Foothills Baptist Bible College

The Sword of the Spirit

By Dr. Tom Walker
McDowell County

Eph 6:17 says, "*And take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God." In this study, we are going to focus on the words, "The sword of the Spirit which is the Word of God."*

For English-speaking people, the Word of God is the King James Version of the Bible. Its source is the Textus Receptus or the Received Text. That Greek Text was widely used in the seven churches of Asia Minor. The purpose of this study is not to give all the many reasons why I make the statement in the opening sentence of this paragraph. That study would be too long to include in this study on Christian warfare.

We are going to look at three different avenues of study in this article. We are going to see the value of the sword, the involvement of the Spirit, and the indispensability of the Word of God.

The Value of the Sword
"the sword"

Today a literal sword is considered a primitive weapon in these days of assault rifles and other sophisticated weaponry. Its history goes back as far as 3300 B.C.

In early Bible days, they fought with swords, spears, and bows. The word sword is mentioned 424 times in our King James Bible. Since it is mentioned so many times, it was a very important weapon in the early Bible days.

A sword was a piercing or cutting weapon, with which a warrior might stab or slash an enemy. Some swords were designed to pierce, others to slash. All swords had two parts, a handle or hilt, and a blade. The blade was usually straight, but one unusual variation was the sickle sword. This weapon featured a curved blade with a sharp edge on the outside. Swords were the basic weapon of a Hebrew soldier. The Biblical phrase that identified a man as a soldier was that he "*drew the sword"* (2 Kings 3:26).

It was used for defense. Today many people carry small pistols that are compact and easily hidden for defensive purposes. If someone attacks you, you need some way to defend yourself. It would look odd today for you to walk around carrying a long sword from a scabbard on your belt. In Bible days the best weaponry they had was the sword. We have an enemy called Satan from which we need to defend ourselves. Jesus used the Word of God in the wilderness of temptation to overcome Satan. Three times Jesus said, "It is written" in handling the onslaught of the Devil. Since it worked for Jesus, it will work for us as well. He demonstrated what we are to do when tempted by Satan. Just use the Word of God as a means of defense.

It was used for offense. I just completed teaching a 24-week course on Bible Geography. One thing is obvious all through history. The man was seldom ever satisfied with what he had regarding land, territory, and power. Warriors had to go on offense with swords and spears to conquer another nation's territories, taking many lives while using the sword.

It was used with two edges. Most swords have two edges. If it was sharpened on both sides, it could penetrate and cut at every contact point and with every movement, a warrior may make. If a blade is sharpened on individual sides, it can be thrust more quickly and deeply. It can cut much more easily after being sharpened on both sides.

Double-edged swords are also more effective at penetrating through armor than single-edged swords. However, this is more of a side benefit from the fact that double-edged swords are better for thrusting attacks. During the Middle Ages, European warriors would use thrusting attacks with double-edged swords to penetrate through their enemies' armor.

A third benefit of the double-edged design is that it prevented a warrior's enemy from grabbing the blade. With a single-edged sword, an enemy could potentially grab the dull edge of the blade. This isn't possible with double-edged swords, however. With both edges featuring razor-like sharpness, there's no safe edge to grab. If an enemy attempted to grab a double-edged sword, he would likely sustain a serious cut.

The Involvement of the Spirit
"the sword of the Spirit"

The sword we use finds its origin in the Spirit of God. 2 Peter 1:21 says, *"For the prophecy came not in old time by the will of man: but holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost."*

The word "moved" (phero) is extremely interesting. It is translated into several words in our KJV Bible: bring, bear, carry, and other ways. The word "carry" is a very good way to express how we were given our Bible. It suggests normally either force or speed. It can be used as a gust of wind or of persons being carried in a ship over the sea.

The men who penned down the Bible did not just sit down one day and decide they were going to write just another book and call it the Bible. Holy men of God, chosen by God, were carried along and inspired to write the Bible. The wind of the Spirit moved upon their minds and hearts and carried them along to give us the Bible we have today.

The Spirit inspired it. There is another important verse found in 2 Timothy 3:16. It says, "*All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness." The word "inspiration" means "God-breathed or the breath of God."*

God's words were given through men superintended by the Holy Spirit so that their writings are without error. This fact was virtually taken for granted by the Jews. Then Paul asserted the "usefulness" of the Word. For each aspect of Timothy's ministry, whatever it might be—doctrine (instructing believers in God's truths), reproving those in sin (cf. 1 Tim. 5:20; 2 Tim. 4:2), correcting those in error (cf. 2 Tim. 2:25; 4:2), and instructing (paideian, lit., "child-training") in righteousness (guiding new believers in God's ways)—for all of these and more the written Word of God is profitable. With it, the man of God (one who must provide spiritual leadership to others) is complete, capable, and proficient in the sense of being able to meet all demands.

The Spirit does not contradict it. He works in harmony with and does not contradict the Word He inspired. A fellow who claimed to be a Christian years ago told me the Lord led him to drive a beer delivery truck for a living. In light of what the Bible says about alcohol, I could not understand that to be true. Habakkuk 2:15 says, "Woe unto him that giveth his neighbour drink, that puttest thy bottle to him, and makest him drunken also, that thou mayest look on their nakedness!" How could the Spirit of God direct someone to do something contrary to the Bible? He will not and cannot.

The Holy Ghost works with it. Before a person is saved, he hears the Word of God. Then, the Spirit of God goes to work. The Spirit uses the Word of God to bring conviction to the sinner. There must be a conviction of sin before a person can be saved.

When the Holy Ghost convicts of sin, He skillfully uses the Word of God to bring about salvation. The Spirit of God using the Word of God can bring the sinner to the point of salvation from sin.

The Indispensability of the Word of God
"the Word of God"

There is power in the Bible. Hebrews 4:12 says, "*For the word of God is quick, and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart."*

The Bible pierces. It reaches the innermost heart and judges the thoughts and attitudes of the heart as well. It can distinguish in man what is spiritual and what is merely soulish or natural. The inner life of a believer is often a mixture of emotions, some being spiritual and others being merely human. It takes the penetrating, discerning agent of the Word of God, to expose what is spiritual and what is of the flesh.

It is quick. God's word of promise is not a lifeless letter and is not just paper and ink. His Word and His promises are living. They are a living reality. It is always alive and active. It is always working and quickening its message to the human heart. It is living and full of life to the believer.

The Word of God makes dead sinners living Christians; it makes souls dead in trespasses and sins alive unto God. The Bible conveys life and spirit to the repentant, believing sinner. 1 Peter 1:23 states, "*Being born again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, by the word of God, which liveth and abideth forever."*

It is powerful. It has great power as it is administered by the Holy Ghost to the life of a child of God. It has the power to convict, convert, comfort, and condemn. That is why God called preachers to preach the word; it is so unparallel and powerful in its operation.

It is sharp. The Bible pierces. It reaches the innermost heart and judges the thoughts and attitudes of the heart as well. It can distinguish in man what is spiritual in man and what is merely soulish or natural. The inner life of a believer is often a mixture of emotions, some being spiritual and others being merely human. It takes the penetrating, discerning agent of the Word of God, to expose what is spiritual and what is of the flesh. It has two edges, signifying how thorough it is in its operation.

Since we have the Sword of the Spirit, which is the Word of God available to us in our daily battles, let's utilize it to drive back and resist the forces of Satan.

Tom Walker is President of Foothills Baptist Bible College and Pastor of Zion Hill Baptist Church in Marion, NC.

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