

The Attackers: Taking up the Full Armor of God: Paul Begins His Description of the Believer's Spiritual Panoply: the Aorist Imperative of *Analambánō*: to "Pick up and Put on": Points on the Imperative Mood: Designed to Guide the Believer, Is the Mood of Volition, & Furthest Removed from Reality; Constatative Aorist Tense: Requires a Completed Action; Seeks a Positive Response, Eph 6:13

Ephesians 6:13 - Therefore, take up the full armor of God, so that you will be able to resist in the evil day, and having done everything, to stand firm. (NASB)

1. This verse begins with the preposition **διὰ (diá)** plus the accusative of cause of the demonstrative pronoun **οὗτος (hóutos)**: "Because of this."
2. The revelation of the structure of the demonic army in verse 12 stands as a warning to the believer: Our combat in this life is not against human beings—blood and flesh—but rather innumerable demonic forces under the command of the ultimate genius, *Helel ben Shachar*: Lucifer.
3. Since the enemy's troops are invisible and their weapons are ethereal, then our defenses against them must be invisible and internal.
4. Paul now begins to describe the divinely provided equipment designed for the conflict. These come down the grace pipeline in the form of Bible doctrine.
5. What is provided in grace must be appropriated by means of positive volition. To be successful in battle the believer must respond to the provision of divine armor.
6. To emphasize the importance of a positive response, the next word is the aorist active imperative of the verb **ἀναλαμβάνω (analambánō)**: "to pick up equipment and put it on."
7. The aorist tense is constative which gathers up the entirety of the armor that is to be worn and emphasizes the total process of putting it on.
8. Imagine for a moment that all the items of the armor are gathered on a table. Paul points at them and says "Put these on." One can visualize a soldier in full dress uniform.
9. However, the believer must respond to the command, therefore the active voice stresses the requirement of a positive response—the believer must decide to produce the action.
10. This imperative mood is a direct command; therefore it is presented as a mandate from God to put on this armor.
11. Some important points regarding the imperative mood need to be emphasized here:
 - (1) The principle that defines the relationship between the God and man is summarized as follows: In human history, the sovereignty of God and the free will of man coexist by divine decree.
 - (2) The sovereignty of God has issued a completed canon of Scripture and especially in the New Testament, it contains imperative moods designed to guide the believer in the development of righteous behavior.
 - (3) The problem that is intrinsic to the imperative mood is that it is the "mood of volition":

The imperative is the mood of command or entreaty—the mood of *volition*. It is the genius of the imperative to express the appeal of will to will. In ordinary linguistic communication the primary appeal is from intellect to intellect, but in the imperative one will addresses another. It expresses neither probability nor possibility, but only intention, and is, therefore, the furthest removed from reality.¹

- (4) The imperative in our context is an aorist imperative. Not only is it a direct command, it also put emphasis on a completed process:

Aorist Imperative. The basic idea of the aorist imperative is a command in which the action is viewed as a whole, without regard for the internal make-up of the action. However, it occurs in various contexts in which its meaning has been affected especially by lexical or contextual features. Consequently, most aorist imperatives can be placed into one of two broad categories, ingressive or constative.

Further, the aorist is most frequently used for a *specific* command rather than a general precept. Thus, “in general precepts ... concerning attitudes and conduct there is a preference for the present, in commands related to conduct in specific cases for the aorist. Why is the aorist singled out for specific commands? “A specific command normally calls for action viewed as a single whole, for action to be done in its entirety on that occasion, and the aorist is natural for this.”²

- (5) In verse 13, Paul is making a direct, positive appeal to believers, but the imperative only expresses the divine will.
- (6) Since volition is free, the believer may choose to reject the command or, having come to understand the command and retain its requirements, to then fail to execute it.
- (7) The appeal is obviously one that seeks a positive response. We illustrate by applying two definitions of the word “imperative”:
(1) Since this is an imperative mood expressing God’s desire that the believer respond positively, then (2) it is imperative that the believer respond positively.
- (8) The first use is a challenge to the believer’s free will. The second emphasizes that it should not be avoided or evaded.
12. Our translation so far, “Because of this, pick up and put on.” What is to be put on comes up next, the accusative singular of the noun **πανοπλία** (*panoplia*).
13. This is the word that describes the entire outfit worn by the Roman foot soldier and may be translated, “the full armor.”
14. The ownership of this armor is stated next by the genitive singular of possession of the noun **Θεός** (*Theós*): “the full armor of God.”
15. The items mentioned among the foot soldier’s equipment are illustrative of the spiritual equipment that the believer is able to appropriate in his soul.

¹ H. E. Dana and Julius R. Mantey, *A Manual Grammar of the Greek New Testament* (Toronto: The Macmillan Co., 1955), 174.

² Daniel B. Wallace, *Greek Grammar: Beyond the Basics* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1996), 719.