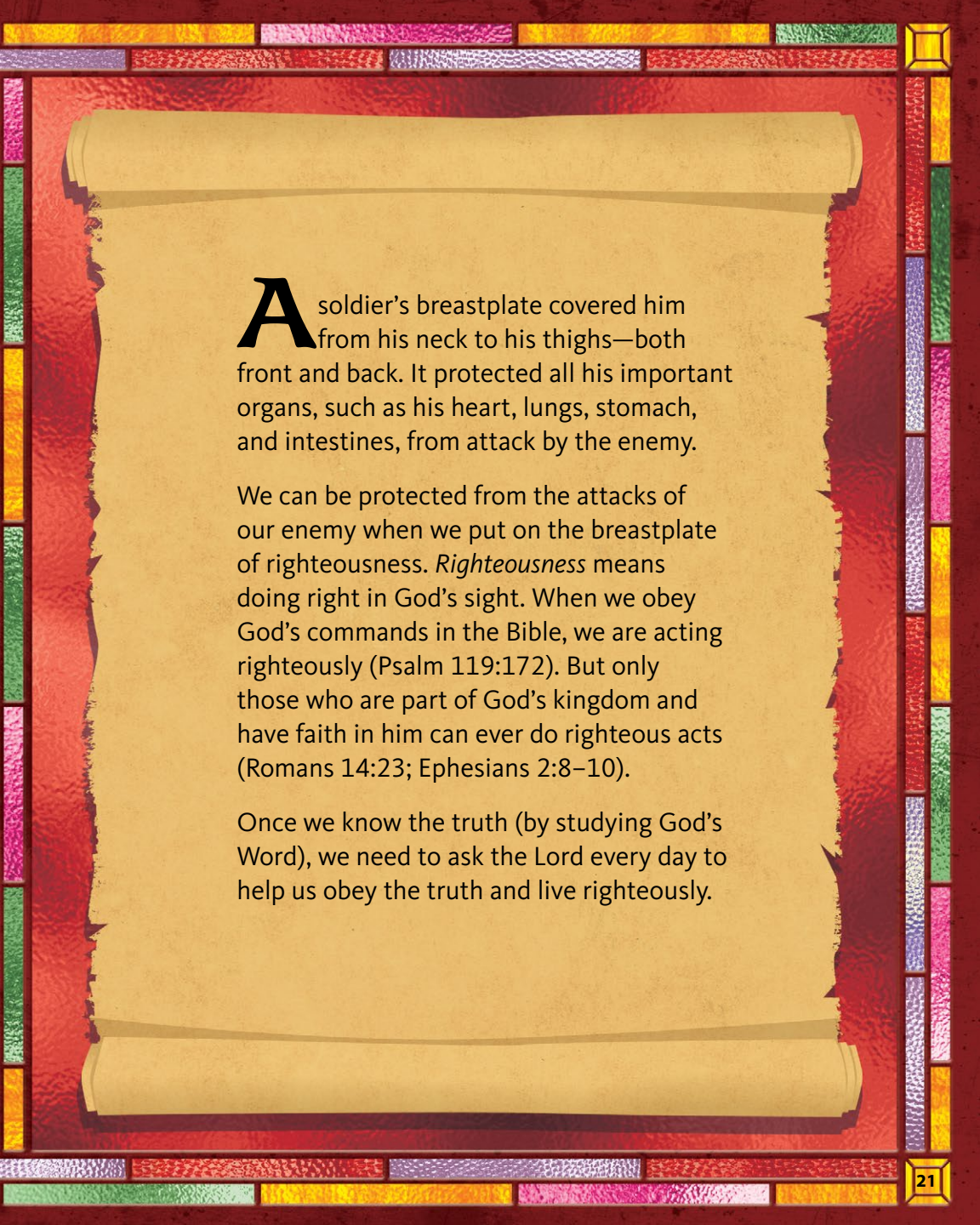
We need to read and study God's Word, the Bible, so that we can know what truth is and spot the lies of the enemy when we hear them in books, in movies, on TV, or from our friends.

We should always compare what we learn to what the Bible—the source of truth—says. In the Bible, God tells us about many things, including history, science, and morality (doing what's right). So whatever topic the Bible touches on, we can believe it, accept it, and use it as our standard for truth.

The Breastplate of Righteousness

Ephesians 6:14





A soldier's breastplate covered him from his neck to his thighs—both front and back. It protected all his important organs, such as his heart, lungs, stomach, and intestines, from attack by the enemy.

