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The Sword of the Spirit

6: 17b

The sword of the Spirit DIG: In what way is the Word of God like a sword? How is the Word of God a defensive weapon; how are the Scriptures an offensive weapon?

REFLECT: How well do you know God's Word? What would it take for you to go into battle with this "sword?" You can have excuses or you can have results. But you can't have both.

The sword of the Spirit is always ready to be taken up and used when the battle begins.

The sword to which **Sha'ul** refers here is the *machaira*, which varied in length from six to eighteen inches. **It** was the common **sword** carried by Roman foot soldiers and was the principal weapon in hand-to-hand combat. Carried in a sheath or scabbard attached to their belts, it was always at hand and ready for use. It was **the sword** carried by the soldiers who came to arrest **Yeshua** in **the Garden (Matthew 26:47)**, wielded by **Peter** when **he cut off the ear of the high priest's slave**, and used by **Herod's** executioners to put **James to death (Acts 12:2)**.

Take up the sword of the Spirit. From the context we know that it is a spiritual weapon, to be used in our struggle against spiritual enemies. As **the Spirit of truth (John 14:17)**, **the Ruach Ha'Kodesh** is the believer's resident truth **Teacher**, who teaches us all things and brings **God's Word** to our **remembrance (John 14:26)**. The emphasis of the present passage is on how believers are to use **the sword of the Spirit**. **It** is not a physical weapon designed by human minds or forged by human hands (see the commentary on **Second Corinthians, to see link click Bt - Winning the Spiritual War**), but the perfect spiritual weapon of divine origin and power, in effect, **God's** twenty-four-hour emergency hotline. Like **the shield of faith** (see **Cf - The Shield of Faith**) and **the helmet of salvation** (see **Cg - The Helmet of Salvation**), **it** is always at hand, ready to be **taken up** and used when the battle begins.



Paul specifically states that **the sword of the Spirit is the Word of God**, offering limitless resources and blessings to the believer. First of all, **it** is the source of all **truth**. **Your word is truth**, **Yeshua** said to His **Father (John 17:17)**. People today look everywhere for answers to life, to try to find out what is worth believing and what is not. The source of all truth about **God** and mankind, life and death, time and eternity, men and women, right and wrong, heaven and hell, damnation and salvation, is **God's own word**.

The Bible is also a source of **happiness**. Speaking of **God's wisdom**, the writer of **Proverbs** declares: **Blessed [or happy] is the one who listens to me (Pro 8:34)**. **Yeshua** said: **Blessed are those who hear the word of God, and observe it (Lk 11:28)**. No person can be **happier** than when they discover, accept, and obey **God's Word**.

Scripture is also the source of spiritual growth. **Like newborn babes, Peter** admonished, **long for the pure milk of the word, that by it you may grow in respect to salvation (First Peter 2:2)**. It is the source of power: **living and active and sharper than any two-edged sword, and piercing as far as the division of soul and spirit (Hebrews 4:12)**; the source of guidance: **a lamp to our feet, and a light to our path (Psalm 119:105)**; the source of comfort (**Romans 15:4**); and the source of perfection (**Second Timothy 3:16**). And **God's Word** is the source of victory over our great spiritual enemy, our most powerful weapon against **Satan**.

The sword of the Spirit is first of all a defensive weapon, **it** is the believer's supreme weapon of defense against the onslaughts of **the Adversary**. Unlike **the shield**, however, which gives broad and general protection, **the sword** can deflect an attack only if **it** is used precisely and skillfully. It must block the enemy weapon exactly where the thrust is made. When **Yeshua** was tempted by **the Serpent in the wilderness** (see the commentary on **The Life of Christ Bj - Jesus is Tempted in the Wilderness**), **His** defense for each

temptation was a passage from **Deuteronomy** that precisely opposed **the Devil's sword**. The believer who does not know **God's Word** well cannot use **it** well. Those who merely rely on their salvation or their feelings to defend themselves spiritually are in grave danger. They get into countless compromising situations and fall prey to innumerable false ideas and practices, simply because they are ignorant of the specific teachings of **Scripture**.

