

KILLING AND THE PHINEHAS PRIESTHOOD : PART 1

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Beliefs Of The Phinehas Priesthood, Violence In the Pacific Northwest, Story Of Biblical Phinehas In Numbers 25, Large Difference Between Old And New Testaments, Conquest Of The Promised Land, Sceptre Of Judah, Jesus: Lion Of The Tribe Of Judah, Canaan Conquest: Extermination Of Pagans In The Old Testament, Different Words Translated As "Murder" And "Kill" In The Old Testament, Justifiable Homicide, Penal Colonies And Cities Of Refuge, Nine Hebrew Words Translated As "Kill", Jesus' Clear Message Of Love And Forgiveness In New Testament

The following article is based on an interview I watched more than twenty years ago on American television where former CBS news anchorman Dan Rather interviewed one of the incarcerated leaders of the Phinehas Priesthood. From what this detained member said during the broadcast, it seems that the Phinehas Priesthood was a loosely-structured organization comprised of fundamentalist Christians who had declared open war on the US government. Their ideology seemed to stem from a 1990 book by Richard Kelly Hoskins called "Vigilantes of Christendom: The Story of the Phineas Priesthood". In the book, members of the priesthood embraced Christian Identity beliefs. This included opposition to interracial relationships, the mixing of races, homosexuality, and abortion. In addition, the group opposed multiculturalism, and was likewise anti-Semitic.

However, the actual 1990s group wasn't limited to spiritual warfare alone. The members in fact engaged in real physical warfare. This civilian militia believed that killing, robbing banks, committing assassinations and other violent acts were condoned by God, because in their view, the US government is evil, ungodly and against the Bible. For this reason, they were classified as terrorists. Among their deeds during the 1990s, they bombed numerous abortion clinics in the Pacific Northwest, bombed The Spokesman-Review newspaper in Spokane,

robbed banks, and made plans to blow up FBI buildings as well.

At that time, the organization appeared to be comprised of individual cells which acted independently of each other. However, today, as I was updating this article twenty-one years later, I discovered some new online information which suggests that the four members who were detained back then may have actually been the full membership of the group. All four of them were given life sentences in 1997 and 1998. No other information is available regarding this group.

Regarding the name of the group, as Hoskins points out in his book, they were named after an Old Testament Israelite by the name of Phinehas. He was the son of Eleazar, thus making him the grandson of the high priest Aaron, the brother of Moses. You will find the story of Phinehas in Numbers twenty-five. At that time, Israel had once again fallen into apostasy. Not only were they fornicating with the women of Moab, but they were also worshipping their false gods as well. Naturally, God's anger was kindled against Israel because of this. Thus, as restitution for their sins, Moses ordered that all of the offenders be killed, and their heads hung up to dry in the Sun.

In the meantime, another Israelite foolishly took a Midianite woman into his tent in order to fornicate with her. Phinehas happened to see them. So, he grabbed a javelin, went into the tent, and plunged it through both of them. In this way, the plague was stayed in Israel, and God's wrath was turned away from them. Due to his valor and zealousness, as part of his reward, Phinehas and his descendants were given a priesthood.

Now, concerning the 1990s group, the Phinehas Priesthood, let me state the following. While I can agree with some of their beliefs, particularly in regards to their view that the U.S. government is corrupt, evil, ungodly and opposed to Christian beliefs -- although the current Trump administration appears to be trying to turn the situation around, at least on the surface -- beyond that, I would have to say that the members of this organization clearly misunderstood the Scriptures.

Anyone who has read a significant portion of the Bible knows that there are some vast differences between what happened in the Old Testament where the Israelites were constantly at war with their enemies, and the pacifistic message of love and

forgiveness which we are given in the New Testament by both Jesus Himself, and the Apostles and Disciples who continued to propagate His message following His return to Heaven.

As I amply point out in articles such as "The Fruits of Disobedience", while it may be difficult for some of us to fully understand, it does seem that God condoned killing in the Old Testament. Its purpose was so that the Hebrews could eventually inherit the Promised Land of Canaan, later to be known as Israel. In so doing, the Israelites continued the lineage of the tribe of Judah up through King David, until the eventual birth of our Savior about one thousand years later. Jacob -- who was also known as Israel -- foresaw the arrival of the Savior far in the future. Thus, prior to his death, he made the following prophecy regarding the tribe of Judah:

"The sceptre shall not depart from Judah, nor a lawgiver from between his feet, until Shiloh come; and unto him shall the gathering of the people be."

