

Should A Christian Fight?

“*The LORD is a man of war*”, said Moses in **Exodus 15:3**. Yet Paul calls Him “*the God of Peace*” in **Romans 16:20**. “*Thou shalt not kill*”, says the sixth commandment. Yet He Himself has killed innumerable people throughout the Bible, both directly and indirectly.

God speaks of a future when He makes wars cease to the ends of the Earth (**Psalms 46:9**), yet in the same book David says, “*He teaches my hands to war*” (**Psalms 18:34**). What’s more, God later criticized David because he warred so much, and forbade him to build the temple.

God says He will “*scatter the people who delight in war*” (**Psalms 68:30**), yet when the Israelites entered Canaan, at God’s command they took Jericho and slew every man, woman and child in the city. You can read extensive comments by God about war and killing in **Deuteronomy 32:39-42**.

Yet when Jesus was betrayed to be killed, He would not allow His servants to fight even to defend Him. Are these contradictions? Is God as irrational as these facts make Him seem? Is He a hypocrite? Does God expect us to kill for Him – or will He punish us for doing it? Should we join the military and fight for our country, or should we be pacifists and refuse to hurt a fly? That’s the vitally important topic of...

LESSON 22: SHOULD A CHRISTIAN FIGHT?

To truly understand what God wants, it’s sometimes best to start at the end – what it will be like after Jesus has returned as King of Kings and “*His will is done on Earth*”. So in that happy future, will there be wars? **Isaiah 2:4**.

All the effort that nations spend today on arms, tanks, biological weapons and spy satellites will be turned to more productive work in the world God has planned. Swords will be beaten into scythes and tanks will be converted into tractors. And the nations shall *never learn war any more*. This is the FUTURE of war. This is what God WANTS – a world without war.

War may or may not be a necessary means to an end, but whatever it is, it is NOT something God intends to continue indefinitely. All the rest of the Bible should be interpreted in light of this fact – **when God has His way – once His ideal has finally been achieved, there will be no more war. Ever.**

WHAT CAUSES WAR?

So next we need to ask, why do we have wars today? When nation battles nation, what is the real cause? **James 4:1-2**. Nations go to war against one another because of greed, jealousy and revenge; all the same reasons individuals fight with each other. So naturally, in a world where the government is given to the saints of the Most High, those traits will never again grow to the point where they can cause wars between nations (**Micah 4:3**).

But there is another cause of wars; God manages the nations behind the scenes, He sets up the king, the dictator and the elected official, and He uses them to fulfill His plan. And sometimes, His plan is to cause war. Before reading these verses, remember the Bible almost always uses the phrase “the sword” figuratively to refer to war.

Why did Ezra say Israel had been in wars and taken in captivity? **Ezra 9:7**. What happens if people disobey God? **Job 36:12**. If your nation rebels against God, what will He do? **Isaiah 1:20**. What did God promise to do to Israel because they had repeatedly disobeyed Him? **Isaiah 65:12**.

When God sent prophets to tell Israel their sins, how did they respond – and what did God do? **2 Chronicles 36:16-17**. What did God prophesy would happen when Israel sinned? **Deuteronomy 28:22**. Why does God bring war on people? **Job 19:29**. Does He make one nation stronger and another weaker to fulfill His judgment against that nation? **Ezekiel 30:24-25**. What happened when Israel followed false gods? **Judges 5:8**.

When nations sin against God, war is one of the most common ways God puts them back on track. By sending another nation against them, God causes the nation to – at least in some degree – turn back to Him. Fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom (**Psalms 111:10**), and nothing strikes fear into a nation like war.

Does God punish us as individuals in the same way a father punishes children? **Hebrews 12:6-10**. How does God tell parents to correct their children? **Proverbs 13:24**. So when God punishes nations, does He have a particular “rod” – a switch or paddle – that He uses? **Isaiah 10:5-6**.

Assyrians were the ancestors of the modern German people, which you will learn in a future lesson. But regardless of who they are, it is plain that God uses certain warlike nations as paddles to swat other nations – He often uses Assyria, because they have always loved war throughout history. Of course, if you’ll continue reading in **Isaiah 10:7-8, 13-14**, you will see they always took it to extremes and then took all the credit.

They didn’t declare war on other nations to punish them for unrighteousness; they did it because they wanted to rule the world. After they teach the lesson God wanted taught, He punishes the “rod” He used for lifting themselves up higher than they had any right to do – which you can read in **verses 12, 15-19**. This is how God keeps nations in line.

But just as God causes wars, He also ensures peace – see **2 Chronicles 14:6**. When there were righteous kings in Judah, they were not attacked by the heathen kingdoms around them – were they? **2 Chronicles 17:10**. Why? **Verses 3-4**. Does God notice things like that? **2 Chronicles 16:9**.

God can make kings and kingdoms be pleasant, or aggressive; He can make them rapacious or generous. He can make them content with their own land, or make them desire yours. It requires only a little bit of effort on His part to put the right people in power on each side and give them the right prodding and you can have either a war or peace.

I’ve explained this so thoroughly, at the risk of being redundant, because it is vitally important that you understand that **the Most High RULES in the kingdoms of men!** (**Daniel 4:17**). And that means **no nation has ever been in a war that God didn’t bring upon them! Nor lost a war God didn’t want them to lose – WHETHER THEY FOUGHT OR NOT!**

And that’s the real key. If God wants your nation destroyed **a stronger military won’t help – and if He has decided your nation should be sold into slavery NO AMOUNT OF WEAPONS WILL HELP!**

On the other hand, if God wants your nation to be prosperous and have peace **no military is needed!** You will see countless Biblical examples of this before this lesson is over.

SO WHAT IS THE SOLUTION?

To review, we’ve learned that

1. Wars have no place in God’s ideal world.
2. Wars are fought over envy, lust, and other carnal reasons.
3. God brings wars on nations because of their sins.

