

## CIVIL DISOBEDIENCE AND CHRISTIAN PERSECUTION : PART 1

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Published On : May 27, 1998

Last Updated : July 9, 2012

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Some time ago, I was involved in a conversation with an American white supremacist in which we discussed the topic of civil disobedience. As I clearly point out in a number of other articles such as "Killing and the Phinehas Priesthood", "Killing, Murder and Military Duty", and "He Who Fights and Runs Away: Choose Your Battles Wisely", based on my personal understanding of the Scriptures, I do not believe for one minute that we Christians are supposed to physically resist -- through the bearing of arms -- the powers that be. As the Apostle Paul writes in the thirteenth chapter of his Epistle to the Romans:

"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. For for this cause pay ye tribute also: for they are God's ministers, attending continually upon this very thing. Render therefore to all their dues: tribute to whom tribute is due; custom to whom custom; fear to whom fear; honour to whom honour. Owe no man any thing, but to love one another: for he that loveth another hath fulfilled the law."  
Romans 13:1-8, KJV

Based in part on the previous verses, it is my opinion that any citizen -- particularly any Christian -- who decides to take up arms against their government, is in essence really fighting against God Himself. Why? Because all things -- and all leaders, whether for good or for evil -- are ordained by God, as we can determine from the following verses:

"Lift not up your horn on high: speak not with a stiff neck. For promotion cometh neither from the east, nor from the west, nor from the south. But God is the judge: he putteth down one, and setteth up another."  
Psalms 75:5-7, KJV

"Daniel answered and said, Blessed be the name of God for ever and ever: for wisdom and might are his: And he changeth the times and the seasons: he removeth kings, and setteth up kings: he giveth wisdom unto the wise, and knowledge to them that know understanding:"  
Daniel 2:20-21, KJV

"This matter is by the decree of the watchers, and the demand by the word of the holy ones: to the intent that the living may know that the most High ruleth in the kingdom of men, and giveth it to whomsoever he will, and setteth up over it the basest of men."  
Daniel 4:17, KJV

"The king's heart is in the hand of the LORD, as the rivers of water: he turneth it whithersoever he will."  
Proverbs 21:1, KJV

"For rebellion is as the sin of witchcraft, and stubbornness is as iniquity and idolatry. Because thou hast rejected the word of the LORD, he hath also rejected thee from being king. And Saul said unto Samuel, I have sinned: for I have transgressed the commandment of the LORD, and thy words: because I feared the people, and obeyed their voice. Now therefore, I pray thee, pardon my sin, and turn again with me, that I may worship the LORD. And Samuel said unto Saul, I will not return with thee: for thou hast rejected the word of the LORD, and the LORD hath rejected thee from being king over Israel."  
1 Samuel 15:23-26, KJV

Furthermore, as Bible-believing Christians, we should all recognize that all things truly do work together for good, precisely as the Apostle Paul states only five chapters earlier when he writes the following:

"And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose."  
Romans 8:28, KJV

Concerning the United States, if the Lord wanted to stop the evil corruption which has so deeply infiltrated the American government, then He would most certainly do so. However, I'm not convinced that this is what He intends to do. If the US government does indeed become as cruel and as oppressive as certain conspiracy theorists, radicals and anti-government elements theorize, then in my view, it is because the Lord will have allowed it to happen for a reason. If this were to occur, then based upon examples which we find in God's Word -- please refer to articles such as "Oh Israel, Why Will Ye Die?" and "The Fruits of Disobedience" -- I would conclude that it is because God is using the corrupt government as a Rod of Chastisement, and a Vessel of Wrath, to punish the citizenry.

While some of my non-American readers may not realize it, the truth of the matter is that Christian hypocrisy is rampant in the United States. There are many proud, stubborn, rebellious people in America who hypocritically refer to themselves as Christians, when they are no such thing. While popular slogans claim "One nation under God", and "In God we trust", at the same time, many Americans support, promote and encourage such sinful things as abortion rights, gay and lesbian rights, the banning of school prayer, placing restrictions on witnessing our faith in public places, teaching evolution as an absolute truth, and other nonsense. Add to this sad picture corruption in government and in Big Business, the widespread trafficking of drugs, rampant prostitution, inner city violence, and the out-of-control pharmaceutical industry, and it is plain to see that the country is really a mess.

Then, of course, there is also the American public's foolish support of the US government's foreign wars, which not only rob the lives of many innocent people -- which the military callously writes off as collateral damage -- but which also waste an incredible sum of money which could be better used for more constructive purposes such as helping the needy and the poor. Concerning this particular topic, please consider reading "America: Land of the Free . . . and Hypocrisy!".

This two-sided nature is really nothing new. I am reminded of verses such as the following which expose the hypocrisy of the ancient Jews. They too boasted of their spirituality and their religiosity, but consider what the Lord had to say concerning them:

"Wherefore the Lord said, Forasmuch as this people draw near me with their mouth, and with their lips do honour me, but have removed their heart far from me, and their fear toward me is taught by the precept of men:"  
Isaiah 29:13, KJV

"Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven. Many will say to me in that day, Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in thy name? and in thy name have cast out devils? and in thy name done many wonderful works? And then will I profess unto them, I never knew you: depart from me, ye that work iniquity."  
Matthew 7:21-23, KJV

"Then spake Jesus to the multitude, and to his disciples, Saying, The scribes and the Pharisees sit in Moses' seat: All therefore whatsoever they bid you observe, that observe and do; but do not ye after their works: for they say, and do not."  
Matthew 23:1-3, KJV

"And why call ye me, Lord, Lord, and do not the things which I say?"  
Luke 6:46, KJV

"Strive to enter in at the strait gate: for many, I say unto you, will seek to enter in, and shall not be able. When once the master of the house is risen up, and hath shut to the door, and ye begin to stand without, and to knock at the

door, saying, Lord, Lord, open unto us; and he shall answer and say unto you, I know you not whence ye are: Then shall ye begin to say, We have eaten and drunk in thy presence, and thou hast taught in our streets. But he shall say, I tell you, I know you not whence ye are; depart from me, all ye workers of iniquity. There shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth, when ye shall see Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob, and all the prophets, in the kingdom of God, and you yourselves thrust out. And they shall come from the east, and from the west, and from the north, and from the south, and shall sit down in the kingdom of God. And, behold, there are last which shall be first, and there are first which shall be last."  
Luke 13:24-30, KJV

"Ye hypocrites, well did Esaias prophesy of you, saying, This people draweth nigh unto me with their mouth, and honoureth me with their lips; but their heart is far from me. But in vain they do worship me, teaching for doctrines the commandments of men."  
Matthew 15:7-9, KJV

"Not with eyeservice, as menpleasers; but as the servants of Christ, doing the will of God from the heart; With good will doing service, as to the Lord, and not to men:"  
Ephesians 6:6-7, KJV

Clearly then, claiming to be Christian without manifesting the righteous fruits thereof is indeed hypocritical, and it is deceptive as well.

As I point out in "Oh Israel, Why Will Ye Die?", the Prophet Jeremiah was ridiculed, hated and persecuted for preaching a similar message to the political and religious leadership of Israel. He was accused of being a traitor, and of conspiring with the foreign enemy. Exactly what was Jeremiah's "crime"? Quite simply, he spoke God's truth; and he was not afraid to deliver the full counsel of the Lord, despite the fact that it placed him at odds with his own people. Jeremiah's message was not just a warning of judgment and destruction. It was also a promise of protection for those people who instead of resisting the Babylonian invasion, would recognize it as the Lord's loving chastisement. Consider the Prophet's message to Zedekiah -- the last king of Judah during that period -- just prior to the third Babylonian invasion:

"And it shall come to pass, that the nation and kingdom which will not serve the same Nebuchadnezzar the king of Babylon, and that will not put their neck under the yoke of the king of Babylon, that nation will I punish, saith the LORD, with the sword, and with the famine, and with the pestilence, until I have consumed them by his hand. Therefore hearken not ye to your prophets, nor to your diviners, nor to your dreamers, nor to your enchanters, nor to your sorcerers, which speak unto you, saying, Ye shall not serve the king of Babylon: For they prophesy a lie unto you, to remove you far from your land; and that I should drive you out, and ye should perish. But the nations that bring their neck under the yoke of the king of Babylon, and serve him, those will I let remain still in their own land, saith the LORD; and they shall till it, and dwell therein. I spake also to Zedekiah king of Judah according to all these words, saying, Bring your necks under the yoke of the king

of Babylon, and serve him and his people, and live. Why will ye die, thou and thy people, by the sword, by the famine, and by the pestilence, as the LORD hath spoken against the nation that will not serve the king of Babylon?"  
Jeremiah 27:8-13, KJV

