

A THESIS IN SUPPORT OF THE DOCTRINE THAT THE DISCIPLE OF CHRIST MAY AND, WHERE CONSCIENCE SO REQUIRES, MUST GO ARMED: THE CASE OF SIMON PETER AND THE CARRIED BLADE

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ABSTRACT

This thesis argues that the New Testament, read as a unified canon and in light of its Old Testament background, supports four propositions:

- The Lord Jesus Christ commanded his disciples to be equipped with a *machaira*, a short sword or large knife, in anticipation of a hostile world (Luke 22:36).
- The chief apostle, Simon Peter, carried such a blade in the Lord's own company, was not disarmed, and was corrected only as to the occasion and manner of its use (Matt 26:52; John 18:11).
- The duties of neighbor-love, household provision, and watchmanship create an affirmative obligation to be capable of protecting the innocent.
- Therefore the carrying of a bladed, portable, and (where lawful and prudent) concealable weapon for defense is a legitimate exercise of Christian conscience and, for the believer so convicted, a duty rather than a mere liberty.

The argument proceeds cumulatively, through textual, canonical, historical, and moral reasoning. It also states, in Chapter XIII, the points at which the case is contested.

CHAPTER I: STATEMENT OF THE THESIS AND BURDEN OF PROOF

1.1 The Thesis

A follower of Christ who may do so lawfully bears a moral and religious duty to be prepared to defend innocent life, and the carrying of a defensive blade is a legitimate and, in the circumstances Christ described, a commanded expression of that duty.

1.2 The Burden

- The advocate does not claim that the New Testament mentions firearms, kirpans, or modern carry laws.
- The advocate claims that the *principles, precedents, and commands* of Scripture, applied to new circumstances, yield the duty. This is the method by which the Church derives doctrines such as the Trinity, which is not named in the text, and the baptism of infants.
- The standard of proof is cumulative: no single verse bears the whole weight, and the case rests on the convergence of independent lines of evidence.

1.3 The Order of Argument

1. The Old Testament background establishes that defense is lawful.
2. Luke 22 establishes a command.
3. The example of Peter establishes the practice.
4. The ethic of love establishes the motive.
5. Apostolic and civil context establishes the limits.
6. Only then is the duty drawn.

CHAPTER II: DEFINITIONS AND SCOPE

2.1 Key Terms

- **Machaira (μάχαιρα):** The word translated “sword” in Luke 22:36, 22:38, 22:49, 22:52; Matt 26:47, 26:51, 26:52, 26:55; Mark 14:43, 14:47, 14:48; and John 18:10-11. In ordinary Greek usage it denotes a large knife or short sword, as distinct from the *romphaia*, the large broadsword. It is the weapon of close personal use, not of the battlefield formation.
- **Thēkē (θήκη):** The “sheath” of John 18:11. A weapon with a sheath is a weapon *worn on the person*.
- **Hoplon / hopla:** Weapons or implements (John 18:3; Rom 6:13).
- **Concealable:** Capable of being carried beneath a garment, as distinct from displayed. The advocate uses the term in a descriptive sense.
- **Religious obligation:** A duty binding on conscience by virtue of Scripture, as distinct from a mere civil permission.

2.2 Scope Limitations

- The thesis concerns *defensive* carrying only. Aggression, vengeance, intimidation, and vigilantism are excluded.

- The thesis presupposes *lawful* carrying. Chapter IX explains why Romans 13 binds the believer to the law of the land.
- The thesis concerns the *principle of preparedness*. The particular instrument (blade, firearm, or other) is a question of time, place, and law. The blade is chosen as the focus because it is the instrument the New Testament actually names.

CHAPTER III: HERMENEUTICAL METHOD

3.1 Canons Adopted

- **Canon of plain sense.** Where the grammar is direct, the burden rests on those who would read it as figure.
- **Canon of non-abrogation.** Christ said:

“Think not that I am come to destroy the law, or the prophets: I am not come to destroy, but to fulfil.” (Matt 5:17, KJV)

Defensive provisions of the Old Testament remain in force unless the New Testament repeals them. It does not.

- **Canon of apostolic silence.** Where Christ and the apostles meet an armed person and do not require disarmament, permission may be inferred.
- **Canon of harmony.** An interpretation reconciling Luke 22 with Matthew 5 is preferable to one that sets them at odds.
- **Canon of cumulative probability.** Several independent indications pointing the same way carry more force than any one of them.

3.2 The Reconciling Principle

The advocate’s central reconciling principle is the **distinction between the self and the neighbor**:

- The disciple may be called to *endure* insult and persecution for the faith (Matt 5:39; 1 Pet 2:21-23).
- The disciple is called to *protect* the weak and innocent (Ps 82:4; Prov 24:11).
- These are different duties directed at different persons. The first governs what I surrender of my own. The second governs what I owe to those who cannot defend themselves.

CHAPTER IV: THE OLD TESTAMENT FOUNDATION

4.1 The Law of the Night Intruder

“If a thief be found breaking up, and be smitten that he die, there shall no blood be shed for him.” (Exod 22:2, KJV)

- Defensive force against a nighttime intruder is declared *without bloodguilt*.
- The law distinguishes day from night (v. 3), and in this the advocate finds the origin of the principle of reasonable apprehension: at night the householder cannot know the intruder’s intent.
- Nothing in the New Testament repeals this provision.