Now looking at that, it's quite obvious if those are the CAUSES of wars... then the solution isn't to build bigger guns. It isn't to build a United Nations. It isn't to have better spies, better security or a larger military. If you're being thrown into war **it's because God is angry at your nation. Killing more of the enemy isn't going to fix that!**

Who determines the outcome of all battles? **1 Samuel 17:47**. How does God save? By giving people more weapons? (Same verse). Can a sword save you? (Same verse). Are nations saved by having big armies? **Psalms 33:16-17**. What does save them? **Verses 18-20**. Usually, both sides are praying for God to smite their enemy. So how does God decide who to help? **Verses 12-15**.

Notice! God considers "ALL THEIR WORKS". Their obedience! Bigger stockpiles of nuclear weapons are a WORTHLESS THING for safety! But the nation whose God is the LORD – the true God, not the false Jesus – that nation is BLESSED! What happens to that nation? **Isaiah 32:17-18**.

Righteousness is what causes peace and **IT'S THE ONLY THING THAT DOES!** If a nation is sinning, and finds itself losing a war, what does God say they should do? **Jeremiah 18:7-8**. On the other hand, if He blesses a nation and they repay His blessing by sinning, what will God do? **Verses 9-11**.

And what if they don't listen? **Verses 12, 15-17**. If they reject God's warning, His punishment is to cause them to lose wars! If a nation truly wants defense against war – the judgment of God – what sort of weapons should a righteous nation build? **Jeremiah 51:19-21**.

God is a righteous nation's weapons of war. He is all the army they need. God directs the course of this world's battles. He governs whether other nations are hostile or friendly to your nation, and if war does come He picks the winner – and He picks them, not based on how well trained they are for war, **but on how righteous their nation is**.

SO DOES GOD WANT WARS OR NOT?

You've seen that ultimately, God doesn't want war. But does He want US to fight and kill other nations? Should we kill our enemies to preserve our way of life or not? To answer that, we need to start at the Exodus.

When Israel left Egypt, nations immediately came out to attack them – starting with the Egyptians and it continued long after they entered the Promised Land. If you study each of these examples in order, you will see a distinct pattern.

Did God put the people in a position where they would have to war? **Exodus 13:17**. When Pharaoh approached, did Moses arm the people for battle? **Exodus 14:13-14**. Notice they were to *stand still* – not help God fight, not to have God make them stronger or bless their battle... they were to STAND STILL and DO NOTHING and God would do ALL the fighting for them! How did God do that? **Verses 24-27**. And what did the people learn from this? **Verses 30-31**.

This was God's ideal! The people saw that, and believed God – they had faith in Him! But did they remember that lesson? **Exodus 15:24, 16:2-3**. A week or two later, the Israelites had forgotten the mighty miracle God did by overthrowing Pharaoh and were showing an utter lack of faith! Were they also being obedient during this time? **Exodus 16:27-28**. Did they continue tempting God? **Exodus 17:1-4**. Immediately after they tempted God, what happened? **Verses 8-13**.

Do you see the pattern here? At first, God was happy to fight their battles for them! They didn't have to lift a finger to help! *And they had faith at that time!* But as their obedience faltered, so did their faith! **And as their faith faltered, God became less willing to fight their battles for them!**

In a matter of about five weeks, God went from killing the Egyptians **for** Israel, to merely **helping Israel fight**. But that wasn't the original plan! After they arrived at Sinai, God offered Israel the NC and with it, a chance at repentance and a new start. So with that new start, how did God feel about war? **Exodus 23:20-33**.

God was planning to bring Israel into the Promised Land **but without shedding any blood!** What weapon was God planning to use? **Verses 27-28. God's intention was to use FEAR and BEES to drive out the Canaanites!** God wanted the Canaanites destroyed for their sins, **but He was well able to do that without Israel bloodying their hands to help slaughter them!**

Those were the terms of war under the NEW Covenant made at Sinai. But there was a problem. There were CONDITIONS attached to this promise! What were those conditions? **Verses 20-23.** God said He would be an enemy to their enemies *ONLY IF they obeyed His voice* and did ALL that He spoke! And if they stopped obeying Him, then **He would stop fighting for them!**

And as you read the rest of the story of the Exodus, you watch that happen. For the rest of the trip, God never again completely fought battles for them as He did at first and would gladly have continued to do. He helped them fight their own battles when they were righteous. But what happened when they rebelled against God? **Numbers 14:40-45.**

So you see, the wars of Samson, David, and Joshua against the enemies of God – while God blessed them – were not God's intention. Joshua's battles served God's purpose, but flocks of hornets could have done just as well. Goliath could have been killed by a lightning bolt as well as by David. **God doesn't need us to kill for Him.** He tolerates it from people under the OC, because of their lack of faith **but it is not what He wants a nation to do!**

God's original plan was to bring Israel out of Egypt without war. When their complete lack of faith prevented that, God had to compromise on His ideal and allow them to fight their own battles. But why didn't God want them fighting – why did He WANT them to let Him fight their battles for them? **Exodus 19:6.**

God wanted the entire nation to be holy. Every last one was supposed to be a part of the holy priesthood of God, a nation of priests to the world! Does shedding blood in war disqualify you from working on (or presumably, in) the temple of God? **1 Chronicles 28:2-3.**

For Israel to be holy priests, **they had to be free of blood.** When it became clear to God that all of Israel wasn't going to have any part of God's New Covenant, He allowed them to fight their own battles. But did He let EVERYONE in Israel fight in those wars? **Numbers 1:1-3.** Here, God is commanding Moses to count all the people who can go to war in Israel. Was EVERYONE counted? **Verses 45, 47.** Why not? **Verses 50-53.**

So even in the Old Testament, even under the Old Covenant, even when God permitted a nation to war *there were always some in the nation who were strictly forbidden from fighting!* **THE PRIESTHOOD NEVER FOUGHT!**

What was the job of the priest? **Malachi 2:7.** The Levite's job was to stay home and teach the law to the people. When they did their job properly, the nation was righteous; when they didn't, the nation became evil. Then what happened? **Judges 3:12.** (This happened 6 times in the book of Judges alone).

Through the Bible there are many examples of Israel fighting against their enemies. Often God blessed these battles, other times He didn't. If you open a random page anywhere between Numbers and Nehemiah, and you'll probably find them fighting. **And every battle was caused by Israel's sins!** And if they won, it was only because they were slightly less evil than their enemies!

