

The Two Swords

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Luke 22:36, Pages 1646

In response to another question, today we will review the conversation Jesus had with His disciples concerning two swords. The night before His crucifixion, Jesus gave new directions to His disciples concerning swords.



Luke 22:35, Page 1646

“And He said to them, ‘When I sent you out without money belt and bag and sandals, you did not lack anything, did you?’ They said, ‘No, nothing.’”

Lacking Nothing. In Luke 22:35, page 1646, Jesus reminded the disciples that they lacked nothing when He sent them out without money belt, bag or sandals. We may learn from this simple reminder that Jesus was about to change something with His disciples.



Luke 22:36, Page 1646

“And He said to them, “But now, whoever has a money belt is to take it along, likewise also a bag, and whoever has no sword is to sell his coat and buy one.’”

Buy a Sword. In Luke 22:36, page 1646, we now see the change that Jesus had in mind. Remember that Jesus had already taught the disciples to go into ministry in complete dependence upon

God to provide for all their needs. The disciples already knew about living by faith in God's provision. Now, Jesus was expanding their faith by telling them they could now take along a money belt, and also a bag. They should also sell their coats to purchase swords. This direction to purchase swords might seem strange to us. It has promoted much controversy among commentators on this verse. Some see it as literal swords, and others as symbolic swords. Some commentators have emphasized that Jesus was talking about a short sword (μάχαιραν), and not the bigger sword for soldiers. As I always urge my friends, we must study all the verses in this passage to understand how they all fit together, so we may understand each verse in the context of this passage. In this case, the next verse sheds considerable light upon the two swords causing so many interpretations.



Luke 22:36, Page 1646

“For I tell you that this which is written must be fulfilled in Me, ‘AND HE WAS NUMBERED WITH THE TRANSGRESSORS’; for that which refers to Me has its fulfillment.”

Numbered with the Transgressors. In Luke 22:37, page 1646, we see Jesus connect verse 37 with verse 36. The little word “for” (“ὁὐ”) indicates that the second verse helps explain the previous verse. Jesus clearly applies the quotation from Isaiah 53: 12, page 1156, as a verse written about Himself. Jesus identified Himself as the Servant in Isaiah that must come to be crushed for the iniquities of the people and pierced for their transgressions (Isaiah 53:5, page 1155). The Servant of Isaiah 53:12 also must be “numbered with the transgressors.” Therefore, we see that Jesus had linked two items together: (1) the fulfillment of the passage about the Servant being numbered with the transgressors with (2) the new

directions He just gave His disciples about buying swords. Notice again that Jesus said “that which refers to me has its fulfillment” (Luke 22:37, page 1646). Jesus implied He was fulfilling Isaiah 53:12, page 1156, by His disciples purchasing swords. In this context, the disciples had not been known for using swords, and therefore had no need of them. Now, Jesus specifically commanded them to purchase swords, because now He would be numbered with the transgressors. The fulfillment of “being numbered with the transgressors” now appears tied to the disciples having and using swords. Who are those transgressors?



Luke 22:36, Page 1646

“They said, ‘Lord, look, here are two swords.’ And He said to them, ‘It is enough.’”

It Is Enough. In Luke 22:38, page 1646, Jesus said that two swords among the eleven disciples would be “enough” (“ἱκανόν”). This word “enough” (“ἱκανόν”) means to attain, reach a certain stage, be sufficient. So, Jesus was telling the disciples in this context that two swords would be sufficient for Him to be “numbered with the transgressors.” Note that two swords fulfilled the plural requirement of “transgressors” in the prophecy of Isaiah 53:12, page 1156. Jesus has now fully explained the link between the two swords and the fulfillment of the prophecy that Jesus Himself would be “numbered among the transgressors.” Jesus has set the stage for the use of the swords at His arrest. Let us look to the realization of the prophecy.



Luke 22:49-50, Page 1646

“When those who were around Him saw what was going to happen, they said, ‘Lord, shall we strike with the sword?’ And one of them struck the slave of the high priest and cut off his right ear.”

“Lord, Shall We Strike with the Sword?” In Luke 22:49, page 1646, Judas, with a crowd behind him, has just kissed Jesus and identified Jesus as the Messiah of Israel and Judas himself as a betrayer. The disciples of Jesus, standing around him, now having two swords, asked Jesus, “Lord, shall we strike with the sword?” John 18:10, page 1691 tells us that Peter used the sword. Even before Jesus answered, Peter acted and cut off the right ear of Malchus, the servant of the high priest (John 18:10, page 1691).