4.2 Abram's Armed Rescue

"And when Abram heard that his brother was taken captive, he armed his trained servants, born in his own house, three hundred and eighteen, and pursued them as far as Dan." (Gen 14:14, KJV)

- The father of the faithful (Rom 4:11-12) armed his household *to rescue a family member*.
- He is blessed by Melchizedek immediately afterward (Gen 14:19-20), which the advocate reads as divine approval of the act.

4.3 The Builders with Swords

"They which builded on the wall, and they that bare burdens, with those that laded, every one with one of his hands wrought in the work, and with the other hand held a weapon. For the builders, every one had his sword girded by his side, and so builded." (Neh 4:17-18, KJV)

- Here are people doing *holy work* (rebuilding the city of God) who work armed.
- The text pairs prayer with preparation (Neh 4:9: "Nevertheless we made our prayer unto our God, and set a watch against them day and night"). It is not faith *or* arms, but faith *and* arms.
- Nehemiah's exhortation names the objects of defense:

"...and fight for your brethren, your sons, and your daughters, your wives, and your houses." (Neh 4:14, KJV)

4.4 The Concealed Dagger of Ehud

"But Ehud made him a dagger which had two edges, of a cubit length; and he did gird it under his raiment upon his right thigh." (Judg 3:16, KJV)

- This is the Old Testament's clearest example of a **blade carried beneath a garment**.
- The same chapter says the LORD "raised them up a deliverer" (Judg 3:15).
- The Greek Old Testament (the Septuagint) uses *machaira*, the same word later used of Peter's sword, for blades in several passages. The advocate infers that the New Testament reader would hear the older associations.
- *Limitation noted in advance*: Ehud's act is an assassination in a time of oppression, not an act of personal defense. The advocate cites the verse only for the narrow point that carrying a blade under one's clothing is not treated as intrinsically wicked.

4.5 The Wisdom Tradition on Prudence

"A prudent man foreseeth the evil, and hideth himself: but the simple pass on, and are punished." (Prov 22:3, KJV)

"A time to kill, and a time to heal; a time to break down, and a time to build up;... A time to love, and a time to hate; a time of war, and a time of peace." (Eccl 3:3, 8, KJV)

- Prudence, meaning foresight against evil, is praised as wisdom.

- The Preacher acknowledges that circumstances exist in which taking life is a “time” appointed.

4.6 The Prayer of the Warrior-King

*“Blessed be the LORD my strength, which teacheth my hands to war, and my fingers to fight:”
(Ps 144:1, KJV)*

- Skill in arms is presented as something *taught by God*, not something forbidden by him.

4.7 The Meaning of “Thou Shalt Not Kill”

“Thou shalt not kill.” (Exod 20:13, KJV)

- The Hebrew verb (*ratsach*) denotes unlawful killing, or murder. The same Law that contains this command also prescribes defensive killing (Exod 22:2) and judicial execution (Gen 9:6; Exod 21:12).
- A commandment cannot be read to contradict its own lawgiver’s provisions in the same book.

CHAPTER V: THE DOMINICAL COMMAND (LUKE 22:35-38)

5.1 The Text

“And he said unto them, When I sent you without purse, and scrip, and shoes, lacked ye any thing? And they said, Nothing. Then said he unto them, But now, he that hath a purse, let him take it, and likewise his scrip: and he that hath no sword, let him sell his garment, and buy one. For I say unto you, that this that is written must yet be accomplished in me, And he was reckoned among the transgressors: for the things concerning me have an end. And they said, Lord, behold, here are two swords. And he said unto them, It is enough.” (Luke 22:35-38, KJV)

5.2 Verse-by-Verse Analysis

Verse 35: The former dispensation

- Jesus recalls the earlier mission (Luke 10:4: “Carry neither purse, nor scrip, nor shoes”).
- The disciples confirm: “Nothing.” Under that arrangement provision was supernatural and hospitality was assured.

Verse 36: The reversal

- “But now” (*alla nyn*) signals a deliberate contrast with the preceding period.
- Three imperatives follow: *take* the purse, *take* the scrip, *sell and buy* the sword.
- The sword is placed in the same list as purse and bag, which are ordinary provision for travel. The advocate argues that this classifies the sword as **standard equipment** for the new circumstances.
- The sacrifice demanded (sale of the garment, the *himation*, the outer cloak) shows its priority. The cloak was a poor man’s bedding and protection from the cold, and Mosaic law protected it from permanent seizure:

“If thou at all take thy neighbour’s raiment to pledge, thou shalt deliver it unto him by that the sun goeth down: For that is his covering only, it is his raiment for his skin: wherein shall he sleep?” (Exod 22:26-27, KJV)

- A command to part with that for a blade is as strong a priority statement as the Gospels contain on any material object.

Verse 37: The prophetic frame

- The quotation is from Isaiah 53:12: “and he was numbered with the transgressors.”
- The advocate’s position: the prophecy is *a reason offered*, not a withdrawal of the command. The command stands whether or not the prophecy also explains it.

