

Should Christians Go To War?

I look back over the generations and cannot help but be grateful that I was born *at the end* of the last world war and have lived my allocated years and more, in relative peace, for both my father and grandfather fought in foreign lands to preserve their homeland from invasion, but now it seems, we all live in an ever more dangerous age.

Of course, many in those generations recognised that victory came only with God's help, (Probably to enable those who live at the end of this age to deliver and receive the whole gospel of the Kingdom of God to the nations of this world). I see that in this last week alone there were visitors to this website from over 70 different nations, who then have the opportunity to begin to understand the plan of God for all mankind, and what their responsibilities are, as Christians in the End Time.

But I notice from Google analytics that the majority of our visitors are in their twenties and thirties, and I suspect that, as the time may be short, many of them may not be fully baptised and converted when the end of this age arrives, which will be marked by God's angel reaching every man and woman on earth in dreams and visions with the miraculous gospel message, Revelation 14:6-7, *'Then I saw another angel flying directly overhead, with an **eternal gospel** to proclaim to those who dwell on earth, to every nation and tribe and language and people. And he said with a loud voice, "Fear God and give him glory, because **the hour of his judgment has come**, and worship him who made heaven and earth, the sea and the springs of water."* This will fulfill the prophecy of Matthew 24:14, and thereby indicate the start of the 7-year End Time, or Tribulation. *'And this gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in all the world for a witness unto all nations; and then shall the end come.'*

It will only be a few months after that miraculous, world shaking event, that America and Britain will be brought low by God for their evil choices, and **world war** will break out. The next six years will be tumultuous, as the coming **Beast power** of Europe rampages through many nations, Isaiah 10:5-7,

*"Woe to the Assyrian, the rod of my anger,
in whose hand is the club of my wrath!
I send him against a godless nation,
I dispatch him against a people who anger me,
to seize loot and snatch plunder,
and to trample them down like mud in the streets.
But this is not what he intends,
this is not what he has in mind;
his purpose is to destroy, to put an end to **many nations.**" (NIV).*

Daniel 11:40-43,

*At **the time of the end** the king of the South will engage him in battle, and the king of the North will storm out against him with chariots and cavalry and a great fleet of ships. He will invade many countries and sweep through them like a flood. He will also invade the Beautiful Land. **Many countries will fall**, but Edom, Moab and the leaders of Ammon will be delivered from his hand. He will extend his power over many countries; Egypt will not escape. He will gain control of the treasures of gold and silver and all the riches of Egypt, with the Libyans and the Ethiopians in submission. (NIV).*

Matthew 24:21-22, *‘For then there will be great distress, unequalled from the beginning of the world until now—and never to be equaled again. “If those days had not been cut short, no one would survive, but for the sake of the elect those days will be shortened.’* (NIV).

What should young Christians do at that time when called upon to defend their nations from such invasion? What examples and teaching do we find in the Bible about war, for only there can we expect to find the true answers to those questions?

Before we start we should understand that almost all the modern versions of the Bible correct a mistranslation of Exodus 20:13, which says in the King James version, *“Thou shalt not kill”*, but which in the Hebrew reads **“Thou shalt not murder”**. Murder is the unlawful killing of one human being by another. Deliberately taking the life of a human being usurps the authority that belongs to God, and is a hedge to protect the sanctity of human life. Genesis 9:6 prescribes that a murderer should forfeit his own life and this authority, **like the declaration of a just war**, he has handed over to the human governments of the world, Romans 13:1, 4, *‘Let every person be subject to the governing authorities. For there is no authority except from God, and those that exist **have been instituted by God.**for he is God’s servant for your good. But if you do wrong, be afraid, for he does not bear the sword in vain. For he is the servant of God, an avenger who carries out God’s wrath on the wrongdoer.’* Genesis 9:6 is evidence that Exodus 20:13 is indeed a mistranslation. *“Whoever sheds the blood of man, **by man shall his blood be shed, for God made man in his own image.**”*

We must beware of the teachings of men and make our own personal beliefs based upon God’s words – all of God’s word, not just the odd scripture, and some scriptures can at first reading seem to prohibit war, e.g. 2 Corinthians 10:3, *‘For though we walk in the flesh, we are not waging war according to the flesh.’* The Apostle Paul here is talking about our spiritual warfare, because that is a Christian’s main battle. We do not go to war “after the flesh” - for evil or wicked reasons as do some for their lustful gain. We fight our main campaign against our evil desires and the powers of darkness, as the following verses in this chapter show.