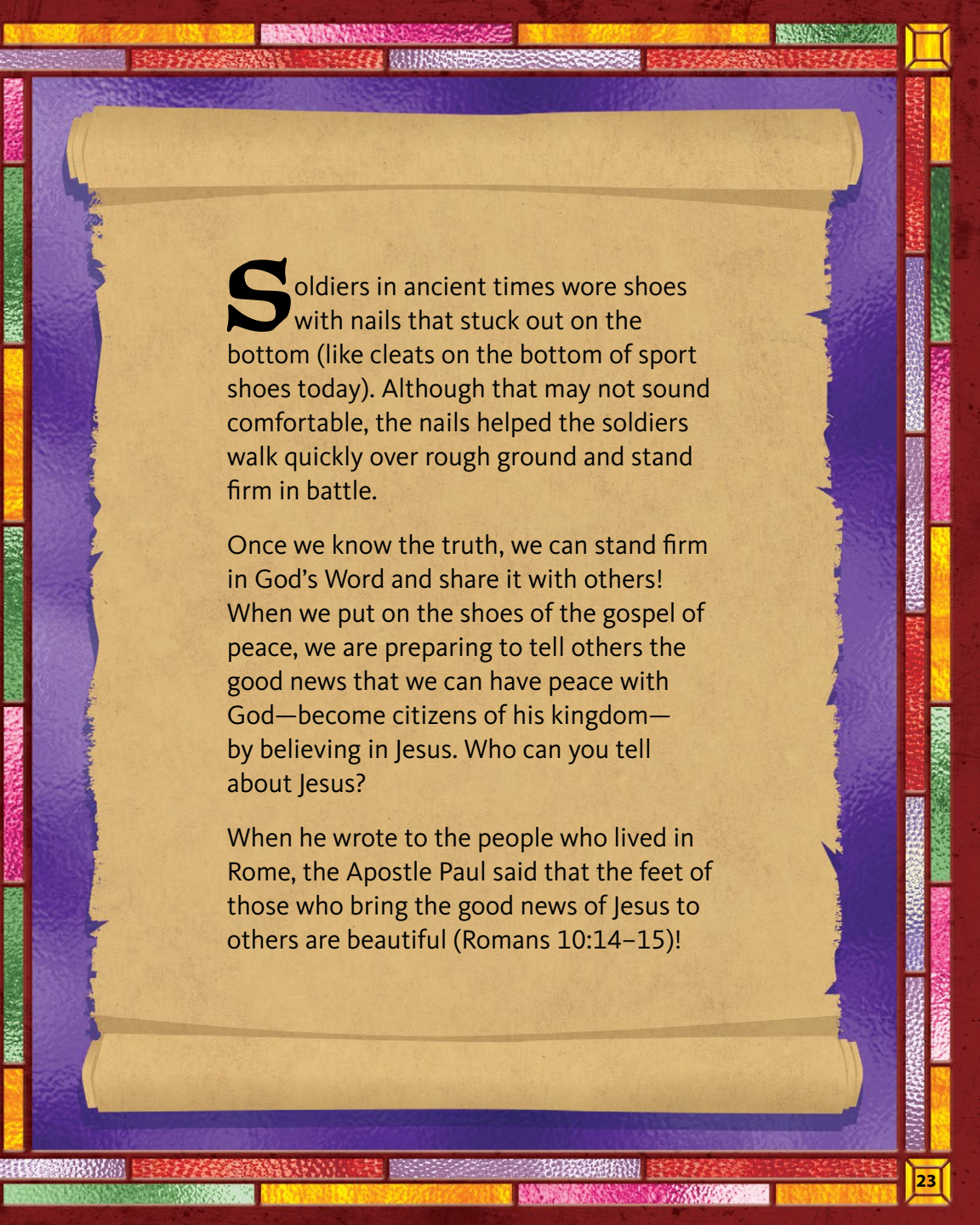
We can be protected from the attacks of our enemy when we put on the breastplate of righteousness. *Righteousness* means doing right in God's sight. When we obey God's commands in the Bible, we are acting righteously (Psalm 119:172). But only those who are part of God's kingdom and have faith in him can ever do righteous acts (Romans 14:23; Ephesians 2:8–10).

Once we know the truth (by studying God's Word), we need to ask the Lord every day to help us obey the truth and live righteously.

The Shoes of Peace

Ephesians 6:15





Soldiers in ancient times wore shoes with nails that stuck out on the bottom (like cleats on the bottom of sport shoes today). Although that may not sound comfortable, the nails helped the soldiers walk quickly over rough ground and stand firm in battle.


Once we know the truth, we can stand firm in God's Word and share it with others! When we put on the shoes of the gospel of peace, we are preparing to tell others the good news that we can have peace with God—become citizens of his kingdom—by believing in Jesus. Who can you tell about Jesus?

When he wrote to the people who lived in Rome, the Apostle Paul said that the feet of those who bring the good news of Jesus to others are beautiful (Romans 10:14–15)!