Verse 38: The response and the reply

- The disciples produce two swords. Jesus does not order them cast away.
- “It is enough” (*hikanon estin*) literally means “it is sufficient.” The advocate’s reading is that it is an assessment of adequacy.
- The disciples *already had* swords. Peter’s presence in the Gospel narratives with a sword is therefore part of a pre-existing practice, not a sudden improvisation.

5.3 The Garden: “Shall We Smite?”

“When they which were about him saw what would follow, they said unto him, Lord, shall we smite with the sword? And one of them smote the servant of the high priest, and cut off his right ear. And Jesus answered and said, Suffer ye thus far. And he touched his ear, and healed him.” (Luke 22:49-51, KJV)

Key observations:

- The disciples *ask permission* before use. This shows that their carrying was understood to be under the Lord’s authority.
- The KJV renders the reply “Suffer ye thus far.” This differs from the modern “No more of this” and is more ambiguous. The advocate observes that on the KJV reading the Lord is not issuing a blanket prohibition but marking a *limit* (“thus far”) on what is to be permitted at that moment, namely the arrest, which was a necessary part of his redemptive plan.
- Jesus then performs an act of mercy toward the wounded enemy. The advocate sees a template for the duty after defense: preserve life where possible.

5.4 Summary of the Chapter

- The command is in the imperative mood.
- The cost is great.
- The command was never withdrawn by any later text.
- The disciples were not disarmed.

CHAPTER VI: THE CASE OF SIMON PETER: THE CARRIED BLADE

This is the central chapter. The argument is that the apostle Peter provides a *worked example* of a disciple carrying a portable, sheathed blade in the immediate company of Christ.

6.1 Peter's Possession Is Established in the Gospels

“And, behold, one of them which were with Jesus stretched out his hand, and drew his sword, and struck a servant of the high priest’s, and smote off his ear.” (Matt 26:51, KJV)

“And one of them that stood by drew a sword, and smote a servant of the high priest, and cut off his ear.” (Mark 14:47, KJV)

“Then Simon Peter having a sword drew it, and smote the high priest’s servant, and cut off his right ear. The servant’s name was Malchus.” (John 18:10, KJV)

Dot-point analysis:

- John identifies the sword-bearer by name: *Simon Peter*, and describes him as “having a sword” (*echōn machairan*). The participle denotes possession as an ongoing condition, not a transient act.
- All four Gospels record the incident, and the identity of the actor is given by John, the Gospel written last, when Peter’s death may already have occurred and he could be safely named.
- No Gospel suggests that Peter *acquired* the sword that night. The text treats it as already his.

6.2 The Sequence of the Night

The advocate sets out the timeline using the KJV:

- Luke 22:14: “And when the hour was come, he sat down, and the twelve apostles with him.” (The Supper)
- Luke 22:36-38: The command regarding the sword, and the production of two swords, take place *at the table*.
- Luke 22:39: “And he came out, and went, as he was wont, to the mount of Olives; and his disciples also followed him.”
- John 18:1: “When Jesus had spoken these words, he went forth with his disciples over the brook Cedron, where was a garden, into the which he entered, and his disciples.”

The advocate reasons:

- The swords were produced *after* the Lord’s own command, in his presence, and in the same evening as the arrest.
- The Lord, who knew all things (John 18:4: “Jesus therefore, knowing all things that should come upon him”), took no step to confiscate them.
- The Lord, who for the three preceding years had traveled with Peter, knew whether Peter habitually carried a blade.

6.3 The Argument from the Sheath

“Then said Jesus unto Peter, Put up thy sword into the sheath: the cup which my Father hath given me, shall I not drink it?” (John 18:11, KJV)

“Then said Jesus unto him, Put up again thy sword into his place: for all they that take the sword shall perish with the sword.” (Matt 26:52, KJV)

Dot-point analysis:

- **“Into the sheath” (*eis tēn thēkēn*).** The weapon had a scabbard. A sheathed blade is carried on the body, ordinarily at the girdle, and is kept out of sight beneath the outer garment when the wearer does not wish to alarm others.
- **“Into his place” (*eis ton topon autēs*).** The Lord commands Peter to return the blade *to its place*, which is not the same as commanding him to discard it. A thing with a proper place is a thing that has a proper use.
- **“Drew it” (*heilkyesen*).** To *draw* implies that it had not been visible in the hand. Before the moment of drawing, the blade was carried on the person.
- **The advocate’s inference regarding concealment.** The text states that a crowd came “with swords and staves” (Matt 26:47) and that the arresting party carried “lanterns and torches and weapons” (John 18:3). It nowhere says that Peter’s sword was displayed. The arresting party made no effort to disarm Peter’s company *before* the strike, which is consistent with the disciples’ blades being worn beneath their garments.

Candor note: The Gospels do not state in terms that Peter’s sword was concealed. This is an inference from the verbs “drew” and “sheath,” from the nature of the garment, and from the absence of any report that the sword was seen before it was used. The thesis does not depend on it, since the argument for carrying stands whether the blade is worn openly or covered. The advocate’s point is only that nothing in the narrative treats a worn blade, visible or not, as scandalous.

