

War and the Christian

By Bro. Jim

There is a vast error that has been propagated over the centuries in the Church concerning warfare and a Christian. The error: that a born again believer can and should take part in war and/or killing of another person. History is rife with examples of "Christians" in warfare including the Crusades which was nothing more than hordes of Catholics attempting to force Christianity (their version) upon other peoples; the American revolution was full of men that were claiming God's hand of providence was upon them in gaining their freedom from Britain; the American Civil War had many a participant that claimed God was "on their side"; today the United States, Britain, and other Allied forces fight in places like Afghanistan, Iraq, etc. all the while claiming a "just war" with many prayers going up for God to protect the American forces as they banish the world from "evil". We could go on and on but the point is made that for centuries men have gone to war and claimed that God was on their side or that it was their "duty" to serve God and country. Typically Christians turn to the Old Testament and the many wars fought by men of God such as Moses, Joshua, David and the like. The reasoning here is that if God commanded these men of faith to fight in battles, then He surely condones His people fighting in wars today. Others will cite Romans 14 where it talks about how God put the government over us and we are to obey the government which includes going to war if commanded to do so. Some even resort to the fact that Jesus Christ Himself did tell the Apostles at a certain time to get swords. But what does the Bible really say about Christians and warfare? What are the explanations for the above references to passages in the Holy Scriptures that may seemingly show that Christians should or could go to battle? We will answer these questions and a whole lot more in this booklet. I will show anybody who has eyes to see and ears to hear that indeed, Christians are NOT to go to war or kill anybody under ANY CIRCUMSTANCE. I will do this by starting off with a basic premise that any Christian cannot deny. I will then use several scriptural references to support such a premise. I will then wrap things up by handling the "yea but's", i.e., the scriptures that do seem to show that it's okay for God's people to fight in wars and kill other people. Finally, we will conclude our study. It is my hope that after reading this booklet, as a born again believer you will accept the truth and come to the realization that it is NOT okay for a Christian to fight in a war or kill anybody for any reason. With that let's begin our study with a very basic premise.

I'm going to put this entire study on top of one elementary and rock solid foundational truth from which we will be able to build our entire argument. The basic premise we are going to establish that is undeniable if you are a born again believer and believe in the Word of God is this: there are two types of people in the world: saved and unsaved. Stated another way, there are born again believers and unbelievers. There is no middle ground here. It's two party system and there are not third and fourth parties etc. There are those that have been saved and washed in the blood of the Lamb and those that have not been born again. As a Christian this is an undeniable truth and central to the message of God via His Word the Holy Bible. Let's now examine these two groups of people in light of the discussion at hand. We will begin with "group A", the unbeliever. If you kill an unbeliever you have killed a person dead in his or her trespasses and sins and sent that person to hell and ultimately the lake of fire. Nowhere in the entire New Testament can anybody show where Jesus Christ or any other man of God commands a Christian to kill a sinner. Rather, there are countless scriptures that command born again believers to spread the good news of the gospel and tell sinners about Jesus Christ and His saving power, (Mth 28:18-20, Mk. 16:15-18, Lu. 9:1-6, Ro. 10:12-15, Eph. 6:15, etc.). **To reiterate, there is NOT ONE scripture in the New Testament that tells a Christian to kill a sinner.** There are a plethora of passages on the other hand that do tell a Christian to share the faith and spread the gospel to sinners. Secondly let's look at Group B, the Christians. There is NOT ONE scripture in the New Testament that says it's okay for one Christian to kill another Christian under any circumstance. Rather there are several passages that command Christians to die for one another, (Jn. 15:12, 1Jn. 3:16 etc.). Further,

"Marvel not, my brethren, if the world hate you. We know that we have passed from death unto life, because we love the brethren. He that loveth not his brother abideth in death. Whosoever hateth his brother is a murderer: and ye know that no murderer hath eternal life abiding in him." 1Jn. 3:13-15.

