

The Believer's Warfare

Ephesians 6:17

The Sword of the Spirit

Ephesians 6:10-18

10 Finally, my brethren, be strong in the Lord, and in the power of his might.

11 Put on the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil.

12 For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places.

13 Wherefore take unto you the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand.

14 Stand therefore, having your loins girt about with truth, and having on the breastplate of righteousness;

15 And your feet shod with the preparation of the gospel of peace;

16 Above all, taking the shield of faith, wherewith ye shall be able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked.

17 And take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God:

18 Praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit, and watching thereunto with all perseverance and supplication for all saints;

I. INTRODUCTION -- A FINAL INSPECTION

This is the concluding study of the actual physical weapons of the soldier. Before progressing to a discussion of the sword of the Spirit, one final look at the soldier and his characteristics will be beneficial.

Every soldier is to fight with all of his heart. He is to struggle against the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eye, and the pride of life never allowing a moment of spiritual ease. The soldier will either be in perpetual warfare or perpetual preparation for the warfare. For the soldier to wait for the attack of the enemy is foolish strategy. There are times that the Christian must be on the offensive and "pray without ceasing." Often the soldier does not invest his greatest efforts until he is the midst of the battle. However, if one could grasp the concept that the will cannot wait to be attacked his warfare will be much more successful.

The soldier cannot afford to wait for the days of turbulence to prove that he can master the storm. He will never overcome the fierce blasts of passion in a mode of vigilance. He has to go on the offensive. Before the attack ever comes, while all is still peaceful in the soul, when the tempter is not in

sight, while all is calm, the soldier must exercise himself to discipline by self-denial. The way to resist indulgence in the unlawful things of the flesh is to appropriate the powers and faculties to obedience in giving up things that are lawful. Paul illustrated very well that there are some limitations of liberty. Consider the following Scriptures:

ARMS, ARMOR OF THE BIBLE

Dagger Sword. Different translations of the Bible speak of the dagger and the sword as if these two weapons were basically the same. 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 the 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 Kin. 3:26>.

Daggers were similar to swords in that they were composed of a hilt and a blade and were used to stab. Their advantage over swords was their ability to be hidden. EHUD, the judge, exploited this advantage by hiding a dagger and stabbing the oppressor Eglon <Judg. 3:16-22>. The fullest development of armor imagery occurs in the Epistle to the Ephesians in the New Testament. The apostle Paul compared the Christian's struggles with evil to a battle in which God provides the believer with the armor and weapons needed to protect oneself against the enemy, Satan: "Put on the whole armor of God, that you may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil" <Eph. 6:10>.

Greek Word Studies

Ephesians 6:17 -- . . . Sword. . .

3162 machaira (makh'-ahee-rah); probably feminine of a presumed derivative of 3163; a knife, i.e. dirk; figuratively, war, judicial punishment: KJV-- sword.

(Strong's)

3162 machaira-

1) a large knife, used for killing animals and cutting up flesh

2) a small sword, as distinguished from a large sword

a) curved sword (for a cutting stroke)

b) a straight sword, for thrusting

(Thayer's)

1. machaira ^3162^, "a short sword or dagger" (distinct from No. 2), e. g., <Matt. 26:47,51,52> and parallel passages; <Luke 21:24; 22:38>, possibly "a knife" (Field, Notes on the Translation of the NT); <Heb. 4:12

1 Corinthians 6:12 -- All things are lawful unto me, but all things are not expedient: all things are lawful for me, but I will not be brought under the power of any.

1 Corinthians 10:23 -- All things are lawful for me, but all things are not expedient: all things are lawful for me, but all things edify not.

Because there are certain restraints that are necessary, the soldier must be trained spiritually to work toward overcoming the enemy. There are certain demands that every successful soldier will have in his life. He must have the willingness for self sacrifice (I Cor. 10:24). He must be an encourager, not only of himself (I Sam. 30:6) but of others. He must have the traits of endurance (Gal. 6:9; Ps. 126:5-6). He must submit himself to both discipline of the flesh and of the spirit (I Cor. 9:27). He must be vigilant (I Peter 5:8-9). He must have a sense of obedience and loyalty to the Commander. He must be in ready cooperation with the movements of the church. He must be enthusiastic in his associations with other soldiers. He will benefit from being in unity with those around him. He must have a sense of earnestness in his pursuit of God (Ps. 42:1-2).