As can be seen, the Prophet Jeremiah's message was in direct contradiction to the deceptive message that was being spoken by the false prophets who promised well-being for the people of Judah and Jerusalem. The false prophets spoke of peace, while Jeremiah warned of war, enslavement, famine and death, as we see by the following verses:

"For from the least of them even unto the greatest of them every one is given to covetousness; and from the prophet even unto the priest every one dealeth falsely. They have healed also the hurt of the daughter of my people slightly, saying, Peace, peace; when there is no peace. Were they ashamed when they had committed abomination? nay, they were not at all ashamed, neither could they blush: therefore they shall fall among them that fall: at the time that I visit them they shall be cast down, saith the LORD."  
Jeremiah 6:13-15, KJV

"Therefore will I give their wives unto others, and their fields to them that shall inherit them: for every one from the least even unto the greatest is given to covetousness, from the prophet even unto the priest every one dealeth falsely. For they have healed the hurt of the daughter of my people slightly, saying, Peace, peace; when there is no peace. Were they ashamed when they had committed abomination? nay, they were not at all ashamed, neither could they blush: therefore shall they fall among them that fall: in the time of their visitation they shall be cast down, saith the LORD."  
Jeremiah 8:10-12, KJV

In similar fashion, there are many American Christian false prophets today who patriotically wave their American flags, and who continue to sing "God Bless America", while those of us who have an ear to hear recognize that the Lord's pending judgments loom ever closer. The following warning could have very well been written for the rebellious nation of America, because she too has allowed many strange and false gods to be worshipped within her borders:

"Thus saith the LORD, Behold, I will bring evil upon this place, and upon the inhabitants thereof, even all the words of the book which the king of Judah hath read: Because they have forsaken me, and have burned incense unto other gods, that they might provoke me to anger with all the works of their hands; therefore my wrath shall be kindled against this place, and shall not be quenched."  
2 Kings 22:16-17, KJV

So thus spoke the Prophetess Huldah when King Josiah sent Hilkiah the priest, Ahikam, Achbor, Shaphan and Asahiah to hear the Word of the Lord. Because King Josiah had humbled himself before the Lord, God promised him that that He would allow the king to go to his grave in peace without seeing the evil which would befall Judah in the days of his descendants. This evil was hastened by the very fact that the next three kings -- Jehoiakim, Jehoiachin and Zedekiah -- all rebelled

against the king of Babylon. Just as the Lord said "I will bring evil" through the Prophetess Huldah, in examining the Book of Jeremiah, we discover that He gave the very same message to Jeremiah as well. Consider the following verses:

"Set up the standard toward Zion: retire, stay not: for I WILL BRING EVIL from the north, and a great destruction."  
Jeremiah 4:6, KJV

"Hear, O earth: behold, I WILL BRING EVIL upon this people, even the fruit of their thoughts, because they have not hearkened unto my words, nor to my law, but rejected it."  
Jeremiah 6:19, KJV

"Therefore thus saith the LORD, Behold, I WILL BRING EVIL upon them, which they shall not be able to escape; and though they shall cry unto me, I will not hearken unto them."  
Jeremiah 11:11, KJV

"And there shall be no remnant of them: for I WILL BRING EVIL upon the men of Anathoth, even the year of their visitation."  
Jeremiah 11:23, KJV

"And say, Hear ye the word of the LORD, O kings of Judah, and inhabitants of Jerusalem; Thus saith the LORD of hosts, the God of Israel; Behold, I WILL BRING EVIL upon this place, the which whosoever heareth, his ears shall tingle."  
Jeremiah 19:3, KJV

"Wherefore their way shall be unto them as slippery ways in the darkness: they shall be driven on, and fall therein: for I WILL BRING EVIL upon them, even the year of their visitation, saith the LORD."  
Jeremiah 23:12, KJV

"And seekest thou great things for thyself? seek them not: for, behold, I WILL BRING EVIL upon all flesh, saith the LORD: but thy life will I give unto thee for a prey in all places whither thou goest."  
Jeremiah 45:5, KJV

In like manner, the evil which may soon befall the American people will also be God's bitter pill of chastisement. It is because of the very fact that certain people will refuse to swallow this pill, and won't accept this Divine Chastisement as coming from the Lord -- such as some of the the American white separatist groups and supremacist organizations like the KKK, White Pride, the Phinehas Priesthood, Aryan Nation, and various other militia groups -- that they will foolishly fight against it and will organize themselves in preparation for what they apparently view as a coming prolonged civil war against the government of the United States of America.

Personally, I don't know with absolute certainty that this is going to happen; but if online chatter is any indication, it is possible. There are many conservative people who are not very happy with the current state of affairs in the USA, who are quite convinced that a serious confrontation with Uncle Sam is going to occur at some point. Furthermore, there are now so many handguns, rifles, semi-automatic and automatic

assault weapons, grenades, bomb materials and other weapons in the hands of private citizens, that it is truly going to be one bloody mess if and when it does occur. Of course, it is also true that this kind of talk has been occurring on the web between conspiracy theorists for many years now, and it still hasn't happened, so who knows.

Regardless of whether the Lord's chastisement comes upon the American nation by way of widespread civil disobedience and war, or through an invasion by a foreign power or a coalition of powers, it will still most likely come suddenly for those people who have not discerned the signs of the times. Just as Jeremiah prophesied for forty years prior to the destruction of Jerusalem around 587 BC, in similar fashion, about forty years before the city was destroyed a second time in 70 AD, Jesus also prophesied the destruction of Jerusalem by Titus and the legions of Rome. As had occurred with the leaders of Israel in Jeremiah's day, the First Century rulers of Israel were likewise so spiritually blind, that they were unable to discern the signs which were all around them. It is for this reason that Jesus said the following to them:

". . . When it is evening, ye say, It will be fair weather: for the sky is red. And in the morning, It will be foul weather to day: for the sky is red and lowring. O ye hypocrites, ye can discern the face of the sky; but can ye not discern the signs of the times?"  
Matthew 16:2b-3, KJV

Is it possible that many Americans are also blind to the fact that an angry God may soon let His hot displeasure be known in a way in which they have never felt before? Time will tell.

While we have been discussing those people who aren't in tune with God's Spirit, obviously, there are also many God-fearing men, women and children who are endeavoring to serve the Lord with an honest, sincere heart. As the world grows colder and darker in a spiritual sense, and as our Christian beliefs are maligned more and more with each passing year, how should we respond to the antichrist forces which may attempt to further restrict our right to practice our faith as we see fit? This day may not be as far off as we think. We can already see the dark clouds on the horizon; both on a national level, as well as on an international level. Due to the liberalism which has crept into so many churches and denominations, not to mention the sex scandals which have rocked certain denominations, and the financial scandals as well, many people are becoming very disillusioned with our faith.

While Christians in most Western nations still enjoy a lot of freedom insofar as practicing their beliefs is concerned, as many of you will no doubt already know, this is not the case in many Muslim countries, in some oriental countries, and in countries where an oppressive government is in control. Many of our brethren in such countries have been experiencing some level of persecution -- including death in extreme cases -- for many years now. If there is one thing that the Scriptures make rather clear, it is that God's true children have always been persecuted; not only by their own people, but by foreign nations as well. Persecution is inevitable; because there will always be someone who does not agree with our faith. Consider the following sample verses:

"I beheld, and the same horn made war with the saints, and prevailed against them . . . And he shall speak great words against the most High, and shall wear out the saints of the most High, and think to change times and laws: and they shall be given into his hand until a time and times and the dividing of time."  
Daniel 7:21, 25, KJV

"And in the latter time of their kingdom, when the transgressors are come to the full, a king of fierce countenance, and understanding dark sentences, shall stand up. And his power shall be mighty, but not by his own power: and he shall destroy wonderfully, and shall prosper, and practise, and shall destroy the mighty and the holy people."  
Daniel 8:23-24, KJV

"And they that understand among the people shall instruct many: yet they shall fall by the sword, and by flame, by captivity, and by spoil, many days. Now when they shall fall, they shall be holpen with a little help: but many shall cleave to them with flatteries. And some of them of understanding shall fall, to try them, and to purge, and to make them white, even to the time of the end: because it is yet for a time appointed."  
Daniel 11:33-35, KJV

"And ye shall be hated of all men for my name's sake: but he that endureth to the end shall be saved."  
Matthew 10:22, KJV

"Then shall they deliver you up to be afflicted, and shall kill you: and ye shall be hated of all nations for my name's sake."  
Matthew 24:9, KJV

"But before all these, they shall lay their hands on you, and persecute you, delivering you up to the synagogues, and into prisons, being brought before kings and rulers for my name's sake."  
Luke 21:12, KJV

"If the world hate you, ye know that it hated me before it hated you. 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. Remember the word that I said unto you, The servant is not greater than his lord. If they have persecuted me, they will also persecute you; if they have kept my saying, they will keep yours also. But all these things will they do unto you for my name's sake, because they know not him that sent me."  
John 15:18-21, KJV

"They shall put you out of the synagogues: yea, the time cometh, that whosoever killeth you will think that he doeth God service."  
John 16:2, KJV

"Yea, and all that will live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution."  
2 Timothy 3:12, KJV

"And when he had opened the fifth seal, I saw under the altar the souls of them that were slain for the word of God, and for the testimony which they held: And they cried with a loud voice, saying, How long, O Lord, holy and true, dost thou not judge and avenge our blood on them that dwell on the earth? "And white robes were given unto every one of them; and it was said unto them, that they should rest yet for a little season, until their fellowservants also and their brethren, that should be killed as they were, should be fulfilled."