So you see the Levites were far more vital to the peace of the nation than the soldiers! **When the priest failed, the soldiers lost anyway! And when the priest was successful, no soldiers were needed!** And each time war came, Israel repented and called to God; and each time God raised up a deliverer to save them from the enemy.

And as long as the judge lived, the people obeyed God. Then the judge died and gradually the people went back to their sins, until God once again threw them into a war, which they lost. This pattern was repeated literally dozens if not hundreds of times in the history of Israel, culminating in them being completely taken captive by the enemy and taken out of their land. Why did that happen? **1 Kings 14:15-16.**

EXAMPLES OF HOW A NATION SHOULD FIGHT A WAR

So to add to our summary from earlier;

4. God permitted Israel to go to war only because of their lack of faith.
5. Even then, the priesthood never went to war.
6. If the priesthood had done their job and kept the people righteous, there would have been no wars.

But let's suppose your nation was sinning, and repents – but you're still in war. Or for the sake of argument, let's suppose you were a righteous nation and Satan just sent this evil nation against you. What **SHOULD** your nation do? Are there times when you **HAVE** to go to war to save God's people? Or is there another way?

What you usually see in the Bible – because most of the time, the nation didn't have faith – was an example like **1 Chronicles 5:20-22**. Most of the time God helped them fight – whether by giving them extra strength, confusing their enemies, or just giving a few men incredible fighting skills like David's mighty men or Samson.

But we've already established that wasn't the ideal, but something God was forced to “settle for”. But a few times in history, there were good kings who did have at least some faith. These are not all ideal examples, but they approach them much closer – and make it clear what the ideal would have been.

Jehoshaphat, King of Judah (927-902 B.C.) was faced with an overwhelmingly superior army and knew he had no hope. So what did **HE** do? **2 Chronicles 20:1-13**. He was afraid, and set himself to seek God and proclaimed a fast throughout the nation. This was a good start! And God answered him through a prophet in **verses 14-17**.

Do you see that? God was impressed by Jehoshaphat's actions and prayer, and what was His response? He said “**YE SHALL NOT NEED TO FIGHT** in this battle: set yourselves, **STAND YE STILL**, and **SEE** the salvation of the **LORD**”! Just as happened at the Red Sea, they weren't to lift a finger to win this battle!

Now read **verses 20-24**. You see **the first thing** Jehoshaphat reminded them was **TO HAVE FAITH!** Without faith, they'd have been no different from the other kings who had to fight their own battles in the Bible! God turned the enemy against each other and when the army of Judah came out, **every single man of the enemy were dead without them shedding the first drop of blood!** That's what God **WILL** do for a righteous nation that has faith! And when the other nations heard of what had happened, **it made them fear to attack Judah again – thus avoiding future wars! (verses 29-30).**

Hezekiah, king of Judah (724-695 B.C.) was another example of a good king, a righteous leader who put the country **BACK ON TRACK FOLLOWING GOD**. How did he do that? **2 Chronicles 31:1-4**. Notice the importance of the law and the priesthood in teaching that law! It is more important to a nation's security than all the armies in the world!

Hezekiah restored the temple and re-established the priesthood and repaired the temple, and God summarizes in **verses 20-21**. When the king of Assyria attacked him, what did he do? **2 Chronicles 32:1-6**. These are not ideal examples *because these people were still under the Old Covenant*. They still had armies and weapons, but considering they were in the OC, they had tremendous faith. What did Hezekiah advise his people? **2 Chronicles 32:7**.

You'll notice Hezekiah isn't talking about troops and weapons! What was he talking about? Verse 8. Hezekiah had **FAITH!** The king of Assyria sent messengers telling them to surrender, making a big mistake by mocking God and Hezekiah's faith in the process (**verses 9-19**). How did Hezekiah respond? Remember, God hadn't delivered them yet. Things looked pretty bad. Most nations would have surrendered or sought another army to help their defense by then. What did he do? **2 Chronicles 32:20**.

And what did God do? That's the **TRUE TEST** of whether someone did the right thing or not – how did **GOD FEEL** about this choice? Did He feel they should have “helped him”, and made a bigger army? Or hired someone to do it for Him? **Verses 21-23**. A better version of the same event is recorded in **2 Kings 19:35**.

185,000 men killed, and Hezekiah and the men of God didn't lift the first sword! Not the first drop of blood was spilled by the men with FAITH IN GOD! And God, just to make a neat, tidy package, killed the leader of the Assyrians when he returned home – using the Assyrian's own children to do it!

This is an excellent example of why you have to use the WHOLE Bible when you're studying, because if you just read this one passage, there are several unanswered questions. If Hezekiah was doing such a good job at making the nation righteous, and wars are the result of sin... why did God bring an enemy to attack him in the first place? To understand that, you need the COMPLETE picture, which you can only get by combining *both* versions of the story!

Start in **2 Kings 18:1-8**. So far, so good – Hezekiah was a great king. But even great kings make mistakes. Read **verses 13-16**. Now does it make more sense why God brought war to his nation? At first, Hezekiah did great things. He rebelled against Assyria, set the nation back on track, **but when the first real test came – when Assyria threatened to go to war with them – Hezekiah folded.**

He apologized to Assyria, begged their forgiveness, and promised to pay whatever fine they levied on him. And what's worse, he got the money to pay the fine *from the silver and gold in the temple of God!* Surely that can't have set well with God!

Naturally, once they paid the money the Assyrians went back on their word and decided to destroy Jerusalem anyway! **Remember, Assyria is the rod of God's anger and paying a pagan nation protection money with the gold in God's temple SURELY made God angry!**

Did Assyria honor their deal? **Verses 17-19**. Was Hezekiah relying on God only, or had he also made a side-deal with Egypt for protection? **Verses 20-21**. See, Hezekiah made a lot of mistakes. That's easy for us to say in hindsight, but it's just a fact. You can't fight the judgment of God with money or weapons! **If God sends a nation to attack you, hiring another nation to defend you won't help!!**

This is a great example of how God punishes nations. Assyria probably intended to honor their deal originally, but God wanted Judah punished so He saw to it that Assyria broke their deal and attacked Judah even though they had paid the tribute!