A proof of a person being born again is the existence of love for your brother and sister in Christ. If you don't love your brother, you are still in death. If you hate your brother, you are a murderer and no murderer has eternal life abiding in him or her. What are you going to do in war? Shoot your brother but just before you shoot him say, "I love you brother!" BLAM BLAM BLAM. God forbid. So to conclude this foundational premise, there are two kinds of people in the world: believers and unbelievers. If a Christian kills an unbeliever he or she has sent that sinner to hell which is against the teachings of the Bible. If a Christian kills another Christian he or she has killed his or her brother/sister in the Lord. God's people are NOT commanded to kill one another but on the contrary are commanded to love and DIE for one another. If a Christian isn't supposed to kill a sinner and isn't supposed to kill his/her brother in Christ then who is left to kill? Nobody! Agreed? Good, now that we have laid the bedrock for this discussion we can build upon it precept by precept and in the end we will have established the truth! Praise the Lord.

"Thou shalt not kill." Ex. 20:13.

A command from God couldn't be any clearer than this one. Do not kill. To engage in war means there is a good possibility that you could kill someone. By definition a soldier is one whose job it is to "kill the enemy" and win the battle and war. Many will argue back that how could God give a commandment to His people that they should not kill and yet God Himself gave the orders for His people in the Old Testament (Israel) to kill? The answer therein lies; GOD gave the commandment. When God commands, you do. God is a righteous judge and in the Old Testament He used His people Israel to carry out His judgments which involved in part killing of other peoples. It was God who talked directly to Moses and told him that Israel needed to wipe out the Amorites; it was God who had Joshua and company take out the Philistines; it was God who led King's Saul and David respectively over the Amalekites, Philistines, etc. When God gave this command, "Thou shalt not kill" it was meant that man, on his own cannot decide when someone is to die and then take that life. If God commands, it is different. It was like that in the Old Testament and it's like that today. The question that naturally arises is this: Does God command Christians in the New Testament Church to kill today? Along with this question the other question we need to answer is: Who are God's people in the New Testament Church? We will answer these two very important questions in the next section. For now, let it suffice that we have a commandment not to kill. Next, let's see what the New Testament has to say on this important subject.

"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." Lu. 3:14.

To set the scene here, John the Baptist is in the wilderness preaching the repentance of sins to anybody who will listen. Different groups of people are listening to him and asking questions. One of the groups present was a band of soldiers. The question these soldiers posed to John was, "What shall we do?" John's response to them, among other things was to "Do violence to no man." It's pretty hard to fight in a war and kill/maim another human being if you are commanded by a prophet of God to "Do violence to no man". I've heard it argued before that John didn't tell these soldiers to get out of the army and hence, he was not saying you couldn't go to war and kill. Come on, do you have to be in the army to kill someone? If he had merely said, "Get out of the army" to those soldiers, they could have left the army and become mercenaries and still killed people all the while saying "John didn't say we couldn't kill, he just said get out of the army". No, John using the wisdom of God got right to the heart of the matter by saying "Do no harm to any man". It's pretty hard to be in the army and especially on the front lines if you are going to keep this commandment. And remember, this command was given to some soldiers, how much more to those that have been born again and have taken the name of Jesus Christ!

"Behold, I send you forth as sheep in the midst of wolves: be ye therefore wise as serpents, and harmless as doves." Mth. 10:16.

Jesus is instructing His followers to be harmless as doves. Can you juxtapose this image of Christian conduct ovetop of an image of a man shooting an automatic weapon with intent to kill another human being. I can't. Harmless means to do NO HARM. It is certainly harmful to shoot, stab, bomb, etc. other people. Jesus wasn't kidding when He said harmless as doves. This is in the New Testament and is a command to those in the New Testament Church! Let's continue.

"And the servant of the Lord must not strive; but be gentle unto all men, apt to teach, patient," 2Tim. 2:24.