Revelation 6:9-11, KJV

"And one of the elders answered, saying unto me, What are these which are arrayed in white robes? and whence came they? And I said unto him, Sir, thou knowest. And he said to me, These are they which came out of great tribulation, and have washed their robes, and made them white in the blood of the Lamb. Therefore are they before the throne of God, and serve him day and night in his temple: and he that sitteth on the throne shall dwell among them."

Revelation 7:13-15, KJV

"And I heard a loud voice saying in heaven, Now is come salvation, and strength, and the kingdom of our God, and the power of his Christ: for the accuser of our brethren is cast down, which accused them before our God day and night. And they overcame him by the blood of the Lamb, and by the word of their testimony; and they loved not their lives unto the death . . . And the dragon was wroth with the woman, and went to make war with the remnant of her seed, which keep the commandments of God, and have the testimony of Jesus Christ."

Revelation 12:10-11, 17, KJV

"And it was given unto him to make war with the saints, and to overcome them: and power was given him over all kindreds, and tongues, and nations . . . And he had power to give life unto the image of the beast, that the image of the beast should both speak, and cause that as many as would not worship the image of the beast should be killed."

Revelation 13:7, 15, KJV

Persecution arrives in many different forms. In the case of the Jews of old, it often originated with a foreign invader. With Jesus and the First Century Disciples, it was their own government, as well as the Jewish religious hierarchy -- the Scribes and the Pharisees -- who were the source of trouble. Of course, in later years, the Roman government also began to attack the young Christian Church. At our present time, antagonistic and oppressive governments, liberal judges and lawyers, scornful coworkers, unbelieving classmates and even even the members of our own families can all be sources of persecution on one level or another.

I can personally testify to the latter, because I have been alienated from my family for more than forty years now. This is due in large part to the fact that they refuse to accept me for who I am. While my beliefs are an integral part of my being, they refuse to let me even mention my faith whenever we communicate, which has not occurred in a number of years now. They claim that I am not normal, because I mention God whenever possible. Isn't that what we Christians are supposed

to do? Aren't we supposed to let our lights shine before the world? As the Scriptures inform us, if we are ashamed of Him, then He will be ashamed of us as well at His Coming. Consider the following verses:

"Ye are the light of the world. A city that is set on an hill cannot be hid. Neither do men light a candle, and put it under a bushel, but on a candlestick; and it giveth light unto all that are in the house. Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven."

Matthew 5:14-16, KJV

"Whosoever therefore shall be ashamed of me and of my words in this adulterous and sinful generation; of him also shall the Son of man be ashamed, when he cometh in the glory of his Father with the holy angels."

Mark 8:38, KJV

"For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ: for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth; to the Jew first, and also to the Greek."

Romans 1:16, KJV

"For the which cause I also suffer these things: nevertheless I am not ashamed: for I know whom I have believed, and am persuaded that he is able to keep that which I have committed unto him against that day."

2 Timothy 1:12, KJV

"That ye may be blameless and harmless, the sons of God, without rebuke, in the midst of a crooked and perverse nation, among whom ye shine as lights in the world;"

Philippians 2:15, KJV

For additional information regarding this subject, please consider reading such articles as "The Children of Light: Are You One of Us?" and "Are You a Burning Ember for the Lord?".

Please go to part two for the continuation of this series.

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CIVIL DISOBEDIENCE AND CHRISTIAN PERSECUTION : PART 2

Copyright 1994 - 2012 Endtime Prophecy Net

Published On : May 27, 1998

Last Updated : July 9, 2012

Inevitability Of Persecution, No Peaceful Coexistence Between Believers And Nonbelievers, God's Word Divides The Sheep From The Goats, Families Are Divided By Christ, Authority Of God's Spirit, Rejoice When We Receive Persecution, Don't Be Ashamed,

Walk Worthy Of Our Vocation, Rising Persecution, Keep Our Eyes On Jesus, Don't Faint In Your Mind, Coming Victory And Eternal Rewards, God's Prophets And Apostles Suffered Martyr's Deaths, Do Not Worry About The Future, Our Daily Sacrificial Service, Jesus Laid Down His Life For Our Benefit, Do Not Fear Death, Run The Race With Patience, Flee Persecution If It's Possible, Apostle Paul's Eventual Destiny With Martyrdom, Paul In Rome

As I concluded in part one, persecution is an inevitable part of being Christian. Sooner or later, someone -- a government, our coworkers, liberal judges and lawyers, our classmates, or even members of our own families -- will object to our faith, and will begin to persecute us in some way. It may be verbal, or it may be physical, or it may be both. They will attempt to make your life difficult in some way. They will try to find a way to irritate you. They will let you know that they don't agree with your Christian beliefs. They may make it difficult for you to remain at your job. They may hassle you at your school. They may make you feel unwelcome at your particular place of residence. The simple truth of the matter is that unless people agree, they can't really walk together for very long. They may feign friendship, or at least civility, but it may be doomed from the start. Consider the following verses:

"Can two walk together, except they be agreed?"  
Amos 3:3, KJV

"Ye cannot drink the cup of the Lord, and the cup of devils: ye cannot be partakers of the Lord's table, and of the table of devils."  
1 Corinthians 10:21, KJV

"Be ye not unequally yoked together with unbelievers: for what fellowship hath righteousness with unrighteousness? and what communion hath light with darkness? . . . Wherefore come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean thing; and I will receive you, And will be a Father unto you, and ye shall be my sons and daughters, saith the Lord Almighty."  
2 Corinthians 6:14, 17-18, KJV

"A double minded man is unstable in all his ways."  
James 1:8, KJV

"And if it seem evil unto you to serve the LORD, choose you this day whom ye will serve; whether the gods which your fathers served that were on the other side of the flood, or the gods of the Amorites, in whose land ye dwell: but as for me and my house, we will serve the LORD."  
Joshua 24:15, KJV

"And Elijah came unto all the people, and said, How long halt ye between two opinions? if the LORD be God, follow him: but if Baal, then follow him. And the people answered him not a word."  
1 Kings 18:21, KJV

While Paul advises us in his Epistle to the Romans to try to live peaceably with all men -- Romans 12:18 -- the fact of the matter is that if we are living the Gospel Truth, and if

we are really letting our lights shine before men, then try as we might, we just won't be able to peacefully coexist with the unbelieving children of the world for very long. Someone will eventually complain about your talking about Jesus all the time, just as some of my family members did with me. To try to force the situation is similar to attempting to mix water with oil. While it is possible to mix them together for a short while by shaking them vigorously, eventually, they will separate again into their individual components. It is just their nature to do so, and so it is with Believers and nonbelievers.

The Gospels clearly reveal that when Jesus spoke the Word, it divided people. It separated the sheep from the goats. It had a definite effect on everyone who heard it. It separated the believers from the nonbelievers. It forced His listeners to make a clear decision, either for Him, or against Him. As Jesus said in the Gospel of Matthew:

"He that is not with me is against me; and he that gathereth not with me scattereth abroad."  
Matthew 12:30, KJV

Sharing God's Word today should have the very same effect. It should elicit some reaction from your listeners or from your readers. It should move them in some way. It will make them sad, or it will make them glad. It will inspire them, or it will offend them. No one can remain neutral for very long once they are exposed to the truth of the Word of God. Now, if the Word is not having that kind of effect on your audience, then perhaps you need to find out why. Is it in your delivery? Are you lacking the anointing of the Spirit? Are you speaking or writing with the Authority of the Spirit as Jesus did? Consider these verses:

"And it came to pass, when Jesus had ended these sayings, the people were astonished at his doctrine: For he taught them as one having authority, and not as the scribes."  
Matthew 7:28-29, KJV

"And they were astonished at his doctrine: for he taught them as one that had authority, and not as the scribes."  
Mark 1:22, KJV

If your teaching and preaching is not having the effect on your audience that you desire, is it possibly because there is some kind of compromise in your life that is holding you back? If you deliver a no-compromise, full Gospel, and not a watered down version of it, then it is bound to result in division -- even amongst family members -- sooner or later, as we see by the following verses:

"Think not that I am come to send peace on earth: I came not to send peace, but a sword. For I am come to set a man at variance against his father, and the daughter against her mother, and the daughter in law against her mother in law. And a man's foes shall be they of his own household. He that loveth father or mother more than me is not worthy of me: and he that loveth son or daughter more than me is not worthy of me. And he that taketh not his cross, and followeth after me, is not worthy of me."  
Matthew 10:34-38, KJV

"Now the brother shall betray the brother to death, and the father the son; and children shall rise up against their parents, and shall cause them to be put to death. And ye shall be hated of all men for my name's sake: but he that shall endure unto the end, the same shall be saved."  
Mark 13:12-13, KJV

"Suppose ye that I am come to give peace on earth? I tell you, Nay; but rather division:"  
Luke 12:51, KJV

"If any man come to me, and hate not his father, and mother, and wife, and children, and brethren, and sisters, yea, and his own life also, he cannot be my disciple."  
Luke 14:26, KJV

"So there was a division among the people because of him."  
John 7:43, KJV

"Therefore said some of the Pharisees, This man is not of God, because he keepeth not the sabbath day. Others said, How can a man that is a sinner do such miracles? And there was a division among them."  
John 9:16, 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

If the time should arrive when we receive persecution, and are threatened with imprisonment, and possibly even with death due to our faith in Jesus Christ, exactly what should be our attitude? The following verses clearly tell us that we should consider it an honour, a privilege and a blessing to be counted worthy of suffering for the Lord's sake. In other words, we should submit to it joyfully. The Apostle James tells us to "count it all joy", and Jesus tells us to "Rejoice, and be exceeding glad", as does the Apostle Peter:

"Blessed are ye, when men shall revile you, and persecute you, and shall say all manner of evil against you falsely, for my sake. Rejoice, and be exceeding glad: for great is your reward in heaven: for so persecuted they the prophets which were before you."  
Matthew 5:11-12, KJV

"These things I have spoken unto you, that in me ye might have peace. In the world ye shall have tribulation: but be of good cheer; I have overcome the world."  
John 16:33, KJV

"And they departed from the presence of the council, rejoicing that they were counted worthy to suffer shame for his name."  
Acts 5:41, KJV

"And not only so, but we glory in tribulations also: knowing

that tribulation worketh patience; And patience, experience; and experience, hope: And hope maketh not ashamed; because the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost which is given unto us."

Romans 5:3-5, KJV

"But rejoice, inasmuch as ye are partakers of Christ's sufferings; that, when his glory shall be revealed, ye may be glad also with exceeding joy."

1 Peter 4:13, KJV

"My brethren, count it all joy when ye fall into divers temptations; Knowing this, that the trying of your faith worketh patience. But let patience have her perfect work, that ye may be perfect and entire, wanting nothing."

James 1:2-4, KJV

As we saw in part one, the last thing that any of us want to do is to be ashamed of our faith; because if we are ashamed of the Lord, and if we are afraid to suffer persecution for His Name's sake, then He will also be ashamed of us. So may God grant us the Grace to boldly face our persecutions, if and when they come, knowing that all things originate from the Hand of our Father. As the Apostle Paul writes, let us all walk worthy of the vocation wherein we have been called:

"And they departed from the presence of the council, rejoicing that they were counted worthy to suffer shame for his name."

Acts 5:41, KJV

"I therefore, the prisoner of the Lord, beseech you that ye walk worthy of the vocation wherewith ye are called, With all lowliness and meekness, with longsuffering, forbearing one another in love; Endeavouring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace."

Ephesians 4:1-3, KJV

"For this cause we also, since the day we heard it, do not cease to pray for you, and to desire that ye might be filled with the knowledge of his will in all wisdom and spiritual understanding; That ye might walk worthy of the Lord unto all pleasing, being fruitful in every good work, and increasing in the knowledge of God;"

Colossians 1:9-10, KJV

"As ye know how we exhorted and comforted and charged every one of you, as a father doth his children, That ye would walk worthy of God, who hath called you unto his kingdom and glory."

1 Thessalonians 2:11-12, KJV

"So that we ourselves glory in you in the churches of God for your patience and faith in all your persecutions and tribulations that ye endure: Which is a manifest token of the righteous judgment of God, that ye may be counted worthy of the kingdom of God, for which ye also suffer: Seeing it is a righteous thing with God to recompense tribulation to them that trouble you; And to you who are troubled rest with us, when the Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven with his mighty angels, In flaming fire taking vengeance on them that know not God, and that obey not the gospel of our Lord

Jesus Christ: Who shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of his power; When he shall come to be glorified in his saints, and to be admired in all them that believe (because our testimony among you was believed) in that day. Wherefore also we pray always for you, that our God would count you worthy of this calling, and fulfil all the good pleasure of his goodness, and the work of faith with power: That the name of our Lord Jesus Christ may be glorified in you, and ye in him, according to the grace of our God and the Lord Jesus Christ."

2 Thessalonians 1:4-12, KJV

Because of the nature of our work, it is realistic to expect that the number of our casualties will continue to increase; especially as the evil cloud of unbelief and liberalism, and the spirit of carnality, continue to envelop this rebellious world, and persecution rises against our Christian brethren. As I mentioned earlier, for many of our brethren, persecution is already a reality, and they are dying on a daily basis in certain nations around the world. Persecution takes on a more subtle form in some countries. For example, certain Christian missionaries are restricted by local laws and customs, so that they are forced to restrain their evangelical endeavors. Such is the case in Muslim countries, as well as in the state of Israel.

During times of persecution and imprisonment, we must always remember to keep our eyes upon Jesus, who is the Author and the Finisher of our faith; knowing that in due time, we will reap a great victory -- and Eternal Rewards -- if we faint not in our minds, and don't surrender to the enemy. Consider the following inspiring verses:

"Looking unto Jesus the author and finisher of our faith; who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God. For consider him that endured such contradiction of sinners against himself, lest ye be wearied and faint in your minds. "

Hebrews 12:2-3, KJV

"Therefore seeing we have this ministry, as we have received mercy, we faint not . . . For which cause we faint not; but though our outward man perish, yet the inward man is renewed day by day."

2 Corinthians 4:1, 16, KJV

"And let us not be weary in well doing: for in due season we shall reap, if we faint not."

Galatians 6:9, KJV

"Wherefore I desire that ye faint not at my tribulations for you, which is your glory."

Ephesians 3:13, KJV

"But ye, brethren, be not weary in well doing."

2 Thessalonians 3:13, KJV

"For I reckon that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us."

Romans 8:18, KJV

"But thanks be to God, which giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ."

1 Corinthians 15:57, KJV

"For whatsoever is born of God overcometh the world: and this is the victory that overcometh the world, even our faith."

1 John 5:4, 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

"His lord said unto him, Well done, thou good and faithful servant: thou hast been faithful over a few things, I will make thee ruler over many things: enter thou into the joy of thy lord."

Matthew 25:21, KJV

It is a historical fact that many of the original Apostles suffered martyr's deaths, as did Stephen, Paul and others. As I point out in such series as "Revelation's Babylon the Great", the same holds true for many of the Prophets of the Old Testament era as well. None of us truly knows what the Lord may have in store for us in the days and years ahead. Perhaps it is better that we don't know; because to possess such knowledge would be a source of unnecessary worry, which the Lord clearly taught us we are not supposed to do. Not only that, but Jesus even told us not to worry about what we will say to our persecutors once we are finally apprehended. Consider the following verses:

"Take therefore no thought for the morrow: for the morrow shall take thought for the things of itself. Sufficient unto the day is the evil thereof."

Matthew 6:34, KJV

"But when they deliver you up, take no thought how or what ye shall speak: for it shall be given you in that same hour what ye shall speak. For it is not ye that speak, but the Spirit of your Father which speaketh in you."

Matthew 10:19-20, KJV

If the day should arrive in which some of us are called to give our lives as a final witness of our faith in the Lord, then as the previous verses indicate, it is our duty to do so gladly. Just as we currently offer our lives in daily sacrifice to the Lord's service, we should also be willing to present our bodies one final time through our martyrdom, knowing that our reward is great in the Kingdom of Heaven. After all, our bodies belong to the Lord, and we are bought with a price. I discuss this same topic in such articles as "Are You Crucified With Christ?" Consider these verses:

"I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service."

