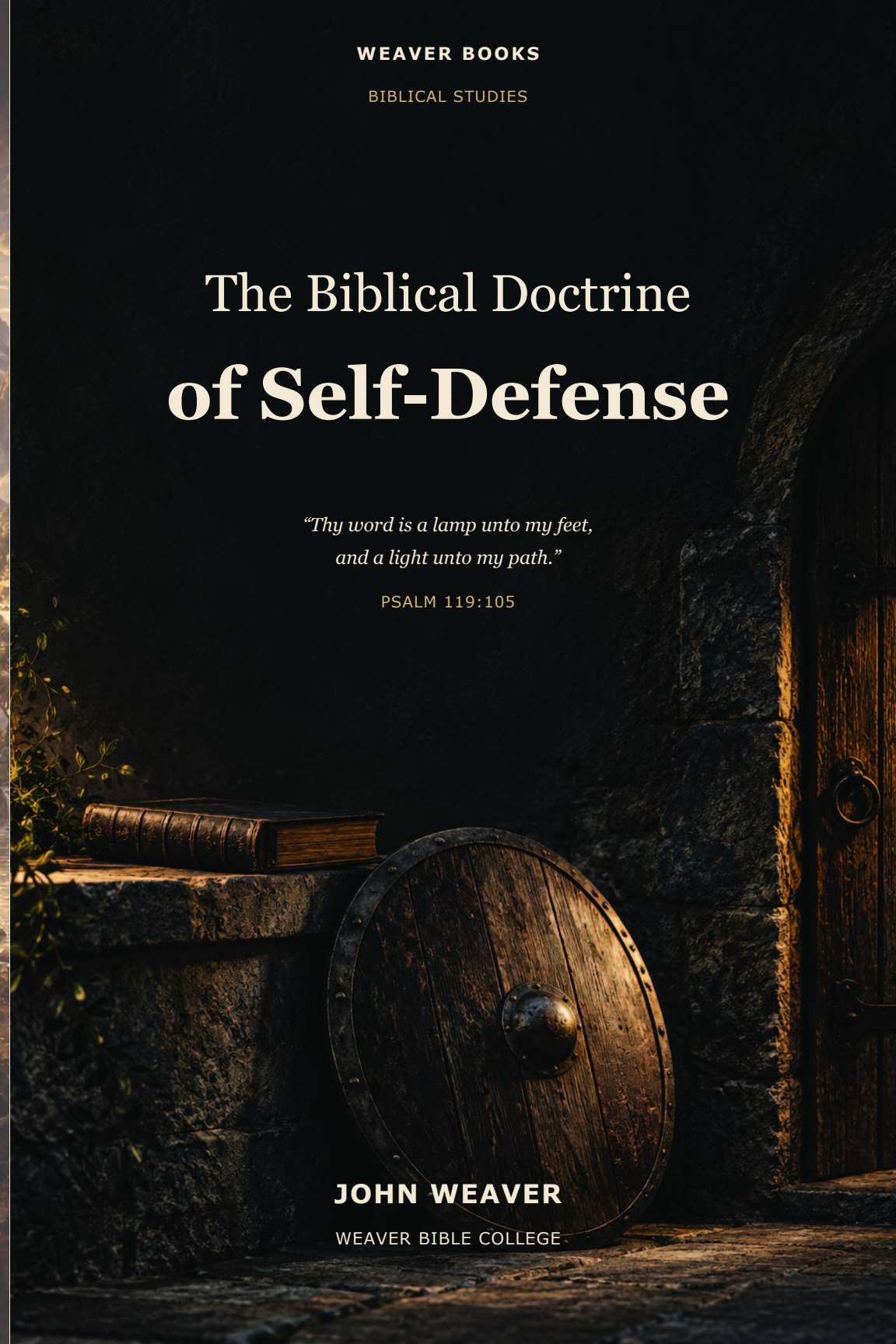
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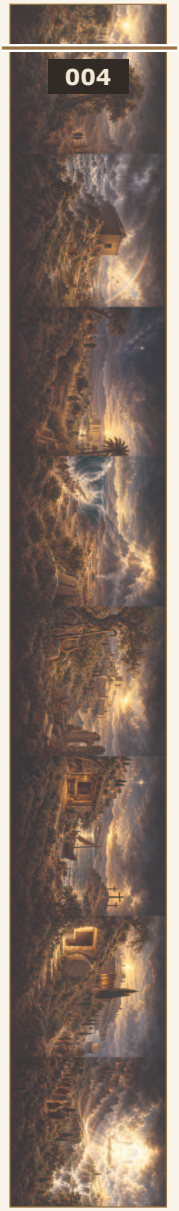
"Thy word is a lamp unto my feet, and a light unto my path."

PSALM 119:105



JOHN WEAVER

WEAVER BIBLE COLLEGE



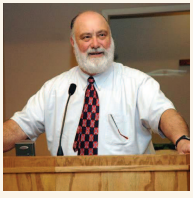
Deliver them that are drawn unto death.

PROVERBS 24:11, EXCERPT

What responsibilities does Scripture place upon those who would protect life? John Weaver examines self-defense as a theological question, considering biblical texts, moral distinctions, and the duties associated with protection. These messages present his arguments for careful evaluation, asking readers to distinguish lawful responsibility from aggression, vengeance, and presumption.

“Based upon the sixth commandment, self-defense is obligatory. We must defend ourselves in order to obey God's law.”

JOHN WEAVER



John Weaver

John Weaver's sermons form the teaching collection presented by Weaver Bible College. This volume gathers his teaching from that collection.

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CHAPTER 1

The Biblical Doctrine Of Self Defense

Part One of Two

Introduction and Historical Context

Let us turn to Exodus chapter 20 and verse 13. I am going to begin a message today that I really will not finish until next week. I will finish the message in one sense of the word today; it will be complete. But next week I am going to deal with the objections to this message, or at least the leading objection. Today we are going to look at Exodus 20:13 and begin a two-part series on the biblical doctrine of self-defense. Or, as one of my friends suggested, perhaps the correct title should be the Glock Doctrine.

Notice Exodus chapter 20 and verse 13: “Thou shalt not kill.” Everyone recognizes that as the sixth commandment. It is indeed very short. But what in the world does it mean? Does it mean that life can never ever be taken at all, or that it can be taken only upon certain terms? Before explaining this passage, I want to give you some history.