But don't get the wrong idea – Hezekiah was also trusting God – see **verse 22**. Hezekiah hadn't turned his back on God – he didn't think he had, anyway – in order to trust these other nations. **He still believed he was trusting in God**, he was just keeping his gun handy too! **But God is jealous of your trust and doesn't like to share it with a gun, an army, or another nation!**

Meanwhile, the Assyrian king makes a fascinating statement in **verse 25**. He was probably lying... but it was truer than he knew! **The Assyrians were the rod of God's anger and they were indeed sent by God, even if they didn't realize it!**

The rest of the chapter mirrors **2 Chronicles** pretty well, but new pieces are added in **2 Kings 19:1-7**. So he returned, and then sent a new set of letters saying similar things in **verses 8-13**, Hezekiah's actions are recorded in **verses 14-19**, and God's response is in **verses 20-37**. Notice how much information is added to the same event by reading BOTH versions!

We can now see Hezekiah did great things at first, but God saw his faith was weak and needed TESTING. So he sent the Assyrians to attack, and Hezekiah made a mistake and lost faith and paid them off, and hired the Egyptians to defend him. That didn't work, so Hezekiah learned **those things were foolish and worthless and the only thing he had to do was trust in God, and God would save him without a single shot being fired!**

DIVIDING YOUR TRUST

We briefly touched on dividing your trust there, but you need to thoroughly understand it. If your nation is truly obeying God and has faith, **you will not need to fire a single shot to defeat your enemies**. God will fight FOR you, IN YOUR PLACE, and you will never have to shed blood to be safe!

If your nation has somewhat less faith, but is still fairly righteous, God will deliver you by blessing your armies, allowing you to fight your own battles and just guiding events here and there as needed. God doesn't like that, but He will tolerate it.

But if you do like Hezekiah did and divide your trust between God and the kings of Assyria or Egypt, hoping that by trusting all three, one of them will deliver you... well, you saw what happened to Hezekiah. It was his lack of faith in God ALONE that got him in hot water. And God only saved him after he gave up hoping his armies or his money could save him, and turned back to God and put ALL his trust in God.

Another example is King Asa, of Judah (968-927 B.C.). He was also a good king, which you can read about in **2 Chronicles 14:1-7**. So far so good! Then Asa built an army (**verse 8**). Not an act of faith, but for an Old Covenant king, it was acceptable. Then Zerah the Ethiopian came against Israel with an enormous army – over a million troops (**verses 9-10**). Asa realized his armies were worthless in this battle, and did the right thing in **verses 11-15**.

God made promises to Asa in **2 Chronicles 15:1-7**; these promises show how God deals with all kingdoms, so study them carefully. The prophet said, *“The LORD is with you, while ye be with him; and if ye seek him, he will be found of you; but if ye forsake him, he will forsake you”* (**verse 2**). If there was one piece of advice you could give to any country THAT SHOULD BE IT!

When your churches teach the law and the people obey it, GOD IS WITH YOU! When your churches teach that obedience to God is offensive to Him, and those who do evil are blessed (**Malachi 2:17**), then GOD IS AGAINST YOU. God blessed the USA and many other democratic, God-fearing countries beyond all measure in the last few centuries. And while they feared Him and taught His law, HE BLESSED THEM EVEN MORE!

No nation could stand against them in battle; they dwelt in peace and prosperity without fear. But as they have turned their back on God more and more, God has turned His back on them – and it will get much worse before it gets better. When churches gradually stopped teaching the law about a hundred years ago, and it became harder and harder to find a true priest of God who taught the commandments of the true God, we have had less and less peace and *“nation is destroyed of nation, and city of city, for God did vex them all with adversity”*.

But let's get back to the thread of the story. Asa heard this, and was pleased. **2 Chronicles 15:8-19** shows all his good acts brought peace to Israel for many decades. But then in **2 Chronicles 16:1-6** this same man made a huge mistake! The same one Hezekiah made – he hired PAGAN KINGS to defend him from his enemies! Just like Hezekiah did! And to make matters worse he did it **with the gold in God's temple**.

This man had SEEN God's power. He had defeated an army of a MILLION SOLDIERS with God's help! He KNEW he didn't need to fear this pagan king! But how easily the heart of man forgets the blessings of God! How did God feel about Asa making a treaty with this pagan king? **2 Chronicles 15:7-9. Just because Asa made a treaty with another king for defense, God punished him with wars for the rest of his life!**

God made it plain. If he'd only asked, God would have given him victory again, but no! He had to do it HIS way. He wanted to trust men he could SEE and bribe, not an invisible God! And God was MAD. Why? **Deuteronomy 4:24**. God is JEALOUS of your obedience, JEALOUS of your trust, and when Asa betrayed Him and turned to the Syrian army for help, God was jealously furious! And as a punishment for that foolish decision of Asa's, God said He would send WARS to PUNISH HIM!

Asa did not take this well (**2 Chronicles 15:10**), which suggests it was because of Asa's lack of faith and growing unrighteousness that God sent the war in the first place. **God only sends war to a disobedient nation, a people who needs to learn to put their faith in God!** War and adversity should make a nation LOOK at their works and PUT THEIR FAITH IN GOD if they want to be delivered, (**Ecclesiastes 7:14, Jeremiah 8:5-6**) not trust their money or weapons or armies to protect them.

God doesn't WANT you to fight your own battles! The battles are there to show that YOU NEED TO CHANGE YOUR WAY OF LIFE! Not to show that you need to buy more guns! God will fight your battles for you (since He's the reason you're facing them in the first place!).

To make the problem go away, you ONLY have to be a righteous – or even repentant – nation! But carnal men would always prefer to buy more guns than commit less sins! It's much easier to send your sons off to die in war than it is to HUMBLE yourself before God and admit you NEED His help!

ONE AGAINST AN ARMY

Remember, your God is JEALOUS of you! He is jealous of your obedience, of your worship, and of your trust! If you are just ONE MAN, and a kingdom sends an ENTIRE ARMY to capture you, God WILL protect you, IF YOU TRUST HIM *and HIM ALONE!*

In **2 Kings 6:8** the King of Syria was warring against Israel, and was frustrated because every time he made a plan, the king of Israel was one jump ahead of him! And he wanted to know why? **Verses 11-12**. To a pagan king, the logical solution was to capture the prophet. So he sent an army to capture him in **verses 13-14**.