Romans 12:1, KJV

"What? know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost which is in you, which ye have of God, and ye are not your own? For ye are bought with a price: therefore glorify God in your body, and in your spirit, which are God's."  
1 Corinthians 6:19-20, KJV

"Are they ministers of Christ? (I speak as a fool) I am more; in labours more abundant, in stripes above measure, in prisons more frequent, in deaths oft. Of the Jews five times received I forty stripes save one. Thrice was I beaten with rods, once was I stoned, thrice I suffered shipwreck, a night and a day I have been in the deep; In journeyings often, in perils of waters, in perils of robbers, in perils by mine own countrymen, in perils by the heathen, in perils in the city, in perils in the wilderness, in perils in the sea, in perils among false brethren; In weariness and painfulness, in watchings often, in hunger and thirst, in fastings often, in cold and nakedness."  
2 Corinthians 11:23-27, KJV

These words shouldn't really seem strange to our ears. After all, not only did the Lord teach us about daily sacrificial service in the Gospels, but He also led the way by His very own example of willingly surrendering His life and body for our benefit, as we can determine by the following verses:

"I am the good shepherd: the good shepherd giveth his life for the sheep."  
John 10:11, KJV

"Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends."  
John 15:13, KJV

"Hereby perceive we the love of God, because he laid down his life for us: and we ought to lay down our lives for the brethren."  
1 John 3:16, KJV

"And he said to them all, If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily, and follow me. For whosoever will save his life shall lose it: but whosoever will lose his life for my sake, the same shall save it."  
Luke 9:23-24, KJV

If we are currently yielded to the Lord in humble submission to His Will, then our future release from this wicked world will come much easier. In fact, while we shouldn't purposely hasten our Graduation through our own foolishness, we should anticipate death with great gladness. We should not fear it; knowing that just like the Apostle Paul, we too have run with patience the race which has been set before us. In contrast, so many people of the world are afraid of death and of dying; so much so that the Bible informs us that they are in bondage to it, as we see here:

"Forasmuch then as the children are partakers of flesh and blood, he [Jesus] also himself likewise took part of the same; that through death he might destroy him that had the power of death, that is, the devil; And deliver them who through fear of death were all their lifetime subject to

bondage."  
Hebrews 2:14-15, KJV

As King David wrote, the Lord cherishes the death of every single one of His children. In fact, the Book of Acts tells us that Jesus actually arose from His Heavenly Throne when Stephen was martyred by his enraged, Law-bound, pharisaical persecutors; the unbelieving Jews of the Sanhedrin. Please consider the following verses:

"Wherefore seeing we also are compassed about with so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which doth so easily beset us, and let us run with patience the race that is set before us,"  
Hebrews 12:1, KJV

". . . What mean ye to weep and to break mine heart? for I am ready not to be bound only, but also to die at Jerusalem for the name of the Lord Jesus."  
Acts 21:13, KJV

"For I am now ready to be offered, and the time of my departure is at hand. I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith: Henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, shall give me at that day: and not to me only, but unto all them also that love his appearing."  
2 Timothy 4:6-8, KJV

"But he [Stephen], being full of the Holy Ghost, looked up stedfastly into heaven, and saw the glory of God, and Jesus standing on the right hand of God, And said, Behold, I see the heavens opened, and the Son of man standing on the right hand of God."  
Acts 7:55-56, KJV

"Precious in the sight of the LORD is the death of his saints."  
Psalms 116:15, KJV

In light of all of the preceding Scriptural evidence, does this mean that we are to just allow ourselves to fall into the hands of our enemies, whether it is our own government, or perhaps members of our own family, or bullies at school, or maybe a jealous pastor down the street, or some foreign government, or an unsympathetic boss? Most definitely not! Naturally, we are to try to maintain our freedom as long as possible, unless the Lord specifically reveals to us that we are to do otherwise. In other words, if you are given the opportunity to flee from persecution, then by all means, please use your head and do so.

Such was the case with the Apostle Paul. As I explain in the article called "A Biblical Cafeteria or the Whole Course?", the Lord clearly revealed to Paul that he was going to pay a great price for his faith; and that he would be bound and taken as a prisoner to Rome, in order to be a witness in the courts of Emperor Nero. Some of Paul's Epistles prove this very point as well, as we see here:

"And now, behold, I go bound in the spirit unto Jerusalem, not knowing the things that shall befall me there: Save that

the Holy Ghost witnesseth in every city, saying that bonds and afflictions abide me. But none of these things move me, neither count I my life dear unto myself, so that I might finish my course with joy, and the ministry, which I have received of the Lord Jesus, to testify the gospel of the grace of God. And now, behold, I know that ye all, among whom I have gone preaching the kingdom of God, shall see my face no more."

Acts 20:22-25, KJV

"And the night following the Lord stood by him, and said, Be of good cheer, Paul: for as thou hast testified of me in Jerusalem, so must thou bear witness also at Rome."

Acts 23:11, KJV

"The Lord Jesus Christ be with thy spirit. Grace be with you. Amen. [The second epistle unto Timotheus, ordained the first bishop of the church of the Ephesians, was written from Rome, when Paul was brought before Nero the second time.]"

2 Timothy 4:22, KJV

"To all that be in Rome, beloved of God, called to be saints: Grace to you and peace from God our Father, and the Lord Jesus Christ . . . So, as much as in me is, I am ready to preach the gospel to you that are at Rome also."

Romans 1:7, 15, KJV

"Brethren, the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with your spirit. Amen. [To the Galatians written from Rome.]"

Galatians 6:18, KJV

"Grace be with all them that love our Lord Jesus Christ in sincerity. Amen. [To the Ephesians written from Rome, by Tychicus.]"

Ephesians 6:24, KJV

"The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you all. Amen. [To the Philippians written from Rome, by Epaphroditus.]"

Philippians 4:23, KJV

"The salutation by the hand of me Paul. Remember my bonds. Grace be with you. Amen. [Written from Rome to Colossians by Tychicus and Onesimus.]"

Colossians 4:18, KJV

"But, when he was in Rome, he sought me out very diligently, and found me."

2 Timothy 1:17, KJV

"The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with your spirit. Amen. [Written from Rome to Philemon, by Onesimus a servant.]"

Philemon 1:25, KJV

Please go to part three for the continuation of this series.

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## CIVIL DISOBEDIENCE AND CHRISTIAN PERSECUTION : PART 3

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Published On : May 27, 1998

Last Updated : July 9, 2012

Apostle Paul Was The Exception, Abide In Your Calling, David Koresh And Branch Davidians, Don't Bear Arms Against Enemies, Flee From Persecution And Capture, The Spiritual Nature Of Our Warfare, Submit To Your Captors And Don't Resist Arrest, Peter's Sword And Events In Garden Of Gethsemane, There Is No Scriptural Foundation For Christians To Engage In Civil Disobedience, God Will Deliver Us If He Desires, Examples Of Miraculous Intervention: The Apostles Are Freed From Prison, We Ought To Obey God Rather Than Men, Count The Cost And Be Prepared To Pay The Price For Your Stand Of Faith, Do Not Purposely Antagonize Your Unbelieving Enemies, A Line Drawn In The Sand, Beware: Don't Harm The Lord's Prophets, We Are The Apple Of God's Eye, Four Quaternions: Peter Is Delivered From Prison, Paul And Silas Are Set Free By God's Earthquake

Continuing our discussion from part two, allow me to point out that Paul was obviously an exception to the rule. Not all of us -- and in fact, very few of us -- are destined to appear before presidents, prime ministers, kings and queens. The vast majority of us must content ourselves with having a more humble ministry; that is, reaching the common people; many of whom are considerably more receptive than the rich, pompous rulers of this current world. As the New Testament plan makes very clear, we are each to abide in the calling wherein we have been called by the Lord, as we can see by the following verses:

"Yea, so have I strived to preach the gospel, not where Christ was named, lest I should build upon another man's foundation: But as it is written, To whom he was not spoken of, they shall see: and they that have not heard shall understand."

Romans 15:20-21, KJV

"Let every man abide in the same calling wherein he was called . . . Brethren, let every man, wherein he is called, therein abide with God."

1 Corinthians 7:20, 24, KJV

"For we dare not make ourselves of the number, or compare ourselves with some that commend themselves: but they measuring themselves by themselves, and comparing themselves among themselves, are not wise. But we will not boast of things without our measure, but according to the measure of the rule which God hath distributed to us, a measure to reach even unto you. For we stretch not ourselves beyond our measure, as though we reached not unto you: for we are come as far as to you also in preaching the gospel of Christ: Not boasting of things without our measure, that is, of other

men's labours; but having hope, when your faith is increased, that we shall be enlarged by you according to our rule abundantly, To preach the gospel in the regions beyond you, and not to boast in another man's line of things made ready to our hand. But he that glorieth, let him glory in the Lord. For not he that commendeth himself is approved, but whom the Lord commendeth."  
2 Corinthians 10:12-18, KJV

"But contrariwise, when they saw that the gospel of the uncircumcision was committed unto me, as the gospel of the circumcision was unto Peter; (For he that wrought effectually in Peter to the apostleship of the circumcision, the same was mighty in me toward the Gentiles:) And when James, Cephas, and John, who seemed to be pillars, perceived the grace that was given unto me, they gave to me and Barnabas the right hands of fellowship; that we should go unto the heathen, and they unto the circumcision."  
Galatians 2:7-9, KJV

Regardless of the level and scope of our particular calling and ministry, if Satan has his way with this world, we all may face serious persecution in the days ahead. If and when that occurs, exactly what kind of resistance are we supposed to offer to our enemies? Are we supposed to take up arms and defend ourselves like some of the so-called Christian militia groups have determined to do? In particular, I am reminded of the tragic events surrounding David Koresh and his followers -- the Branch Davidians -- which occurred at their compound outside of Waco, Texas in 1993. I discuss that incident in more detail in the series called "Heaven's Gate, Suicide And Other Death Cults". To say the least, it did not end well for the Branch Davidians.