Genesis 49:10, KJV

As you may know, it is for this reason that Jesus is referred to as "the Lion of the tribe of Juda" and "the Root of David" in the Book of Revelation, as we see by the following verse:

"And one of the elders saith unto me, Weep not: behold, the Lion of the tribe of Juda, the Root of David, hath prevailed to open the book, and to loose the seven seals thereof."

Revelation 5:5, KJV

As the leader of the Phinehas Priesthood explained during his interview, God seems to have looked at the bloody wars to conquer the Promised Land as the necessary elimination of the pagan, idol-worshipping nations of the Canaanites who rejected the true God of Israel. The Lord did not view this as wholesale murder, but rather as a necessary cleansing of the land. He viewed it just as a bug exterminator would view a house infested with cockroaches. While this analogy may surprise and perhaps offend some people, it is nevertheless what the Bible seems to indicate. For example, consider the following words which were spoken to the Children of Israel by Moses, on the final day of the fortieth year when they were about to cross the Jordan River in order to enter the land of Canaan:

"Understand therefore this day, that the LORD thy God is he which goeth over before thee; as a consuming fire he shall destroy them, and he shall bring them down before thy face: so shalt thou drive them out, and destroy them quickly, as the LORD hath said unto thee."

Deuteronomy 9:3, KJV

The word "destroy" is derived from the Hebrew word "shamad" which means to destroy, exterminate or annihilate. Just as the Germans sought to exterminate the Jews more than seventy years ago, likewise, the ancient Israelites were ordered by the Lord to do the very same thing to the idol-worshipping Canaanites. As I explain in "God of Peace, God of War", it basically amounted to total genocide. Tragically, as I point out in "The Fruits of Disobedience", they failed miserably in this task, and they suffered for it as well.

In the very next verse, the Lord warns them to not become puffed up in their own conceit, thinking that they will have accomplished this by their own hand, or because they deserve it. He clearly informs them that the only reason why they will be able to drive out the Canaanites, will be because the Lord is punishing the Canaanites for their wickedness. What a contrast in attitude between then and now, where we see the haughty Israelis of today who depend not only upon their own military strength and superiority, but also upon military alliances which they forge with other nations, such as the United States of America. Consider this verse:

"Speak not thou in thine heart, after that the LORD thy God hath cast them out from before thee, saying, For my righteousness the LORD hath brought me in to possess this land: but for the wickedness of these nations the LORD doth drive them out from before thee."

Deuteronomy 9:4, KJV

So as you can see, the extermination of the Canaanites was apparently not considered murder in the Lord's eyes. Murder is a conscious, premeditated act which is often motivated by greed, lust or some other negative human desire. According to what we read in the Scriptures, the conquest of Canaan was viewed by the Lord as a righteous cause, unlike many wars which have been fought by violent, wicked men since then.

As you may know, there have been a number of heated debates regarding the correct meaning of the word "kill", as it is used in the original Commandments which were given to Moses on Mount Sinai. In the Book of Exodus we read the following well-known verse in the twentieth chapter:

"Thou shalt not kill."

Exodus 20:13, KJV

The word "kill" is derived from the Hebrew word "ratsach". Sixteen times it is translated as "slayer", fourteen times as "murderer", five times as "kill", and then in other ways even lesser times. As we can see, the overall idea seems to be a conscious choosing to take another person's life. In other words, murder. Other examples where "ratsach" is used to mean manslayer or murderer can be found in the following verses. Please notice that while the Lord did command the Israelites to not murder, there were situations in the Old Testament where it was permissible. This kind of murder is what would be referred to as "justifiable homicide". This is still recognized today, and is not punishable by law in some areas of the world, such as in the Muslim countries. They call it "honor killing":

"And they shall be unto you cities for refuge from the avenger; that the manslayer die not, until he stand before the congregation in judgment."

Numbers 35:12, KJV

"But if the slayer shall at any time come without the border of the city of his refuge, whither he was fled; And the revenger of blood find him without the borders of the city of his refuge, and the revenger of blood kill the slayer; he shall not be guilty of blood:"

Numbers 35:26-27, KJV

I find the previous verses interesting, because not only do they discuss justifiable homicide, but they also demonstrate that penal colonies actually have a basis in the Scriptures. Rather than build one building to house dangerous, violent criminals, the Lord commanded the ancient Israelites to set aside entire cities for them, where they could flee while they awaited their judgment. Just imagine if you were a criminal in those days. There were no hot meals served, or

guards to protect you from other criminals. You were really on your own. We can only wonder how many criminals lived long enough to be properly judged. Notice too that it says that if they were to come out of the penal cities, or the cities of refuse, they were fair game for those individuals who sought to slay them for their crimes.