6.4 The Nature of the Weapon: A Blade of Personal Scale

- *Machaira* is the word used elsewhere in Greek for a **knife** (including a butcher’s or sacrificial knife) and a **short sword**. It is not the long sword of the cavalry or legions.
- A weapon of this size is by nature **portable and capable of being worn beneath the cloak**.
- The advocate adds as historical background the accounts of Josephus, who describes the *sicarii* (“dagger-men”) of this period as carrying short daggers *hidden under their garments*, mingling in festival crowds (*Jewish War* 2.254-257; *Antiquities* 20.186). The New Testament itself names them:

“Art not thou that Egyptian, which before these days madest an uproar, and leddest out into the wilderness four thousand men that were murderers?” (Acts 21:38, KJV)

- The KJV’s “murderers” translates *sikarioi*. The advocate’s point is **contextual**: small concealed blades were a known feature of Judean life, particularly at festival times such as Passover, and no Gospel author is shocked to discover that a disciple carried one.
- *Limitation*: the *sicarii* were assassins. The advocate cites them for cultural context only, not as moral models.

6.5 Peter's Trade

“And Jesus, walking by the sea of Galilee, saw two brethren, Simon called Peter, and Andrew his brother, casting a net into the sea: for they were fishers.” (Matt 4:18, KJV)

- Peter was a commercial fisherman. Fishermen of the period ordinarily carried a knife for cutting line and net and dressing fish.
- The advocate argues that Peter's possession of a blade would not have been unusual, and that the dual function of knife as tool and weapon is part of ordinary life.
- *Limitation:* this is an inference from occupation, not a statement of the text.

6.6 The Rebuke Analyzed

The opponent's strongest text is the rebuke. The advocate analyzes it point by point.

- **What was rebuked?** The surrounding text states the reason: the cup given by the Father must be drunk (John 18:11), and the Scriptures must be fulfilled:

“Thinkest thou that I cannot now pray to my Father, and he shall presently give me more than twelve legions of angels? But how then shall the scriptures be fulfilled, that thus it must be?” (Matt 26:53-54, KJV)

The reason given for the correction is *the redemptive purpose of the arrest*, not the intrinsic wrongness of carrying a blade.

- **“All they that take the sword shall perish with the sword.”** The advocate reads this as a statement of consequence for the one who *takes* (initiates, seizes) the sword. The verb “take” (*lambanō*) carries the sense of seizing. This reads the saying as a warning against unauthorized aggression, and specifically against resisting a divinely ordained event.
- **Peter was not disarmed.** The Lord says “put up,” not “give it to me” or “cast it away.”
- **The weapon's later disappearance from the record is not evidence of prohibition.** After the arrest the disciples fled (Matt 26:56), and the narrative of the Passion no longer concerns itself with them.
- **The Lord's own restraint is not generalized.** His submission to arrest was the unique act of the Redeemer. The advocate notes that Jesus himself says:

“Jesus answered, My kingdom is not of this world: if my kingdom were of this world, then would my servants fight, that I should not be delivered to the Jews: but now is my kingdom not from hence.” (John 18:36, KJV)

The statement is conditional: servants *would* fight if the kingdom were of this world. It is a statement about the *purpose* for which he would not be defended, namely preventing his delivery to the cross.

6.7 The Gethsemane Incident as a Model of Conduct

From the narrative the advocate derives a set of principles, offered as an inference from the text and not as an explicit commandment.

- **Carry sheathed.** The weapon is kept in its place until needed.
- **Seek direction before force where time permits.** “Lord, shall we smite with the sword?” (Luke 22:49).
- **Never resist lawful or divinely ordained process.** Peter's error was striking against the arrest.

- **Limit the harm.** The Lord's response contemplates a limit ("thus far").
- **Heal where possible.** "And he touched his ear, and healed him" (Luke 22:51).
- **Do not use the weapon as a means of pride or provocation.** The whole conduct of the Lord is restrained.

6.8 Peter After Gethsemane

- Peter is restored (John 21:15-17) and commissioned: "Feed my sheep." No restoration is conditioned on the surrender of a blade.
- Peter writes to the churches urging submission to governors "sent by him for the punishment of evildoers, and for the praise of them that do well" (1 Pet 2:14, KJV), which accords with Romans 13.
- Peter ministers to a centurion (Acts 10) and does not require him to lay down arms. The advocate views this as consistent with a mature apostolic ethic that permits defense and law enforcement while forbidding vengeance.

6.9 Summary of the Chapter

- The most prominent apostle carried a blade.
- The Lord knew it.
- The Lord rebuked the occasion and manner of its use, not the carrying.
- The blade belonged to a category of personal weapon that is small, wearable, and capable of being worn beneath a garment.

CHAPTER VII: THE DUTY TO THE NEIGHBOR

7.1 The Second Great Commandment

"And the second is like unto it, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself." (Matt 22:39, KJV)

- Love is defined by *action* as well as feeling.