The sword of the Spirit is also an offensive weapon, capable of inflicting blows as well as deflecting those of the enemy. **The Word of God is alive 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. Nothing in all creation is hidden from God's sight. Everything is uncovered and laid bare before the eyes of him to whom we must give account (Hebrews 4:12-13).** It is so powerful that it transforms people from the realm of lies to that of truth, from the realm of darkness to that of light, and from the realm of sin and death to that of righteousness and life. When **the seed** of **God's Word** is **sown on good soil, the one who hears the message and understands it will surely bear fruit, a hundred or sixty or thirty times what is sown** (see **The Life of Christ Et - The Parable of the Soils**). It is here that the great offensive power of **the sword of the Spirit** is seen as it converts a soul from sin to salvation.

No believer has any excuse for not knowing and understanding **God's Word**. Every believer has **God's** own **Spirit** within him as his own divine **Teacher** of **God's** divine **Word**. Our only task is to submit to **His** instruction by studying **the Word** with sincerity and commitment. We cannot plead ignorance or inability, only disinterest and neglect. It is essential for **God's Word** to be known, and loved, and practiced if we are to win the battle against **Satan**.²⁶⁶



As stated above, of all the weapons given to a Roman soldier, **the sword** was the only offensive tool. Every other piece of equipment was for protection against the onslaughts of the enemy. And the Roman **sword** was a feared weapon; but how much more so **the sword**

of **the Lord!** In the spiritual battle, a military **sword** is useless. But **the Scriptures** are called a **double-edged sword** that **cuts right through to where soul meets spirit (Heb 4:12)**. **According to the sages, the Torah was said to be the only true antidote to the attacks of the Adversary (Leviticus Rabba 28:3)**. We cannot bind **him**, even though we might like to. In fact, **the Scriptures** never encourage us to tie **him** up, but instead, to resist **him** through the power of **the Word of God**. Of course our **Messiah** modeled this for us in **His** own encounter with **Satan in the wilderness**. Yet, even **Yeshua** did not waste **His** time on curses or magical formulas, but quoted **the Torah** as **He** drove off **the Evil One**. If **Yeshua** stood **His** ground by quoting **the Word of God**, how much more should we! But how can we use **the sword** if we are unfamiliar with **it**? No wonder that studying **the Scriptures** is one of the highest priorities for the believer. **It is a tree of life to those who apply it (Proverbs 3:18)!²⁶⁷**

*Dear Heavenly **Father**, Praise and thank **You** for the joy of studying **Your** Word. Using **the sword of your Word** can not only conquer those who are **Your** enemies, but can also conquer thoughts of discouragement and give strength and encouragement to make me stronger and wiser in battle. It is wise who keeps my **sword** sharp by spending time meditating on **Your Word** and thinking over stories that show your power, **Your** wisdom in everything, and **Your** love and holiness. Then when a battle comes, I can be well equipped to draw **the sword of Your Word** and conquer!*

*Sharpening **the sword** by meditating on how **God** loves and guides me is profitable in calming my heart and helping me prepare a plan of action. Meditating on **David's** life brings encouragement for even when **David** was in the dry wilderness being sought after to be killed, **he** trusted in **You, God**, and sought a deeper relationship with **You**. **O God, You are my God, earnestly I seek You. My soul thirsts for You. My flesh longs for You in a dry and weary land, where there is no water. David** praised **You** in the midst of the trial. **Since Your lovingkindness is better than life, my lips will praise You (Psalms 63:2-3)**. **Praising you in hard situations is such a powerful thrust of the sword to demolish fear.***

*Meditating on both **David's (Psalms 51)** and **Sha'ul's (First Timothy 1:15)** life, encourages those who fail to turn around in humble confession to **God** for **God** longs for sinners to repent so he can forgive them. **The Lord is not slow in keeping His promise, as some consider slowness. Rather, He is being patient toward you - not wanting anyone to perish, but for all to come to repentance (Second Peter 3:9)**. Thank **You** for the great joy and encouragement that comes when I sharpen my **sword** by studying, and meditating on, **Your Almighty** power, love and holiness shown in **the Word of God**. In*



*Messiah Yeshua's holy name and power of **His** resurrection. Amen*