As I have already clearly demonstrated in this and in other articles, my personal conviction is that we are not supposed to take up arms and defend ourselves against our enemies. I also believe that Christians who do so greatly err in their understanding of the Scriptures. Consider the following wise advice that the Lord offers us in the Gospel of Matthew:

"But when they persecute you in this city, flee ye into another: for verily I say unto you, Ye shall not have gone over the cities of Israel, till the Son of man be come."  
Matthew 10:23, KJV

"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: Let him which is on the housetop not come down to take any thing out of his house: Neither let him which is in the field return back to take his clothes."  
Matthew 24:15-18, KJV

In accordance with the Lord's teachings, in the Book of Revelation, the Apostle John likewise informs us that the woman fled from the face of her persecutors, as we see by this verse:

"And the woman fled into the wilderness, where she hath a

place prepared of God, that they should feed her there a thousand two hundred and threescore days."

Revelation 12:6, KJV

Thus we see that if it is at all possible for us to escape persecution and capture, then we should by all means do so. The longer we can maintain our freedom, the better; for in so doing, the Lord may be able to use us to reach more of His lost hungry sheep in these Last Days. As the old saying states, "He who fights and runs away, lives to fight another day". I discuss this same topic in the article entitled "He Who Fights and Runs Away: Choose Your Battles Wisely". While it's indeed true that we are all involved in serious warfare, Scriptures such as the following make it quite clear that we are engaged in spiritual warfare, and not in actual violent, physical warfare:

"For though we walk in the flesh, we do not war after the flesh: (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 10:3-5, 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."  
Ephesians 6:10-12, 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

"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

However, despite our best efforts, eventually, due to their advanced technology and the tight grip which they already have on our lives, our enemies will catch up with some of us. The verses that I shared in part one make it perfectly clear that the devilish leader who the Bible refers to as a Beast, will make war against and will wear out the Saints of

the Most High. Eventually, some of the Lord's children are going to get tired of running; and some of us are going to get caught. Whether such verses refer to the Jews of Israel, or to Christians worldwide, remains to be seen. Exactly what do the Scriptures advise us to do if and when this happens? The following verse provides us with the perfect example:

"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

As I point out in a number of other articles, Jesus did not resist arrest once the unbelieving Jewish mob had caught up with Him. He knew that the time had come for His betrayal and Crucifixion. When Peter did offer resistance by cutting off the ear of Malchus, the servant of the high priest, what did Jesus do? He healed him as one of His final acts of love and forgiveness. At the same time, He used the incident to teach a valuable lesson to Peter. That lesson -- as I have already made plain -- is that we are to wage a spiritual battle, and not a physical one. Consider the following verses:

"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."

Matthew 26:51-52, 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

If you personally adhere to a political philosophy of civil disobedience, allow me to ask you a question: Where in the Bible do we find even one of the Lord's Prophets, Apostles or Disciples resisting arrest, or taking up arms in order to fight against the powers that be? From the Prophets of the Old Testament, to the Disciples of the Book of Acts, to the aged Apostle John who was exiled on the isle of Patmos, we see that they had such great faith in the Word and Power of God, that they accepted all things as coming from His Hand; exactly as Paul states in the following verse that is found in his Epistle to the Romans:

"And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose."

Romans 8:28, KJV

These brave pioneers of our faith knew that no matter what happened to them, and no matter where they were sent, God was still with them; and He would deliver them from their afflictions if He so desired. Just look at the examples we find in the Book of Acts. God's children are so important to Him, that if they haven't yet finished the job that He has given them to do, He will find a way to deliver them; even

if it has to be through miraculous Angelic Intervention, as occurred in the case of Peter and the other Apostles in Acts chapter five. Consider the following verses:

"Then the high priest rose up, and all they that were with him, (which is the sect of the Sadducees,) and were filled with indignation, And laid their hands on the apostles, and put them in the common prison. But the angel of the Lord by night opened the prison doors, and brought them forth, and said, Go, stand and speak in the temple to the people all the words of this life. And when they heard that, they entered into the temple early in the morning, and taught. But the high priest came, and they that were with him, and called the council together, and all the senate of the children of Israel, and sent to the prison to have them brought. But when the officers came, and found them not in the prison, they returned, and told, Saying, The prison truly found we shut with all safety, and the keepers standing without before the doors: but when we had opened, we found no man within. Now when the high priest and the captain of the temple and the chief priests heard these things, they doubted of them whereunto this would grow. Then came one and told them, saying, Behold, the men whom ye put in prison are standing in the temple, and teaching the people. Then went the captain with the officers, and brought them without violence: for they feared the people, lest they should have been stoned. And when they had brought them, they set them before the council: and the high priest asked them, Saying, Did not we straitly command you that ye should not teach in this name? and, behold, ye have filled Jerusalem with your doctrine, and intend to bring this man's blood upon us. Then Peter and the other apostles answered and said, We ought to obey God rather than men."  
Acts 5:17-29, KJV

Please take note of the Apostles' bold statement in the final verse above: "We ought to obey God rather than men". It may interest you to know that, to my knowledge, other than Jesus Himself, who constantly had run-ins with the self-righteous religionists of His day, this is the only Scriptural example we find in the New Testament where the Disciples demonstrate open defiance, and resist the powers that be. Personally, I interpret this particular incident to mean that the only time that we should resist the powers that be is when they try to prevent us from witnessing our faith to others. Furthermore, please notice that this was verbal resistance. The Apostles did not go out and join the radical Zealots, who were intent on overthrowing Rome, and deposing Rome's puppet, King Herod.

However, I also hope that you realize that you should only do this -- that is, take such a bold stand of faith -- if you personally have the faith to endure the consequences which may result from your act of open resistance to the authorities. In other words, as the Scriptures inform us, you must be prepared to count the cost before taking any action which you may later regret. Consider the following verses:

"If it be possible, as much as lieth in you, live peaceably with all men."  
Romans 12:18, KJV

"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

"And there went great multitudes with him: and he turned, and said unto them, If any man come to me, and hate not his father, and mother, and wife, and children, and brethren, and sisters, yea, and his own life also, he cannot be my disciple. And whosoever doth not bear his cross, and come after me, cannot be my disciple. For which of you, intending to build a tower, sitteth not down first, and counteth the cost, whether he have sufficient to finish it? Lest haply, after he hath laid the foundation, and is not able to finish it, all that behold it begin to mock him, Saying, This man began to build, and was not able to finish. Or what king, going to make war against another king, sitteth not down first, and consulteth whether he be able with ten thousand to meet him that cometh against him with twenty thousand? Or else, while the other is yet a great way off, he sendeth an ambassage, and desireth conditions of peace. So likewise, whosoever he be of you that forsaketh not all that he hath, he cannot be my disciple."  
Luke 14:25-33, KJV

In short, if you are not prepared to suffer possible police brutality, or be locked up unfairly in a prison cell with drunks and other questionable or even dangerous characters, or be expelled from your school, or be fired from your job, or be kicked out of that foreign mission field, then it is probably in your best interest to obey that police officer, school principal, boss, shopping mall manager, immigration official, or whoever it is that is telling you to peddle your pamphlets and preach elsewhere.

As you may already realize, while we Christians should not purposely go out of our way to antagonize our enemies, in this day and age when the forces of antichrist are becoming more widespread -- even within the so-called Christian USA -- this is quickly becoming unavoidable. Satan will not be content until he has totally silenced us. So what are we supposed to do? Should we just cower in fear and go quietly in the night? Should we just hide our light under a bushel?