One of my favorite stories is about the old Puritan or pilgrim pastor who was on his way to church with a blunderbuss on his shoulder. As he walked to church, a man approached him and said, "Pastor, wait a minute, I have some questions to ask you. Do you not believe in the absolute sovereignty of God?" The pastor responded, "Well, yes, of course I do." The man continued, "Do you not believe that when it comes your time to die, you are going to die, and there is absolutely nothing you can do about it?" He answered, "I believe that wholeheartedly." The man asked, "Do you not believe that God is in control of everything?" The pastor said, "Yes, I believe that." So the man said, "Pastor, if you believe that God is sovereign, and if you believe that God is in control of everything, and if you believe that when it comes your time to die, you are going to die, and there is not one thing you can do about it, may I ask, why are you

"Carrying that blunderbuss to church?" The pastor responded, "Oh, that's easy. In case I meet an Indian whose time it is to die." So very obviously our forefathers did indeed go to church armed. Most of us have never thought about this and probably never comprehended that our forefathers not only always went around armed, but even went to church armed.

I have a book in my library entitled The Sabbath in Puritan New England. It is a very old book, written by Alice Morse Earle, and thankfully it has been reprinted and is also available on the internet. It is a very meaty book, and it shows why our forefathers went around armed, even to church on the Lord's Day. In fact, it presents an interesting concept: in order to sanctify the loading of their weapons on the Lord's Day, the pastor told them not to discharge those weapons unless it happened to be an Indian or a wolf, which were, of course, their two main enemies at that time.

But Trumbull, who was the historian of Connecticut, in his McFingal writes a little poem jesting and making fun of carrying weapons to church. Here is his little poem:

"So once for fear of Indian beating, Our grandsires wore their guns to meeting. Each man equipped each Sunday morn With psalm book, shot, and powder horn, And looked in form as almost grant, Like the ancient true church militant."

That was his little poem, and certainly it was neat. But in the formation of our nation, all bore arms, and all bore them even to church on the Lord's Day. In fact, it was required by law that they go to church armed. For instance, in 1640 Massachusetts ordered that attendants at churches should carry "a competent number of pieces, fixed and complete, with powder, shot, and swords every Lord's Day to the meeting house." Thus, they were required to carry not only a rifle, musket, muzzle loader, or blunderbuss, but also a sword.

In Connecticut in 1643, those who failed to bring their arms to church were fined twelve pence for each offense. You and I do not think too much of twelve pence today, but in 1643 it was probably a pretty good sum. In 1644, a law demanded that a fourth part of a trained band—that is, a fourth part of the trained fighting men—come to church armed. The sentinels were ordered to keep their matches lighted so that they might fire their matchlock rifles in case of an Indian attack. Picture armed soldiers sitting, perhaps, in the back of the building, with a piece of lighter burning throughout the church service. All they had to do was stick it to the matchlock in order to fire. In 1692, the Connecticut legislature ordered that one-fifth of the soldiers in each town attend the Sunday meeting.

That way, the congregants would be protected by those men. Many of our modern-day habits stem from those old days and the honored practices and customs of that time. I do not know if you have ever noticed it, but in most churches, especially where there are pews, men usually sit on the ends of the pews. I noticed that when I was a boy. When I grew up, I always sat on the end of the pew. I always wondered, Why in the world did men sit on the ends of the pews?

The answer is very simple: when they went to church, they went armed and stacked their rifles in the middle of the aisle. If there was danger, the men could reach out, grab a rifle, and be ready to defend themselves and their families. The women and children were inside the pews, where they were not in the way and could be more easily and readily protected.

I like this next little tidbit of history. Today, usually when a pastor finishes preaching on Sunday, he walks to the back of the church, where people greet him as they leave. Have you ever wondered how

that custom originated and why it is done? It is not because the pastor must go there to have his hand shaken; if you want to shake my hand, you can walk forward as easily as I can walk backward or to the side. The reason the pastor always went to the back of the church was because the pastor was the under shepherd.

He was responsible for the flock and always went to the doors first, looking out to make sure there were no Indians or other dangers lurking around. After the pastor gave the all-clear sign, the men came out with their weapons, followed by the women and children.

The practice of the pastor going to the back of the church originated from the fact that he was not only the lookout, responsible to discern whether there was danger, but also prepared to defend the congregation. In Concord, New Hampshire, all the men stacked their arms in the middle of the aisles around a post. However, their honored pastor, who was not only a good shot but possessed the best rifle in the settlement, preached with his rifle by the pulpit. When he went to the back door, he carried that weapon with him so that he might be ready to defend his congregation.

On June 17, 1775, before the War of Independence began in all its greatness, the Provincial Congress, or Continental Congress, recommended that all men within twenty miles of the seacoast carry their arms and ammunition with them to the meetinghouse, not only on the Lord's Day but during every other day for public worship as well. Certainly, the recommendation proved beneficial many times before the war ended in 1783.

In light of these historical examples, were our forefathers correct? Were they biblical? They were correct, right, and biblical. Before expounding Scripture, however, I want to give some modern-day illustrations of why it was, and still is, absolutely necessary for men to be armed.

Modern Examples of Church Violence

For instance, this took place in Cape Town, South Africa, July 25, 1993, at 7:15 p.m. It happened at St. James Church, the largest church there in Cape Town. On Sunday night, more than a thousand

were in attendance. A group of five terrorists came to St. James Church, the largest evangelical church in Cape Town, shortly after the evening service began.

One of the terrorists, wearing a ski mask, rolled a hand grenade into the packed assembly without warning and opened fire with an AK-47, shooting from the hip as he sprayed the worshippers. The deadly attack left 12 people dead at that particular count and more than 50 severely wounded. Another terrorist was getting ready to throw a hand grenade and open up with an AK-47, but he was deterred. These terrorists were communist guerrillas from the ANC, which was Nelson Mandela's group.

There happened to be a missionary in the church, a missionary with Frontline Fellowship. He returned fire with his .38 revolver. The masked men dashed to a green Mercedes waiting in the parking lot. As they fled, the missionary, the only armed man in the church, emptied his pistol into the fleeing vehicle, but the terrorists got away.