"But whoso hath this world's good, and seeth his brother have need, and shutteth up his bowels of compassion from him, how dwelleth the love of God in him? My little children, let us not love in word, neither in tongue; but in deed and in truth." (1 John 3:17-18, KJV)

- The advocate asks: if a brother is in need of rescue from violence and I could assist but do not, in what sense have I loved "in deed and in truth"?

7.2 The Good Samaritan

"A certain man went down from Jerusalem to Jericho, and fell among thieves, which stripped him of his raiment, and wounded him, and departed, leaving him half dead." (Luke 10:30, KJV)

"Which now of these three, thinkest thou, was neighbour unto him that fell among the thieves? And he said, He that shewed mercy on him. Then said Jesus unto him, Go, and do likewise." (Luke 10:36-37, KJV)

Dot-point analysis:

- The Jericho road was notorious for banditry. The Samaritan traveled it knowingly.
- The priest and the Levite are condemned for *failing to act*.
- The Lord's instruction, "Go, and do likewise," establishes the *pattern of the neighbor*: the one who is able to help and does.
- The advocate argues that a disciple who travels the roads of a dangerous world with no means of assisting the vulnerable has reduced his capacity to obey this command.

7.3 The Watchman

"But if the watchman see the sword come, and blow not the trumpet, and the people be not warned; if the sword come, and take any person from among them, he is taken away in his iniquity; but his blood will I require at the watchman's hand." (Ezek 33:6, KJV)

- Responsibility for protecting others rests on the one who has the *position and capacity* to see danger.
- The advocate generalizes: every disciple is, within his own circle, a watchman.

7.4 The Duty to Deliver

"Deliver the poor and needy: rid them out of the hand of the wicked." (Ps 82:4, KJV)

"If thou forbear to deliver them that are drawn unto death, and those that are ready to be slain; If thou sayest, Behold, we knew it not; doth not he that pondereth the heart consider it? and he that keepeth thy soul, doth not he know it? and shall not he render to every man according to his works?" (Prov 24:11-12, KJV)

- Failing to deliver the one "ready to be slain," when able, is treated as culpable. The claim "we knew it not" is rejected as an excuse.
- Deliverance from violence cannot always be accomplished by words.

CHAPTER VIII: HOUSEHOLD, PRUDENCE, AND PREPAREDNESS

8.1 The Strong Man Armed

"When a strong man armed keepeth his palace, his goods are in peace: But when a stronger than he shall come upon him, and overcome him, he taketh from him all his armour wherein he trusted, and divideth his spoils." (Luke 11:21-22, KJV)

- The Lord uses the image of an armed householder as a picture of *normal security*. The goods are "in peace" because the man is armed.
- The advocate acknowledges that the passage's immediate subject is spiritual (the binding of Satan). The point is that the Lord chooses an illustration in which armed guarding of one's household is *taken for granted as sensible*.

8.2 The Householder and the Thief

“But know this, that if the goodman of the house had known in what watch the thief would come, he would have watched, and would not have suffered his house to be broken up.” (Matt 24:43, KJV)

- The Lord praises the householder who would have watched and *not suffered* the break-in.
- The same Lord says “Watch therefore” (Matt 24:42), and the advocate reads vigilance as a general Christian virtue.

8.3 The Duty of Provision

“But if any provide not for his own, and specially for those of his own house, he hath denied the faith, and is worse than an infidel.” (1 Tim 5:8, KJV)

Dot-point analysis:

- The Greek *pronoēō* (“provide”) means literally to *think ahead for*, or take forethought.
- The advocate argues that forethought for a household includes forethought against foreseeable violence.
- The severity of the penalty (“denied the faith... worse than an infidel”) shows that the duty is regarded as grave.

8.4 Wisdom with Innocence

“Behold, I send you forth as sheep in the midst of wolves: be ye therefore wise as serpents, and harmless as doves.” (Matt 10:16, KJV)

- Innocence of intent is joined to wisdom of preparation.
- The advocate reads “wise as serpents” as a command to *exercise prudent foresight* in a dangerous environment.

8.5 The King Who Counts the Cost

“Or what king, going to make war against another king, sitteth not down first, and consulteth whether he be able with ten thousand to meet him that cometh against him with twenty thousand?” (Luke 14:31, KJV)

- Even in a parable about discipleship, the Lord uses the prudent assessment of one’s means of resisting an adversary as an *example of sense*.

CHAPTER IX: THE APOSTOLIC AND CIVIL CONTEXT

9.1 The Sword of the Magistrate

“Let every soul be subject unto the higher powers. For there is no power but of God: the powers that be are ordained of God.” (Rom 13:1, KJV)

“For he is the minister of God to thee for good. But if thou do that which is evil, be afraid; for he beareth not the sword in vain: for he is the minister of God, a revenger to execute wrath upon him that doeth evil.” (Rom 13:4, KJV)

Dot-point analysis:

- The *machaira* is here assigned to the civil magistrate by divine appointment.
- The advocate argues that the state’s authority to bear the sword is **derived from** the natural right of defense, which the state exercises on behalf of its people.
- Where the state is not present at the moment of danger, a person acting to protect life exercises a small share of that same protective function.
- *Counter-reading acknowledged:* many interpreters hold that the verse limits the sword to the state alone.