Now Elisha had great faith. Probably even New Covenant faith. His servant didn't, and was terrified (**verse 15**). But Elijah didn't seem to be worried at all, did he? **Verses 16-17**. There was a huge army of angels, and chariots of FIRE around Elisha! God was going to defend HIM, and he KNEW IT! God didn't need Elisha to take a sword or gather together the town to "help" to defeat them – God could handle that by Himself, and He did! Read **verses 18-23**. No murder was necessary – or permitted – by Elisha. Only faith. Faith that his God was mightier than an army.

Now had Elisha been a bit more like Hezekiah or Asa, he might have been afraid – one could hardly blame him – and he might have roused the townsmen to defend him, or run and hid, or even picked up a sword to defend himself. All of these God might have tolerated, under the right circumstances, from a man without faith. But this... this is what He LIKED.

This is what gave this man the right to speak for God, and what made God give him such great power to work miracles. This man trusted God, and didn't divide that trust with pagan kings, weapons, or money. And neither should you.

FIGHTING THE JUDGMENT OF GOD

It has been established that war is the judgment of God upon a sinning nation. At best, it is a test God is sending on a nation He knows lacks faith, and needs to learn some. So when nations rage and fume against the rod of God's anger, they are resisting the judgment of God and only prolonging the punishment!

Let's suppose God sends a nation to punish your nation. And let's suppose you somehow had an ENORMOUS army, and all the power of the devil to help you, and let's say SOMEHOW you defeated the army God sent against you. Ok? Let's imagine you DEFEATED the judgment of God! Now read **Jeremiah 37:10**.

God says EVEN IF you did that, even if you somehow DEFEATED them, God says He would raise them up to finish the job! **What God ordains will come to pass, and your army will not save you from the judgment of God!** Will that judgment find you, no matter where you hide or what happens, until you repent? **Amos 9:1-10**.

And when God sends one nation to punish another nation – say, Babylon to attack Egypt – if you help Egypt **you will take part in her punishment!** Read **Ezekiel 30:6, 8**. Both Egypt AND ALL HER HELPERS WILL BE DESTROYED! God will not permit you to interfere with His righteous judgment **and you shouldn't want Him to let you interfere!**

Think about it! If God is sending an army against a nation, it's because they're sinning. If this nation is evil, wicked and rebellious... SHOULD you defend them? If God is trying to teach them a lesson, and give them a spanking for their evil, why would you even WANT to fight against Him??

Read **Ezekiel 33:26-27**. When a nation is full of adultery, false Christianity, and all sorts of sins – like the USA is today – and they rely, not on God, but on their guns and military for defense.... God says mockingly "*shall you [continue to] possess the land?*"

If God ordains destruction, all the armies on earth won't help! Your sword won't help your nation in that day! **AND YOU SHOULDN'T WANT IT TO HELP!!** If you truly want to interfere with the judgment of God then **strike at the source! Attack the REASON God brought the judgment!** What is God's fervent hope when He brings war on a nation? **Jeremiah 36:3**. What does it take to change God's judgment? **Jeremiah 26:2-6**. What will God do when a people repents after they see war? **1 Kings 8:33-34**.

So it's obvious that grabbing an ax and killing a barbarian – a barbarian God is sending to punish your nation – will only anger God and get you in hot water with Him. The only righteous way to help the nation is to get them back on God's good side – and that can only happen through repentance and the righteousness it creates. When that happens, you will see the promise in **Leviticus 26:8** fulfilled.

WAR AND THE NEW COVENANT CHRISTIAN

You learned about the difference between the New and Old Covenants in the last lesson, and to summarize it in a single word, the difference is "faith". When a nation had faith, they were treated under the terms of the New Covenant. But when they lacked faith *and to the exact extent they lacked faith*, they had to fight their own battles. It really is that simple.

Take the example of Abraham, the father of the faithful. Read all of **Genesis 14**, and you'll find this man going to war to rescue his nephew, Lot. On his way back, Melchizedek – Jesus – blessed him. Abraham didn't war for greed (**Genesis 14:21-24**), but to rescue his family. Does this justify us going to war for "good reasons"?

You can answer for yourself – **what covenant was Abraham under at the time?** God didn't make the New Covenant with him until "after these things" in **Genesis 15:1**. **Therefore he was not yet under the covenant of faith, and so by going to war he was obeying the terms of the Old Covenant that he was under at the time, and God blessed him for it!**

But after he accepted the NC, **Abraham never again went to war**. Nor did God put him in a position where it would be necessary. It works like this; if you have no faith, you have to fight your own battles. If you have a little faith, God will help you fight. If you have a lot of faith, God will fight in your place, and you won't have to fight.

But if you have GREAT faith... there won't be any fighting at all. God will just see to it that nothing bad ever happens. As He promised "*when a man's ways please the LORD, he maketh even his enemies to be at peace with him*" (**Proverbs 16:7**). **That is the true ideal. An even greater blessing than God fighting for you, is God blessing you so much He doesn't have to fight for you!** Few of us will attain that level of faith **but it should be everyone's goal**.

It is that goal you see described in the New Testament. Although we are human, living in human kingdoms, do we fight human battles with human weapons? **2 Corinthians 10:3-4**. Should you respond to force with force? **Matthew 5:39-42**. Should you hate your enemies? **Verses 43-44**. Is this REQUIRED to be a child of God? **Verse 45**.

There are many more scriptures like that, but you already know them. We'll discuss how these things apply on a personal level much more in future lessons, but for now we are primarily focused on what the Bible says about going to war.

When will Jesus inherit His kingdom? **Revelation 12:10**. Is Jesus' kingdom on this Earth today? **2 Timothy 4:1**. If Jesus' kingdom were on this Earth now, would His servants fight? **John 18:36**. Notice **even to save their future king and the son of God, Jesus' true servants are not permitted to fight!**

But some object and point to **Luke 22:36-38**, saying since Jesus commanded them to take up a sword, that He wanted them to fight. First of all, **the very same night He said they were NOT supposed to fight**.