Notice that the Apostle Paul, by inspiration of the Holy Spirit is setting guidelines to Timothy (and hence, the Church) concerning those that are to be servants of God. One such guideline is that men of God are to be *gentle unto all men*. The phrase "all men" is inclusive of, well, all men on planet earth. It includes every last person. You cannot go to war and kill somebody without breaking this command. Paul also says that a man of God must not strive. A combat situation is full of strife. In fact, to survive you have to strive. Ask any combat veteran. Paul says that men of God are NOT to strive. The image of war with guns blazing and blood splattering, etc. is an image of strife. Once again, it's hard to juxtapose these commands for Christian conduct (harmless as doves, not striving, gentility etc.) over top of a person killing or maiming another person. Clearly you cannot fulfill these Christian requirements if you are a soldier in a war.

"To speak evil of no man, to be no brawlers, but gentle, shewing all meekness unto all men." Titus 3:2.

Again we see Paul giving instruction as to how a man of God is to act. This time the instruction is to Titus and notice it's very much in line with the instruction he gave to Timothy (and the instruction of Jesus Christ). Namely that men of God are to be gentle unto all men and not fighters (brawlers). Also men of God are to show meekness (controlled power) unto all men. Is this the picture of a combat veteran? No!

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

"For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places." Eph. 6:12.

These two scriptures together are very powerful indeed in showing that a Christian is not to fight or do harm against other men under any circumstance. In the first passage Paul tells Christians that their weapons are NOT carnal. This means the weapons used by Christians are NOT things like guns, knives, rocket, bombs, etc. He then tells us why that is: because a Christian's battle is NOT against flesh and blood! Our battles, as the second passage indicates are against demon spirits. You cannot shoot a demon spirit out of a person. You cannot use a knife against the rulers of the darkness of this world. You cannot destroy spiritual wickedness in high places with a bomb! But you CAN use prayer, faith, and the Word of God which is the Christian's sword (Eph. 6:11-17). Praise the Lord! Could this be any clearer?

Now that we have taken time to carefully support the premise in this booklet let's turn our attention to the few scriptures that people use that seem to say or suggest that Christians can go to war, can kill other people etc. In light of what we have looked at already, we will come up with the explanation showing that God's Word is both true and without contradiction!

Let's pick up something we have already commented on, namely, the command in Exodus of "Thou shalt not kill" and the fact that God told Israel to kill, even completely wipe out other peoples on several occasions. As I was alluding to earlier, it was God that told Israel to take out the Amorites, Amalekites, Philistines, etc. God had passed judgment on these people and for additional reasons beyond the scope of this booklet had Israel go to war against them. If God commands to kill, then you do it. Man, on his own was not and is not to make that decision. In addition, there are several things to say about this picture. First of all, it was God Himself directly talking to Israel and the kings of Israel. In that dispensation Israel was God's people on earth. He had a special relationship with that physical nation. As such, He talked directly to them and gave command. One of the things He commanded them to do from time to time was go to war. God still has a people on earth today: The Christians! In this time Christians are God's people on earth. But God does not tell a Christian in this New Testament Church to go to war or kill others (as we have already seen). The scriptures we have looked at declare such and from be sufficient proof of this. Since Jesus walked this earth to today we have been in the dispensation of grace. The woman taken in adultery is an example of grace. By the Old Testament Law to Israel, that woman was to be stoned. What did Jesus do? He told her "Go and sin no more"; that is grace. Likewise, we are in the dispensation of grace to this very hour and God has not and will not tell any members of the Church to go to war or kill others during this particular dispensation. In addition and just as importantly, you cannot compare God directly talking to the nation of Israel (His people on earth in that time) to any physical nation on earth today. **There is no physical nation on earth today that has a special relationship with God!** The United States is NOT a Christian nation. It is a nation that contains believers and unbelievers **JUST LIKE EVERY OTHER NATION ON THE GLOBE.** God **DOES NOT** have a relationship with any physical nation in this dispensation. The world lieth in darkness (1Jn. 5:19). God does not talk directly to the presidents of the US, Russia, France, Nigeria, China, etc. and tell them to go to war. All nations on earth today have Christians and non-Christians. NO nation on earth today is "God's people". Those that live in the United States have long been under the delusion that American is God's nation or that America is a Christian nation. Lies! The whole world, (America included) lieth in darkness. God does have a nation on earth today however that He does have a special relationship with. That is the Christian nation and the Christian nation is made up of peoples from all over the world! Praise the Lord. Let me repeat this, God's holy nation today is the Christian Nation and this nation is made up of people from all tongues, tribes, nationalities, etc. God has not and is not commanding people from His nation to go to war or kill others. We are in the dispensation of grace! Praise the Lord. Let's continue.

