

THE ARMOR OF GOD

"The Sword of the Spirit"

- 1 Sam 13:2-22
- 2 Saul chose three thousand men from Israel; two thousand were with him at Micmash and in the hill country of Bethel, and a thousand were with Jonathan at Gibeah in Benjamin. The rest of the men he sent back to their homes.
- 3 Jonathan attacked the Philistine outpost at Geba, and the Philistines heard about it. Then Saul had the trumpet blown throughout the land and said, "Let the Hebrews hear!"
- 4 So all Israel heard the news: "Saul has attacked the Philistine outpost, and now Israel has become a stench to the Philistines." And the people were summoned to join Saul at Gilgal.
- 5 The Philistines assembled to fight Israel, with three thousand chariots, six thousand charioteers, and soldiers as numerous as the sand on the seashore. They went up and camped at Micmash, east of Beth Aven.
- 6 When the men of Israel saw that their situation was critical and that their army was hard pressed, they hid in caves and thickets, among the rocks, and in pits and cisterns.
- 7 Some Hebrews even crossed the Jordan to the land of Gad and Gilead. Saul remained at Gilgal, and all the troops with him were quaking with fear.
- 8 He waited seven days, the time set by Samuel; but Samuel did not come to Gilgal, and Saul's men began to scatter. [*see 1 Sam. 10:8*]
- 9 So he said, "Bring me the burnt offering and the fellowship offerings." And Saul offered up the burnt offering.
- 10 Just as he finished making the offering, Samuel arrived, and Saul went out to greet him.
- 11 "What have you done?" asked Samuel. Saul replied, "When I saw that the men were scattering, and that you did not come at the set time, and that the Philistines were assembling at Micmash,
- 12 I thought, 'Now the Philistines will come down against me at Gilgal, and I have not sought the LORD's favor.' So I felt compelled to offer the burnt offering."
- 13 "You acted foolishly," Samuel said. "You have not kept the command the LORD your God gave you; if you had, he would have established your kingdom over Israel for all time.
- 14 But now your kingdom will not endure; the LORD has sought out a man after his own heart and appointed him leader of his people, because you have not kept the LORD's command."
- 15 Then Samuel left Gilgal and went up to Gibeah in Benjamin, and Saul counted the men who were with him. They numbered about six hundred.
- 16 Saul and his son Jonathan and the men with them were staying in Gibeah in Benjamin, while the Philistines camped at Micmash.
- 17 Raiding parties went out from the Philistine camp in three detachments. One turned toward Ophrah in the vicinity of Shual,
- 18 another toward Beth Horon, and the third toward the borderland overlooking the Valley of Zeboim facing the desert.
- 19 Not a blacksmith could be found in the whole land of Israel, because the Philistines had said, "Otherwise the Hebrews will make swords or spears!"
- 20 So all Israel went down to the Philistines to have their plowshares, mattocks, axes and sickles sharpened.
- 21 The price was two thirds of a shekel for sharpening plowshares and mattocks, and a third of a shekel for sharpening forks and axes and for repointing goads.

22 So on the day of the battle not a soldier with Saul and Jonathan had a sword or spear in his hand; only Saul and his son Jonathan had them. (NIV)

This account takes place at the beginning stages of Saul's decline. Saul was the king chosen by God to fulfill the fleshly desires of the people of Israel. He was anointed by the Holy Spirit and received a changed heart from the Lord. He who was once shy and fearful of people became bold in the Lord and wrought many victories against Israel's oppressors. But his confidence in the Lord waivered. He was presumptuous and sacrificed before the Lord against Samuel's command and was severely rebuked for his foolishness. He who had begun a campaign against the Philistine with three thousand men was reduced to 600 men armed only with clubs and slings. Only he and Jonathan had sword and spear.

Matthew Henry's Commentary-

1 Samuel 13:15-23 PP5

(2.) how impolitic Saul was, that did not, in the beginning of his reign, set himself to redress this grievance. Samuel's not doing it was very excusable; he fought with other artillery; thunder and lightning, in answer to his prayer, were to him instead of sword and spear; but for Saul, that pretended to be a king like the kings of the nations, to leave his soldiers without swords and spears, and take no care to provide them, especially when he might have done it out of the spoils of the Ammonites whom he conquered in the beginning of his reign, was such a piece of negligence as could by no means be excused.

(3.) how slothful and mean-spirited the Israelites were, that suffered the Philistines thus to impose upon them and had no thought nor spirit to help themselves. It was reckoned very bad with them when there was not a shield or spear found among 40,000 in Israel <Judg. 5:8>, and it was not better now, when there was never an Israelite with a sword by his side but the king and his son, never a soldier, never a gentleman; surely they were reduced to this, or began to be so, in Samuel's time, for we never find him with sword or spear in his hand. If they had not been dispirited, they could not have been disarmed, but it was sin that made them naked to their shame.