Second, the **same verse** shows WHY Jesus commanded them to take up swords! In order for prophecy to be fulfilled, He had to be *with* people who were breaking a law. It was illegal for Jews to carry weapons at the time,

so He told them to carry swords to fulfill the prophecy. **But they weren't all armed! Only two swords were found, and He said "it is enough".**

The prophecy said He would be "reckoned among the transgressors". "Transgressors" is plural, **so at least two people had to be breaking a law. Therefore, two swords were enough!** Notice how exactly the tiniest little prophecy was fulfilled to the letter! Did Jesus want them to use those swords to defend Him? **John 18:36** again. What happened when one of the disciples zealously used a sword without permission? **Luke 22:49-51, John 18:10-11.**

Not only did Jesus not permit them to use a sword, **but when Peter cut off the man's ear, Jesus healed him – His enemy, who was delivering Him to death!** Jesus' enemies were not harmed by the sword of His true followers that day or any other!

Now backing up to **John 18:36** one more time, Jesus said IF His kingdom were of this world, His servants WOULD fight. The Psalms make this clear, for example **Psalms 144:1** and **Psalms 18:34**. Make no mistake, we are learning to war in this life. We are learning to fight. We just aren't ready to start warring yet.

WE ARE NOT PACIFISTS

The world tends to classify anyone who is opposed to military service as a pacifist. **We are not pacifists.** We believe in violence, for our God is a man of war (**Exodus 15:3**). We believe sin should be dealt with firmly and swiftly (**Ecclesiastes 8:11**). When Jesus returns, we will rise to meet Him in the air, and after the wedding supper we, the armies of heaven (**Revelation 19:14**), will follow Him into battle against the armies of this world. There we will take part in one of the bloodiest, most violent wars ever to take place (**Revelation 14:20**).

There are two reasons why we don't take part in wars today. First, all wars are fought between nations over envy, lust, and hatred. Oh, they all make up excuses about why theirs is the righteous cause **but it's always about land, oil, taxation, commerce, slavery, or something carnal and unbecoming a son of God.** But when we fight that battle, what will we be fighting for? **Revelation 19:11.** Jesus makes war RIGHTOUSLY, for RIGHTEOUS REASONS, and when we fight with Him, so will we.

That is the first reason, but it is only half of the answer, for when people stop reasoning there, they take up arms against the government, blow up abortion clinics and start executing vigilante justice. **And all of that is wrong and sinful because the OTHER half of the reason forbids it!**

The second answer is that **no human being is qualified to execute sinners until he is without sin.** Read **2 Corinthians 10:6**. We are supposed to be READY to avenge all disobedience! We are supposed to be ready to enforce the death penalty for sin! We are supposed to be PREPARED to help Jesus rule all nations with a ROD OF IRON! **Revelation 19:15.**

But Jesus gave us a principle in **John 8:7** that only He who is without sin is qualified to pronounce the death penalty on sinners! Are you without sin? **1 John 1:8-10.** Therefore **you are not qualified to grab a gun and execute a sinner!** But you are supposed to be READY to avenge ALL sins... when? WHEN YOUR OWN OBEDIENCE IS COMPLETE! (**2 Corinthians 10:6**). When will that happen? **1 John 3:9.**

When you are resurrected, a full-fledged son of God made of spirit and incapable of sinning **then and only then you will be qualified to execute judgment on others.** No human today, however righteous, is "god". Was even Jesus, while He had our carnal nature in Him, worthy of being called good? **Matthew 19:17.** Does any good thing exist in our flesh (excepting God's spirit, of course)? **Romans 7:18.** Was even Jesus, as a man, qualified to judge sin until He had overcome sin Himself? **John 12:47-48.**

If even Jesus was not qualified to execute sinners, and did not come to Earth to enforce the death penalty on those who were rejecting His Father's laws... what possible right could we have to do so, we who are to follow in His footsteps?

Of course, **Jesus openly condemned sin and didn't hesitate to criticize people or actions when it was appropriate.** But He left the ultimate judgment, the ultimate life-and-death decision in the hands of the one

Being who was worthy of the title “good” – the Father. Now of course, Jesus is also good, and now He has been given the authority to execute judgment on this world. When we are resurrected, we will also be given that authority as kings and priests in the Kingdom of God.

But today, we are merely in a “readiness of mind” to avenge all disobedience AFTER our obedience is filled. And not a minute before! When the day comes, we will help Him fulfill **Psalms 46:9**; we will break the bow, cut the spear, and burn the chariot with fire **through war**. But no human is ready to take part in such a war until God’s spirit remains in them and they cannot sin.

WHAT ABOUT YOU?

We’ve talked all about wars. How God feels about wars, where they come from, how to avoid them, what a Christian’s place in war should be. But suppose you’re already in the military – what should you do? John the Baptist was asked this question by the Roman Soldiers in his time. What was his answer? **Luke 3:14**.

John didn’t tell them to leave the military, and neither do I. John just said, “*do violence to no man*” (keep commandment #6), “*accuse no man falsely*” (keep commandment #9), and “*be content with your wages*” (keep commandment #8). The other commandments are implied, but those are the ones he thought were likely to be broken in service to the military. The military of the day was corrupt and brutal.

But if you follow John’s advice and keep the Ten Commandments, you will probably not be in the military very long. I would also add the words of Jesus to John’s, and have you read **Matthew 6:24**. This is a simple fact. When you join the military, they not only demand your loyalty, **they literally own you. You become government property**. You cannot serve your sergeant and God. It simply can’t be done.

What happens when the sergeant commands you to work on Saturday (which will happen the first week you’re in the military)? What happens when you are commanded to kill and defy the sixth commandment? Will you obey the orders of your general, or God?

You have a whole Bible full of commands, ideals, and lessons by which you must live your life, IN GOOD CONSCIENCE, at all times! Being in the military, you obey ORDERS, not your conscience. And those orders will REGULARLY require you to violate your conscience – if your conscience is educated by the Bible.