Police said that the missionary's quick action saved at least 100 lives in the church, which averages 1,000 in attendance on Sunday evenings. The other terrorist did not throw his hand grenade because the missionary targeted him and began shooting at him. Rather than throw his grenade and open up with his AK, he ducked out of the building and went to the car.

History will bear out the fact that it has ever been the design and the program of communists and terrorists to attack people where they believe they are the safest. What two places are the safest for an individual? At home and in church. If you can be shaken in your perception of safety either at home or in church, then you are constantly terrified and constantly in trouble.

Let us ask several questions. Do not answer them out loud. First of all, was the missionary right to carry a loaded weapon into the Lord's house? Was he right in using that weapon in the defense of his life and in the defense of the lives of others as well? Were those Christians in South Africa wrong, wicked, and unbiblical for not wanting to be murdered? Perhaps they were not pious enough or spiritual enough to die at that particular time.

Christians say, "I'm ready to die for the Lord." If you are ready to die for the Lord, why not die at that particular time? Were they just not spiritual enough? Would you prefer to be murdered, or would you prefer to live? Would you prefer that the communist terrorists die, or that an innocent and righteous individual die?

You say, "Brother Weaver, wait a minute now. That happened in 1993 in South Africa, far away from the safety of the United States." Yes, it did. But on August the 12th, 2007, a lone gunman, Iken Elam Simon, opened fire in a Missouri Micronesian church, killing the pastor and two other churchgoers. On May the 20th, 2007, a standoff between police and a suspect in the shootings of three people in a Moscow, Idaho, Presbyterian church ended with three dead, including a police officer. On October the 2nd, 2006, a gunman went into an Amish school in Lancaster County, Pennsylvania, killed five girls, and then himself.

He targeted a religious site. On May the 21st, 2006, in Louisiana, four men were killed by one man at the Church of Jesus Christ. On February the 26th, 2006, in Michigan, two people were killed in Zion Hope Missionary Baptist Church by a man who reportedly had gone there looking for his girlfriend. He later killed himself. On April the 9th, 2005, a 27-year-old airman died after being shot at a church in College Park, Georgia, where he had once worked as a security guard. On March the 12th, 2005, a man walked into the services of the Living Church of God in Milwaukee and opened fire, killing seven people. On October the 5th, 2003, a woman walked into Turner Monumental AME Church in Kirkwood, east of Atlanta, killing the pastor and two others. On September the 16th, 1999, seven young people were killed when a man walked into Wedgwood Baptist Church in Fort Worth, Texas, and opened fire. You do not have to live in South Africa to have danger in your church.

Look in Exodus 20 and verse 13 again: “Thou shalt not kill.” When you read the Ten Commandments, understand that they are not what some people call Jewish law. The Ten Commandments are God’s law given by Moses. If you want Jewish law, you need to read the Gemara and the Mishnah, or the Talmud, which includes both of those. The Talmud is Jewish law.

The Meaning of 'Thou Shalt Not Kill'

That is why our Lord got in trouble with those Jews, especially in Matthew 15 and Mark 7. They asked Him, “Why do your disciples not keep the tradition of the elders?” Jesus Christ said, “Why is it with your traditions you make void the law of God?” So the Ten Commandments are God’s law, and when we read, “Thou shalt not kill,” that is God’s law.

I want to emphasize today the biblical doctrine of self-defense. It is biblical, and it is found in the Word of God. In order to be biblical, we must ascertain the meaning of this simple statement, “Thou shalt not kill.” In the Hebrew, it literally refers to this: “Thou shalt not murder.” In the New Testament, when it is translated in the Greek, it is still, “Thou shalt not murder.”

There is a vast difference between murder and self-defense. Taking life may be murder, but it is not always murder. Life may be lawfully taken without murdering. Thus the sixth commandment means, “Thou shalt do no murder,” or, “Thou shalt not take life unjustly.” It is possible to take life justly. You could interpret it like this: “Thou shalt not take life except on God’s terms.” Since God is the giver of life, God determines when life may be lawfully and legitimately taken.

Let me give you, very quickly, 18 reasons listed in the Bible why life may be lawfully taken. In these 18 instances, God demanded that life be taken. We talk about the death penalty. Number one, life may be taken for murder, but not for accidental killing.

Exodus 21:12–14 teaches that life may be taken for murder: the murderer shall be put to death.

Second, life may be forfeited for striking or cursing a parent. Exodus 21:15; Leviticus 20:9; Proverbs 20:20; Matthew 15:4; and Mark 7:10 all address striking or cursing one's father and mother, for which the death penalty is demanded. Third, life is to be taken for kidnapping; the kidnapper shall be put to death (Exodus 21:16; Deuteronomy 24:7).

The death penalty is given for adultery (Leviticus 20:10–21), demanded for incest (Leviticus 20:11–12, 14), pronounced for

bestiality (Exodus 22:19; Leviticus 20:15–16), demanded for sodomy (Leviticus 20:13), and demanded for unchastity (Deuteronomy 22:20–21). The death penalty is also demanded for the rape of a betrothed virgin, which will be discussed in a little while (Deuteronomy 22:23–27).

Tenth, the death penalty is demanded for witchcraft. Exodus 22:18 says, “Thou shalt not suffer a witch to live.” Eleventh, it is demanded for offering human sacrifice (Leviticus 20:2): whoever offers someone as a human sacrifice is to be put to death. Twelfth, listen carefully, it is demanded for incorrigible delinquency, or what I would call habitual criminality (Deuteronomy 21:18–21). Thirteenth, it is demanded for blasphemy (Leviticus 24:11–14, 16, 23). Fourteenth, it is demanded for Sabbath desecration (Exodus 35:2; Numbers 15:32–36). Fifteenth, it is demanded for propagating false doctrines (Deuteronomy 13). Sixteenth, it is demanded for sacrificing to false gods (Exodus 22:20).

Seventeenth, the death penalty is demanded for refusing to abide by the decision of a biblical court of law (Deuteronomy 17:8–13). Eighteenth, it is demanded for failing to restore the pledge or the bailment (Ezekiel 18:12–13).

I have just given you eighteen reasons, with the Scripture, why God demanded the death penalty in those instances, showing you that God did demand it. Whether you agree with those eighteen instances or not, or whether you understand them or not, is immaterial. If you read the Scriptures, they demand that life may be taken because of these sins and crimes. Therefore, any honest reading of Scripture tells you, yes, life may be lawfully taken.