As Peter and the Apostles demonstrate in Acts chapter five, sooner or later we have to draw the line. After all, we owe our allegiance and our obedience first of all to the King of Kings, and the Lord of Lords. While the human governments of this world may accuse us of breaking their laws, the fact of the matter is that by persecuting us, and preventing us from doing our job as faithful witnesses and ambassadors for the Lord, they are the ones who are breaking God's Laws. As such, they better watch out; because He is taking notice; as we see by the following verses:

"Saying, Touch not mine anointed, and do my prophets no harm."  
1 Chronicles 16:22, KJV

"Why do the heathen rage, and the people imagine a vain

thing? The kings of the earth set themselves, and the rulers take counsel together, against the LORD, and against his anointed, saying, Let us break their bands asunder, and cast away their cords from us. He that sitteth in the heavens shall laugh: the Lord shall have them in derision. Then shall he speak unto them in his wrath, and vex them in his sore displeasure."  
Psalms 2:1-5, KJV

"Saying, Touch not mine anointed, and do my prophets no harm."  
Psalms 105:15, KJV

"For thus saith the LORD of hosts; After the glory hath he sent me unto the nations which spoiled you: for he that toucheth you toucheth the apple of his eye."  
Zechariah 2:8, KJV

"And the King shall answer and say unto them, Verily I say unto you, Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto me."  
Matthew 25:40, KJV

"Then stood there up one in the council, a Pharisee, named Gamaliel, a doctor of the law, had in reputation among all the people, and commanded to put the apostles forth a little space; And said unto them, Ye men of Israel, take heed to yourselves what ye intend to do as touching these men. For before these days rose up Theudas, boasting himself to be somebody; to whom a number of men, about four hundred, joined themselves: who was slain; and all, as many as obeyed him, were scattered, and brought to nought. After this man rose up Judas of Galilee in the days of the taxing, and drew away much people after him: he also perished; and all, even as many as obeyed him, were dispersed. And now I say unto you, Refrain from these men, and let them alone: for if this counsel or this work be of men, it will come to nought: But if it be of God, ye cannot overthrow it; lest haply ye be found even to fight against God."  
Acts 5:34-39, KJV

It may interest you to know that in Zechariah 2:8 above, the word "apple" is derived from the Hebrew word "babah", which is pronounced baw-baw'. This Hebrew word actually refers to the pupil of one's eye. In other words, when the people and the governments of the world purposely persecute and harm the children of the Lord, it is just like poking their finger in God's very own Eye! Ouch! We have all had this happen to us at one time or another, and it is definitely not a pleasant experience. It is our natural reaction to protect our eyes, either by blinking, or else by putting up our arm or hand in order to block the approaching danger. In like manner, it is the Lord's natural reaction to swat down those who would dare to harm His children. Sometimes, He may allow them to carry out their plans against us, for whatever His reasons, but eventually He will also punish the evildoers.

We find another wonderful example of the Lord's miraculous deliverance in Acts chapter twelve where, after beheading James, the brother of John, evil King Herod has Peter thrown into prison. Herod's obvious intent is to also behead Peter in order to please the antichrist Jewish Elders. As occurred

in the previous incident, the Lord again sends one of His special Celestial Agents to confound the rulers of Israel, as we see by the following verses:

"Now about that time Herod the king stretched forth his hands to vex certain of the church. And he killed James the brother of John with the sword. And because he saw it pleased the Jews, he proceeded further to take Peter also. (Then were the days of unleavened bread.) And when he had apprehended him, he put him in prison, and delivered him to four quaternions of soldiers to keep him; intending after Easter to bring him forth to the people. Peter therefore was kept in prison: but prayer was made without ceasing of the church unto God for him. And when Herod would have brought him forth, the same night Peter was sleeping between two soldiers, bound with two chains: and the keepers before the door kept the prison. And, behold, the angel of the Lord came upon him, and a light shined in the prison: and he smote Peter on the side, and raised him up, saying, Arise up quickly. And his chains fell off from his hands. And the angel said unto him, Gird thyself, and bind on thy sandals. And so he did. And he saith unto him, Cast thy garment about thee, and follow me. And he went out, and followed him; and wist not that it was true which was done by the angel; but thought he saw a vision. When they were past the first and the second ward, they came unto the iron gate that leadeth unto the city; which opened to them of his own accord: and they went out, and passed on through one street; and forthwith the angel departed from him. And when Peter was come to himself, he said, Now I know of a surety, that the Lord hath sent his angel, and hath delivered me out of the hand of Herod, and from all the expectation of the people of the Jews."

Acts 12:1-11, KJV

In the previous verse group, the word "quaternion" is derived from the Greek word "tetradion", the pronunciation of which is tet-rad'-ee-on. To fully comprehend what precautions were taken to ensure that Peter did not escape from prison as he did during his earlier incarceration, consider what Thayer's Greek English Lexicon states regarding this word:

----- Begin Quote -----

"A guard consisting of four soldiers (for among the Romans this was the usual number of the guard to which the custody of captives and prisoners was entrusted; two soldiers were confined with the prisoner and two kept guard outside). Four quaternions of soldiers would be used to guard one all night, one for each of the four night watches."

----- End Of Quote -----

Whether or not Herod had actually heard of Peter's earlier escape from the common prison of the Jews, we really do not know. However, the fact that he had Peter placed in chains and properly guarded by sixteen soldiers during the course of the night shift, does seem to indicate that he was not about to take any chances. Despite these ridiculous human precautions, once again the Lord fulfilled His Word, as it was revealed by King David about one thousand years earlier:

"The angel of the LORD encampeth round about them that fear him, and delivereth them."  
Psalms 34:7, KJV

Perhaps Peter was pondering this very verse when he said "Now I know of a surety, that the Lord hath sent his angel, and hath delivered me out of the hand of Herod." One final, excellent example of the Lord's Deliverance of His children can be found in Acts chapter sixteen. In this chapter we are informed that due to their causing a public disturbance in Philippi of Macedonia as a result of preaching the Gospel there, Paul and Silas were thrown into prison. To make sure that they did not escape, Luke -- the author of the Book of Acts -- informs us that Paul and Silas were also placed in the stocks.

As the Angel Gabriel told Mary in chapter one of the Gospel of Luke "For with God nothing shall be impossible." Imagine the surprise of the prison guard when a great earthquake hit the prison, and Paul and Silas -- as well as the rest of the prisoners -- were set free. Clearly, it is an exercise in futility to try to stop the servants of the Lord when God is still not done using them yet. Please read the story below:

"And when they had laid many stripes upon them, they cast them into prison, charging the jailor to keep them safely: Who, having received such a charge, thrust them into the inner prison, and made their feet fast in the stocks. And at midnight Paul and Silas prayed, and sang praises unto God: and the prisoners heard them. And suddenly there was a great earthquake, so that the foundations of the prison were shaken: and immediately all the doors were opened, and every one's bands were loosed. And the keeper of the prison awaking out of his sleep, and seeing the prison doors open, he drew out his sword, and would have killed himself, supposing that the prisoners had been fled. But Paul cried with a loud voice, saying, Do thyself no harm: for we are all here. Then he called for a light, and sprang in, and came trembling, and fell down before Paul and Silas, And brought them out, and said, Sirs, what must I do to be saved? And they said, Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved, and thy house. And they spake unto him the word of the Lord, and to all that were in his house. And he took them the same hour of the night, and washed their stripes; and was baptized, he and all his, straightway. And when he had brought them into his house, he set meat before them, and rejoiced, believing in God with all his house."  
Acts 16:23-34, KJV

Please go to part four for the conclusion of this series.

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CIVIL DISOBEDIENCE AND CHRISTIAN PERSECUTION : PART 4

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Published On : May 27, 1998

Last Updated : July 9, 2012

Learn To Recognize Unique Witnessing Opportunities, God Has A Plan And A Purpose In Everything That He Allows, Trust In The Lord And Walk By Faith, God's Ways Are Past Finding Out, Learn To See God Working In All Things, Rejoice And Count It All Joy When You Are Persecuted And Imprisoned, Devil's Lies And Condemnation, Resist Satan Who Is A Liar And An Accuser, Learn To See Things The Way God Sees Them, Being Persecuted Is The Mark Of A True Christian, Trench Warfare, The Devil Is Already Defeated, Absent From The Body And Present With The Lord, We Belong To Jesus Forever And Are Known To God, Soldiers Ambassadors Fellowcitizens And Sons, Not Of This World, Heavenly Vision: New Jerusalem, Additional Reading

Continuing our discussion from part three, from a human perspective, it would at first appear that Paul and Silas being thrown into prison in Philippi was a setback for the Lord's Work. However, God had other plans; and in the end, we see that their brief prison stay turned into a wonderful and unique witnessing opportunity. Not only did all of the prisoners hear the Disciples singing their praises to the Lord, but ultimately, the jailer and his entire family received the Lord. So God garnered another victory out of seeming defeat!