The Shield of Faith

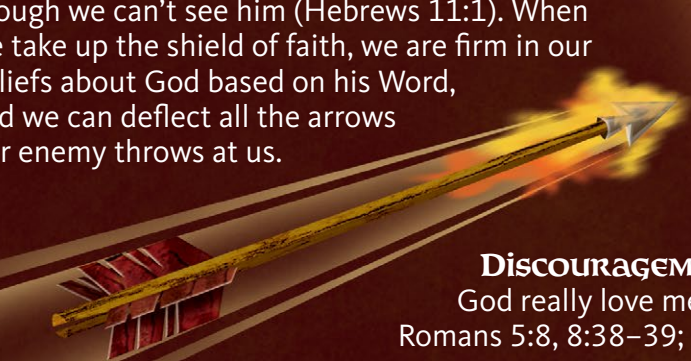


Ephesians 6:16




In the past, soldiers used their shields to block attacks from the enemy and, sometimes, to push the enemy backward.

Faith is believing in God and trusting his Word even though we can't see him (Hebrews 11:1). When we take up the shield of faith, we are firm in our beliefs about God based on his Word, and we can deflect all the arrows our enemy throws at us.



Discouragement ("Does God really love me?" Yes! See Romans 5:8, 8:38–39; 1 John 3:1.)



Doing Wrong (“Can I really know the right thing to do?” Yes! See Psalm 119:9; 2 Timothy 3:16–17.)

Doubt (“Can I really trust God’s Word?” Yes! See 2 Timothy 3:15–17.)

Deception (“Can I really know what is true?” Yes! See Deuteronomy 32:4; Psalm 25:5, 25:10, 119:151; John 14:6.)

Destruction (“Can I really stand strong in this battle?” Yes! See 1 Corinthians 10:13; Revelation 2:7, 3:5; John 10:27–29.)

The Helmet of Salvation

Ephesians 6:17

The helmets soldiers wore protected their heads from attack. Some of the helmets were also very showy with big feathers or unusual shapes (such as elephants). Helmets were a way to let other people know who the soldiers were and who they were fighting for.

When we put on the helmet of salvation, our minds are protected from the attacks of the enemy. And as we learn more about our salvation—and the one who saved us from our sins—by studying the Bible, we begin to think more like Jesus (Philippians 2:5). The way we think makes a difference in the way we talk and act (Proverbs 23:7), so it's important that we guard our minds.

But the helmet of salvation should also be a piece of armor that we use to show others who we are and who we represent—the King of kings. People should be able to see that we are citizens of the good kingdom by the way we live and act and talk. What does your “helmet” say about you?





The Sword of the Spirit



Ephesians 6:17



Soldiers used much of their armor to protect them from the enemy's attacks. But some of their armor they used to actually attack the enemy. The sword was one of those pieces—it was used in close, hand-to-hand combat.

The weapon we use to attack our enemy is the sword of the Spirit—the Word of God, the Bible. Over a period of 1,600 years, the Holy Spirit gave over 40 different men the words he wanted them to write. These writings have been collected into the 66 books that make up our Bible—39 books in the Old Testament and 27 books in the New Testament.

Because the Bible is from God, it is the best way to defeat the enemy. Jesus gave us this example in Matthew 4 when he used Scripture against Satan's attacks and made him go away. We need to read the Bible, study it, memorize it, and say it whenever we can!





Prayer

Ephesians 6:18

After a soldier put on his armor and went to battle, it was important that he stayed in contact with his leader. He needed to know where to go and how to fight and whom to fight.

Although prayer isn't considered a piece of armor, it is very important. We need to stay in constant communication with our heavenly Commander God. Prayer is simply talking to God. We can pray anytime, anywhere. A simple way to pray is to remember the ACTS of prayer.

Adoration—Tell God how much you love him and praise him for his many wonderful attributes (love, mercy, justice, grace, holiness, and sovereignty). Read the psalms for help in what to say.

Confession—Confess (admit) your sins to God; ask him to forgive you (1 John 1:9).

Thanksgiving—Thank God for what he has done for you and others and for the ways he provides for you and helps you (Philippians 4:6; 1 Thessalonians 5:18).

Supplication—This word means to ask. Tell God about the wants and needs you have for yourself and others (Philippians 4:6–7).

Stand strong in the battle for truth!

There's a battle going on between two kingdoms—God's good kingdom and Satan's bad kingdom. Those of us who have received the gift of eternal life in God's good kingdom forever have been given special armor to wear every day. And our heavenly King will help us stand strong in this battle for truth.



The great news is that, according to God's Word, he wins in the end! He will defeat Satan forever, and we can share in his glorious victory as his children!

Whose
side
are you
on?



here's a battle going on between God's good kingdom and Satan's bad kingdom. We need to make sure we're ready for the fight! With *The Battle for Truth*, children will learn from the Bible how to become children of the King. And they'll discover how to put on the armor God has given citizens of His good kingdom so that they can stand strong in this battle for truth!

1:1

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