The sixth commandment, "Thou shalt not kill," forbids all unjust violence as well as murder. When God forbids any act, He also forbids anything that would lead up to that act. For instance, if I jumped on Ralph and started beating him—not necessarily with the intent to kill him, but simply to give him a good beating—what if he fights back? What if he gets the best of me, and the next thing I know, I reach over, pick up a limb, hit him on the head, and end up killing him? If God forbids murder, at the same time He forbids the unjust violence that would lead up to that murder.

I just gave you eighteen reasons why life may be lawfully taken. To that we can add a nineteenth, and I am not adding to the Word of God; I am going to show it to you. The nineteenth would be self-defense, because self-defense is indeed biblical and scriptural.

The Positive Duty to Preserve Life

God's law is normally given to us in negative terms. For instance, "Thou shalt have no other gods before me" and "Thou shalt not make unto thee any graven images." Of the Ten Commandments, only two are positive: "Remember the Sabbath day to keep it holy" and "Honor thy father and thy mother." Even those two positives are always undergirded with many negatives. Whenever God gives a negative, you must ask what the positive is. When God gives a positive, you must ask what the negative is. When God says, "Thou shalt not commit adultery," the positive is, "Thou shalt live a holy, pure and righteous and sanctified life." When God says, "Thou shalt not steal," what does He mean? The positive is that you are to work with your hands—honest, diligent work—that you may support and provide for yourself and also have something to give to those who have need.

Likewise, when God says, "Thou shalt not kill," the positive is, "Thou shalt preserve life." In the sixth commandment, there are two duties: a negative and a positive. The negative is that there is to be no unjust or unlawful taking of life. The positive is that you must preserve life. You are commanded to preserve life; you are obligated to preserve life.

Based upon the sixth commandment, self-defense is obligatory. We must defend ourselves in order to obey God's law. We are obligated to defend ourselves. If we do not defend ourselves, we will be guilty of violating the sixth commandment. God has given us a duty and an obligation not to kill. From that duty and obligation, we infer that we have a duty not to kill ourselves and not to allow ourselves to be killed. Therefore, in order to obey the sixth commandment and preserve my life, I must defend my life, even to the point of taking someone else's life, if necessary, in order to obey the sixth commandment. If we do not defend ourselves, then we are not preserving our lives. If we are not preserving our lives, then we

are violating the sixth commandment, which God says, "Thou shalt not kill."

If Henry came up to me and said, "Now pastor, I'm upset with you, I don't like you, I'm just going to kill you," do you think I should just stand there and say, "Well now brother, just do whatever spins your wheels? I mean, you know, go ahead and do it"? No, I'm not going to do that. If Henry comes up to me and says, "You're going to kill me," he's going to kill me, I'm going to say, "I don't think so. You may do it, but you're going to have a hard time doing it because I'm going to fight you tooth and nail." Why? Because I have a responsibility to preserve my life. Self-defense is obligatory based upon the sixth commandment.

Before we get into Scripture, let me point something else out. Those of us who were in the military will probably remember Article 3 of the United States Military Code. Let me read it to you. Think about this. Article 3 says: "If I am captured, I will continue to resist by all means available. I will make every effort to escape and to aid others to escape. I will accept neither parole nor special favors from the enemy."

Why do you think Article 3 of the United States Military Code says this? Why would you take an oath to endeavor to escape and help others to escape? Is it because your commander just wants you to come back with new information for him? Article 3 of the Military Code is based upon the sixth commandment. You have a duty to preserve your life. You have a duty and an obligation to protect your life. If you remain in a prison camp, what is most likely to happen? You will die. The best thing, then, is to try to escape.

Article 3 is very obviously based upon the Sixth Commandment. So let us ask ourselves: Is self-defense wicked and wrong? Is it unbiblical?

I remember years ago, I was preaching up north and dealing with Romans 13. I happened to mention something about self-defense. After the service, a man came up with his wife and a bunch of little children. He said that he did not believe in self-defense. I said, “What would happen if someone broke into your house and wanted to kill your wife and children?” He said, “I guess I would just have to

let him kill them because I don't believe in taking another man's life."

I said, "Sir, all I can say to you is I'm glad I'm not married to you and I'm glad I'm not your child." Here was someone who had no clue about the Word of God.

God as Defender and Example

Is it wicked and wrong to defend yourself, your family, and your loved ones? I believe it is safe to follow our Lord's example. Our Heavenly Father should be emulated. Turn to 2 Kings chapter 19, and look at verse 34. Let us see what God the Father says: "For I will defend this city to save it for mine own sake and for my servant David's sake."

What did God say? "I will defend this city." He is talking about Jerusalem: "I will defend it." God tells Hezekiah, king of Judah, that He will defend Jerusalem and the people therein from the Assyrians. Hezekiah does not need to worry or fret. God will undertake for the defense.

If self-defense was wicked and wrong in and of itself, would God be defending the city or defending His people? If the defense of others was wicked and wrong, would God be doing it? No. Look in 2 Kings 20 and verse 6. God tells Hezekiah, "And I will add unto thy days fifteen years. And I will deliver thee and this city out of the hand of the king of Assyria."

"And I will defend this city for mine own sake and for my servant David's sake." Again God says, "I am going to defend this city." In Isaiah 31, verse 5, God says, "As birds flying, so will the Lord of hosts defend Jerusalem. Defending also, He will deliver it. And passing over, He will preserve it." It is interesting how many times God gives us the same principle. God says again that He is going to defend Jerusalem, and His defense will indeed be effectual, for in defending it, He will deliver it.

In Isaiah 37, verse 35, God says again, "For I will defend this city to save it for mine own sake and for my servant David's sake." Did God defend Jerusalem? Yes, He did. In Isaiah 38, verse 6, God says,

"I will deliver thee and this city out of the hand of the king of Assyria, and I will defend this city."

Since these verses show that God would defend Jerusalem for His honor and for His servant David's sake, the question you must ask is this: Did God actually kill people in the defense of Jerusalem? If you look in Isaiah 37, verse 36, you will find the answer: "Then the angel of the Lord went forth and smote in the camp of the Assyrians a hundred and four score and five thousand."