“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.” Lu. 22:36.

This passage in Luke is also used by some for justification for Christians to kill or go to war because Jesus did say here to go buy a sword. Yes, he certainly did say this. Jesus Christ was God in a flesh and blood body. As such, He was tempted in all points such as we are, yet without sin (Heb. 4:15). He faced trials and temptations just like we do. From time to time his flesh, as a result would rise up. Unlike any of us however, rather than give in to sin he put it in subjection to the Word of God every time and as a result, never sinned even one time. In this passage His flesh is rising up. As a result He said what He said. However, He also got control of His flesh quickly and put it back down as evidenced by the following passages:

“And they said, Lord, behold, here are two swords. And he said unto them, It is enough.” Lu. 22:38.

“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.” Lu. 22:50-51.

“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. 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.” Mth. 26:51-52.

Jesus spent that night in prayer, watching and knowing that the spirit was willing but the flesh was weak. Peter, (the one who used the sword) and others fell asleep. When the trial came Jesus passed (control of his flesh) and the apostles failed. Notice that Jesus, in control of His flesh, told Peter to put the sword up and also He healed the man’s ear. So yes, at one point Jesus did tell his followers to buy a sword. But after he got his flesh under control he told them to put the sword up because all who take up the sword shall die by the sword. In addition, showing his disapproval for the use of the sword, he healed the man’s ear. Jesus went on to say,

“Thinkest thou that I cannot now pray to my Father, and he shall presently give me more than twelve legions of angels?” Mth. 26:53.

Jesus knew he had to fulfill the scriptures and He also knew that this world was not His own so He wasn’t going to fight for it. He gave this confession before Pontus Pilate,

“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.” Jn. 18:36.

Read that passage again! Jesus said this kingdom was not His therefore neither HE NOR HIS SERVANTS would fight for it!!!! Praise the Lord!
Let’s continue.

“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. Whosoever therefore resisteth the power, resisteth the ordinance of God: and they that resist shall receive to themselves damnation. For the rulers are not a terror to good works, but to the evil. Wilt thou then not be afraid of the power? do that which is good, and thou shalt have praise of the same: 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.” Ro. 13:1-4
(Emphasis mine).

This passage is used a lot to prove that a Christian has to go to war if called upon by the government, as in the case of a draft. This is utter nonsense. Let’s look at it more closely. The passage is talking here about government and true, those in positions of authority in the government are ordained by God. As a side note, it does not mean they are godly men. God knows that in His general providence men need government to maintain peace and order because men are wicked and the whole world lieth in darkness. Therefore God establishes government and rule to have order in the daily lives of men. God is saying here that we should obey the government. But there is one part that is always overlooked and that’s the part that says the people in charge in government are there for our good. It is not good to kill. Therefore, if the government gives a Christian a command that is against God’s law, we do not obey it! To give a parallel example, if the government decided to pass a law that all men must commit adultery against their wives a Christian would not obey such a law. In the Old Testament King Nebuchadnezzar gave command for all people to bow to his image (Daniel chapter three). This was the king’s command. But the righteous did not bow and as a result God showed Himself mighty on their behalf in the fiery furnace. It is not good for a Christian to bow to a false god so we would not obey such a command if given today. Equally, it is not good to kill so if the government tells a Christian to kill we do not have to obey. Let’s take another example of this from scripture:

“And the king of Egypt spake to the Hebrew midwives, of which the name of the one was Shiprah, and the name of the other Puah: And he said, When ye do the office of the midwife to the Hebrew women, and see them upon the stools; if it be a son, then ye shall kill him: but if it be a daughter, then she shall live. But the midwives feared God, and did not as the king of Egypt commanded them, but saved the men children alive.” Ex. 1:15-17 (Emphasis mine).

In this example the government (the Pharaoh) commanded the midwives to kill the Hebrew male children. But because they feared God MORE than they feared man they did not obey. What was God’s response to the midwives for their disobedience of the government command?

“Therefore God dealt well with the midwives: and the people multiplied, and waxed very mighty.” Ex. 1:20.

Judging by this response do you think God was pleased or displeased that the midwives disobeyed the command of the government? Praise the Lord! The government is over us for our good. We obey the government unless the particular command goes against the Word of God. Amen.

I have also heard things like, “What about stopping Hitler in WWII?” As if to say, if Christians are not to go to war then we would just sit by and

watch Hitler take over the world. Yes, we would. The fact is the world is going to do what the world is going to do. Christians are not to get tangled up on such affairs. Besides, things will be allowed or not allowed of God as He sees fit. In a certain time the Anti-Christ and Beast will be in power, as allowed by God and as such, will make war with the saints and also wear out the saints for a time. It is going to happen and going to war won't stop it. God said through Paul to the Church, **"No man that warreth entangleth himself with the affairs of this life; that he may please him who hath chosen him to be a soldier."** 2 Tim. 2:4. And the soldier of the Lord that is being referred to here is a soldier of light and the war being referred to here is a spiritual war because our enemies are not flesh and blood but demons spirits and are warfare is not carnal but spiritual! Amen. The Word of God does NOT contradict itself and is true all the time. Praise the Lord!

In conclusion, despite the many wars that have been fought and are yet to be fought, God's people in this time of the New Testament Church are not to take part in any. God's people are not to kill under any circumstance. There are two kinds of people in the world, Christians and Non-Christians. If you kill a Non-Christian you have sent a sinner to hell, which is not commanded of God to do. If you kill a Christian, you have killed your brother/sister in the Lord. God commands you to love and die for your brother or sister in Christ Jesus, not kill him or her. The Bible and especially the New Testament over and over again show that God's people are to do no violence to any man; we are to be harmless as doves; we are to be gentle unto all men and no brawlers; we are not to strive against other men. The Bible shows us that a Christian's battle is NOT against flesh and blood and as such a Christians weapons are NOT carnal. A Christian battles wicked spirits and his or her own flesh and to win that battle it takes the Sword of the Spirit (Bible), the Shield of Faith, the Helmet of Truth etc. not a gun, knife, or bomb. We have also seen the wisdom of God on the difference between God commanding Israel to go to war in the Old Testament and God's expectations for His holy nation of Christians in the New Testament Church in the time of grace. We have seen that we are to obey the government as long as the command of the government isn't contrary to the laws of God. I hope and pray that you will repent of the murderous spirit you have and begin seeing all people as either a person in need of a Saviour (unbelievers) or see them as your brother and sister in the Lord (fellow believers). To do so, you cannot see color, nationality, race, etc. God has spoken to the Church on this matter. It is not right for a Christian to go to war or kill another person in any circumstance in the current time of grace we are in. Thus saith the Lord. Amen and Amen.

If you have any questions or comments you can reach Brother Jim at the following email address:

gatheringofthesaints@gmail.com

Or visit our Web address at:

www.gatheringofthesaints.com