A. The Soldier's Response To The Fight

When the soldier responds to the fight, he cannot afford to follow the leading of Joash. Fight not as Joash, who smote the ground with the arrows only three times and with half-hearted effort. By stopping after only the three blows, he denied the kingdom the full victory. The soldier cannot fight as Israel in their conquest of Canaan. They became suspended in their conquests and did not totally exterminate the enemy. By allowing the ancient inhabitants to remain, they did not receive the full benefits of the rest that could have been in the land of milk and honey.

When one looks for examples of how to fight the enemy, he can look to the lives of other great soldiers in the Book. Fight as Joseph, who said, "How can I do this great wickedness and sin against God." Fight as did Paul, who brought forth the great spiritual truth of bringing the body under subjection. Fight as Jesus told the disciples to fight. If the eye is the offending member, rid oneself of it or if the hand be the culprit then remove it. Fight as Jesus fought when faced with the temptations of His arch-enemy. He defeated the thoughts of discontent, of ambition, and of the debasing servitude that Satan desired. It was done so in this manner, "Get thee hence, Satan, for it is written, Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and Him only shalt thou serve."

The Sword of the Spirit proves that the Word is always effective to us who are attempting to overcome the difficulties of the flesh and spirit.

B. The Characteristics of a Good Soldier

A good soldier of Jesus Christ must be:

ENLISTED: Before a man can ever fully rid himself of the failures of the flesh, he must obey the salvation message outlined in John 3:3-5 which culminated on the day of Pentecost. The way to salvation is only by Acts 2:38 which involves repentance, water baptism in Jesus name, and receiving the gift of the Holy Ghost with the evidence of tongues. Once this is accomplished, a man has been enlisted into the spiritual struggle.

DRILLED: A great soldier is not made in a day. When the fire of the furnace, when the difficulty of the trial sets in on the soldier, he should not lose heart. These fires have the capacity to burn away the dross and bring forth the pure gold in his life. This is the drilling process. Great pains are taken to train the soldier and he must endure hardness.

A FIGHTER: The soldier who is willing to be involved in the fray will also experience certain wounds at times. However, this is part of the spiritual battle and God has a balm that can treat the wounds of the battle. The flesh, the world, and the devil have to be fought against. If the soldier has no “fight” in him, he will never be successful enough to gain the reward.

OBEDIENT: The soldier must be obedient to the God-given authorities in his life. The foremost factor of obedience is to be obedient to God and to His Word. The second role is that of obedience to the leaders and elders of the church. Do pastors make mistakes? Absolutely, just as saints make mistakes. However, the role given to the watchman on the wall in Ezekiel is effective for us to remember the position of the ministry. The ministry has not been given to be a “lord over God’s heritage” but rather as a watchman who is concerned about the status of the soul of every member of the church.

UNITY: There has never been a successful battle fought with one soldier. The army was involved. The infantry depends on the pilots to assault enemy positions by air and weaken the stronghold. The navy is responsible for transporting the soldiers to the beachhead for the attack. There is not a single soldier who can win a battle alone, he is always going to have to work with others. The Acts of the Apostles gives a number of examples about how the church is to work with a sense of unity. Without unity the soldier will not be

Greek Word Studies Cont.

(see TWO-EDGED); metaphorically and by metonymy, (a) for ordinary violence, or dissensions, that destroy peace, <Matt. 10:34>; (b) as the instrument of a magistrate or judge, e. g., <Rom. 13:4>; (c) of the Word of God, "the sword of the Spirit," probing the conscience, subduing the impulses to sin, <Eph. 6:17>.

