

**Bible Devotions: Lock Stock & Barrel**  
**Devotional Reading for Outdoorsmen**  
**(Old Testament)**

Genesis 3:24

A Flaming Sword

*So He drove out the man; and He placed cherubim at the east of the garden of Eden, and a flaming sword which turned every way, to guard the way to the tree of life.*

In one weapon there is fire and blade set on an eternal course of brandishing itself against those who seek to live life outside the will of God. There are hints of other characteristics: the flaming sword is enchantingly Divine, performing its mysterious duty as an extension of the hand of God. Like a hedge of thorns built to keep good things in and bad things out, the flaming sword protects the way to the Tree of Life. In one instant it is both here and there, fulfilling God's perfect will outside the understanding of our three-dimensional thought.

At the age of thirteen, my son, Kyle, began reading J. R. R. Tolkien's classics, *The Hobbit* and *The Lord of the Rings*. My son's questions prompted me to remember some of the details Tolkien fashioned. In *The Hobbit*, Bilbo Baggins gained possession of an ancient Elfish short sword. Like all Elf-blades, the weapon glowed cold blue when servants of the enemy were near and its cutting edge was sharper than any weapon made in later Ages (Tyler, 1976). In Tolkien's world, these arms possessed supernatural powers that enabled the blades to cut through nearly any substance or otherwise subdue any situation, if not through sheer intimidation alone. The weapons were so well regarded that names were given to them according to a particular quality or feature of its use (Bilbo named his short sword Sting). Much like we might name a firearm Ol' Betsy or Sweet Sixteen or The Equalizer.

In the Bible, the sword is generally regarded to be a symbol of war, bloodshed, and violence (Dictionary of Biblical Imagery, 1998). The sword also represents judgment when used in the Divine sense, and at times can represent something good: God's Word. A flaming sword turning every direction should remind us of the zeal of God's judgment in protecting the essence of eternal life. Flaming in the face of an enemy – sinners – and wielded in the time of spiritual depravity – fallenness – the sword guards against the advance of mortal wickedness on the way to the Tree of Life.

What can a flaming sword do? It can cut and sear at the same time. It can pierce and scorch, hack and burn, kill and consume. No doubt, today there is great need for the cutting away of sin, piercing to the heart with God's Word, hacking away of old habits, and dying to self. Today, there is great need for searing of the conscience, scorching of the oppressor, burning away of wickedness, and the consuming of evilness.

God alone has forged and fashioned the only sword that can do this. It is *the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God* (Ephesians 6:17). We are commanded to take it along with other spiritual battle armament. It is a sword tempered in the blood of Jesus Christ, giving life to all who wield it. It is our flaming sword, gleaming with the glory of the Lord in the face of the enemy and completely surrounding us so that good things stay in and bad things stay out.

Copyright © 2007 Don Hamlin. All rights reserved.

Scripture taken from the New King James Version. Copyright © 1979, 1980, 1982 by Thomas Nelson, Inc. Used by permission. All rights reserved.

**Bible Devotions: Hook Line & Sinker (study guide)**

Genesis 3:24  
A Flaming Sword

HOOK

1. What is the longest blade you use outdoors and what do you use it for?

---

2. Let's say you have a bird feeder hanging in a tree. How would you protect it from squirrels?

---

---

3. Describe how you would keep animals out of your vegetable garden. Be specific.

---

---

LINE

In one weapon there is fire and blade set on an eternal course of brandishing itself against those who seek to live life outside the will of God. Like a hedge of thorns built to keep good things in and bad things out, the flaming sword protects the way to the Tree of Life. In one instant it is both here and there, fulfilling God's perfect will outside the understanding of our three-dimensional thought.

In the Bible, the sword is generally regarded to be a symbol of war, bloodshed, and violence. The sword also represents judgment when used in the Divine sense, and at times can represent something good: God's Word. A flaming sword turning every direction should remind us of the zeal of God's judgment in protecting the essence of eternal life. Flaming in the face of an enemy – sinners – and wielded in the time of spiritual depravity – fallenness – the sword guards against the advance of mortal wickedness on the way to the Tree of Life.

In your view, why did God choose cherubim and a flaming sword to guard the way to the Tree of Life? Is the Garden still in existence? Explain your answer but be Biblical about it.

---

---

Why was man not allowed to hang around the Garden of Eden? Why can't we go back there today? Describe the zeal of the Lord in protecting the essence of eternal life.

---

---

SINKER

Take a few minutes to write your thoughts on this devotional. Reflect on your own experiences.

Key words: sword tree of life eternal life

---

---