What makes this issue of killing and murder more difficult for the English reader is the fact that I have discovered that there are actually at least nine different Hebrew words which are used in the Old Testament for our one English word "kill". For example, in the case of animal sacrifices, the word used for slay or kill is "shachat". From the research I have conducted, it appears that this word is only used to refer to a sacrificial killing by the Levitical priesthood. It is not used for anything else. Consider the following two verses:

"And thou shalt kill the bullock before the LORD, by the door of the tabernacle of the congregation."
Exodus 29:11, KJV

"So kill the passover, and sanctify yourselves, and prepare your brethren, that they may do according to the word of the LORD by the hand of Moses."
2 Chronicles 35:6, KJV

One unusual occurrence I found was with the Hebrew word "naqaph". Normally, it means to compass, to go round about or to go about. However, in the following verse, it is used like "sachat" to kill a sacrifice:

"Woe to Ariel, to Ariel, the city where David dwelt! add ye year to year; let them kill sacrifices."
Isaiah 29:1, KJV

Another word translated into English as "kill" is the Hebrew word "muwth". This word is specifically used in regards to Pharaoh's orders for the Hebrew midwives to kill all of the Hebrew male babies. It is also used when the Israelites accuse Moses of bringing them out of Egypt just to kill them in the wilderness. In these two examples, it appears to be used to describe massive or wholesale killing as opposed to just killing one person:

"And he said, When ye do the office of a 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."

Exodus 1:16, KJV

"And the children of Israel said unto them, Would to God we had died by the hand of the LORD in the land of Egypt, when we sat by the flesh pots, and when we did eat bread to the full; for ye have brought us forth into this wilderness, to kill this whole assembly with hunger."

Exodus 16:3, KJV

However, "muwth" is also used to mean die, or to make dead as in the following example verses:

"But of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, thou shalt not eat of it: for in the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die."

Genesis 2:17, KJV

"And the serpent said unto the woman, Ye shall not surely die:"

Genesis 3:4, KJV

"And all the days that Adam lived were nine hundred and thirty years: and he died."

Genesis 5:5, KJV

Another Hebrew word used is "harag". This word is used in the story where Abram tells the Egyptians that Sarai is his sister because he fears that they might kill him otherwise. This word is also used where Rebekah warns Jacob that his brother Esau is seeking to kill him. It is also used in the case of Moses killing the Egyptian. The overall idea here seems to be that "harag" is used to signify killing which is an act of revenge, retribution or to unrightfully obtain something from another person. In fact, the Lord used this word with Himself in the Book of Exodus when He says He will kill those people who afflict the widow or the fatherless child. Consider the following group of verses:

"And the men of the place asked him of his wife; and he said, She is my sister: for he feared to say, She is my wife; lest, said he, the men of the place should kill me for

Rebekah; because she was fair to look upon."

Genesis 26:7, KJV

"And these words of Esau her elder son were told to Rebekah: and she sent and called Jacob her younger son, and said unto him, Behold, thy brother Esau, as touching thee, doth comfort himself, purposing to kill thee."

Genesis 27:42, KJV

"And he said, Who made thee a prince and a judge over us? intendest thou to kill me, as thou killedst the Egyptian? And Moses feared, and said, Surely this thing is known."

Exodus 2:14, KJV

"And my wrath shall wax hot, and I will kill you with the sword; and your wives shall be widows, and your children fatherless."

Exodus 22:24, KJV

In the case of slaughtering or killing livestock for food, we find the word "zabach" used. It may mean killing animals which are normally reserved for sacrifice, but I am not certain at this point. Consider these two verses:

"Notwithstanding thou mayest kill and eat flesh in all thy gates, whatsoever thy soul lusteth after, according to the blessing of the LORD thy God which he hath given thee: the unclean and the clean may eat thereof, as of the roebuck, and as of the hart."

Deuteronomy 12:15, KJV

"If the place which the LORD thy God hath chosen to put his name there be too far from thee, then thou shalt kill of thy herd and of thy flock, which the LORD hath given thee, as I have commanded thee, and thou shalt eat in thy gates whatsoever thy soul lusteth after."

Deuteronomy 12:21, KJV

We also find the word "tabach" used to mean the general killing of animals, not necessarily for food purposes, and also when comparing the killing of people to a slaughter of animals in the following verses:

"And when Joseph saw Benjamin with them, he said to the ruler of his house, Bring these men home, and slay, and make

ready; for these men shall dine with me at noon."