9.2 Submission to Law

“Submit yourselves to every ordinance of man for the Lord’s sake: whether it be to the king, as supreme; Or unto governors, as unto them that are sent by him for the punishment of evildoers, and for the praise of them that do well.” (1 Pet 2:13-14, KJV)

- This establishes the **limit** on the thesis. The believer carries only where and as the law permits.
- The advocate accepts this limit fully. Where carrying a blade is unlawful, the duty of obedience to authority prevails, and the duty of protection is met by other lawful means.

9.3 The Soldiers

“And the soldiers likewise demanded of him, saying, And what shall we do? And he said unto them, Do violence to no man, neither accuse any falsely; and be content with your wages.” (Luke 3:14, KJV)

“When Jesus heard these things, he marvelled at him, and turned him about, and said unto the people that followed him, I say unto you, I have not found so great faith, no, not in Israel.” (Luke 7:9, KJV)

- Neither John the Baptist nor the Lord tells the soldiers to *leave the army*.
- The Lord holds up an armed centurion as a model of faith.
- The advocate reads “do violence to no man” as a prohibition of *unlawful* violence, namely the extortion by force that soldiers practiced, as the parallel clause “neither accuse any falsely” shows.

9.4 Cornelius and the Jailer

“There was a certain man in Caesarea called Cornelius, a centurion of the band called the Italian band, A devout man, and one that feared God with all his house.” (Acts 10:1-2, KJV)

“And the keeper of the prison awaking out of his sleep, and seeing the prison doors open, he drew out his sword, and would have killed himself, supposing that the prisoners had been fled.” (Acts 16:27, KJV)

- Both men are converted without any record that they were ordered to give up their profession or their arms.
- The advocate uses these as further instances of apostolic silence.

9.5 Paul and the Armed Escort

“And he called unto him two centurions, saying, Make ready two hundred soldiers to go to Caesarea, and horsemen threescore and ten, and spearmen two hundred, at the third hour of the night;” (Acts 23:23, KJV)

- The apostle Paul’s life was protected by an armed escort of nearly five hundred.
- Paul does not refuse it. If the armed defense of an apostle’s life is morally licit when provided by others, it cannot be intrinsically sinful.

9.6 Paul and the Use of Legal Rights

“For if I be an offender, or have committed any thing worthy of death, I refuse not to die: but if there be none of these things whereof these accuse me, no man may deliver me unto them. I appeal unto Caesar.” (Acts 25:11, KJV)

- Paul uses every lawful means to preserve his life while declaring his readiness to die if guilty.
- The advocate treats this as a model of the proper balance: *prepared to suffer unjustly, yet unwilling to surrender life or innocent persons to unlawful violence without lawful resistance.*

CHAPTER X: THE SPIRITUAL ARMORY

The user’s own question includes the spiritual carrying of tools. The advocate argues that the New Testament’s military vocabulary reinforces, rather than undermines, the thesis.

10.1 The Whole Armor

“Wherefore take unto you the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand.” (Eph 6:13, KJV)

“And take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God:” (Eph 6:17, KJV)

- The *machaira*, the same word as Peter’s sword, is chosen by Paul as the image of the Spirit’s word.
- The advocate’s **argument from analogical dignity**: a teacher does not build his sacred imagery out of the furniture of something he regards as inherently unholy. The soldier’s equipment is a fitting figure of spiritual readiness.

10.2 The Word as a Blade

“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...” (Heb 4:12, KJV)

- The writer calls the Word a *machaira* “twoedged,” the image of Ehud’s blade in Judges 3:16.
- The advocate suggests a **spiritual and literal pairing**: the believer is to be equipped in both spheres. The one does not cancel the other.

10.3 The Weapons of Righteousness

“(For the weapons of our warfare are not carnal, but mighty through God to the pulling down of strong holds;)” (2 Cor 10:4, KJV)

- This is also the opponent’s text, and Chapter XII addresses it. For present purposes the advocate notes that Paul **does not deny that carnal weapons exist or have legitimate uses**. He says that *this particular warfare*, the contest against spiritual strongholds, is not fought with them.

10.4 Readiness as a Christian Posture

“Let your loins be girded about, and your lights burning;” (Luke 12:35, KJV)

- “Girded loins” is the language of readiness. A girded man is one ready to act, and the girdle is also where a blade is worn.
- The advocate argues that the Christian life is a life of *preparedness in all spheres*, spiritual, moral, and practical.

10.5 The Temple and the Scourge

“And when he had made a scourge of small cords, he drove them all out of the temple, and the sheep, and the oxen; and poured out the changers’ money, and overthrew the tables;” (John 2:15, KJV)

- The Lord himself applies physical force, with an improvised instrument, in defense of what is holy.
- The advocate does not claim that this is a case of self-defense. The point is that righteous force is not foreign to the Lord’s own conduct.

CHAPTER XI: THE MOVEMENT FROM PERMISSION TO OBLIGATION

This is the step an opponent will most strongly contest. The advocate offers the following structure.

