

THE SHIELD OF FAITH (1)

By Keith Greer

“Above all, taking the shield of faith with which you will be able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked one.” {Ephesians 6:16} In Paul’s epistle to the church at Ephesus, he told each Christian soldier to put on the “whole armor of God.” To Timothy, Paul wrote, *“Fight the good fight of faith, lay hold on eternal life, to which you were also called and have confessed the good confession in the presence of many witnesses.” {1 Timothy 6:12}* Fighting the good fight and laying hold on eternal life go hand in hand. Every Christian is engaged in a spiritual battle for his soul. Satan is seeking to destroy us and steal our crown. He never gives up seeking ways to destroy us spiritually. God has not left His children defenseless to defeat our Adversary!

Carnal weapons are useless in this type of warfare. *“For though we walk in the flesh, we do not war according to the flesh. For the weapons of our warfare are not carnal but mighty in God for pulling down strongholds, casting down arguments and every high thing that exalts itself against the knowledge of God, bringing every thought into captivity to the obedience of Christ.” {2 Corinthians 10:3-5}* This is not some type of shadow-boxing; it’s a real fight. For this reason, Paul, as he sat in a Roman prison facing death because of his faith in Christ, clearly stated with regard to his life, *“I have fought the good fight.” {2 Timothy 4:7}* God’s word anticipates, and provides answers for, every kind of religious error. *“He shall cover you with His feathers, and under His wings you shall take refuge; His truth shall be your shield and buckler.” {Psalm 91:4}* Let us take the **“shield of faith”** and “quench” some of the fiery darts of error that men have devised against His truth.

Peter Was the First Pope. *“And I also say to you that you are Peter, and on this rock I will build My church, and the gates of Hades shall not prevail against it.” {Matthew 16:18}* The entire papal system of the Roman Catholic Church (RCC) is based on the false claim that Peter was the first pope. This theory presents a question—since the RCC believes and teaches that the pope is infallible, was Peter infallible? Far from it. *“Now when Peter had come to Antioch, I withstood him to his face, because he was to be blamed...But when I saw that they were not straightforward about the truth of the gospel, I said to Peter before them all, If you, being a Jew, live in the manner of Gentiles and not as the Jews, why do you compel Gentiles to live as Jews?” {Galatians 2:11,14}* The ASV translates verse 11 as “he stood condemned.” Also, popes must remain celibate—unmarried. But Peter had a wife. *“Now when Jesus had come into Peter’s house, He saw his wife’s mother lying sick with a fever.” {Matthew 8:14}* The RCC claims the pope is the vicar of Christ—God’s spokesperson to His church. Yet, the scriptures plainly teach that position belongs to Christ Himself—no one else, *Hebrews 1:1,2*. This “fiery dart” is quenched!

The Church Is Not Essential. *“Therefore take heed to yourselves and to all the flock, among which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers, to shepherd the church of God which He purchased with His own blood.” {Acts 20:28}* Many in the religious world assert that the church is not an essential part of the plan of salvation. Really? They say we can be saved outside the church. Really? Did Jesus die to purchase a non-essential church? His blood paid for the church—doesn’t that make it important? The Bible teaches that Christ is the head of the church, *“For the husband is head of the wife, as also Christ is head of the church; and He is the Savior of the body... Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ also loved the church and gave Himself for her.” {Ephesians 5:23,25}* Doesn’t this show it’s worth to Him? Why would He assume the headship of a worthless, non-essential institution? On the day of Pentecost, when the gospel was first preached to the lost, 3,000 gladly received and obeyed it. What did the Lord do following their obedience? *“Praising God and having favor with all the people. And the Lord*

added to the church daily those who were being saved.” {Acts 2:47} If the saved are added to that institution, doesn't that make it a necessary part of God's eternal plan. Why would Christ leave the splendor and majesty of heaven to come to this earth and suffer that cruel death on the cross for a “non-essential institution” that saves no one? Who can believe it! Keep reading.. ***