(from Matthew Henry's Commentary)

In contrast, David was God's king of choice to accomplish his plan of redemption for Israel and the world. Even though his famous census was a sin and caused great harm in Israel, its results are startling when compared to Saul's 600.

1 Chr 21:5

Joab reported the number of the fighting men to David: In all Israel there were one million one hundred thousand men who could handle a sword, including four hundred and seventy thousand in Judah. (NIV)

That they could handle the sword implied that they had a sword to handle and had been trained in its use. David's sin was a reliance on the flesh; finding security in the size of the host instead of the Lord of hosts. And yet, as a good king and commander, he provided weapons and training for his troops. And though he is famous for his slinging, he was no slouch with the sword himself.

1 Chr 11:10-14

- 10 These also are the chief of the mighty men whom David had, who strengthened themselves with him in his kingdom, and with all Israel, to make him king, according to the word of the LORD concerning Israel.
- 11 And this is the number of the mighty men whom David had; Jashobeam, an Hachmonite, the chief of the captains: he lifted up his spear against three hundred slain by him at one time.
- 12 And after him was Eleazar the son of Dodo, the Ahohite, who was one of the three mighties.
- 13 He was with David at Pasdammim, and there the Philistines were gathered together to battle, where was a parcel of ground full of barley; and the people fled from before the Philistines.
- 14 And they set themselves in the midst of that parcel, and delivered it, and slew the Philistines; and the LORD saved them by a great deliverance. (KJV)

2 Sam 23:9-10

- 9 Next to him was Eleazar son of Dodai the Ahohite. As one of the three mighty men, he was with David when they taunted the Philistines gathered [at Pas Dammim] for battle. Then the men of Israel retreated,
- 10 but he stood his ground and struck down the Philistines till his hand grew tired and froze to the sword. The LORD brought about a great victory that day. The troops returned to Eleazar, but only to strip the dead. (NIV)

Ps 144:1-2, 14b-15 (NIV)

- 1 Praise be to the LORD my Rock, who trains my hands for war, my fingers for battle.
- 2 He is my loving God and my fortress, my stronghold and my deliverer, my shield, in whom I take refuge, who subdues peoples under me.
- 14b There will be no breaching of walls, no going into captivity, no cry of distress in our streets.
- 15 Blessed are the people of whom this is true; blessed are the people whose God is the LORD.

The Lord is our strength and fortress and provides training and skill for the use of his sword, not only that we not go back into captivity, but that we might also set the captive free.

Eph 6:17

Take the helmet of salvation and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God. (NIV)

*The Lord has provided for us to be armed with the sword of the spirit. It is the word of God. The Greek word for "word" is **rhema**, an utterance. Our sword of the spirit [**rhema**] is pulled from the belt of truth [**logos**].*

Some definitions:

Vine's:

"The significance of rhema (as distinct from logos) is exemplified in the injunction to take "the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God," <Eph. 6:17>; here the reference is not to the whole Bible as such, but to the individual scripture which the Spirit brings to our remembrance for use in time of need, a prerequisite being the regular storing of the mind with Scripture."

Abbott Smith:

"Logos is reasoned speech, rhema, an utterance, epos, "the articulated expression of a thought"

Tayer:

"What is or has been uttered by the living voice, a thing spoken, a word."

In order to have a sense of how this rhema sword works in the spiritual battle, it is helpful to understand the Roman soldier's sword.

In 192 B.C. the Roman Proconsul M. Flavius captured the city of Toledo in the Iberian Peninsula in an effort to subvert Carthaginian rule. According to Spanish tradition, this city was founded in 540 B.C. by Hebrews, who called it Toledo, the mother of cities. For over two thousand years, its most famous industrial product has been the sword. Toledo steel and its sword making artisans are said to be only matched and only possibly surpassed by the Japanese sword masters.

Prior to this conquests, the Roman's sword was a long, two-handed weapon; more adapted to the cut than the thrust. In Toledo, they encountered the Iberian blade, a short, broad, long pointed, double-edged blade. Their fighting style was revolutionized. The Legion became the terror of more heavily armed and stronger races than themselves.

*Listen to Vegetius as he explains the training of the Roman soldier with the sword:
Quote Book I 11, 12*

Thus the rhema of the Lord. It is a piercing weapon that goes straight to the point.