11.1 The Formal Syllogism

- **Major premise:** The disciple is bound to obey the Lord’s commands and to love his neighbor in deed (Luke 22:36; Matt 22:39; 1 John 3:18).
- **Minor premise:** In a world where violent harm to the innocent is a foreseeable danger, genuine capacity to prevent it is a necessary part of loving in deed, and the Lord expressly commanded his disciples to acquire a *machaira* in anticipation of hostility.
- **Conclusion:** The disciple who is lawfully able and whose circumstances reasonably warrant it is obliged to be equipped for defense.

11.2 Why “Required” and Not Merely “Allowed”

- **The grammar of Luke 22:36** is imperative.
- **The structure of duty to the vulnerable** is affirmative. Love requires acts that are within one’s power.
- **The principle of means and ends.** One who is obliged to an end is obliged to the necessary means. If rescue of the innocent is required, the means of rescue are required where no lawful alternative is available.
- **The role of conscience.** Paul teaches that what is not of faith is sin (Rom 14:23). A believer who is convicted, on scriptural grounds, that preparedness is his duty sins by neglecting it.

11.3 The Limits on the Obligation

The advocate accepts these limits:

- The obligation is conditional on *lawfulness* (Rom 13:1).
- It is conditional on *capacity and training*. A person who cannot safely carry or use a blade is not bound to do so, and may meet the duty in other ways.
- It is conditional on *circumstances*. A person living in a context of low risk may reasonably discharge the duty differently.
- It is a duty of **conscience**, which means it binds the person who has been persuaded of it, not a universal rule enforceable on others.
- It does not extend to preemptive aggression, vengeance, or the use of force beyond what is necessary.

CHAPTER XII: OBJECTIONS AND REPLIES

Objection 1: “All they that take the sword shall perish with the sword” (Matt 26:52)

- *Reply 1:* The saying is a statement about aggressors who *take* the sword, and its context is Peter’s attempt to resist the divinely ordained arrest.
- *Reply 2:* If read as a universal prohibition, it would condemn the magistrate who bears the sword under Romans 13:4, the centurion whom the Lord praised, and Cornelius, none of whom is condemned.
- *Reply 3:* The Lord did not take the sword from Peter. He instructed that it be returned to its place.

Objection 2: “Resist not evil” (Matt 5:39)

“But I say unto you, That ye resist not evil: but whosoever shall smite thee on thy right cheek, turn to him the other also.” (Matt 5:39, KJV)

- *Reply 1:* A blow on the *right cheek*, delivered by a right-handed person, is a backhanded slap, which is an insult and not a lethal assault. The passage concerns injured honor and retaliation.
- *Reply 2:* The passage governs what *I* surrender of *my own* (cheek, cloak, mile). It does not address the defense of another. It is not possible to turn someone else’s cheek.
- *Reply 3:* The same Lord who spoke it commanded the purchase of the sword, so the two sayings must be harmonized, and they are by the self/neighbor distinction.

Objection 3: “Do violence to no man” (Luke 3:14)

- *Reply:* The context is the soldiers’ habit of extortion, and the sentence continues “neither accuse any falsely; and be content with your wages.” The command concerns the abuse of power. The Baptist did not tell them to leave the service, and the Lord later praised a centurion.

Objection 4: “My kingdom is not of this world” (John 18:36)

- *Reply:* The sentence explains why the Lord’s *servants do not fight to prevent his delivery to the cross*. It does not forbid the protection of persons within the present world.

Objection 5: “The weapons of our warfare are not carnal” (2 Cor 10:4)

- *Reply:* Paul is describing the *spiritual* contest, which is not won with carnal weapons. He does not state that the believer may never use a lawful instrument to protect an innocent person from a physical assault.

Objection 6: “Avenge not yourselves” (Rom 12:18-19)

“If it be possible, as much as lieth in you, live peaceably with all men. Dearly beloved, avenge not yourselves, but rather give place unto wrath: for it is written, Vengeance is mine; I will repay, saith the Lord.” (Rom 12:18-19, KJV)

- *Reply 1:* Defense and vengeance are different acts. The first aims at preventing present harm. The second aims at repaying past harm.
- *Reply 2:* The qualifier “if it be possible, as much as lieth in you” acknowledges that peace is sometimes not possible, and that the believer’s responsibility is limited to what lies in him.

Objection 7: “It is enough” was a rebuke (Luke 22:38)

- *Reply:* If the disciples had misunderstood a figure of speech, the Lord’s habit elsewhere is to correct them explicitly (Matt 16:6-12). He does not do so here. He lets the two swords stand.

Objection 8: The swords were only to fulfill Isaiah 53:12

- *Reply:* A prophecy fulfilled by the possession of swords does not make the *command to acquire them* a nullity. Even on this reading, the Lord regarded the sword as a licit thing to own.

Objection 9: “Blessed are the peacemakers” (Matt 5:9)

- *Reply:* A peacemaker is one who works to preserve peace, and a person prepared to prevent violence is more likely to preserve it than one who is helpless before it.

Objection 10: The early Church was pacifist

- *Reply:* The record is mixed. Early Christian objections to military service were often tied to idolatrous oaths and emperor worship. Moreover, the Fathers are not canon, and the Reformed, Catholic, and many other traditions have since accepted defensive force.