“One of Them Struck the Slave.” In Luke 22:50, page 1646, we learn that one of the disciples, having seen “what was going to happen” (Luke 22:49, page 1646) to Jesus, struck the slave with the sword. Notice that Peter struck because Peter realized that Jesus would be arrested and killed. Peter did not want Jesus arrested or killed, and was prepared to use a sword to stop it. Jesus, however, had already predicted His own betrayal and arrest and was all about fulfilling every aspect of prophecy concerning His own arrest and betrayal. Jesus had all the power He needed to oppose the arrest, including twelve legions of angels (Matthew 26:54, page 1551). Jesus consciously chose to submit to arrest. Jesus was following God’s plan.



Luke 22:51, Page 1646

“But Jesus answered and said, “Stop! No more of this.” And He touched his ear and healed him.”

Stop! No More of This. In Luke 22:51, page 1646, Jesus stopped a sword fight from getting worse. Notice that the word “Stop!” is plural in the phrase “Stop! No more of this” (“Ἑἴτε ἕως τούτου”). Jesus meant to stop everyone, including His disciples, for any further use of their swords. He interceded with words for His disciples by commanding them to stop, and also Jesus stopped everyone from using their swords against each other. In interceding for His disciples, Jesus fulfilled Isaiah 53:12, page 1156 “He interceded for the transgressors.” Jesus had come to that hour expecting to be arrested, and He had no intention to oppose that arrest. He did, however, intend to be “numbered with the transgressors,” and sword play was a part of being a transgressor.

Therefore, we may now conclude that Peter was a transgressor of both the law (by opposing the religious authorities with violence) and also the plan of God for Jesus to be arrested, condemned, crucified, and resurrected. In fact, everyone who opposed the arrest of Jesus with violence and sword drawn opposed the will of God. Consider for a moment Matthew 16:21-23, page 1530. Jesus had just told His disciples that “elders and chief priests and scribes” would cause Jesus to suffer many things, and be killed, only to be raised on the third day. Peter immediately protested that those things would never happen to Jesus. Jesus rebuked Peter: “Get behind Me, Satan! You are not setting your mind on God’s interests, but man’s” (Matthew 16:23, page 1530). At the arrest of Jesus, we see that Peter had not learned from his previous rebuke from Jesus concerning Jesus’ own arrest and death because Peter used the sword to resist the arrest of Jesus. In this sense, Peter also was a transgressor of God’s intention to deliver His Son to trial and death, followed by resurrection, while Peter, following Satan’s lead, opposed God’s plans. Moreover, Jesus explicitly told Peter that the Father had set this cup before Jesus, and now Jesus intended to drink it (John 18:11, page 1691). Jesus referred to His arrest as part of drinking

the cup the Father had set before Him. Jesus meant that He was only following the Father's plans and interests, because Jesus had already resolved to drink the cup as He had prayed in the Garden of Gethsemane (Luke 22:42, page 1646). As Jesus warned Peter to pray that Peter would not fall in temptation, Peter gave in to temptation and opposed with the sword the arrest of Jesus (Luke 22:40, page 1646).

Therefore, Peter was one of the transgressors (by once again setting his mind on man's things and opposing God's interest and plans) and Jesus was numbered with him. Keep in mind, however, that Jesus Himself was not a transgressor of any law at any time. Before we leave Luke 22:51, page 1646, please compare Matthew 26:51-54, pages 1551-1552. Jesus also interceded for His disciples with swords by changing their destinies, just as Isaiah predicted that Jesus would intercede for the transgressors in Isaiah 53:12, page 1156. If they had used their swords, normally they would have to perish by the sword (Matthew 26:52, page 1551).

Jesus interceded by healing the servant, as we will see below, and spared Peter in particular, and the other disciple with a sword, from dying by the sword. Jesus had other plans for Peter and all the other disciples. They were not destined to die that night by the sword. Also notice in Matthew 26:54, pages 1551-1552, that Jesus intended to fulfill Scripture by His arrest in the manner prescribed by Scripture (for example, Isaiah 53:7, page 1155: "like a lamb that is led to slaughter . . ."). Jesus intended to be numbered with the transgressors to fulfill Scripture, but not one of the disciples or members of the crowd had to have permanent damages resulting from the arrest.

And He Touched His Ear and Healed Him. In Luke 22:51, page 1646, Jesus interceded for His disciples by healing the ear (another fulfillment of Isaiah 53:12, page 1156—"He interceded for the transgressors." He also acted in compassion and love by healing the servant's ear. The effect of the miracle

constituted loud and clear testimony that Jesus was the Messiah, the rightful King of Israel, and no one should be opposing Him or arresting Him. It makes sense that the sword play stopped, and no further violence occurred. Jesus had stopped the violence with His words and His miraculous healing power. He had just completed His first and second intercession for the disciples so that they would be free and ready to scatter, as predicted and fulfilled (Matthew 26:31, page 1550; compare Luke 22:37, page 1646). Being always full of mercy, Jesus healed the servant's ear (Luke 22:50, page 1646).