Genesis 43:16, KJV

"If a man shall steal an ox, or a sheep, and kill it, or sell it; he shall restore five oxen for an ox, and four sheep for a sheep."

Exodus 22:1, KJV

"But I was like a lamb or an ox that is brought to the slaughter; and I knew not that they had devised devices against me, saying, Let us destroy the tree with the fruit thereof, and let us cut him off from the land of the living, that his name may be no more remembered."

Jeremiah 11:19, KJV

"Howl, ye shepherds, and cry; and wallow yourselves in the ashes, ye principal of the flock: for the days of your slaughter and of your dispersions are accomplished; and ye shall fall like a pleasant vessel."

Jeremiah 25:34, KJV

"I will bring them down like lambs to the slaughter, like rams with he goats."

Jeremiah 51:40, KJV

In the case of the messianic prophecy concerning Jesus that is found in the fifty-third chapter of the Book of Isaiah, the variation "tebach" -- instead of "tabach" -- is used, as we see here:

"He was oppressed, and he was afflicted, yet he opened not his mouth: he is brought as a lamb to the slaughter, and as a sheep before her shearers is dumb, so he openeth not his mouth."

Isaiah 53:7, KJV

In the story concerning the chastisement of the sodomite Benjamites of Gibeah by the other tribes of Israel, it appears that "chalal" might mean the killing or slaying of one group of people by another group of people, as we see by these two verses:

"And the children of Benjamin went out against the people, and were drawn away from the city; and they began to smite of the people, and kill, as at other times, in the highways,

of which one goeth up to the house of God, and the other to Gibeah in the field, about thirty men of Israel."

Judges 20:31, KJV

"And when the men of Israel retired in the battle, Benjamin began to smite and kill of the men of Israel about thirty persons: for they said, Surely they are smitten down before us, as in the first battle."

Judges 20:39, KJV

Lastly, we find the Hebrew word "nakah" in the following verses. According to the Brown, Driver, Briggs, Gesenius Hebrew Aramaic English Lexicon, it means to smite, slay, kill, beat or slaughter with a few other lesser-used meanings as well. The only common denominator I see in all of these verses is that they all refer to the killing of just one person, that is, Cain, Joseph and Goliath:

"And the LORD said unto him, Therefore whosoever slayeth Cain, vengeance shall be taken on him sevenfold. And the LORD set a mark upon Cain, lest any finding him should kill him."

Genesis 4:15, KJV

"And Reuben heard it, and he delivered him out of their hands; and said, Let us not kill him."

Genesis 37:21, KJV

"If he be able to fight with me, and to kill me, then will we be your servants: but if I prevail against him, and kill him, then shall ye be our servants, and serve us."

1 Samuel 17:9, KJV

"And the men of Israel said, Have ye seen this man that is come up? surely to defy Israel is he come up: and it shall be, that the man who killeth him, the king will enrich him with great riches, and will give him his daughter, and make his father's house free in Israel."

1 Samuel 17:25, KJV

So then, in all, there are at least nine different Hebrew words found in the Old Testament which are all translated as "kill" in the English language: chalal, harag, muwth, nakah, naqaph, ratsach, shachat, tabach and zabach. Being as I am by no means a Hebrew scholar, I am not sure of their precise

meanings, and I am only making educated guesses based on how they are used in the previous verses, and based on what is stated in the Brown, Driver, Briggs, Gesenius Hebrew Aramaic English Lexicon. If there is one thing we can definitely see, it is that Hebrew is a much more precise and exact language than English. We can also determine that the issue of killing, and the kind of killing involved, was taken very seriously by the Lord and the Hebrews, or Israelites.

Having now thoroughly examined the Old Testament examples of killing, let's take a look at what the New Testament has to say regarding this same issue. In my view, the contrast in messages is quite clear. With Christ's arrival on Earth, through His own preaching, life, and ultimate example on the Cross at Calvary, He made it quite clear that this type of violence was no longer condoned by or acceptable to God.

As I explain in articles such as "Owning Guns: What Saith the Scriptures?", nowhere do we see Jesus encouraging any kind of physical violence, revolt, or war against the system of His day. Some people wanted to make Him their king after He had done some miracles. The Zealots wanted Him to become their leader so that He could lead a revolt against their Roman occupiers. However, in every case, Jesus refused to yield to their demands. He was not here to declare a physical war, but only a spiritual one. His was a war to win souls out of the clutches of Satan the deceiver, as is ours. Even up to the moment of His betrayal and death on the Cross, He made this message very clear through His own example.

