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# Reference Point

## April 2015

### **Prepare Your Shields!**

*“Prepare your shields, both large and small, and march out for battle! Harness the horses, mount the steeds! Take your positions with helmets on! Polish your spears, put on your armor!”* Jeremiah 46:3-4

These words are so picturesque! Reading them makes me feel ready to join this army preparing for battle! These are all the things necessary for the Old Testament-era soldier... shields, harnesses, horses, helmets, spears, armor. It reminds me almost immediately of the passage in Ephesians 6:11-17 that urges us to put on all the armor of God so we can be ready to do battle with our enemy. Here in Jeremiah, the prophet tells the people to prepare their shields. In Ephesians, the Apostle Paul refers to the shield of faith. Here in Jeremiah, we are to prepare our shields, both large and small, so even if your shield of faith is small, it should be prepared for use. The amount of your faith is relatively unimportant at this point... just prepare what you have so you can use it. If you are anything like me, you need that reminder on those days when things are happening at the office, at church, or at home that tax your faith!

The next step is to harness the horses and mount the steeds, which brings to mind another verse in the same Old Testament book, Jeremiah 12:5: *“If you have raced with men on foot and they have worn you out, how can you compete with horses?”* I want to think of myself as strong in faith, yet my faith often falters when I am faced with a new challenge of some kind. It is in those

times when I realize that I must keep training for even greater competitions, ones that will involve not just foot races but horses. I suspect that every person reading this can name at least one time recently when you felt like you were racing against horses! Seeing my personal weakness in the “small” challenges should not discourage me, but rather prompt me to face whatever current challenge I have with the understanding that it is pushing me, training me for stronger faith the next time. That training through the circumstances I face will help me harness that horse and mount that steed, prepared in another step for the battle.

Then I take position for battle with my helmet on. The “helmet of salvation” enables me to battle sin and evil. We, as librarians in ACL, understand that our salvation is key to our competing in this spiritual battle that invades all of life, even the halls of the libraries that mean so much to us.

Finally, I am to polish my spear. In Ephesians, that spear is the Word of God. So if I am not getting all the time more acquainted with God’s Word, my spear isn’t getting polished and I cannot fight this battle effectively.

I don’t know about you, but I am preparing to do battle in whatever arena God calls me to, confident in the Savior who has already conquered the grave!

--Jo Ann Rhodes

Jo Ann Rhodes retired in 2012 from her position as Library Director at Columbia International University in Columbia, South Carolina.