"And when they arose early in the morning, behold, they were all dead corpses." God sent an angel and killed a hundred and eighty-five thousand Assyrians in one night. Could God have defended Jerusalem without killing those Assyrian soldiers? Of course. When the Syrians were attacking Israel, God made them hear a sound like the sound of chariots, and they said, "It's the Egyptians; they've been hired against us." The Syrians fled and left everything. No one was killed then. Could God have defended Jerusalem in the same way, making the Assyrians hear horses and chariots coming and flee? Yes! But He didn't. He killed 185,000 Assyrians. Who is going to be so blasphemous as to charge God with murder or tell God that He was wrong in taking those lives?

David said in Psalm 7 and verse 10, "My defense is of God who saveth the upright in heart." Over and over in the Bible, David claims that God is his defender. In Psalm 59, verses 9, 16, and 17; Psalm 62, verses 2 and 6; and Psalm 94 and verse 22, David says that God is his defense. What is he saying? "I'm relying upon the power and the mercy of God to defend me." In Psalm 89 and verse 18, David said, "For the Lord is our defense, and the Holy One of Israel is our King." Notice that he said the Lord is our defense.

We may rightly conclude that God not only defends His people, but also defends His honor and His cause. It is never wrong to emulate our Heavenly Father. When life must be taken, it must be taken upon God's terms. When it is taken upon God's terms, it is not murder.

An objection may be raised: "I understand that God killed those 185,000 Assyrians, but what God does and what we do are two different things. We are not God." That is true. We are not God, and

we never will be God. But Scripture shows that the same sovereign, holy, righteous God enabled and empowered His people to take the lives of their enemies.

SCRIPTURE READING - Judges 10:1; 2 Samuel 23:8-12 (KJV)

In fact, look in your Bibles to Judges chapter 10 and verse 1. I want you to see this one: “And after Abimelech there arose to defend Israel, Tola the son of Puah the son of Dodo, a man of Issachar, and he dwelt in Shamir in Mount Ephraim.” Now watch: “and after Abimelech there arose,” what are those next words? “To defend Israel.” You know what the book of Judges is about? The book of Judges is about God raising up men who became judges, and these judges always led the people in fighting against their enemies. When they fought against their enemies, their enemies died. I don't care where you read in the book of Judges, God raised up those judges so that they might defend Israel.

In 2 Samuel 23, we have a listing of David's mighty men. It is a tremendous chapter. We will begin reading with verse 8 through verse 12:

“These be the names of the mighty men whom David had. The Tachmonite that sat in the seat, chief among the captains, the same was Adino the Eznite. He lift up his spear against eight hundred whom he slew at one time.

“And after him was Eleazar the son of Dodo the Ahohite, one of the three mighty men with David, when they defied the Philistines that were there gathered together to battle, and the men of Israel were going away. He arose and smote the Philistines until his hand was weary, and his hand clave unto his sword. And the Lord wrought a great victory that day, and the people returned after him only to spoil. And after him was Shammah the son of Agee the Hararite. And the Philistines were gathered together into a troop, where was a piece of ground full of lentils. And the people fled from the Philistines, but he stood in the midst of the ground and defended it, and slew the Philistines, and the Lord wrought a great victory.”

Here are some of David's mighty men that are listed. The interesting thing is that Eleazar, the son of Dodo, the Ahohite, stood and fought the Philistines. The Bible says, until his hand clave unto his sword. His hand was weary. I do not know how many he killed, but note this. Look in verse 10; we are talking about Eleazar now: "He arose, and smote the Philistines until his hand was weary, and his hand clave unto the sword, and the LORD wrought a great victory that day."

Wait a minute. I thought it was Eleazar that was doing the fighting. I thought it was Eleazar that was doing the killing. Well, it was. How, then, did the Lord work a great victory? Because it was the Lord who was enabling and empowering Eleazar to fight. If you will skip down to verse 11: "And after him was Shammah the son of Agee the Hararite, and the Philistines were gathered together into a troop, where was a piece of ground full of lentils, and the people fled from the Philistines."

"Shammah stood in the midst of the ground and defended it, and slew the Philistines, and the LORD wrought a great victory." How did God work a great victory? How did God bring it to pass? Shammah was doing the fighting, but God was enabling him and empowering him to fight. Note, if you would please, it was the Lord who wrought the great victory. Who made these men great? Who made these men such powerful fighters? Who gave them the ability to fight and defend? The answer is, it was God. Consequently, in each instance, God gets the honor and the glory.

We must use the weapons that God places in our hands. At the same time, we must trust in the Lord to make those weapons effectual. These men used swords, bows, spears, and whatever else, but it was not their bow nor their spear that delivered them. It was God who delivered them and made the weapon effectual.

Suppose you ask me, “Do you have a loaded weapon in your bedroom?” and I answer yes. Then you might say, “Since you have a loaded weapon in your bedroom, you are trusting in that loaded weapon.” No, I am not. The loaded weapon is worthless and useless in and of itself. I could have forty shotguns in my bedroom, forty rifles, a hundred handguns, or even a cannon. None of those things

would help me if God does not awaken me in time or enable me to shoot straight. It is God who must make it effectual.

Self-defense is indeed biblical, and defending the lives of others is biblical as well. Some say, “Oh, but all that is Old Testament.” I get aggravated at people who say that because we have one Bible, not two. The Old Testament is just as much the Word of God as the New Testament.

Biblical Cases of Self-Defense

Look in your Bible to Acts chapter 7, beginning at verse 22. Everyone knows the story about Moses: “And Moses was learned in all the wisdom of the Egyptians, and was mighty in words and deeds. And when he was a full forty years old, it came into his heart to visit his brethren, the children of Israel. And seeing one of them suffer wrong, he defended him, and avenged him that was oppressed, and smote the Egyptian.” The Bible says here that he smote him.

You know that he killed him: “For he supposed his brethren would have understood how that God by His hand would deliver them, but they understood not.” Let me point something out. Neither in the Old Testament nor in the New Testament is Moses ever condemned for killing this Egyptian. In fact, you could say that Moses was commended for killing the Egyptian. Why? Because God listed Moses among the heroes of faith in Hebrews chapter 11.