You will recall that when Peter smote off the ear of Malchus, the servant of the high priest in the Mount of Olives, much to the amazement of those present, Jesus immediately healed him to once again show that He did not condone such violence. He in fact rebuked Peter by saying that anyone who takes the sword shall be killed by the sword. As the Lord explained to Peter, this was also to ensure that His Father's Will would be fulfilled by His death on a Roman Cross. When Jesus was questioned before the Roman procurator Pontius Pilate, He likewise stated that His Kingdom is not of this world, and that for this reason, His servants would not fight to save Him from His impending death. Consider the following group of verses which confirm all of these points:

"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. For I say unto you, that this that is written must yet be accomplished in me, And he was reckoned among the transgressors: for the things concerning me have an end. And they said, Lord, behold, here are two swords. And he said unto them, It is enough . . . 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."

Luke 22:36-38, 50-51, KJV

"Then Simon Peter having a sword drew it, and smote the high priest's servant, and cut off his right ear. The servant's name was Malchus. Then said Jesus unto Peter, Put up thy sword into the sheath: the cup which my Father hath given me, shall I not drink it?"

John 18:10-11, KJV

"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. Thinkest thou that I cannot now pray to my Father, and he shall presently give me more than twelve legions of angels? But how then shall the scriptures be fulfilled, that thus it must be?"

Matthew 26:51-54, KJV

Please go to part two for the conclusion of this article.

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KILLING AND THE PHINEHAS PRIESTHOOD : PART 2

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Sword Incident In The Garden Of Gethsemane, Does Gethsemane Justify Christians Keeping And Using Weapons?, Was The Lord Condoning Violence By Christians?, Two Swords To Protect All Of Them?, "It Is Enough", Jesus Had To Fulfill His Father's Will, Malchus: The Depth Of God's Love Patience And Mercy, Love Your Enemies, By This Shall All Men Know, The Apostles Were Spared, Our Spiritual Warfare, Violent Religions: Islam And Roman Catholicism, Violence Is Not The Answer, Christians Should Not Ever Resort To Violence, We Are Not Of This World, Spiritual Weapons Of Our Warfare, As Lambs To The Slaughter, Obey And Submit To Higher Powers, Conclusion, Reading List

Continuing our discussion from part one, some people have questioned the incident which occurred in the twenty-second chapter of the Gospel of Luke -- which I shared with you in part one -- where after the Last Supper, Jesus instructed His Disciples to sell their garment, and to purchase a sword in its place. In response, we are told that the Disciples then presented Jesus with two swords, to which the Lord said "It is enough". This same story can be found in several of the other Gospels as well.

In our recent online discussions regarding the very tragic school shooting which took place on February 14, 2018 at Marjory Stoneman Douglas High School in Parkland, Florida, a number of gun-owning Christians have pointed to this exact incident in the Gospels, and used it as their justification for owning and using firearms. So what is going on here? Is this really the message which we are supposed to understand from the incident in the Garden of Gethsemane? Was the Lord condoning Christians taking up weapons against their enemies? This certainly seems to be how the Phinehas Priesthood had interpreted these Scriptures during the mid-1990s when they engaged in acts of violence throughout the Pacific Northwest.

Well, to be honest, many years ago when I was still young in our Christian faith, and before I had gained more wisdom and understanding regarding God's Word, it did in fact seem to me that Jesus was condoning the Disciples possessing swords. You see, because I was not yet properly grounded in the Bible, I

was not aware of what some other verses stated. As a result, I arrived at an erroneous conclusion. Furthermore, I would dare say that this is precisely what some of my Christian brethren are doing today, in regards to the Second Amendment and the American right to keep and bare arms.

However, thankfully, through the passage of years, and as a result of my continued study of the Scriptures, I have now gained some new insight regarding the lessons I believe we are supposed to learn from the incident in Gethsemane. You have to admit that if we just look at this incident on the surface, there is something a little strange about it. First the Lord tells His followers to obtain swords, and then He turns around and admonishes them to not use them. Why even obtain them in the first place then?

Think about this for a moment. At that time, there were the Twelve Apostles, not to mention the seventy other Disciples whom Jesus had sent out on the road to preach the Gospel of the Kingdom. Then, of course, the Lord had other followers such as the women. If Jesus really meant for them to arm themselves to the hilt so that they could defend themselves against their Roman and Jewish enemies, why would He tell them "It is enough" after they had only acquired two swords? Obviously, two swords would not have been enough to properly defend all of them -- not even the Twelve -- against a band of Roman soldiers, or against an angry mob. In fact, I also suspect that if they had just acquired one sword, the Lord would still have said "It is enough". Let me tell you why I feel this way.