Fortunately, the Bible contains much of the history of God’s people and that history was never peaceful for long, so we can expect to find those answers. God’s people never want to fight, they love peace and would prefer to live in harmony with others but it seems that there are always wicked people, nations and foreign leaders who look with envy on their land and resources. They look on what God has given to His people, what He has blessed them with, covet those blessings and have often come with might to take what they have built, or hate us for our beliefs.

If God’s people have not prepared for war, practiced their armed forces on land, at sea and in the air, and personally accepted that they might be called upon **to defend** their homes and families, and the innocent, then those invaders will win, and we all saw what happened to the nazi victims in the last world war.

Some have claimed that Christians should not fight - that they should rely upon God to deliver – that when some man wants to take our home, our wife or our children, we should not resist – not be prepared take up arms in their defense, so what does God’s word tell us? But first let us notice what Jesus Christ told His disciples about how they should protect themselves in self-defense while carrying out their commission, for soon after that, He would no longer be there with His miraculous powers, and they would travel through a dangerous world to preach the gospel, with robbers and wild beasts. Luke 22:36, *‘He said to them, “But now let the one who has a moneybag take it, and likewise a knapsack. And let the one who has no sword **sell his cloak and buy one.**”’* That makes it quite clear that Christians have every right to arm themselves for the purposes of self-defense. The

sword was never to be considered an offensive weapon but it would nevertheless discourage attack and protect them from animals.

In the Old Testament, that great patriarch and **father of the faithful**, Abraham, saw his nephew Lot carried away captive by invaders. Abraham made war to rescue his nephew Lot, Genesis 14:14-16, *'When Abram heard that his kinsman had been taken captive, he led forth **his trained men**, born in his house, 318 of them, and went in pursuit as far as Dan. And he divided his forces against them by night, he and his servants, and defeated them and pursued them to Hobah, north of Damascus. Then he brought back all the possessions, and also brought back his kinsman Lot with his possessions, and the women and the people.'*He was then blessed on God's instructions ... *'And Melchizedek king of Salem brought out bread and wine. (He was priest of God Most High.) And he blessed him and said, "Blessed be Abram by God Most High, Possessor of heaven and earth; and blessed be God Most High, **who has delivered your enemies into your hand!**"'*

I'm sure that we are also familiar with the fact that Moses and Joshua were great Israelite Generals who relied upon the Lord *and their armies* to successfully deliver Israel into the Promised Land.

Israel also conducted wars on God's instructions against the Canaanite people because of their evil abominations, such as burning their own children in sacrifice, as well as the later wars in self-defense against powerful nearby empires such as the Egyptians and the Assyrians. It tells us in Ecclesiastes 3:8 that there is, *'a time to love, and a time to hate; a time for war, and a time for peace.'* The example of faithful men of God has been included for a purpose.

King David was a man after God's own heart, Acts 13:22, *'God testified concerning him: 'I have found David son of Jesse, **a man after my own heart; he will do everything I want him to do.'*** He successfully fought many wars for Israel with God's help and support, 2 Samuel 22:33, 35, *'God is my strength and power: and he maketh my way perfect.**He teacheth my hands to war; so that a bow of steel is broken by mine arms.'*** Right from his youth defending his father's flock, and his defeat of Goliath in the defense of Israel, he relied both upon the Lord *and* his martial skills, 1 Samuel 17:45, *'Then David said to the Philistine, "You come to me with a sword and with a spear and with a javelin, but I come to you in the name of the LORD of hosts, the God of the armies of Israel, whom you have defied.'* Even before he became king, while being pursued by the demon-driven King Saul, he built a band of trained warriors, 1 Sam 22:2, *'And every one that was in distress, and every one that was in debt, and every one that was discontented, gathered themselves unto him; and he became **a captain over them**: and there were with him about four hundred men.'*

Later of course, his military skills were well respected by the surrounding nations, and Israel became great with God's blessing, 2 Samuel 5:10, *'And David went on, and grew great, and the LORD God of hosts was with him.'* This was partly because King David constantly maintained well trained standing armies which brought the peace and prosperity which his son Solomon inherited, because Israel was known to be far too strong to tangle with, - the principle behind Christ's instruction to the disciples to buy a sword.