2. rhomphaia ^4501^, a word of somewhat doubtful origin, denoted "a Thracian weapon of large size," whether a sword or spear is not certain, but usually longer than No. 1; it occurs (a) literally in <Rev. 6:8>; (b) metaphorically, as the instrument of anguish, <Luke 2:35>; of judgment, <Rev. 1:16; 2:12,16; 19:15,21>, probably figurative of the Lord's judicial utterances.#

TWO-EDGED

distomos ^1366^, lit., "twomouthed" (dis, and stoma, "a mouth"), was used of rivers and branching roads; in the NT of swords, <Heb. 4:12; Rev. 1:16; 2:12>, RV, "twoedged" (KJV, "with two edges").# In the Sept., <Judg. 3:16; Ps. 149:6; Prov. 5:4>.#

Ephesians 6:17 -- Spirit. . .

4151 pneuma (pnyoo'-mah); from 4154; a current of air, i.e. breath (blast) or a breeze; by analogy or figuratively, a spirit, i.e. (human) the rational soul, (by implication) vital principle, mental disposition, etc., or (superhuman) an angel, demon, or (divine) God, Christ's spirit, the Holy Spirit:

KJV-- ghost, life, spirit (-ual, -ually), mind. Compare 5590. (Strong's)

4151 pneuma-

1) a movement of air (a gentle blast)

a) used of the wind, hence the wind itself

b) the breath of the nostrils (the mouth)

2) the spirit, that is, the vital principal by which the body is animated

a) the rational spirit, the power by which the human being feels, thinks, decides

b) the soul

3) a spirit, that is, a simple essence, devoid of all or at least all grosser matter, and possessed of the power of knowing, desiring, deciding, and acting

a) a life giving spirit

b) a human soul that has left the body

successful in his spiritual struggle.

There are a number of other areas that can be incorporated in an independent study that will give one further enlightenment about the profile of a good soldier.

II. THE SWORD OF THE SPIRIT -- EPHESIANS 6:17B

“. . . and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God:”

A. The Word of God

The Word of God is the most powerful Book that has ever been written. A lifetime of study would not even tap the surface of the rich veins of truth that is found there. The Bible is more than just a place for a minister to “get” sermons from. It is a source of comfort during times of duress. It is a storehouse of promises during the times of spiritual famine. It is the source of doctrine. It gives the doctrine of man, of salvation, of sin, of heaven, of hell, of the church, and many more elements that God chose to provide to man.

An unknown source gives this tribute to the Holy Writ:

There are words written by kings, by emperors, by princes, by poets, by sages, by philosophers, by fisherman, by statesmen, by men learned in the wisdom of Egypt, educated in the schools of Babylon, and trained at the feet of rabbis in Jerusalem. It was written by men in exile, in the desert, in shepherd's tents, in green pastures, and beside still waters.

Among its authors we find a tax-gatherer, a herdsman, a gatherer of sycamore fruit. We find poor men, rich men, statesmen, preachers, captains, legislators, judges, and exiles. The Bible is a library full of history, genealogy, ethnology, law, ethics, prophecy, poetry, eloquence, medicine, sanitary science, political economy, and the perfect rules for personal and social life. And behind every word is the divine author, God Himself.

Greek Word Studies Cont.

Ephesians 6:17 -- Spirit. . .

- c) a spirit higher than man but lower than God, that is, an angel
 - 1) used of demons, or evil spirits, who were conceived as inhabiting the bodies of men
 - 2) the spiritual nature of Christ, higher than the highest angels and equal to God, the divine nature of Christ
 - 4) the Spirit of God
 - a) God's power and agency distinguishable in thought from His essence in itself considered:
 - 1) manifest in the course of affairs
 - 2) by its influence upon the souls productive in the theocratic body (the church) of all the higher spiritual gifts and blessings
 - 3) the third person of the Trinity, the Holy Spirit
 - 5) the disposition or influence which fills and governs the soul of anyone; the efficient source of any power, affection, emotion, desire, etc. (Thayer's)

pneuma ^4151^ primarily denotes "the wind" (akin to pneo, "to breathe, blow"); also "breath"; then, especially "the spirit," which, like the wind, is invisible, immaterial and powerful. The NT uses of the word may be analyzed approximately as follows:

- "(a) the wind, <John 3:8> (where marg. is, perhaps, to be preferred); <Heb. 1:7>; cf. <Amos 4:13>, Sept.; (b) the breath, <2 Thes. 2:8; Rev. 11:11; 13:15>; cf. <Job 12:10>, Sept.; (c) the immaterial, invisible part of man, <Luke 8:55; Acts 7:59; 1 Cor. 5:5; Jas. 2:26>; cf. <Eccl. 12:7>, Sept.; (d) the disembodied (or 'unclothed,' or 'naked,' <2 Cor. 5:3,4>) man, <Luke 24:37,39; Heb. 12:23; 1 Pet. 4:6>; (e) the resurrection body, <1 Cor. 15:45; 1 Tim. 3:16; 1 Pet. 3:18>; (f) the sentient element in man, that by which he perceives, reflects, feels, desires, <Matt. 5:3; 26:41; Mark 2:8; Luke 1:47,80; Acts 17:16; 20:22; 1 Cor. 2:11; 5:3,4; 14:4,15; 2 Cor. 7:1>; cf. <Gen. 26:35; Isa. 26:9; Ezek. 13:3; Dan. 7:15>; (g) purpose, aim, <2 Cor. 12:18; Phil. 1:27; Eph. 4:23; Rev. 19:10>; cf. <Ezra 1:5; Ps. 78:8; Dan. 5:12>; (h) the equivalent of the personal pronoun, used for emphasis and effect: 1st person, <1 Cor. 16:18>; cf. <Gen. 6:3>; 2nd person, <2 Tim. 4:22; Philem. 25>;

The Scottish pastor, Thomas Guthrie wrote,

The Bible is an armory of heavenly weapons, a laboratory of infallible medicines, a mine of exhaustless wealth. It is a guidebook for every road, a chart for every sea, a medicine for every malady, a balm for every wound. Rob us of our Bible and our sky has lost its sun.

John Wesley wrote concerning the Bible,

The Bible must have been written by God or good men or bad men or good angels or bad angels. But bad men and bad angels would not write it because it condemns bad men and bad angels. And good men and good angels would not deceive by lying about its authority and claiming that God wrote it. And so the Bible must have been written as it claims to have been written--by God who by His Holy Spirit inspired men to record His words using the human instrument to communicate His truth.

B. The Sword of the Word

The Old Testament has a great deal to say about the sword of the Word. Often it is used metaphorically as a "sword" and a number of

different verbs are attached to describe both its effect and its use.

The following texts give reference to the fact that the Sword of Yahweh is sent out against the enemies and it “whetted” and “drunk with blood.” This is profound victory that is demonstrated against the enemies of God and of His people.

Amos 9:4 -- And though they go into captivity before their enemies, thence will I command the sword, and it shall slay them: and I will set mine eyes upon them for evil, and not for good.

Isaiah 31:8 -- Then shall the Assyrian fall with the sword, not of a mighty man; and the sword, not of a mean man, shall devour him: but he shall flee from the sword, and his young men shall be discomfited.

Isaiah 34:5-6 -- For my sword shall be bathed in heaven: behold, it shall come down upon Idumea, and upon the people of my curse, to judgment. The sword of the LORD is filled with blood, it is made fat with fatness, and with the blood of lambs and goats, with the fat of the kidneys of rams: for the LORD hath a sacrifice in Bozrah, and a great slaughter in the land of Idumea.

Deuteronomy 32:41-42 -- If I whet my glittering sword, and mine hand take hold on judgment; I will render vengeance to mine enemies, and will reward them that hate me. I will make mine arrows drunk with blood, and my sword shall devour flesh; and that with the blood of the slain and of the captives, from the beginning of revenges upon the enemy.

Jeremiah 25:29 -- For, lo, I begin to bring evil on the city which is called by my name, and should ye be utterly unpunished? Ye shall not be unpunished: for I will call for a sword upon all the inhabitants of the earth, saith the LORD of hosts.

Jeremiah 47:6 -- O thou sword of the LORD, how long will it be ere thou be quiet? put up thyself into thy scabbard, rest, and be still.

One notes in the conquest of the Midianites, that Gideon proclaimed with a battle cry, “The Sword of the Lord and Gideon,” (Judges 7:20) would give the

connotation that God's sword was equated with that of Gideon's. One also notes that in the case of the king who was girded with righteousness and donned the sword to help the poor (Isa. 11:4; Psalm 45:2-5).