First of all, we know from the Scriptures that one reason why Jesus prevented His followers from committing further violence in the Garden of Gethsemane, is because He had to fulfill God's Will by dying on the Cross. This is quite evident from the verses which I shared with you at the end of part one. But then we have Jesus healing the ear of the servant of the High Priest after Peter had cut it off. In doing this, Jesus was sending a clear message regarding the depth of His Father's love, patience and mercy for and with a lost and dying world; including for pagans such as the Romans who had a plethora of gods and goddesses. The act of healing Malchus would in fact reinforce one of the lessons that Jesus had taught them all along, which is revealed in the following verses:

"But I say unto you, Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them which despitefully use you, and persecute you;"

Matthew 5:44, KJV

"Master, which is the great commandment in the law? Jesus said unto him, Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind. This is the first and great commandment. And the second is like unto it, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself. On these two commandments hang all the law and the prophets."

Matthew 22:36-40, KJV

"A new commandment I give unto you, That ye love one another; as I have loved you, that ye also love one another. By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one to another."

John 13:34-35, KJV

"This is my commandment, That ye love one another, as I have loved you . . . These things I command you, that ye love one another."

John 15:12, 17, KJV

On a practical level, and possibly as a secondary reason, Jesus probably realized that the Apostles with their two swords were no match for the angry mob who had come out to apprehend Him. In fact, we know that once the mob had the Lord in their hands, the Apostles quickly fled the scene. So they weren't nearly as brave as they thought they were. Peter even went on to betray the Lord. Thus, by preventing more bloodshed on that night, Jesus had spared their lives so that they could go out into the world and fulfill their mission as His messengers.

However, I think that there is an even more valuable lesson which the Lord wanted to teach them by allowing the sword incident to occur in Gethsemane that night. That lesson had to do with the spiritual nature of their warfare, and the fact that they -- and we, by extension -- were not supposed to take up arms of any kind. In other words, new Disciples would be won, and the Early Church would grow, through the example of their love, dedication, perseverance and self sacrifice; unlike Roman Catholicism and Islam which would

force people to convert at the edge of a sword centuries later. We all know about the so-called "Christian" Crusades and the various Inquisitions. I discuss these topics more at length in articles such as "Pontifex Maximus: Pagan High Priest to Roman Catholic Pope" and "Holy Qur'an and Islam: A Doctrine of Devils?".

As Jesus Himself had said that night "Thinkest thou that I cannot now pray to my Father, and he shall presently give me more than twelve legions of angels?". So it is evident that the reason why He told the Apostles to purchase swords was not for matters of defense at all. It was to teach them the exact opposite. He had to demonstrate to them through an unforgettable, physical example, that violence was not the way or the answer. Love was, and is, the way. He obediently went to the slaughter, and some of them eventually went to the slaughter. Furthermore, some of our Christian brethren today are likewise going to the slaughter, such as in some Muslim lands. But our reward is coming.

This one incident in the Garden of Gethsemane aside, every other verse that is found in the New Testament indicates that we are not to resort to any form of physical violence in order to defend ourselves, or even to fight against any government which we deem to be ungodly. As some of you will already know, and as I have stated so many times before, we are constantly told in the Scriptures that we are not of this world and that our Kingdom is not of this world. Please consider the following verses which make this point so clear:

"If ye were of the world, the world would love his own: but because ye are not of the world, but I have chosen you out of the world, therefore the world hateth you."
John 15:19, KJV

"I have given them thy word; and the world hath hated them, because they are not of the world, even as I am not of the world. I pray not that thou shouldest take them out of the world, but that thou shouldest keep them from the evil."
John 17:14-15, KJV

"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."

John 18:36, KJV

"Wherefore come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean thing; and I will receive you,"

2 Corinthians 6:17, KJV

"If ye then be risen with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ sitteth on the right hand of God. Set your affection on things above, not on things on the earth."

Colossians 3:1-2, KJV

"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 Timothy 2:4, KJV

"Ye adulterers and adulteresses, know ye not that the friendship of the world is enmity with God? whosoever therefore will be a friend of the world is the enemy of God."

James 4:4, KJV

"Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world. If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him. For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, is not of the Father, but is of the world."