You say, “Oh, but Brother Weaver, Moses had to flee Egypt.” Yes, he did, but not because he violated God’s law. He had to flee because of the tyranny and despotism of Pharaoh. Pharaoh was going to kill Moses because Moses had killed an Egyptian. Moses did not have to flee because he had broken God’s law; he had to flee because a tyrant was after him and was going to take his life for doing that which was right.

Now consider 1 Samuel 17, where David meets Goliath. David had come to the army. There had been a standoff because Goliath, the great giant, kept challenging the Israelites: “Send me a man that we may fight. If I kill him, you be our servants. If he kills me, we’ll be your servants.” Everybody was afraid of Goliath, but not David. David said, “God delivered me out of the hand of a bear. He

delivered me out of the hand of a lion. This uncircumcised Philistine, I'll take care of him just as I did that lion and that bear, with God's grace and God's help."

David has the sling. Notice in 1 Samuel 17, verse 43, how the Philistine purposefully presses the attack and threatens David: "And the Philistine said unto David, Am I a dog that thou comest to me with staves? And the Philistine cursed David by his gods. And the Philistine said to David, Come to me, and I will give thy flesh unto the fowls of the air and unto the beasts of the field. Then said David to the Philistine, Thou comest to me with a sword, and with a spear, and with a shield. But I come to thee in the name of the Lord of hosts, the God of the armies of Israel, whom thou hast defied. This day will the Lord deliver thee into mine hand, and I will smite thee, and take thine head from thee, and I will give the carcasses of the host of the Philistines this day unto the fowls of the air, and to the wild beasts of the earth, that all the earth may know that there is a God in Israel. And all this assembly shall know that the Lord saveth not with sword and spear, for the battle is the Lord's, and He will deliver you into our hands."

The Philistine told David, "You come to me, young man. I'm not necessarily interested in killing young boys, but I'll kill you." David answered, "You've come to me with a sword and with a shield, but I come to you in the name of the Lord God of Israel." He declared, "I'm going to take your head."

Did David intend to kill Goliath when he went out there? Yes, he did. David did not have a sword, but he put that rock in the sling, hit Goliath between the eyes, and knocked him out. Then he walked up to Goliath, took his own sword, and cut his head off. David said, "The battle is the Lord's."

Who empowered David to kill Goliath? It was God. Was the death of Goliath murder? No. Goliath's life, and the lives of those Philistines, were taken in self-defense. David was defending himself, the armies of Israel, and the people at home. Goliath's life was taken lawfully in obedience to the sixth commandment. Remember, the sixth commandment has that positive meaning: "Thou shalt preserve life."

SCRIPTURE READING - Exodus 22:1-3 (KJV)

> Now let me show you. Exodus chapter 22. Exodus 22. Let me show you what God's law very plainly teaches. Exodus 22. Let us begin reading there with verse 1. Exodus 22, verse 1. God says:
>
> "If a man shall steal an ox or a sheep and kill it or sell it, he shall restore five oxen for an ox and four sheep for a sheep. If a thief be found breaking up and be smitten that he die, there shall no blood be shed for him. If the sun be risen upon him, there shall be blood shed for him."

Exodus 22 is the law of restitution, and in it God gives several scenarios. In verse 2 He says, "If a thief be found breaking up and be smitten that he die, there shall no blood be shed for him." Here is a thief breaking in at night. You cannot identify him or see well enough to know whether he is armed.

He may be coming through your window or door, or he may already be in your house. What does God say? "If you kill him, there shall no blood be shed for him." He ought not to have been in the house or coming through the door or window. He was breaking into a man's private property.

In reality, God's law is far more extensive than man's law. Go back to verse 1: "If a man shall steal an ox or a sheep and kill it or sell it, he shall restore five oxen for an ox, four sheep for a sheep. If a thief be found breaking up or breaking in and be smitten that he die, there shall no blood be shed for him." Do oxen and sheep stay in the house? No, they stay in the barn. Thus, this is somebody breaking onto your property, not necessarily into your house, and it is at night.

You do not know who he is or whether he is armed. God says his life may be lawfully taken. It is not murder. But verse 3 says, "If the sun be risen upon him, there shall be blood shed for him, for he should make full restitution. If he have nothing, then he shall be sold for his theft." If the thief is there in the daytime, you do not kill him. If you kill him, his blood will be required at your hand. In the daytime, you can identify him and tell whether he is armed. If he is unarmed and identifiable, there is no reason to shoot him. He is to

be captured and required to make fourfold restitution; if he has nothing, he is to be sold for his theft. There is, however, a lawful way to kill him in the daytime: if he is armed and threatens your life, that is self-defense.

It is amazing to me—and I am going to use the word—how ignorant most Christians are when it comes to the biblical doctrine of self-defense. Years ago, I was in South Carolina, and a Christian asked me this question: "Brother Weaver, what would you do if you woke up during the night and a man was climbing through your bedroom window?"

My answer was, "That depends." He said, "Depends upon what?" I said, "Well, it depends upon whether or not I could get my hands on a gun. If I get my hands on a gun, I would shoot him. If I couldn't get my hands on a gun, I'd get my hands on a baseball bat and I'd beat him in the head." He said, "Well, I don't think you ought to do that." I said, "What do you think I should do?"

He said, these are his words exactly, "I think you should go in another room and pray about it." I said, "You mean to tell me, you think I should be in another room praying while a man's either in there raping my wife or killing her and my children?" I said, "Sir, I will tell you, I would pray. I really would. I'd pull that baseball bat back and I'd say, 'Dear God, don't let me miss him this time.' Pow! That's how I'd pray."

That's what God says. If someone's found breaking in, you don't know him, and you don't know whether he's armed or not. God says your life is in danger. You have the right to preserve your life and the life of your family.

Look what the Bible says in Deuteronomy 22, beginning with verse 23: "If a damsel that is a virgin be betrothed unto a husband, and a man find her in the city, and lie with her, then you shall bring them both out into the gate of that city, and you shall stone them with stones, that they die. The damsel, because she cried not, being in the city, and the man, because he hath humbled his neighbor's wife, so shalt thou put away evil from among you. But if a man find a betrothed damsel in the field, and the man force her, and lie with her, then the man only that lay with her shall die. But in the damsel

thou shalt do nothing. There is in the damsel no sin worthy of death, for as when a man riseth against his neighbor, and slayeth him, even so it is in this matter. For he found her in the field, and the betrothed damsel cried, and there was none to save her."