Greek Word Studies

Ephesians 6:17 -- Spirit . . .
; cf. <Ps. 139:7>; 3rd person, <2 Cor. 7:13>; cf. <Isa. 40:13>; (i) character, <Luke 1:17; Rom. 1:4>; cf. <Num. 14:24>; (j) moral qualities and activities: bad, as of bondage, as of a slave, <Rom. 8:15>; cf. <Isa. 61:3>; stupor, <Rom. 11:8>; cf. <Isa. 29:10>; timidity, <2 Tim. 1:7>; cf. <Josh. 5:1>; good, as of adoption, i. e., liberty as of a son, <Rom. 8:15>; cf. <Ps. 51:12>; meekness, <1 Cor. 4:21>; cf. <Prov. 16:19>; faith, <2 Cor. 4:13>; quietness, <1 Pet. 3:4>; cf. <Prov. 14:29>; (k) the Holy Spirit, e. g., <Matt. 4:1> (see below); <Luke 4:18>; (l) 'the inward man' (an expression used only of the believer, <Rom. 7:22; 2 Cor. 4:16; Eph. 3:16>); the new life, <Rom. 8:4-6,10,16; Heb. 12:9>; cf. <Ps. 51:10>; (m) unclean spirits, demons, <Matt. 8:16; Luke 4:33; 1 Pet. 3:19>; cf. <1 Sam. 18:10>; (n) angels, <Heb. 1:14>; cf. <Acts 12:15>; (o) divine gift for service, <1 Cor. 14:12,32>; (p) by metonymy, those who claim to be depositories of these gifts, <2 Thes. 2:2; 1 John 4:1-3>; (q) the significance, as contrasted with the form, of words, or of a rite, <John 6:63; Rom. 2:29; 7:6; 2 Cor. 3:6>; (r) a vision, <Rev. 1:10; 4:2; 17:3; 21:10>."

Notes: (1) For phantasma, rendered "spirit," <Matt. 14:26; Mark 6:49>, KJV, see APPARITION. (2) For the distinction between "spirit" and "soul," see under SOUL, last three paragraphs.

The Holy Spirit
The "Holy Spirit" is spoken of under various titles in the NT ("Spirit" and "Ghost" are renderings of the same word, pneuma; the advantage of the rendering "Spirit" is that it can always be used, whereas "Ghost" always requires the word "Holy" prefixed.) In the following list the omission of the definite article marks its omission in the original (concerning this see below): "Spirit, <Matt. 22:43>; Eternal Spirit, <Heb. 9:14>; the Spirit, <Matt. 4:1>; Holy Spirit, <Matt. 1:18>; the Holy Spirit, <Matt. 28:19>; the Spirit, the Holy, <Matt. 12:32>; the Spirit of promise, the Holy, <Eph. 1:13>; Spirit of God, <Rom. 8:9>; Spirit of (the) living God, <2 Cor. 3:3>; the Spirit of God, <1 Cor. 2:11>; the Spirit of our God

There were a number of the enemies of God (i.e. Babylonians, Assyrians, Egyptians) who made an inference to the sword of their gods also. However, there is a vast difference in the distinctions given. For example, the Assyrians refer to their own armies as "the iron sword of the god Assur" and in the same breath as "the army of the king of the gods." Yet, when looking at these terms one must understand that if the earthly king was involved then there was no need for Assur to be involved in the battle. Such is the mode of humanistic ideation. A man's security rests either with himself or with the resources that he has stockpiled to help him.

The Living God is an up close and personal God. He is at the receiving end of every prayer that one prays. In looking at the OT references, it was Yahweh who often participated in the battles of Israel using His own "arms." If the "Lord of hosts" chooses to fight the battle with a troop of soldiers who are carrying swords, bows, and shields, He is not dependent on their resources to win the battle for Him. He can win the victories with his holy angels. The following Scripture references are used to document such:

Joshua 5:13-15 -- **And it came to pass, when Joshua was by Jericho, that he lifted up his eyes and looked, and, behold, there stood a man over against him with his sword drawn in his hand: and Joshua went unto him, and said unto him, Art thou for us, or for our adversaries? And he said, Nay; but as captain of the host of the LORD am I now come. And Joshua fell**

on his face to the earth, and did worship, and said unto him, What saith my lord unto his servant? And the captain of the LORD's host said unto Joshua, Loose thy shoe from off thy foot; for the place whereon thou standest is holy. And Joshua did so.