1 John 2:15-16, KJV

"These all died in faith, not having received the promises, but having seen them afar off, and were persuaded of them, and embraced them, and confessed that they were strangers and pilgrims on the earth. For they that say such things declare plainly that they seek a country. And truly, if they had been mindful of that country from whence they came out, they might have had opportunity to have returned. But now they desire a better country, that is, an heavenly: wherefore God is not ashamed to be called their God: for he hath prepared for them a city."

Hebrews 11:13-16, KJV

As we clearly learn in a number of the Epistles which are found in the New Testament, our weapons are of a spiritual

nature, because our real enemies -- that is, the Devil and his demons -- are spiritual beings who influence the minds of men, including our own. Thus, we are instructed to put on the Armor of God, and fight the good fight of faith. This is our one and only real battle as citizens of the Kingdom of God. So please leave the wars of the world, and resistance to ungodly governments, to the children of the world, and have no part in it, because that is not what God has called any of us to do. Please consider the following verses:

"(For THE WEAPONS OF OUR WARFARE ARE NOT CARNAL, but mighty through God to the pulling down of strong holds;) Casting down imaginations, and every high thing that exalteth itself against the knowledge of God, and bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ;"
2 Corinthians 10:4-5, KJV

"Finally, my brethren, be strong in the Lord, and in the power of his might. Put on the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil. 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. Wherefore take unto you the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand. Stand therefore, having your loins girt about with truth, and having on the breastplate of righteousness; And your feet shod with the preparation of the gospel of peace; Above all, taking the shield of faith, wherewith ye shall be able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked. And take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God: Praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit, and watching thereunto with all perseverance and supplication for all saints;"
Ephesians 6:10-18, KJV

"Fight the good fight of faith, lay hold on eternal life, whereunto thou art also called, and hast professed a good profession before many witnesses."
1 Timothy 6:12, KJV

"Thou therefore endure hardness, as a good soldier of Jesus Christ. 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 Timothy 2:3-4, KJV

"I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith:"

2 Timothy 4:7, KJV

"Ye have not yet resisted unto blood, striving against sin."

Hebrews 12:4, KJV

"For the word of God is quick, and powerful, and sharper than any twoedged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart."

Hebrews 4:12, KJV

"Wherein in time past ye walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that now worketh in the children of disobedience:"

Ephesians 2:2, KJV

To reiterate one of the main points of this current article, we Christians are not supposed to own weapons of any kind -- such as firearms -- and we are not supposed to engage in the physical warfare of this present world. We are supposed to be peacemakers -- and not warmongers -- who strive to bring peace between God and man, by way of the saving knowledge of Jesus Christ. We find further evidence of this Biblical truth in the following verses:

"For though we walk in the flesh, WE DO NOT WAR AFTER THE FLESH:"

2 Corinthians 10:3, KJV

"Some trust in chariots, and some in horses: but we will remember the name of the LORD our God."

Psalms 20:7, KJV

"If it be possible, as much as lieth in you, live peaceably with all men."

Romans 12:18, KJV

Let me also remind you that in Matthew chapter twenty-four, the Lord admonished His followers that when they saw the

Abomination of Desolation standing in the Holy Place in Jerusalem, they should flee to the mountains. Jesus did not instruct them to stay and fight against their persecutors, that being the Romans. Consider the following two verses:

"When ye therefore shall see the abomination of desolation, spoken of by Daniel the prophet, stand in the holy place, (whoso readeth, let him understand:) Then let them which be in Judaea flee into the mountains:"

Matthew 24:15-16, KJV

So again we see that we are not supposed to engage in any kind of physical warfare against the world. That means not even against our own oppressive governments. To believe otherwise is to contradict what we are actually taught by Jesus and the Apostles. My friends, there are so many verses which support this pacifistic view that I cannot possibly list them all here. If Jesus was brought as a Lamb to the slaughter, and if we are to follow His example, how can we possibly justify lifting up a hand against those people who may persecute us now, or sometime in the future? We are to faithfully go to our deaths knowing that a glorious reward awaits those who die for the cause of Christ, just as those Saints did who are listed in that great record of Biblical heroes, Hebrews chapter eleven. Consider the following verses:

"Precious in the sight of the LORD is the death of his saints."

Psalms 116:15, KJV

"Fear none of those things which thou shalt suffer: behold, the devil shall cast some of you into prison, that ye may be tried; and ye shall have tribulation ten days: be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life."

