

## “THE SWORD OF THE LORD”

For the word of God is living and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the division of soul and spirit, and of joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart. (Hebrews 4:12 NKJV)

Recently I was visiting with Mrs. Madelyn Warrick. She has some superb pieces of antique furniture. One piece was made of ornately carved wood and had a shelf of marble. Under the shelf were two doors. She told me that the panel in each door is split. She doesn't want to have them repaired because her great-aunt told her that a Yankee ran his sword into those panels and that is how they were split.

When I was thinking about today's sermon I remembered that when I was a young man I subscribed to a newspaper named "The Sword of The Lord." What I liked about that paper were the sermons by great preachers of the past including Charles H. Spurgeon and George Whitfield.

If you are familiar with the legend of King Arthur, the sword Excalibur is a mythical representation of the sword of the Lord. John Bunyan's *Pilgrim's Progress* is about a man's pilgrimage through life, finding salvation, struggling with temptation and doubt, and finally arriving in heaven. Bunyan wrote another book, *The Holy War*. That book is about Christ, with sword in hand, warring against Satan with swords and armies.

There are people who only want to know and believe that God loves. They resist the idea of a God who has wrath and sends punishment to wicked nations in this life and who sends the unrighteous to hell in the life to come.

- 1.) In the Old Testament the Lord used the sword to conquer and kill.

The first instance of the use of a sword by the Lord is when Adam and Eve were driven out of the Garden of Eden because they had sinned against the Lord. The Lord posted seraphim at the entrance with swords to keep any human from ever entering it.

After the Israelites had wandered in the Wilderness for forty years, the Lord led them to Canaan, the land He had promised to their forefathers, Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob.

"When the LORD your God brings you into the land which you go to possess, and has cast out many nations before you, the Hittites and the Girgashites and the Amorites and the Canaanites and the Perizzites and the Hivites and the Jebusites, seven nations greater and mightier than you, and when the LORD your God delivers them over to you, you shall conquer them and utterly destroy them. You shall make no covenant with them nor show mercy to them." (Deuteronomy 7:1-2 NKJV)

"You shall not be terrified of them; for the LORD your God, the great and awesome God, is among you. And the LORD your God will drive out those nations before you little by little; you will be unable to destroy them at once, lest the beasts of the field become too numerous for you. But the LORD your God will deliver them over to you, and will inflict defeat upon them until they are destroyed." (Deuteronomy 7:21-23 NKJV)

When Joshua was about to lead the armies of Israel in conquering the Promised Land, an angel appeared to Joshua. He was captain of the Lord's army and they had come to fight for the Israelites.

When David disobeyed God by ordering a census of all the people, God sent Gad the seer to David and told him to choose his punishment: 'either three years of famine, or three months to be defeated by your foes with the sword of your enemies overtaking you, or else for three days the sword of the LORD-the plague in the land, with the angel of the LORD destroying throughout all the territory of Israel.' Now consider what answer I should take back to Him who sent me." (1 Chronicles 21:12NKJV)

When the Israelites had turned to wickedness and idolatry, the Lord again turned the sword of His wrath on them.

The plunderers have come On all the desolate heights in the wilderness, For the sword of the LORD shall devour From one end of the land to the other end of the land; No flesh shall have peace. (Jeremiah 12:12 NKJV)

2.) In the New Testament the Bible becomes the sword of the Lord.

The religion of Islam originated with Mohammed about 610 A.D. Within twenty years of its beginnings, Islam had begun a campaign of conversion by military conquest. Mohammed died in 632 A.D. A century later its empire stretched from the Atlantic Ocean to central Asia. Their success prompted the Roman Catholic Church to promote military Crusades to try to free the Holy Land from the control of Muslim rulers. These Crusades lasted 200 years and failed to achieve their stated purpose of returning the Holy Land to Christian control.

The teachings of Christ do not permit His followers to attempt to extend the kingdom of God or to drive back the kingdom of Satan by the use of force.

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 NKJV)  
For the word of God is living and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the division of soul and spirit, and of joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart. (Hebrews 4:12 NKJV)

Put on the whole armor of God, that you may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil. For we do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this age, against spiritual hosts of wickedness in the heavenly places. Therefore take up the whole armor of God, that you may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand. Stand therefore, having girded your waist with truth, having put on the breastplate of righteousness, and having shod your feet with the preparation of the gospel of peace; above all, taking the shield of faith with which you will be able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked one. And take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God; (Ephesians 6:11-17)

There is a teaching of Jesus which is difficult to understand:

And He said to them, "When I sent you without money bag, knapsack, and sandals, did you lack anything?" So they said, "Nothing." Then He said to them, "But now, he who has a money bag, let him take it, and likewise a knapsack; and he who has no sword, let him sell his garment and buy one. (Luke 22:35-36 NKJV)

Peter used his sword to cut off the ear of a servant defending Jesus. But Jesus said to him, "Put your sword in its place, for all who take the sword will perish by the sword. (Matthew 26:52 NKJV)

3.) When Christ comes, He will unsheathe the sword of the Lord.

"Mine eyes have seen the glory of the coming of the Lord.  
He is trampling out the vintage where the grapes of wrath are stored,  
He has loosed the fateful lightning of His terrible swift sword.  
His truth is marching on.  
Glory, glory, hallelujah. Glory, glory, hallelujah. Glory, glory, hallelujah.  
His truth is marching on."

The Revelation introduces the Lord Jesus Christ exalted in heaven and His sword figures prominently in the description:

His feet were like fine brass, as if refined in a furnace, and His voice as the sound of many waters; He had in His right hand seven stars, out of His mouth went a sharp two-edged sword, and His countenance was like the sun shining in its strength. (Revelation 1:15-16)

As the progression of history unfurls and finally comes to its climax, Satan and his earthly followers gather to make war against Christ and His followers.

Now I saw heaven opened, and behold, a white horse. And He who sat on him was called Faithful and True, and in righteousness He judges and makes war. His eyes were like a flame of fire, and on His head were many crowns. He had a name written that no one knew except Himself. He was clothed with a robe dipped in blood, and His name is called The Word of God. And the armies in heaven, clothed in fine linen, white and clean, followed Him on white horses. Now out of His mouth goes a sharp sword, that with it He should strike the nations. And He Himself will rule them with a rod of iron. He Himself treads the winepress of the fierceness and wrath of Almighty God. And He has on His robe and on His thigh a name written: KING OF KINGS AND LORD OF LORDS. (Revelation 19:11-16 NKJV)

Notice that only Christ's sword is needed to conquer all the armies.

And I saw the beast, the kings of the earth, and their armies, gathered together to make war against Him who sat on the horse and against His army. Then the beast was captured, and with him the false prophet who worked signs in his presence, by which he deceived those who received the mark of the beast and those who worshiped his image. These two were cast alive into the lake of fire burning with brimstone. And the rest were killed with the sword which proceeded from the mouth of Him who sat on the horse. And all the birds were filled with their flesh. (Revelation 19:19-21 NKJV)