CHAPTER XIII: CRITICAL ASSESSMENT: WHERE THE ARGUMENT IS WEAK

A thesis of this kind is only honest if it states the points at which an informed opponent will press hardest.

- **The step from “allowed” to “required” is the weakest.** Nearly every text supports permission. Only Luke 22:36 reads as a command, and critics hold that it was addressed to the Twelve on one night, not to all Christians for all time.
- **The “concealed” element is inference, not text.** No Gospel says Peter’s blade was hidden. The arguments from “drew,” “sheath,” and garment style are plausible but not conclusive. The Ehud and sicarii parallels are weak as moral models, since both involve killing.
- **The rebuke carries real weight.** Jesus’ words to Peter in two Gospels are most naturally heard as a correction of the use of the sword, and many readers, including pacifist traditions, see no basis for distinguishing “use” from “carrying.”
- **“Enough” may mean “enough of this.”** The phrase *hikanon estin* has parallels in Jewish idiom as a way of ending a conversation. Two swords cannot plausibly defend thirteen men, and many scholars read the exchange as the Lord closing a line of talk that the disciples had misunderstood.
- **The fulfillment reading is respectable.** If the swords were meant to make the company look like transgressors, then Luke 22 says nothing about personal defense.
- **Silence is a weak argument.** The soldiers’ stories do not show that the Lord approved of every aspect of their profession.
- **Many traditions disagree.** The Mennonite, Quaker, and Anabaptist traditions, and some early Fathers, read the Sermon on the Mount and Matthew 26:52 as excluding lethal force altogether. Even traditions that accept defense do not generally call carrying a weapon a *religious duty*.
- **Protection does not require a blade.** The duties of neighbor-love and watchmanship can be fulfilled by alerting others, calling for help, intervening without a weapon, or building community safety.
- **The law is a real limit.** In many jurisdictions, carrying a bladed article in a public place without a lawful reason is an offense, and concealment may worsen the position. Romans 13 therefore constrains the thesis in practice, and where the law forbids, the advocate’s own position is that the believer complies.
- **“Pre-emptive action” is the least supported idea.** Nothing in the New Testament endorses striking first. The Lord’s response in Gethsemane cuts the other way, and the just-defense tradition itself requires imminence and proportionality.

CHAPTER XIV: CONCLUSION AND FINDINGS

On the cumulative case set out above, the advocate submits the following findings:

1. **That** the Lord Jesus, in Luke 22:36, commanded his disciples to acquire a *machaira*, a bladed weapon of personal scale, in anticipation of a hostile world.
2. **That** the apostle Simon Peter bore such a blade, sheathed and worn on his person, in the Lord’s presence, and that the Lord did not disarm him but redirected its use.
3. **That** the Lord’s rebuke addressed the occasion and manner of the blade’s use, namely resistance to the divinely ordained arrest, and not the fact of its carriage.
4. **That** the Old Testament background affirms defensive force, armed rescue, and the carrying of blades beneath the garment as lawful.

5. **That** the duties of neighbor-love, the watchman, the Samaritan, and household provision impose an affirmative obligation to be capable of protecting the innocent.
6. **That** the apostolic record treats armed professions and armed protection without condemnation.
7. **That** the carrying of a defensive blade, within the law and with right motive, is therefore a legitimate expression of Christian conscience and, for the believer so convicted, a duty.
8. **That** this duty is bounded by lawfulness, proportionality, imminence of threat, and the overriding command to love, and it forbids vengeance, aggression, and intimidation.

The advocate adds that the test is the one the Lord himself supplied:

“For out of the heart proceed evil thoughts, murders, adulteries, fornications, thefts, false witness, blasphemies:” (Matt 15:19, KJV)

An instrument is morally neutral until a motive is attached. The believer who carries to protect, who is trained to restrain himself, who acts only in true necessity, and who then heals where he can, has followed the pattern the Gospels give. The believer who carries to menace or avenge has not.

Respectfully submitted.

APPENDIX: INDEX OF KJV PASSAGES RELIED UPON

- **Old Testament:** Gen 14:14; Exod 20:13; Exod 22:2-3, 26-27; Judg 3:15-16; Neh 4:9, 14, 17-18; Ps 82:4; Ps 144:1; Prov 22:3; Prov 24:11-12; Eccl 3:3, 8; Isa 53:12; Ezek 33:6
- **Gospels:** Matt 4:18; 5:9, 17, 39; 10:16; 15:19; 16:6-12; 22:39; 24:42-43; 26:47, 51-56; Mark 14:43, 47-48; Luke 3:14; 7:9; 10:30-37; 11:21-22; 12:35; 14:31; 22:14, 35-39, 49-53; John 2:15; 18:1, 3, 10-11, 36; 21:15-17
- **Acts:** 10:1-2; 16:27; 21:38; 22:25; 23:23; 25:11
- **Epistles:** Rom 12:18-19; 13:1, 4; 14:23; 2 Cor 10:4; Eph 6:13, 17; 1 Tim 5:8; Heb 4:12; 1 Pet 2:13-14; 1 John 3:17-18