Revelation 2:10, KJV

Returning to the Phinehas Priesthood, based solely on what the Scriptures tell us, I am convinced that said group was sincerely misguided, just as I believe some of my Christian brethren today are also misguided regarding their intention to rise up against a tyrannical American government, should that day ever arrive. According to God's New Covenant in the New Testament, there is no way they can justify any violent actions, regardless of how wrong the current worldly systems

may be. By changing men's hearts and spirits through their voluntary acceptance of Jesus Christ as their personal Lord and Savior, this is how we fight against the forces of Satan. Mental and spiritual change must come first, and physical change will hopefully follow afterwards.

Let me also remind you that according to the Scriptures, we Christians are supposed to obey the powers that be, because they have been placed there by God. If they are wrong, God will deal with them in His own chosen time. In fact, Jesus and the Apostles Peter and Paul clearly inform us that not only are we Christians supposed to submit ourselves to the ruling authorities of this present world -- or higher powers as the Apostle Paul refers to them -- but they also inform us that it is the government in authority which is supposed to bear arms, keep the peace, and punish the evil doers. It should be obvious to you that this includes dealing with the mentally unstable people who have engaged in horrible mass shootings over the past thirty years or so. These tasks are not the responsibility of the normal citizenry, and they are most certainly not the responsibility of we Christians. We are not supposed to take such matters into our own hands. Consider the following set of verses which confirm these various points:

"Agree with thine adversary quickly, whiles thou art in the way with him; lest at any time the adversary deliver thee to the judge, and the judge deliver thee to the officer, and thou be cast into prison. Verily I say unto thee, Thou shalt by no means come out thence, till thou hast paid the uttermost farthing."

Matthew 5:25-26, KJV

"They say unto him, Caesar's. Then saith he unto them, Render therefore unto Caesar the things which are Caesar's; and unto God the things that are God's."

Matthew 22:21, KJV

"And Jesus answering said unto them, Render to Caesar the things that are Caesar's, and to God the things that are God's. And they marvelled at him."

Mark 12:17, KJV

"And he said unto them, Render therefore unto Caesar the things which be Caesar's, and unto God the things which be

God's."

Luke 20:25, KJV

"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 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. Wherefore ye must needs be subject, not only for wrath, but also for conscience sake."

Romans 13:1-5, KJV

"These things speak, and exhort, and rebuke with all authority. Let no man despise thee. Put them in mind to be subject to principalities and powers, to obey magistrates, to be ready to every good work, To speak evil of no man, to be no brawlers, but gentle, shewing all meekness unto all men."

Titus 2:15-3:2, KJV

"Dearly beloved, I beseech you as strangers and pilgrims, abstain from fleshly lusts, which war against the soul; Having your conversation honest among the Gentiles: that, whereas they speak against you as evildoers, they may by your good works, which they shall behold, glorify God in the day of visitation. Submit yourselves to every ordinance of man for the Lord's sake: whether it be to the king, as supreme; Or unto governors, as unto them that are sent by him for the punishment of evildoers, and for the praise of them that do well. For so is the will of God, that with well doing ye may put to silence the ignorance of foolish men: As free, and not using your liberty for a cloke of maliciousness, but as the servants of God. Honour all men. Love the brotherhood. Fear God. Honour the king."

1 Peter 2:11-17, KJV

According to the Scriptures, the only time we should disobey the laws of man is when they are in direct conflict with the Laws of God. For example, Jesus instructed His followers to

preach the Gospel. As His modern emissaries, if the ruling authorities try to tell us to shut up, or to stop winning souls, that is clearly something by which we cannot abide. In such a case, we will have to do as Peter did in the Book of Acts and say the following. However, if we are going to do this, then we need to make sure that we are prepared in our hearts to endure whatever consequences may result from our decision to resist the system. According to your faith:

". . . We ought to obey God rather than men."

Acts 5:29, KJV

With these thoughts I will bring this article to a close. I trust that you have enjoyed it, learned something from it, and I pray that it has been a blessing in your life. If you have an account with Facebook, Twitter or Google+, I would really appreciate if you would take the time to click on the corresponding link that is found on this page. Thank you so very much! May God bless you abundantly!

For additional information, you may want to refer to the list of reading resources below which contain topics which are related to this article. All of these articles are likewise located on the Bill's Bible Basics website:

Civil Disobedience and Christian Persecution

God of Peace, God of War

Holy Qur'an and Islam: A Doctrine of Devils?

Killing, Murder and Military Duty

Oh Israel, Why Will Ye Die?

Owning Guns: What Saith the Scriptures?

Pontifex Maximus: Pagan High Priest to Roman Catholic Pope

School Shootings: The Second Amendment Controversy

The Children of God and Politics

The Fruits of Disobedience

The Royal Law: Thou Shalt Love

You've Got It Wrong: Submit and Live!

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