2 Samuel 5:24 -- And let it be, when thou hearest the sound of a going in the tops of the mulberry trees, that then thou shalt bestir thyself: for then shall the LORD go out before thee, to smite the host of the Philistines.

Deuteronomy 9:3 -- Understand therefore this day, that the LORD thy God is he which goeth over before thee; as a consuming fire he shall destroy them, and he shall bring them down before thy face: so shalt thou drive them out, and destroy them quickly, as the LORD hath said unto thee.

Not only does God have the command of holy angels at His hand, He also has the capacity to win with a ridiculously small number of men (Judges 7) or He may take a stone tossed from a sling and win the battle (I Sam. 17).

In reference to Ephesians 6:17, one must understand that words and sounds can play a decisive role in the battle. This holds true not only in the OT but also in the annals of the ancient world histories. Oracles are read to encourage the soldiers in their struggle, curses were pronounced on enemies, fiery orators would be hired to encourage the troops to heroic service, last minute prayers were prayed immediately before entering into the fray, crisp commands were shouted and acknowledged, and there were yells that accompanied the charge. All of these actions were accomplished by the use of words.

When one looks to uncover the Scriptural truths in Ephesians 6:17, one finds that the “word” used in the confrontation of the saints is the “gospel of peace” which was first proclaimed by the Messiah (Eph. 2:17; 6:15; Heb. 2:3-4). According to Ephesians 6:18-20, the mode of wielding and using this particular “word” is by fervent prayer. The prayer of the saints to God is of great imminence. The “gospel of peace” goes through prison walls, before courts, to Rome, thus it will go to all the world (Acts 28:30-31). It should become clear that the mere ability to quote the Word of God does not exhaust the use of the “word of God” which the saints are to make. There are new prayers to pray, new

meditations to discover, and a multitude of forms of proclamation are at our fingers for evangelism. There must be a great love for the Scriptures that God has so carefully placed in our hands.

C. Hebrews 4:12 -- A Brief Detour

2 Timothy 2:3-4 -- Thou therefore endure hardness, as a good soldier of Jesus Christ. No man that warreth entangleth himself with the affairs of this life; that he may please him who hath chosen him to be a soldier.

2 Corinthians 10:3-5 -- For though we walk in the flesh, we do not war after the flesh: (For the weapons of our warfare are not carnal, but mighty through God to the pulling down of strong holds;) Casting down imaginations, and every high thing that exalteth itself against the knowledge of God, and bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ;

1 Timothy 1:18 -- This charge I commit unto thee, son Timothy, according to the prophecies which went before on thee, that thou by them mightest war a good warfare;

2 Corinthians 1:6 -- And whether we be afflicted, it is for your consolation and salvation, which is effectual in the enduring of the same sufferings which we also suffer: or whether we be comforted, it is for your consolation and salvation.

2 Timothy 3:11 -- Persecutions, afflictions, which came unto me at Antioch, at Iconium, at Lystra; what persecutions I endured: but out of them all the Lord delivered me.

2 Timothy 4:5 -- But watch thou in all things, endure afflictions, do the work of an evangelist, make full proof of thy ministry.

Hebrews 10:32 -- But call to remembrance the former days, in which, after ye were illuminated, ye endured a great fight of afflictions;

Hebrews 12:2-3 -- Looking unto Jesus the author and finisher of our faith; who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God. For consider him that endured such contradiction of sinners against himself, lest ye be wearied and faint in your minds.

Hebrews 4:12 -- For the word of God is quick, and powerful, and sharper than any twoedged 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.

This is an oft-quoted verse in reference to the power that lies within the Word of God. The word “quick” is an old English word that carries the same connotation as “alive,” or “living.” The Word of God is alive. It has the great ability to illuminate the hearts and motives of men. There is not one single behavior that has been left out of the Book either mentioned or given as an example. All of the unruly spirits that attempt to rumble within the flesh are addressed within the Word of God.

