

SWORDS & SHIELDS

Swords and shields stand as the world's most recognizable, essential, and iconic pieces of equipment when we think of battles throughout history. Whether it's history, myth, or legend, the sword and shield are forged in our imaginations, religions, and cultures.

This got me thinking of some of the legendary swords and shields throughout history, mythology, and culture:

SHIELDS:

1. The Shield of Achilles

As described in Homer's Iliad, this shield is made by the god, Hephaestus and given to Thetis, the mother of Achilles, who then brings it to earth and gives it to Achilles as he goes into battle against the Trojan prince, Hector.



2. Aegis

One of the most famous shields of Greek mythology, this shield belonged to Zeus and Athena. It is also mentioned in Homer's Iliad. The shield sometimes features the head of a Gorgon (basically, Medusa—more on her later).



3. Pridwen

In a version of the Arthurian legend of King Arthur and the Knights of the Round Table, this is the shield of King Arthur.



4. Captain America's Shield

Wielded by the superhero, Captain America, this near-indestructible vibranium construction with its red, white, and blue star design. This is one of the most recognizable shields in history.



5. Thorin Oakenshield

Yes, this is a name, but in J.R.R. Tolkien's book The Hobbit, Thorin is given this last name because he took up a log of oak and used it as a shield in the battle at Moria



Speaking of The Hobbit, in the film the dwarf Balin states to Bilbo that "swords are named for the great deeds they do." Here is a list (not exhaustive) of legendary **SWORDS** throughout history, mythology and culture:

1. Excalibur

Probably one of the most famous swords, this is the legendary, and perhaps mythical, sword of King Arthur. (Think of the famous "sword in the stone").



2. Joyeuse

One of the most legendary swords in European history, this sword is attributed to Charlemagne, the King of the Franks and the first Holy Roman Emperor.



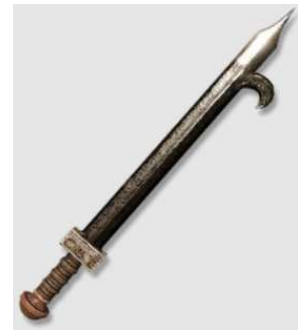
3. Hrunting

In Anglo-Saxon mythology, this was the sword of Beowulf in his battle against Grendel's, a monster and one of three antagonists in the epic poem, mother. It unfortunately failed him and he has to get rid of it.



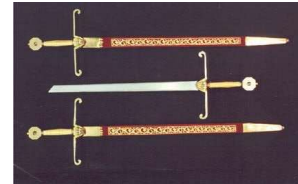
4. Harpe

Remember Medusa? This was the sword wielded by Perseus who used it to kill Medusa.



5. Curtana

Known as the “Sword of Mercy,” this ceremonial sword is one of the Crown Jewels of the United Kingdom.



6. Ascalon

For those of you familiar with the Christian legend of Saint George, who was a Christian martyr and protector of the Kingdom of Lydda in Palestine, he famously used this sword to kill a dragon who was terrorizing the people of Lydda.



7. The Wallace Sword

Scotland's most famous sword, this massive sword is traditionally attributed to Sir William Wallace, the legendary Scottish knight who led the resistance against English rule in the late 13th century (think of the movie Braveheart—thanks Mel Gibson).



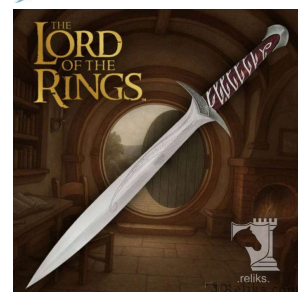
8. The Master Sword

For all my gamers out there, this is the legendary sword of Link in the Legend of Zelda video games.



9. Sting

Speaking again of J.R.R Tolkien's The Hobbit, this is the “sword” (more like a letter opener) wielded by Bilbo Baggins. It would famously glow blue when danger was close.



10. Goliath's Sword

Last, but not least, arguably the most famous sword in the Bible, the massive sword of the giant, Goliath of Gath. In the biblical account of the battle between David and Goliath, David uses Goliath's own sword to chop Goliath's head off after defeating him with the slingshot and stone.



I know those lists probably showed my inner nerd, but there is a greater Sword and Shield than any on these lists.

Deuteronomy 33:29

“Happy are you, O Israel! Who is like you, a people saved by the Lord, the Shield of your help, and the Sword of your triumph!...”

What an amazing description of the Lord. He is our Shield and our Sword!

As our Sword, He fights for us. Just as with the Israelites, He goes before us and fights our battles. He is the One who brings the victory. **Psalm 60:12** says, *“With God we will gain the victory...”*

Greater than Excalibur and Joyeuse (or any other sword), God doesn’t need any magical powers. He is Almighty, and the Almighty fights for us as our Sword. *“What then shall we say to these things? If God is for us, who can be against us (Romans 8:31)?”*

The Lord not only fights for us as our Sword, but He also guards and protects us as our Shield.

He is our protector and our help. **Psalm 46:1** says, *“God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble.”* He watches over us and guards us against the *“fiery darts of the wicked.”*

As I’ve been thinking about this verse, I had a great gospel connection:

Shields not only help, guard, and protect, but they take the blows and get pierced by the arrows. Essentially, the shield incurs the punishment that’s intended for us.

As our Shield, Jesus did the same thing for us.

“But he was pierced for our transgressions; he was crushed for our iniquities; upon him was the chastisement that brought us peace, and with his wounds we are healed (Isaiah 53:5).”

As our Shield, Jesus took the punishment that we deserved when He died on the cross for our sins. He was pierced for our transgressions, just like the arrows and spears pierce the shield. He was crushed for our iniquities just like the shield being crushed by the repeated blows of the sword, hammer, and axe. The chastisement and the wounds He incurred as our Shield brought us peace and healing.

While the swords and shields of history, myth, and legend are cool and interesting, our Sword and Shield has saved us.

Happy are we!

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