Notice the difference between the two scenarios the Lord gives. First, a young woman in the city is betrothed, and a man takes her and lies with her. God says that, in this instance, both the man and the woman are to be taken outside and put to death. In the second scenario, the man finds the young damsel in the field and does the same thing, but God says that only the man is to be put to death. What is the difference? In the first scenario, the woman was in the city.

Deuteronomy 22:23 says, "If a damsel that is a virgin be betrothed to a husband and a man find her in the city and lie with her, then you shall bring them both out into the gate of the city and you shall stone them with stones that they die. The damsel," because "she cried not being in the city."

The implications are these. First, if the woman did not cry, she was consenting to the sin and the crime and worthy of death. Secondly, if she was not consenting, she would have cried. If she had cried aloud, anyone who heard her would have had the duty, obligation, and responsibility to save her. In the second scenario, the man finds the young woman in the field, and the Bible says she cried out, but there was none to deliver. Therefore, God says that only the man is to be put to death. God is telling us that we have a responsibility not only to protect and preserve our own lives, but also the lives of others who are in danger.

Duty to Preserve Others' Lives

Many of you will remember that, in 1964, Kitty Genovese was brutally murdered. She was stabbed seventeen times, raped, robbed, and left for dead on the street. The whole time, she was screaming and begging for help. Thirty-eight people witnessed at least parts of the attack, and the most any of them would do was call the police, who, of course, arrived after the woman was dead.

Now let me tell you something. According to biblical law, the 38 who watched her raped, murdered, and robbed are just as guilty before God as the men who did it, for they stood by and did nothing to preserve life.

You say, “Brother Weaver, that was 1964.” Oh, listen. June 27, 2008. Cars slowed to watch teenagers beat a homeless man to death so they could steal his radio and headphones. No one lifted a finger! How about this one? June 25, 2008, Philadelphia. Here was a woman who was robbed and raped repeatedly in her own apartment. As she entered, a man grabbed her and forced her into the room; three others followed. She screamed, and the neighbor said, “Well, I just thought she tripped and fell. That’s why she was continually screaming.” No one even called the cops for four hours!

The point I’m trying to make is this: God demands that life be preserved. I want to show you how fastidious God is. I want you to turn to two passages. One of them is close to you. Go ahead and find both of those passages. Find Exodus 23 and hold it; we will come back there. But let’s look at Deuteronomy 22 and verse 4. Look what God says: “Thou shalt not see thy brother’s ass or his ox fall down by the way, and hide thyself from them. Thou shalt surely help him to lift them up again.”

What is God saying? God says here you’re going down the road, and you see that my horse is out in the road. You can’t pretend like you didn’t see that horse. You must help me get that horse back into the pen before a car kills it, and maybe someone else gets hurt in the automobile. Or if you see my cow in danger, you can’t hide yourself. God says you have a responsibility.

Now I want you to understand, He’s talking about animals here. You say, “Now wait a minute, Brother Weaver. I’d be more than happy and glad and willing to help my brother, especially with anything that’s his.” Okay.

In Exodus 23:4–5, God says, "If thou meet thine enemy's ox or his ass going astray, thou shalt surely bring it back to him again. If thou see the ass of him that hated thee lying under his burden, and wouldest forbear to help him, thou shalt surely help with him."

Now it is not your brother; it is your enemy. Your enemy's horse is out. Your enemy's cow is out. Your enemy's cow is having a calf and having difficulty. What does God say? You cannot hide yourself. You must help preserve the animal's life. Why does God give us these truths concerning animals? Here is why. It is an argument from the less to the greater. If you are obligated to help preserve the life of my animals, how much more are you obligated to help preserve my life? If you are obligated to help preserve your enemy's animals—not somebody who is trying to kill you, but somebody who simply does not like you—how much more are you obligated to help preserve his life?

It does not matter where you turn in the Word of God, Old Testament or New Testament: self-defense is obligatory. The preservation of life is just, right, holy, and biblical. It is mandatory; it is required by the law of God.

Application from Nature and Conclusion

Let me make one application. Have you noticed that God has created in animals an ability to defend themselves and their families? Alice and I used to live in Greenville, South Carolina. We had a hedge, and a mockingbird had made a nest in it, only three feet off the ground. Our neighbor had a big old tomcat. When that tomcat came stalking and walking by, the mockingbird would come out of the bush and peck his head until she ran him out of the yard. You might say, "That was a mean mockingbird." No, it was not a mean mockingbird. She was just defending her family; she was defending her babies.

I get so tickled at people who have never been raised on a farm, especially when they try to pick up a baby pig. If you do not think a sow can be mean, pick up her pig and let that pig start squealing. She is going to come after you. The only way you can pick up a pig and have him not squeal is to pick him up by his tail; he will never squeal. You put your hand under that pig to pick it up, and I have news for you: that sow will eat you up.

My father once went deer hunting. A four-point buck came by, and Dad shot it with a .30-06, some automatic rifle. Dad got out of his tree and walked over to the deer, but it was not dead. He aimed at it to finish it off, but the rifle malfunctioned and jammed. While he

was working with the rifle, trying to get a new shell into the chamber, the buck got up, lowered its head, and charged him. What did Dad do? He took that .30-06 and broke it over the buck's head, killing the deer and breaking the rifle's stock. I still have the rifle today; I repaired the stock. You may say, "That was a mean deer." It was not mean. It was defending its life.

It would be a terrible anomaly if God allowed animals to defend their lives and families but did not allow us to do the same. Even little sparrows defend their young. Our Lord said in Matthew 10:31, "Fear not therefore, ye are more valuable than many sparrows." If sparrows may lawfully defend themselves, then, dear friend, we may lawfully defend ourselves. Self-defense is obligatory; the law of God demands it. He who will not defend himself is in violation of the sixth commandment, for the sixth commandment is, "Thou shalt preserve life."

Father, in the name of Jesus Christ, we bow to Thee this day. We ask for Thy grace and mercy. Teach us, and build us up in the most holy faith. Give us grace that we may serve Thee acceptably, with reverence and godly fear. Give us understanding, that we may order our lives and bring them into conformity to Thy Word. In the name of Jesus Christ, we ask and pray. Amen.

