

Elder Bobby Willis



Sell Your Garment and Buy A Sword?

Luke 22:36

There always seems to be those who seek to find conflict within the Word of God. One such case is what some believe to be a chasm between Matthew 5:39 and Luke 22:36. Matthew says, “**...whosoever shall smite thee on thy right cheek, turn to him the other also**” while the opposite is taught in Luke 22:36 which says, “**But now,**” ... “**he that hath no sword, let him sell his garment, and buy one.**”

On first appearance, it would seem that the admonition of Christ to the apostles had changed. However, that is not the case. He was not advocating that carnal weapons be used in defending the cause of Christ. In rightly dividing the Word of God, it is never proper to pit one scripture against another to arrive at the intended meaning. We must remember the divine origin of the Bible and the unity which flows within it.

We must realize the intent of “**turn to him the other also**” (cheek) is not in the same context as to go and buy a sword. Matthew 5:39 is a lesson of how they were to deal with an individual should they be physically or even verbally attacked. We are not to render evil for evil. To retaliate with Road Rage would be a good example today. If someone cuts you off in traffic does not give us leeway to do the same. Or, if you are the blunt of gossip, doesn't mean we should spread gossip about them. Matthew 5:39 is not dealing with the evils of false doctrine or corruptness or the vilest of sins.

To keep Luke 22:35-38 in context, the Disciples of Christ were about to go forth preaching gospel where it would be attacked and slandered and they might not be provided for as in the past. Earlier, they did not take anything with them as the Lord would teach them dependance on Him and His providential care. He even asked them in Luke 22:35, “**When I sent you without purse, and scrip, and shoes, lacked ye any thing? And they said, Nothing.**” Now that they have learned dependance and to trust in the Lord, He instructs them concerning the harder times that were coming as they went preaching the gospel.

Now, in dealing with Luke 22:36, we must realize that the sword under consideration is not a carnal sword made with iron or steel. But rather, Christ is teaching them a beautiful lesson of dependance on Spiritual Weapons. In verse 38, the disciples noted that there were two carnal swords in their possession in which the Lord replied, **“It is enough.”** These two were enough because they were not the right kind of swords. This is proven in Matthew 26:51-52 when He rebuked Peter for using one to cut off an ear of a servant of the high priest.

It would be over spiritualizing to put a meaning to the two swords the disciples had in their possessions. There is only one sword which they needed and it is found in Ephesians 6:17 when Paul, in speaking of our warfare against sin, said to: **“...take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God:...”** God’s servants must not depend on the world to provide for them, but rather put their trust in the Lord and take the divinely inspired word of God (the Bible) with them wherever they go. Notice the explanation of Paul in 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 discernor of the thoughts and intents of the heart.”** The usage of the **“any”** just before this **“twoedged sword”** shows a contrast between the **“word of God”** and the wrong kind of weapon.

In closing, Paul tells Timothy, **“All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: That the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works”** (II Timothy 3:15-17). It would be good for all of us to take our **“sword”** with us and read and study it often. **“Think About IT”**