Luke 22:52, Page 1646

"Then Jesus said to the chief priests and officers of the temple and elders who had come against Him, 'Have you come out with swords and clubs as you would against a robber? While I was with you daily in the temple, you did not lay hands on me; but this hour and the power of darkness are yours.'"

The Chief Priests, Officers of the Temple, and Elders. In Luke 22:52, page 1646-1647, we learn that the chief priests, officers of the temple, and elders all came to arrest Jesus. They were authorities with the power to arrest and try Jesus for religious infractions, but they were unable to kill him without the authority of the Roman government, and Pontius Pilate, the governor, in particular (John 18:31, page 1692). Resisting arrest was never a part of the plan of Jesus. He had predicted and intended His arrest, condemnation, crucifixion, and resurrection. He laid down His life on His own authority and no one took it from Him (John 10:17-18, pages 1675-1676). Peter and the other disciple with a sword, however, resisted not only the arrest, but also the interests of God. Therefore, Peter and the other disciple with the sword, along with all the other disciples opposing the arrest of Jesus, were the

transgressors identified by Isaiah (compare the use of phrase "His own" to see the love and identification of Jesus with the disciples in John 13:1, page 1682). As a side note, Mark 15:28, page 1590, links the two thieves crucified with Jesus as the fulfillment of Isaiah 53:12, page 1156. The manuscript evidence supporting the authenticity of Mark 15:28, page 1590 appears very weak. Even so, in a broad sense, by suffering condemnation and crucifixion as a criminal punishment, Jesus certainly was numbered with the transgressors.

Jesus was numbered with the transgressors who turned out to be some or all of His disciples, but certainly included Peter, because Peter used the sword and opposed the interests of God. Therefore, to summarize, the transgressors were Peter and the other disciple with the sword, because they opposed the interests of God, who intended for Jesus to be arrested. What transgressions did they commit? Peter used the sword to resist arrest, and the other disciple seemed poised and ready to use the sword also. They transgressed by resisting the authorities doing the arrest and, more significantly, the transgressors were setting their interests upon man's own selfish interest of the moment, but opposing God's interest in fulfilling the divine plan of salvation.



Luke 22:52, Pages 1646-1647

“‘Have you come out with swords and clubs as you would against a robber?’”

Swords and Clubs. In Luke 22:52, page 1646-1647, Jesus asked: “Have you come out with swords and clubs as you would against a robber?” Jesus now makes it clear that the crowd came armed with swords and clubs, when Jesus had done nothing previously to provoke them to such action. He was known as a peaceful

man, and not a robber or criminal. Jesus further supports His reply by citing His daily teaching in the temple. They did not lay hands on Him then, but now they act with swords and clubs because “this hour and the power of darkness” were theirs. Jesus did nothing to resist arrest, but actually fulfilled every prophecy concerning His arrest. In conclusion, consider John 18:8-9, page 1691. Jesus clearly identified as Himself as “Jesus the Nazarene” to the crowd seeking to arrest Him and then interceded for His disciples. Jesus interceded for the freedom and safety of His disciples with the words, “if you seek Me, then let these go their way” (John 18:8, page 1691). Jesus intended that “not one” of the disciples given to Him would be lost. This intercession, followed by miraculous healing, fulfilled the Scripture that the disciples would be scattered, not arrested (John 18:12, page 1691—only Jesus was arrested). He was numbered with the transgressors, bore the sin of many, and interceded for the transgressors. This same Jesus lives forever to make intercession for those who draw near to God through Him (Hebrews 7:25, page 1876). Hallelujah, what a wonderful Savior!

So we learn more about the two swords today.

- On the night of His arrest, Jesus told His disciples to acquire swords. The disciples responded they already had two. Jesus then replied two would be enough.
- Jesus linked the two swords of the disciples with the fulfillment of the prophecy: He will be “numbered with the transgressors” (Isaiah 53:12, page 1161).
- Peter and the other disciple with the sword opposed the plan of God regarding the arrest, crucifixion, death, and resurrection of Jesus. In doing so, Peter and the other disciples became transgressors, and so Jesus was numbered with the transgressors, just as Isaiah prophesied.

Application for Today.

As I walk through life today, I want to understand the plans of God for my life and never set my human interests before the interests of God. Jesus loves me every day of my life, and I must trust Him today to get me through today, and rejoice while He leads me along the path. Will you submit to God's plan for your life today?