



The ancient world posed the same threats and dangers that our world does today. There were robbers and wild beasts that the disciples would need to be prepared to defend against. Paul himself acknowledges as much (cf. 2 Cor. 11:26). Even the Lord's parable of the Good Samaritan alludes to the dangers that existed on the ancient roads (Luke 10:30-

36). The Lord's instruction to buy a sword pertains to the disciples' future life in that they were going to be travelling great distances spreading the Gospel and it was customary for travelers to carry swords underneath their garments. Someone may well ask, "Why is there no record of the apostles resisting beatings and scourgings, or being hauled away by the Romans?" We must remember the Lord has also instructed us to be in submission to civil authorities (Titus 3:1). The Lord never advocated militant revolt against any government. Jesus' words were also to His disciples living in the ancient world, so we shouldn't take this to mean every Christian needs to buy a gun to defend his or herself. Nevertheless, God has sanctioned such an action if one so chooses to "buy a sword" to defend himself and his family.



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Welcome Visitors

We are so glad that you joined us today.
Please come again.

● Let us know if you have any questions.

ISSUE

13.23

BULLETIN OF
THE OLSEN
PARK CHURCH
OF CHRIST

Faithful Sayings

June 5
2011



Services

Sunday: 9:30 AM
10:20 AM
6:00 PM

Wednesday: 7:00 PM

Elders:

Pat Ledbetter
Jeff Nunn
Kyle Pope

Deacons:

Dean Bowers
Eddie Cook
Bill Davis
Steve Dixon
Pat Goguen
Jack Langley
Neil Ledbetter
Brady McAlister
Walker McAnear
Lance Purcell
Rusty Scott

Evangelists:

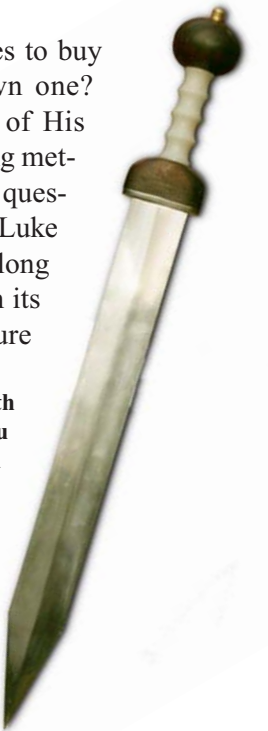
Kyle Pope
Jason Garcia

"Let Him Buy a Sword"

By Jason Garcia

Why would Jesus instruct His disciples to buy swords if they did not already own one? Wouldn't this contradict the spirit of His peaceful gospel? Could it be that He was speaking metaphorically or of "spiritual" swords? All of these questions naturally arise when we read Jesus' words in Luke 22:36. Let us consider the verse in its context along with some other passages that may shed light on its meaning. Beginning in Luke 22:35 the Scripture records:

And he said to them, "When I sent you out with no moneybag or knapsack or sandals, did you lack anything?" They said, "Nothing." He said to them, "But now let the one who has a moneybag take it, and likewise a knapsack. And let the one who has no sword sell his cloak and buy one. For I tell you that this Scripture must be fulfilled in me: 'And he was numbered with the transgressors.' For what is written about me has its fulfillment." And they said, "Look, Lord, here are two swords." And he said to them, "It is enough" (Luke 22:35-38 ESV).



The Lord spoke these words to His disciples on the night He was to be betrayed. Just before this passage He predicted Peter's denial and, just after, He goes up to the Mount of Olives to pray. Is there anything in the context (before, after, or within the passage) that would suggest Jesus is speaking metaphorically? Would it make any sense for the Lord to instruct His disciples to sell a physical piece of clothing in order to purchase a spiritual asset? No, there is not. This is not a parable, and as such there



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is no metaphor or symbolism to dissect. We must conclude that the Lord was speaking literally and about real (tangible) things. Furthermore, the Lord draws a contrast between what He had instructed earlier during the limited commission when the disciples were told to take none of the things mentioned in our passage (cf. Luke 10:4). Was He speaking metaphorically in Luke 10? No. We only find reasons to understand Him literally in both Scriptures.

However, in understanding these swords to be physical and literal, do we then assume the Lord was advocating militant conquest at the Great Commission (cf. Mt. 28:18-20)? Was Jesus teaching an aggressive religion that converts souls by conquest and violence? Certainly not. For this conclusion would fly in the face of every teaching He revealed while on Earth. Before we proceed to draw our own conclusions about this passage, let's first consider some arguments put forth by those who do believe Jesus was speaking of spiritual things in this passage.

Some will try to build an argument from Jesus' quotation of Isaiah 53. In Luke's recording Jesus states the Scripture is about to be fulfilled in which He will be counted among sinners and transgressors. Within this citation we find mention of the Lord doing "no violence". They argue this is the example that He set and we should follow as well committing absolutely no violence. This is—admittedly—a stretch on the part of our friends since Jesus clearly and specifically points to a single verse and its fulfillment as it relates to His instructions in Luke. However, the connotations of this word "violence" in the ancient text pertain to one who visits cruelty upon others, and an even broader sense simply associates it with doing wrong (Strong and Thayer). Certainly this is true of our Lord. However, if our friends mean to say that Jesus always dealt gently and never physically

with people in all His confrontations nothing could be further from the truth. Remember, our Lord was a Man who was willing to make a scourge of cords Himself in order to drive out people and animals from His Father's House. He was a Man willing to flip over tables and overturn carts and scatter merchants money in His efforts to force them out of the temple (cf. John 2:14-16). In conjunction with their argument from Isaiah they will also cite the instance of Jesus' arrest in which Peter cuts off the ear of a servant with a sword. Jesus subsequently rebukes Peter saying, "**Put your sword back in its place, for all those who live by the sword shall perish by the sword**" (Matt. 26:52). From this they conclude that all acts of defense would be rebuked in the same way. Sadly, they seem to have ignored the rest of the text in which Jesus states, "**Do you think that I cannot appeal to my Father and He will at once send 12 legions of angels? But then how would the Scriptures be fulfilled, that it must be so?**" (Matt. 26:53-54). What, do you suppose, is His point? Peter was not wrong in His action because defense in and of itself is sinful. Jesus rebuked Peter because his actions were not according to God's plan. The Lord makes it clear in this passage and later as well when standing before Pilate that if His Kingdom was intended to be earthly and physical then violence would be visited upon those who opposed Him (cf. John 18:36). Incidentally, in the time of Augustus, a Roman legion consisted of nearly 7,000 soldiers (Thayer). The Lord, if He desired, could have overwhelmingly quashed any petty human resistance. Again, Peter was rebuked because what he was trying to do would serve only to frustrate God's plan to offer His Son as a sacrifice for our sins. Those who base their argument against

the Christians right to self-defense solely upon Jesus' reaction to Peter taking up the sword in the garden miss the crucial difference in circumstances: He was meant to die as a sacrifice, they are not. Regarding Jesus statement about those who live by the sword, Barnes offers some interesting insight: "The most satisfactory interpretation is that which regards it as a caution to Peter. Peter was rash. Alone he had attacked the whole band. Jesus told him that his unseasonable and imprudent defense might be the occasion of his own destruction. In doing it he would endanger his life, for they who took the sword perished by it." We see, then, that the Lord is not wholly opposed to violence in all times and in all places. Jesus' teaching never advocates violence as a tool to convert someone through fear, injury, or intimidation. So, then, what conclusions should we draw regarding His instruction to His disciples about buying a sword?