Jesus' use of the Sword of the Spirit in dealing with Satan:

Matt 4:3-11

- 3 The tempter came to him and said, "If you are the Son of God, tell these stones to become bread."
- 4 Jesus answered, "It is written: 'Man does not live on bread alone, but on every **word**² that comes from the **mouth**⁴ of God.'"(Deut. 8:3)
- 5 Then the devil took him to the holy city and had him stand on the highest point of the temple.
- 6 "If you are the Son of God," he said, "throw yourself down. For it is written: "'He will command his angels concerning you, and they will lift you up in their hands, so that you will not strike your foot against a stone.'"(Ps. 91:11-12)*I would have answered with verse 10.*
- 7 Jesus answered him, "It is also written: 'Do not put the Lord your God to the test.'"(Deut6:16)
- 8 Again, the devil took him to a very high mountain and showed him all the kingdoms of the world and their splendor.
- 9 "All this I will give you," he said, "if you will bow down and worship me."
- 10 Jesus said to him, "Away from me, Satan! For it is written: 'Worship the Lord your God, and serve him only.'"(Deut. 6:13-14; Deut. 10:20)
- 11 Then the devil left him, and angels came and attended him.(NIV)

He withstands the devil's temptation in the wilderness and doesn't even step out of a four-chapter spread in Deuteronomy!

Thayer's definition-

4750 **stoma**⁴-

- 1) the mouth, as part of the body: used of man, of animals, of fish, etc. since thoughts of a man's soul find verbal utterance by his mouth, the "heart" or "soul" and the mouth are distinguished
- 2) the edge of a sword

Luke 21:15

For I will give you a **mouth**⁴ and wisdom, which all your adversaries shall not be able to gainsay nor **resist**⁵.(KJV)

436 **anthistemi**⁵ (anth-is'-tay-mee);from 473 and 2476; to stand against, i.e. oppose:
KJV-- resist, withstand.

James 4:7

Submit yourselves, then, to God. **Resist**⁵ the devil, and he will flee from you.(NIV)

1 Pet 5:8-9

- 8 Be self-controlled and alert. Your enemy the devil prowls around like a roaring lion looking for someone to devour.
- 9 **Resist**⁵ him, standing firm in the faith, because you know that your brothers throughout the world are undergoing the same kind of sufferings.(NIV)

Eph 6:13

Wherefore take unto you the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to **withstand**⁵ in the evil day, and having done all, to stand.(KJV)

Its use in withstanding is also a use in evangelizing.

Acts 13:1-12

- 1 In the church at Antioch there were prophets and teachers: Barnabas, Simeon called Niger, Lucius of Cyrene, Manaen (who had been brought up with Herod the tetrarch) and Saul.
- 2 While they were worshiping the Lord and fasting, the Holy Spirit said, "Set apart for me Barnabas and Saul for the work to which I have called them."
- 3 So after they had fasted and prayed, they placed their hands on them and sent them off.
- 4 The two of them, sent on their way by the Holy Spirit, went down to Seleucia and sailed from there to Cyprus.
- 5 When they arrived at Salamis, they proclaimed the word of God in the Jewish synagogues. John was with them as their helper.
- 6 They traveled through the whole island until they came to Paphos. There they met a Jewish sorcerer and false prophet named Bar-Jesus,
- 7 who was an attendant of the proconsul, Sergius Paulus. The proconsul, an intelligent man, sent for Barnabas and Saul because he wanted to hear the word of God.
- 8 But Elymas the sorcerer (for that is what his name means) opposed them and tried to turn the proconsul from the faith.
- 9 Then Saul, who was also called Paul, filled with the Holy Spirit, looked straight at Elymas and **said**⁷,

- 10 "You are a child of the devil and an enemy of everything that is right! You are full of all kinds of deceit and trickery. Will you never stop perverting the right ways of the Lord?
11 Now the hand of the Lord is against you. You are going to be blind, and for a time you will be unable to see the light of the sun." Immediately mist and darkness came over him, and he groped about, seeking someone to lead him by the hand.
12 When the proconsul saw what had happened, he believed, for he was amazed at the teaching about the Lord.(NIV)

You see, this is a spiritual battle fought with words.

Rev. 13:4-8

Rev. 16:3

2 Thes.2:8

Rev. 1:16

Rev. 2:12-17

Rev. 19:11-21

Jesus is the sword of the Spirit that gives us rhema's:

Heb. 4:12-14 He is the logos

rhema verses:

Luke 1:37

For no **word**² from God shall be void of power.(ASV)

*In the Greek text it reads, "οτι ουκ αδυνατεσερ παρα του θεου παν ρημα"; "For **nothing*** shall be **impossible**⁺ with God, **no**⁼thing."*

John 6:63

Isa. 49:1-9

Ps. 149:1-9