

“Go Buy a Sword”

Jesus was constantly being misunderstood by his followers, especially the apostles (the ones who should have known Jesus best). Throughout his ministry, his apostles maintained the belief that he was somewhat of a revolutionary who was going to lead the Jews out of Roman servitude. He would set up an earthly kingdom and reign, and if James and John’s mother had anything to do with it, the “sons of Boanerges” would assist him as co vice presidents. Jesus said it himself (or so they surmised) In **Matthew 10:34-39** when He said:

“Do not suppose that I have come to bring peace to the earth. I did not come to bring peace, but a sword. For I have come to turn “a man against his father, a daughter against her mother, a daughter-in-law against her mother-in-law— a man’s enemies will be the members of his own household.””

Jesus came to start a civil war! Loyalty to him would get you rewarded. You can certainly see why they would be confused. Except for the fact that they were being constantly reminded by Jesus that his kingdom was NOT of this world. And the division in families would come based upon whether or not His message was accepted and believed.

On the occasion of Peter’s denial in **Luke 22**, Jesus tells his apostles to **“go buy a sword.” (verse 36)** He is not telling them to arm themselves for the civil war to come. Most commentaries I have read say this is a way to subtly tell them that he was going to be sacrificed and they would have to fend for themselves. The statement about having **“two swords” (verse 38)** just shows how hard a time they had understanding Jesus’ message considering their preconceived ideas. **“That’s enough!”** was Jesus dismissing them—seriously, are two swords enough to defend themselves against the Roman Empire?

Peter’s continual lack of understanding is evidenced by his attempt to defend Jesus from being arrested by cutting off the ear of the servant of the high priest, Malchus. What did Jesus say there? **“Put your sword back in its place, for all who draw the sword will die by the sword.”** Jesus was capable of calling legions of angels to save Him. He must die, he tells them, and what do they do, these brave would-be soldiers? All the disciples deserted him and fled.

I won’t even discuss the ridiculousness of the statement his apostles made in **Acts 1:6**, where they asked Him if He is now going to restore the kingdom to Israel. It seriously is no wonder that on several occasions Jesus would listen to their statements and say “Are you so dull?”

But Jesus did give them a sword. And it did divide families. It did have its desired effect. Paul in **Ephesians 6:17** tells us that we are to arm ourselves with the **“sword of**

the Spirit” – the word of God. The Hebrew writer, in *Hebrews 4:12-13* says of that word: **“For 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.”**

Everything is exposed by the sword that we wield. It makes obvious our sin (in comparison to it) and surgically removes it from our heart---if we allow it to. I think about the phrase **“cut to the heart”** that is found in *Acts 2*. These people on Pentecost heard the word of God preached and that sword had its desired effect. They were made aware of their sinful state and the need for heart surgery. It judged the thoughts and attitudes of their heart and caused them to give themselves to Christ by being born of water and the Spirit, and that sword has the same effect today.

---Johnny Stephens