By looking at this particular portion of text, one understands that the Word of God not has the ability to inspire faith and bring encouragement, it also can be the voice of judgment that God supplies. Sharper than a two-edged sword, *distomon*, literally a two-mouthed sword. The word mouth was given to the sword because it seemed to devour all that lay before it. It has the capacity to not only destroy sin but it also gives instruction that allows one to destroy the wild beasts in the lives of men.

D. The RHEMA of God

When one looks at the Greek New Testament, more specifically to Ephesians 6:17, one notes that Paul used the word *rhema* for the Word. The *rhema* was not used often by Paul in his epistles. In fact there is a very limited use of the word *rhema* in the Pauline epistles. Paul would primarily use the word *logos* when penning the epistles. It is thus understood to be very weighty, revelatory, prophetic, or a binding pronouncement of judgement. Paul gave the sword the highest level of interpretation available to him because of the power that existed within the spiritual sword.

The sword that Paul was alluding to in this particular verse was the *machaira* which was a small dagger. It was much more handy and required more skill in its handling than the large broadsword (See the Shield of Faith). The large broadsword required very little skill and generally relied on the soldier's ability to put great weight and force behind his swing. However the small dagger that Paul is having reference to required a great deal of skill in learning how to use it. It was a weapon that was most effective in up close fighting. When Jesus faced Satan in the wilderness he carefully pointed him toward the boundaries that are established by Scripture.

The following reasons are given as to why one must study the Word of God:

1. We should study the Bible to know what the truth is.
2. We should have texts of Scripture at command, as the Savior did, to meet various forms of temptation.
3. We should not depend on our own reason or wisdom to overcome the tempter. Use the Book.
4. We should see the importance of training up the young in the accurate study of Scripture.

The Word of God reaches the heart which is the very center of action. If there are Scriptural principles guiding our walk in life then we are more successful in our strive for the mastery. The sinner "dies" which allows him to become "dead" to his former desires and deeds. According to Romans 7:9, he is "slain" by the Law. This is done by the conviction of the Word of God. The Word of God works not to worsen the condition of man but awakens, convicts, converts, and sanctifies the soul.

Greek Word Studies

Ephesians 6:17 -- Spirit . . .

<1 Cor. 6:11>; the Spirit of God, the Holy, <Eph. 4:30>; the Spirit of glory and of God, <1 Pet. 4:14>; the Spirit of Him that raised up Jesus from the dead (i. e., God), <Rom. 8:11>; the Spirit of your Father, <Matt. 10:20>; the Spirit of His Son, <Gal. 4:6>; Spirit of (the) Lord, <Acts 8:39>; the Spirit of (the) Lord, <Acts 5:9>; (the) Lord, (the) Spirit, <2 Cor. 3:18>; the Spirit of Jesus, <Acts 16:7>; Spirit of Christ, <Rom. 8:9>; the Spirit of Jesus Christ, <Phil. 1:19>; Spirit of adoption, <Rom. 8:15>; the Spirit of truth, <John 14:17>; the Spirit of life, <Rom. 8:2>; the Spirit of grace, <Heb. 10:29>."

From Notes on Galatians, by Hogg and Vine, p. 193.

The use or absence of the article in the original where the "Holy Spirit" is spoken of cannot always be decided by grammatical rules, nor can the presence or absence of the article alone determine whether the reference is to the "Holy Spirit." Examples where the Person is meant when the article is absent are <Matt. 22:43> (the article is used in <Mark 12:36>); <Acts 4:25>, RV (absent in some texts); <19:2,6; Rom. 14:17; 1 Cor. 2:4; Gal. 5:25> (twice); <1 Pet. 1:2>. Sometimes the absence is to be accounted for by the fact that Pneuma (like Theos) is substantially a proper name, e. g., in <John 7:39>. As a general rule the article is present where the subject of the teaching is the Personality of the Holy Spirit, e. g., <John 14:26>, where He is spoken of in distinction from the Father and the Son. See also <15:26> and cf. <Luke 3:22>.