God well knows the wickedness of men who are never content with what they have, and look to take what they can gain from those clearly weaker than themselves. God therefore gave Israel instructions concerning the conduct of war, Deuteronomy 20: 3-4, *'And when you draw near to the battle, the priest shall come forward and speak to the people and shall say to them, 'Hear, O Israel, today you are drawing near for battle against your enemies: let not your heart faint. Do not fear or panic or be in dread of them, for the LORD your God is he who goes with you **to fight for you against your enemies, to give you the victory.**'* Deuteronomy 23:9, 14, *'"When you are encamped against your enemies, then you shall keep yourself from every evil thing.'Because the LORD*

your God walks in the midst of your camp, to deliver you and to give up your enemies before you, therefore your camp must be holy, so that he may not see anything indecent among you and turn away from you.’ Deuteronomy 24:5, “When a man is newly married, he shall not go out with the army or be liable for any other public duty. He shall be free at home one year to be happy with his wife whom he has taken.’

God tells us that He doesn’t change His principles, and today Israel is prophesied to be victorious in war despite being surrounded by Islamic enemies, Zechariah 12:2-6, ‘*“Behold, I am about to make Jerusalem a cup of staggering to all the surrounding peoples. The siege of Jerusalem will also be against Judah. On that day I will make Jerusalem a heavy stone for all the peoples. **All who lift it will surely hurt themselves.** And all the nations of the earth will gather against it. On that day, declares the LORD, I will strike every horse with panic, and its rider with madness. But for the sake of the house of Judah I will keep my eyes open, when I strike every horse of the peoples with blindness. Then the clans of Judah shall say to themselves, ‘The inhabitants of Jerusalem have strength through the LORD of hosts, their God.’ “On that day I will make the clans of Judah like a blazing pot in the midst of wood, like a flaming torch among sheaves. And they shall devour to the right and to the left all the surrounding peoples, while Jerusalem shall again be inhabited in its place, in Jerusalem.’*

They have so far been able to do this by maintaining a well respected, strong defense force. Though Israel will not always win, we read that the Lord will bless the then repentant Jews who still remain in Israel after its invasion, to fight in the final battle of Armageddon, at Jerusalem, Zechariah 12:8, ‘*On that day the LORD will protect the inhabitants of Jerusalem, so that **the feeblest among them on that day shall be like David**, and the house of David shall be like God, like the angel of the LORD, going before them.’*

But the Jews will not be alone in supporting Christ in this great battle. He will be accompanied from heaven with His Bride – those true Christians who will qualify to be in the first resurrection, Revelation 14:1-5, ‘*Then I looked, and behold, on Mount Zion stood the Lamb, and with him 144,000 who had his name and his Father’s name written on their foreheads. And I heard a voice from heaven like the roar of many waters and like the sound of loud thunder. The voice I heard was like the sound of harpists playing on their harps, and they were singing a new song before the throne and before the four living creatures and before the elders. No one could learn that song except the 144,000 who had been redeemed from the earth. It is these who have not defiled themselves with women, for they are virgins. It is these **who follow the Lamb wherever he goes.** These have been redeemed from mankind as firstfruits for God and the Lamb, and in their mouth no lie was found, for they are blameless.’ Revelation 19:7, ‘*Let us rejoice and exult and give him the glory, for the marriage of the Lamb has come, and **his Bride has made herself ready;***’*

Together with Jesus Christ and His angels they, as then immortal spirit beings like Christ, will return and be victorious over the nations in this final battle, Revelation 19:11 and 14, ‘*Then I saw heaven opened, and behold, a white horse! The one sitting on it is called Faithful and True, and in righteousness he judges and makes war.And **the armies of heaven, arrayed in fine linen, white and pure, were following him on white horses.***’

The very last righteous war of this age will be over. Christ’s Kingdom will gradually spread out from Jerusalem which will become the world capital, Isaiah 2:4, ‘*He shall judge between the nations, and shall decide disputes for many peoples; and they shall beat their swords into plowshares, and their spears into pruning hooks; nation shall not lift up sword against nation, **neither shall they learn war anymore.*** The need for war will be over because the instigator of wars,

Satan the devil, will be held captive in the abyss, Revelation 20:2-3, *'And he seized the dragon, that ancient serpent, who is the devil and Satan, and bound him for a thousand years, and threw him into the pit, and shut it and sealed it over him, so that he might not deceive the nations any longer, until the thousand years were ended. After that he must be released for a little while.'*

At last the whole world will find peace, and for the first time on this earth, freedom from war, but sadly, until then, the safest way to avoid victimisation and war is to be fully prepared!

It is the right of each person to come to their own conclusions based upon the whole word of God. In an issue such as this it is a particularly important and sensitive responsibility. I have brought together some of the scriptures which I believe reveal guidance, but the decision is yours.

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