

THE SWORD OF THE SPIRIT

“And take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God:” (Eph 6:17)

The Bible is not an ordinary book. Please consider these passages of Scripture:

- **“Heaven and earth will pass away, but my words will never pass away.” (Matt 24:35)**
- **“The words I have spoken to you are spirit and they are life.”, (John 6:63)**
- **“For you have been born again, not of perishable seed, but of imperishable, through the living and enduring word of God.” (1 Peter 1:23)**
- **“For the word of God is living and active. Sharper than any double-edged sword, it penetrates even to dividing soul and spirit, joints and marrow; it judges the thoughts and attitudes of the heart” (Heb 4:12).**
- The Bible is not just a “sword”, it is “the sword of the Spirit”. The Word of God is not only inspired by the Spirit but it is especially designed to conquer the spirit.

There are at least two different Greek words for “sword” used in the Bible. The first is “machaira” which refers to a short double edged sword about 20 inches long. The second is “rhomphaia” which refers to a longer weapon. The Latin word for “sword” is “gladius” from which we get the word “gladiator”.

The word translated as “sword” in our text is “machaira”. As we have said, this is the short sword. All Roman soldiers wore this sword in a scabbard on their right side. Thus soldiers marching side by side could all draw their weapons without accidentally cutting a companion. Longer swords had to be wielded with two hands, but the “machaira” could be easily used with the right hand while the shield was supported by the left. Roman soldiers were trained to fight with this deadly weapon in such close proximity that the long swords of their enemies were rendered useless. Roman soldiers used this sword to conquer the world and continued to use it for around 600 years. It is significant that God chose this very word to describe the Bible. It is the “Sword of the Spirit”.

Man is unique in creation. He is created in the “image” and “likeness” of God. Note: **“Then God said, "Let us make man in our image, in our likeness, and let them rule over the fish of the sea and the birds of the air, over the livestock, over all the earth, and over all the creatures that move along the ground." So God created man in his own image, in the image of God he created him; male and female he created them.” (Gen 1:26-27)**

Animals are two dimensional. They have a physical body and physical life. Consequently animals can be trained by the simple use of pleasure and pain. Man, however, like God is “three dimensional”. Changing his conduct is not so simple. Man is “spirit”, “soul”, and “body”(I Thess 5:23). Because man has a “spirit” the simplistic methods of training animals do not work with him. Moses, for example, promised blessings for obedience and curses for disobedience (Deut. 27: - 28:). The punishment for disobedience was severe. He that despised Moses’ Law died without mercy (Heb. 10:28). Remarkably, however, it didn’t work! The Law was “powerless” and “weak” (Rom. 8:3). As irrational as it seems, the people chose to be disobedient.

What the Law could not do, however, because it was weak through the flesh, God accomplished by the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus (Rom. 8:2). You guessed it! The victory over sin was accomplished by the “Sword of the Spirit”. “Carnal” weapons have no power over “spiritual enemies” (2 Cor. 10:3 - 6). That’s why the “Sword of the Spirit” is essential in evangelism. Praise God! When we “walk in the Spirit” we do not fulfill the “lusts of the flesh” (Gal. 5:16. Let us, therefore, boldly pursue eyeball to eyeball contact with those whom we expect to conquer for Christ. The “Sword of the Spirit” is especially effective in close combat!