This account from the lives of Paul and Silas emphasizes a very important lesson. That is that we should never doubt for a moment that God has a reason and a purpose for everything which He allows to occur in our lives; even if we are unable to understand it at that particular moment. Sometimes it is just a matter of walking by faith, and trusting fully in the Lord, as we learn from the following verses:

"Trust in the LORD with all thine heart; and lean not unto thine own understanding. In all thy ways acknowledge him, and he shall direct thy paths."  
Proverbs 3:5-6, KJV

"(For we walk by faith, not by sight:)"  
2 Corinthians 5:7, KJV

Even when we make foolish mistakes as a result of trusting in our own flesh and in our own wisdom, God is still able to turn them around and obtain victories from them. Furthermore, if we are in tune to God's Spirit, we will learn important lessons from them as well. The longer we know and serve the Lord, and study His Word, the more we come to realize that quite often, His thoughts and His ways are simply far above our own, and they are past finding out. Consider these verses:

"For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways, saith the LORD. For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways, and my thoughts than your thoughts."  
Isaiah 55:8-9, KJV

"Which doeth great things past finding out; yea, and wonders without number."

Job 9:10, KJV

"O the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! how unsearchable are his judgments, and his ways past finding out!"

Romans 11:33, KJV

To reiterate, the key lesson we can learn here is that we must learn to see God working in all things. For example, insofar as persecution is concerned, if God delivers you into the hands of ungodly men so that you are cast into prison, and your deliverance from that place doesn't occur right away, then perhaps you need to consider that He has you there for some specific reason. Of course, it is up to you to try to determine what that reason is. Perhaps there is someone there who needs to hear the Gospel of Salvation. Perhaps like the Prophet Jeremiah, He has placed you there for your own safety, such as to protect you from certain events that are occurring in the outside world. I really don't know. Again, it is for you alone to determine.

However, let me stress that if you are incarcerated for no other reason than the fact that you were being faithful to preach the Good News of Salvation, then under absolutely no circumstances should you feel condemned, or think that you have done something wrong. Quite to the contrary, as we discussed earlier in this series, you should rejoice, count it a blessing, and count it all joy that you have been found worthy to suffer persecution for the name of the Lord Jesus Christ. At such times, it is also important to remember what the Apostle Paul wrote in his Epistle to the Romans:

"There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit."

Romans 8:1, KJV

As many Christians will know, one of the Devil's favorite tactics is to condemn us, to criticize us, and to lie to us by telling us that God no longer loves us, or that He has abandoned us, or that He is thoroughly upset with us because of something which we have done which has been displeasing in His sight. When one is sitting in a prison cell, Satan may find it the perfect opportunity to attack, because we may be weak and vulnerable. That old serpent will endeavor to fill us with his doubts. He will make every attempt to discourage us. He will even try to make us jump ship. If you find yourself in such a situation, please remember verses such as the following:

"Ye are of your father the devil, and the lusts of your father ye will do. He was a murderer from the beginning, and abode not in the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he speaketh a lie, he speaketh of his own: for he is a liar, and the father of it."

John 8:44, KJV

"And I heard a loud voice saying in heaven, Now is come salvation, and strength, and the kingdom of our God, and the

power of his Christ: for the accuser of our brethren [Satan] is cast down, which accused them before our God day and night."

Revelation 12:10, KJV

"Submit yourselves therefore to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you."

James 4:7, KJV

"Neither give place to the devil."

Ephesians 4:27, KJV

"Yet Michael the archangel, when contending with the devil he disputed about the body of Moses, durst not bring against him a railing accusation, but said, The Lord rebuke thee."

Jude 1:9, KJV

As I explain in such articles as "Love, Mercy, Forgiveness and Chastisement", "Are Personal Tragedies Due to Sin?", "Do You Want Love and Light, or Rod and Wrath?" and "Beholding the Evil and the Good", while the Lord does indeed chastise His wayward children, this is not the only reason why things sometimes go wrong in our lives. Furthermore, it is not wise to always judge situations by human standards. We must learn to see things the way that God sees them.

Allow me to emphasize again that unjustified persecution is the mark of a true Christian. It is a badge of accomplishment which signifies that we are getting the job done. As I point out in other articles, it is only when a soldier sticks his head out of the trench, that the enemy begins to fire. It is when we go on the attack by invading Satan's territory, and aggressively witnessing to the Lord's lost sheep, that Satan cowers in fear. It is at such times that he will pull out his biggest guns, or his biggest tricks, or his biggest lies, in the hope that he can scare us into retreat.

However, what we all need to remember is that the Devil is no match for the Children of Light! Furthermore, he was defeated two thousand years ago when Jesus died on a Roman Cross for the sins of the world, and then rose from the dead three days later. Therefore, Satan is bluffing, the war has already been won, and God's truth goes marching on! Consider these verses:

"And I say also unto thee, That thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my church; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it."

Matthew 16:18, KJV

"These things I have spoken unto you, that in me ye might have peace. In the world ye shall have tribulation: but be of good cheer; I have overcome the world."

John 16:33, KJV

So because we are all engaged in spiritual warfare, we may suffer some casualties. In fact at some point, you or I may possibly be one of them. But even if we are, well praise God! As the Apostle Paul writes:

"For to me to live is Christ, and to die is gain."

Philippians 1:21, KJV

"Therefore we are always confident, knowing that, whilst we are at home in the body, we are absent from the Lord: (For we walk by faith, not by sight:) We are confident, I say, and willing rather to be absent from the body, and to be present with the Lord."  
2 Corinthians 5:6-8, KJV

So what are you even worried about? No matter how you look at it, in the end, you are on God's winning team, and there is nothing that Satan and his antichrist forces can do to change that, because they are the real losers. While they may persecute you, imprison you, and perhaps even destroy your physical body, there is absolutely nothing that they can do to the real you; that is, to your spirit. As Jesus Himself tells us in the Gospel of Matthew:

"And fear not them which kill the body, but are not able to kill the soul: but rather fear him which is able to destroy both soul and body in hell."  
Matthew 10:28, KJV

It is possible that our enemies may even cause some of us to deny our Lord with our tongue through physical torture and persecution; but just like the Apostle Peter, the Lord knows our hearts; and we have His promise that He will never leave us nor forsake us, no matter what. Consider these verses:

". . . I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee."  
Hebrews 13:5b, KJV

"If we believe not, yet he abideth faithful: he cannot deny himself . . . Nevertheless the foundation of God standeth sure, having this seal, The Lord knoweth them that are his. And, Let every one that nameth the name of Christ depart from iniquity."  
2 Timothy 2:13, 19, KJV

"All that the Father giveth me shall come to me; and him that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out."  
John 6:37, KJV

"And I give unto them eternal life; and they shall never perish, neither shall any man pluck them out of my hand."  
John 10:28, KJV

"For I am persuaded, that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, Nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord."  
Romans 8:38-39, KJV

In conclusion, if white supremacist groups, private militias, and other racist hate groups want to wage some kind of war against the American government, and engage in acts of civil disobedience, that should really be of no concern to us, and we should have absolutely no part in it. After all, as Jesus tells us, His Kingdom -- and thus, our Kingdom -- is not of this current world. Furthermore, He is not of this world, and neither are we, as we see by these verses:

"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

"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

Clearly then, the tenets of our faith declare that we are not of this current world. As such, we only owe our allegiance and our loyalty to our Heavenly Father, and to His royal Kingdom, because we are His soldiers, His ambassadors, fellowcitizens of His Kingdom, and in fact, members of His Royal Household, as we see by the following verses:

"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

"Now then we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God did beseech you by us: we pray you in Christ's stead, be ye reconciled to God."

2 Corinthians 5:20, KJV

"Now therefore ye are no more strangers and foreigners, but fellowcitizens with the saints, and of the household of God;"

Ephesians 2:19, KJV

So while the children of the world may foolishly wage violent and bloody wars against each other for the sake of power and dominance, it behooves us as the children of the Most High to keep our eyes set upon Jesus Christ, and the Heavenly Vision. That Vision is wonderfully described for us in the following inspiring verses:

"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

With these inspiring thoughts I will bring this series to its conclusion. I trust that you have found it informative, and I pray that it has been an encouragement to you, and 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. Thanks so much, and may God bless you abundantly!

For additional information, you may want to refer to the list of reading resources below which were also mentioned in this series, and which are likewise located on the Endtime Prophecy Net web server:

He Who Fights and Runs Away: Choose Your Battles Wisely  
Killing and the Phinehas Priesthood  
Killing, Murder and Military Duty  
Love, Mercy, Forgiveness and Chastisement  
Are Personal Tragedies Due To Sin?  
Do You Want Love and Light, or Rod and Wrath?  
Beholding the Evil and the Good  
The Fruits of Disobedience  
A Biblical Cafeteria or the Whole Course?  
Oh Israel, Why Will Ye Die?  
The Children of Light: Are You One of Us?  
Are You a Burning Ember for the Lord?  
Are You Crucified With Christ?  
Study, Work, and Don't Be Ashamed  
Heaven's Gate, Suicide And Other Death Cults  
The Heavenly Vision: Have You Got It?

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