In <Gal. 3:3>, in the phrase "having begun in the Spirit," it is difficult to say whether the reference is to the "Holy Spirit" or to the quickened spirit of the believer; that it possibly refers to the latter is not to be determined by the absence of the article, but by the contrast with "the flesh"; on the other hand, the contrast may be between the "Holy Spirit" who in the believer sets His seal on the perfect work of Christ, and the flesh which seeks to better itself by works of its own. There is no preposition before either noun, and if the reference is to the quickened spirit it cannot be dissociated from the operation of the "Holy Spirit." (Vines') In <Gal. 4:29> the phrase "after the Spirit" signifies "by supernatural power," in contrast to "after the flesh," i. e., "by natural power," and the reference must be to the "Holy Spirit"; so in <5:17>.

The full title with the article before both pneuma and hagios (the "resumptive" use of the article), lit., "the Spirit the Holy," stresses the character of the Person, e. g., <Matt. 12:32; Mark 3:29; 12:36; 13:11; Luke 2:26; 10:21> (RV); <John 14:26; Acts 1:16; 5:3; 7:51; 10:44,47; 13:2; 15:28; 19:6; 20:23,28; 21:11; 28:25; Eph. 4:30; Heb. 3:7; 9:8; 10:15>.

The Personality of the Spirit is emphasized at the expense of strict grammatical procedure in <John 14:26; 15:26; 16:8,13,14>, where the emphatic pronoun ekeinos, "He," is used of Him in the masculine, whereas the noun pneuma is neuter in Greek, while the corresponding word in Aramaic, the language in which our Lord probably spoke, is feminine (rucha, cf. Heb. ruach). The rendering "itself" in <Rom. 8:16,26>, due to the Greek gender, is corrected to "Himself" in the Revelation. (Vine's)

There should be the discipline in every Christian to attempt to handle the Word of God with skill and precision. As for the ministry, it should be the quest to preach the Book entirely before we have been laid away in death. The motivating call to every minister is the simple command to preach. He is not called to be an administrator, accountant, etcetera, he must preach all the counsel of God.

III. THE SOLDIER'S PROPER RESPONSE -- CULTIVATING A TEACHABLE HEART

The Kingdom Parables of Matthew 13 began with the Sower and the types of "ground" (hearts). The heart of a true soldier must be visited by a number of things that God can use to create a submissiveness on our part to become the soldier that He wants us to be. There are often tears of sorrow and disappointment that come to our lives but the tears moisten the "soil" so that the Farmer can come along and remove the roots of bitterness more easily.

The heart of a true soldier is like a field of rich soil that is well tended by the husbandman. Not everything can grow there. Weeds, crab grass, Johnson grass, and nut grass can stifle the abundant fruit that the Lord works to grow. Numerous times we are prone to react to the teaching of Scripture with a defensive and stubborn attitude. We become "stiffnecked" and the Spirit has no ability to guide our lives. According to Proverbs 12:15, fools always think that their way is the only way and the right way. Any minister can *expose* us to the truth, but he cannot make us incorporate and appropriate it into our daily lives.

Develop your own plan to open up the Book.

Personal Bible study can begin today. Not only can one read the Bible but read books that are on Christian themes. The most effective way to continue personal Bible study is to stay out of ruts. Season your study with periods of prayer and at times mix in fasting. You will be amazed at how God can direct soldiers who have teachable hearts.

In conclusion, the following words must be considered about the Word of God:

This Book contains the mind of God, the state of man, the way of salvation, the doom of sinners and the happiness of believers. Its doctrines are holy, its precepts are binding, its histories are true, and its decisions are immutable. Read it to be wise, believe it to be safe and practice it to be holy. It contains light to direct you, food to support you and comfort to cheer you. It is the traveler's map, the pilgrim's staff, the pilot's compass, the soldier's sword, and the Christian's character. Here paradise is restored, heaven opened and the gates of hell disclosed. Christ is its grand object, our good is its design and the glory of God its end. It should fill the memory, rule the heart and guide the feet. Read it slowly, frequently, and prayerfully. It is given you in life and will be opened in the judgment and will be remembered forever. It involves the highest responsibility, will reward the greatest labour, and will condemn all who trifle with its sacred contents.