The military simply won’t tolerate you serving someone else, and neither will God! You CAN’T SERVE TWO MASTERS! And when you are in the military you have TWO masters who DISAGREE! If you are fortunate enough to have one of those rare jobs where you can serve both – consider yourself blessed by God. Otherwise, you will have to decide whom you will serve. Ultimately, as with every decision, it will be based on whether you trust God... or not.

YOUR FUTURE IN WAR

God’s prophecies show the USA will fall. You’ll study that in due time, but we will be punished for our sins and lose a great war to a European power. Probably in the not-too-distant future at that. And when it happens, they will be drafting everyone who can hold a sword to fight for them. And before we finish this lesson, it’s important to understand exactly what you should do when that happens.

God gave Israel the Promised Land about 1,500 BC. Around 1,000 BC, the nation split into two kingdoms, Israel and Judah. After that point, Israel never had a righteous king. God finally got fed up and sent them into captivity in 721-718 BC, by bringing the Assyrians (the rod of God’s anger) to conquer them.

Judah had a few righteous kings, but they were outnumbered by the bad about two-to-one. God put up with Judah for another 150 years, then finally in 585 BC they were conquered by Babylon. God had been warning Judah for decades before this happened, mostly through the prophet Jeremiah, telling them to repent of their sins... or else. You read some of those verses in this lesson.

Well, finally it reached the point where there was no hope of saving the nation of Judah as a whole, so God, through Jeremiah, gave advice to the individuals in that nation. Read **Jeremiah 21:4-7**. God told them Jerusalem was doomed. But there was a way out! God always offers a way out! **Verses 8-10**.

God had been warning this nation for decades – centuries really – that their sins were going to bring their destruction. And He knew that one or two people in the city who understood the truth couldn't possibly correct the sins of the whole city *so He offered them a way of escape!* He told them if they surrendered to the King of Babylon **and accepted God's judgment against the city and trusted in His will, they would live!**

The patriots who would rather die than betray Jerusalem, even though it was riddled with sin and thoroughly evil, **got their wish and died with their beloved country**. But when Jeremiah gave this message telling people that God said "surrender to Babylon and live!" how did the patriots respond? **Jeremiah 39:1-13**.

When your nation is attacked by a nation more righteous than they, if you dare to speak the truth and tell them to surrender or die **you will be treated the same**. Both by the citizens of your country, **and by your God who protected Jeremiah and saw to it that no harm came to him. Discomfort yes, but no harm.**

After all that, God extended the same offer to the king of Judah in **Jeremiah 39:14-20**. **But surrendering would have required faith, and King Zedekiah didn't have enough**. This same advice will apply to you, if you ever find yourself in that situation. **Don't fight the judgment of God**. See **Ezekiel 14:17-20**. You will be delivered by your righteousness in obeying God's commands – whether it is to do nothing, or to surrender to Babylon, or to testify before kings of their sins. You will deliver your soul by your righteousness. Not by your sword, by your money, or by your friends.

On a similar note, when the true Church is under extreme persecution in the future, it will be very difficult to fight the temptation to take up arms to defend yourself and your family. But God gives us **Revelation 13:10** to tell us what will happen if we give in to that temptation. Jesus said the same thing in **Matthew 26:52**, when Peter tried to defend Him from wrongful imprisonment and death. A true Christian doesn't fight.

MISGUIDED PATRIOTS

As you have read, when a nation is in war the greatest thing you can do for them is to tell them of their sins. Tell them why this other nation is defeating them. Tell them they deserve this punishment and that they have to change their ways to be delivered!

But when you do, you will be branded as a traitor by the so-called patriots. These people mean well, but their stubborn defense of their country *even when it is evil and full of sin* will get them and their country in trouble. To see what I mean, study the story of another misguided patriot: Jonah.

Start in **Jonah 1:1-2**. Most people reading this assume that Jonah's motivation for running away from the job God had given him was laziness, lack of self-confidence, or just plain fear – but it was something else.

Everyone knows the story of Jonah and the "whale" – although it wasn't a whale, but simply "*a great fish*" (**Jonah 1:17**) – so we'll skip that. The job God had given to Jonah is explained in **Jonah 3:1-5**. Jonah was sent by God to warn Ninevah that if they didn't repent, God would destroy it.

Ninevah was the capital of Assyria, and as you'll remember Assyria is the rod of God's anger – the nation God uses to punish Israel. God sent Jonah to be a prophet to the ENEMIES of Jonah's people! And as it happened, Ninevah did repent, and God saw it and forgave them in **Jonah 3:10**. But how did Jonah feel when his preaching was successful? **Jonah 4:1**.

Why would Jonah be angry that people repented and obeyed God? What sort of prophet was he?? A PATRIOTIC ONE! In **Jonah 4:2**, Jonah tells us THIS is why he fled from God at first – **because he was afraid Ninevah would repent and God would forgive them and he didn't want that!**

Jonah didn't WANT Nineveh to repent! He *wanted* God to destroy them! But why? To understand that, you'll have to understand who, where, and when he was. Remember, he was an Israelite. This book was written

approximately 800 B.C., which was about 80 years before Israel went into captivity **to the Assyrians**. God had already been warning Israel through His prophets that He was going to have them destroyed if they didn't mend their ways – see **2 Kings 17:23**.

And Jonah hated that! Like any loyal patriot, he didn't want *his* country overrun by the enemy! **No matter how unrighteous his country was!** Put yourself in Jonah's place. Suppose you were an American in 1943, and God told you to go to Germany and tell them to repent. You'd have known if they DIDN'T repent God would destroy them and your nation would be spared... at least, from Germany.

On the other hand, if you warned them, and they repented, God would forgive them and use them to destroy YOUR nation! How would you feel about that? Be honest with yourself... you wouldn't like the idea would you? Well, this is the situation Jonah was placed in.

You see, Jonah was a proud citizen of “one nation, under God”, and didn't want them destroyed by Assyria – **despite the fact that Israel was an evil, rebellious people! And that was wrong!** He put HIS country before what was right! **He KNEW his country was evil, but he STILL didn't want to see them punished!**

Are YOU guilty of the same thing? Do YOU want your country to triumph, regardless of the innumerable sins and GOOD SOLID REASONS it needs punished?? Do you support and encourage the defense of an EVIL nation, and hope for the destruction of nations more righteous than we, so OUR evilness can continue unchecked?

These statements will anger many people. Well, it made Jonah angry too. And that, in turn, made God angry – **Jonah 4:4-5**. Jonah STILL wanted Assyria destroyed. He was furious at God for forgiving them, knowing God would use them now to destroy his own nation! Totally forgetting this was a righteous judgment **Israel DESERVED!**

God tried to teach Jonah a lesson that Assyria had as much right to the mercies of God as Israel did in **Jonah 4:6-11**. And there ends the story of Jonah. We don't know if Jonah ever got the message... but we can. Jonah was a patriot, like so many are in this country today. But like them, **he was a misguided patriot!**

A true patriot only loves, prays for, and defends a RIGHTEOUS nation. Not a nation full of adultery, murder, abortion, false Christianity, corruption, Sabbath-breaking, idolatry, covetousness... the list goes on. No, a true patriot doesn't support that sort of a country – not until they repent. Only a fool, a proud, arrogant fool at that, loves, prays for and defends a sinning nation and fights for it against the judgment of God!

But the first and last word of many stubborn, faithless so-called patriots is almost always the same. No amount of reason seems to budge them from their opinion. It goes something like this “if it wasn't for the military, we've have been overrun by the barbarians long ago!”... the answers are simple:

No, if it wasn't for God's law, you'd be a barbarian as bad as they are.

And, if it wasn't for God guiding the outcome of wars you'd never have won a single battle.

And, if it wasn't for people like you who put their trust in your guns and not in God... not one barbarian would so much as look you in the eye, much less attack you.

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

This is a subject that deeply offends many people. I've been called all sorts of names, even threatened with physical harm by misguided patriots – even some who believed they were in the true church of God. But as always, the Bible gives only one answer, and as always, it's a simple one. **Fighting in the military is a sin for anyone under the covenant of faith.**

I have the highest respect for anyone who is willing to put their life on the line for others. If a person truly believes in their country they should be willing to defend it with their life, and those who do deserve the respect of those who don't.

Many in today's military are excellent examples of *old covenant* righteousness. But as a true Christian, we are held to a higher standard of righteousness which cannot be maintained in the military. We are expected to strike at the root of the problem so we won't *need* a military. So rather than dead heroes we can have live sons working to make the nation a better, more righteous place.

Earlier, you read **Exodus 19:6**, and learned that God kept the Levites from fighting in the wars so they could be His priests. Who is his priesthood today? **1 Peter 2:5, 9**. If you are a called and baptized member of the church of God, you are that priesthood. As such, your job is to teach the law to this world, **not to murder at the behest of some Earthly government.**

Wars come from sin, and your job is to strike at the ROOT of the problem, eradicate the sin in the people so there will BE no more wars! Which is truly more helpful to your nation – killing a few dozen of the enemy... or helping convert people to righteousness back home, so God will end the war sooner?

If you really love warfare and feel a stirring to take part in a glorious battle, GREAT! Because there is a battle going on, right now, that YOU CAN JOIN! A battle not fought with carnal weapons but with spiritual ones. A battle God has ordained for us all to fight. A battle between the Kingdom of God and the Kingdoms of this world.

1 Timothy 1:18 *This charge I commit unto thee, son Timothy, according to the prophecies which went before on thee, that thou by them mightest war a good warfare;*

If you want to fight, *there* is a battle you can join! The nations of this world are at war against YOUR heavenly kingdom, and you are responsible to defend it! If you want to battle lions, and persecutions, and snakes, and shipwrecks, JOIN THE BATTLE!

2 Timothy 4:17 *Notwithstanding the Lord stood with me, and strengthened me; that by me the preaching might be fully known, and that all the Gentiles might hear: and I was delivered out of the mouth of the lion.*

But many will say “But I’m not able to preach the word! I don’t know enough!” Well WHY NOT? You are called unto GOOD WORKS! You are commanded to be ready at any time to “*give an answer always to anyone who asks of you a reason of the hope that lies in you*”! (**1 Peter 3:15**)

So if you aren't able to preach the word, then GET ABLE! You don't have to go on the road for the Lord and preach on street corners to take part in the battle – every time you refuse to go to a Christmas party or tell someone WHY they are suffering *you are fighting that battle against evil!* You don't need to go to a faraway land to fight it, *it's happening in your own town, probably in your own house!* Fight THAT battle, and fight it well and your nation won't ever face the other kind again!

So serve your heavenly Kingdom, and fight GOD'S BATTLES! Win those, and the other ones will be won at the same time! This is FAR MORE patriotic, and will A THOUSAND TIMES OVER help the nation more than JOINING THE MILITARY!

Jeremiah 9:12 (BBE) *Who is the wise man able to see this? who is he to whom the word of the Lord has come, so that he may make it clear? why is the land given to destruction and burned up like a waste place, so that no one goes through?*

Who is that person going to be? Who is the person who can declare the REASON the land is perishing, full of sickness and violence and financial collapse? You? The land is perishing, and NO-ONE IS TELLING THEM! YOU CAN HELP!

Deuteronomy 11:25 *There shall NO MAN BE ABLE TO STAND BEFORE YOU: for the LORD your God shall lay the fear of you and the dread of you upon all the land that ye shall tread upon, as he hath said unto you.*

That promise is made to a nation; made to a church; and made to every individual. Anyone who trusts in God cannot be harmed. But anyone who chooses to live by the sword... will die by the sword.

NOTES

This work is completely non-denominational and is meant to fulfill Christ's great commission to "*preach the gospel to every creature*" (**Mark 16:15**). **This publication is not to be sold;** "*freely ye have received, freely give*" (**Matthew 10:8**).

The Bible tells us to PROVE ALL THINGS, and The Simple Answers encourages people to do just that. If you cannot PROVE what you believe, you have no right to believe it! Many of the things we print are shocking because they are different from what you've heard, but if something we say offends or upsets you, we hope you will take the time to set aside your preconceived ideas and PROVE your point from the Bible to see if you truly have been right all these years.

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