CHAPTER 2

The Biblical Doctrine Of Self Defense

Part Two of Two

Introduction and Scripture Reading

Our main text is Luke 22, with three other passages: Matthew 26, Mark 14 and John 18. Matthew 26, verse 51 says, "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, 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." Mark 14, verses 47 and 48 say, "And one of them that stood by drew a sword, and smote the servant of the high priest, and cut off his ear. Jesus answered and said unto them, Are ye come out, as against a thief, with swords and with staves to take me?" Luke 22 says, beginning at verse 49: "When they which were about him saw what would follow, they said unto him, Lord, shall we smite with a sword? And one of them smote the servant of the high priest and cut off his right ear. And Jesus answered and said, Suffer ye thus far. And he touched his

ear and healed him. Then Jesus said unto the chief priests and captains of the temple and the elders which were come to him, Be ye come out, as against a thief, with swords and staves?" John 18, verses 10 through 12 say, "Then Simon, 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 his sheath. The cup which my father hath given me, shall I not drink of it? Then one of the band and the captains of the officers of the Jews took Jesus and bound him."

Review of Part 1: The Obligation of Self-Defense

The first part of the biblical doctrine of self-defense began with the sixth commandment, "Thou shalt not kill." I showed you from the scripture that phrase literally means "thou shalt do no murder" or "thou shalt do no unjust violence." Then I showed you that life may be lawfully and legitimately taken upon God's terms. In fact, I showed you 18 different reasons in the Bible where God demanded that life would be taken according to his terms. And to that we added a 19th, which would be the biblical doctrine of self-defense.

Because every negative has a positive. The negative, "thou shalt not kill" or "thou shalt do no murder," has a positive, "thou shalt preserve life." Thus I showed you from scripture that self-defense is obligatory. You are obligated to defend yourself or else you would be guilty of allowing someone to murder you, which therefore would be self-murder, which of course would be a violation of the sixth commandment. Scripture shows where God not only demanded that we defend ourselves, but the life of others as well. It is lawful and it is right according to the Bible to defend one's life, one's family, and one's neighbors, even to the point of taking life. And I showed you where life lawfully taken certainly is not murder. So, self-defense is indeed obligatory. You must fight in order to protect yourself to be obedient to the sixth commandment. You may lose that fight, but still you must fight.

The Bible tells us in Matthew 5 and verse 17 that Jesus Christ did not come to destroy the law. Rather, He came to fulfill it, that is, to put it into full force as continuous. These four New Testament

passages answer a main objection against the biblical doctrine of self-defense.

The Main Objection: Why Did Jesus Tell Peter to Put Away His Sword?

So many people try to pit Scripture against Scripture. They'll read something in the Old Testament and say, "Oh, but that's changed. Now we're going to read in the New Testament and it's going to be something different." No, it's not going to be something different. Scripture does not contradict Scripture. If your interpretation of one passage of Scripture contradicts another plain teaching of Scripture, it's not the Scripture that is wrong, it's your interpretation that is wrong.

So you have to understand, everything must be taken in its context. So what then is one of the main objections to the biblical doctrine of self-defense? If self-defense is obligatory, and if it is absolutely necessary to defend your life and the life of others, why then did Christ tell Peter to put his sword back into his sheath? We could also ask, if self-defense is mandatory, why did not Peter and the other apostles just simply use their swords to hack their way to safety and deliver themselves and Christ as well?

Luke 22, beginning in verse 35: "And he said unto them," Jesus Christ, "and he said unto them, When I sent you without purse and scrip and shoes, lack ye anything? And they said nothing. Then said he unto them, But now he that hath a purse, let him take it, and likewise a scrip, and he that hath no sword, let him sell his garment and get one."

Context of Luke 22:35-38: A Decisive Change

You must always interpret Scripture in light of Scripture. You must always consider Scripture in its context. And when you're talking about its context, you must remember there's not only an immediate context, that is what goes before and what goes after, there's also a remote context, which of course would include not only the entire book, but sometimes the entire Bible. Our Lord is asking this question in verse 35: "And He said unto them, When I sent you without purse and scrip and shoes, lack ye anything," note the

question, and then the answer, "and they answered nothing." Verse 35 refers back to Luke chapter 9 and Luke chapter 10. Jesus Christ is sending forth His disciples in Luke 9, verse 3: "And He said unto them, Take nothing for your journey, neither staves, nor scrip, neither bread, neither money, neither have two coats apiece."

So He says, take nothing for your journey. In Luke chapter 10, verse 4, Again, our Lord says this as He sends them forth. "Carry neither purse, nor scrip, nor shoes, and salute no man by the way." So here are two instances when Jesus Christ has sent out His disciples. He's told them to take absolutely nothing with them. And so when you get to Luke 22 and verse 35, He's asking them this question. "When I sent you forth and you had absolutely nothing, did you lack for anything?" Their answer came back, "Absolutely not." They did not lack for anything because Christ provided for them in every way. He protected them. In fact, when He says, "don't take staves with you," a stave according to Luke 9 in verse 3, the word would refer to a rod, or a staff, or a walking stick. And that rod, or staff, or walking stick could be used in a multitude of ways, not just to help you walk, but also for self-defense as well.

But what our Lord is emphasizing in Luke 22 and verse 35, that when He sent them forth, they lacked absolutely nothing. He provided for them. He took care of them. After He asked the question, "did you lack anything?" they answered, "nothing." In verse 36 He says, "Then said He unto them, But now he that hath a purse, let him take it. And likewise a scrip. And he that hath no sword, let him sell his garment and get one." Now there is a decisive change about to take place. And Christ is preparing His disciples for this change. "But now," he says. Interestingly, when you speak in the English language, there are some things that you really cannot emphasize like you can in the Greek.

For instance, I could say, "I love my dog." I could say, "I love steak." I could say, "I love my wife."

I've used the word love in three totally different ways. Obviously, I don't love my dog the way I love my wife, nor do I love steak the way I love my wife. We have totally different meanings to the word love. In the Greek, there are two little words for "but." One of them is de,

D-E, and it just is translated "but" over and over in the scripture. But there is a second word.

It is four letters, alla, A-L-L-A, and it literally means "but." However, the distinction is this. Whenever you see the little Greek word alla, it means it is a strong word of contrast. I could say this, "I was going to town, but I changed my mind." And you understand that. I could say this, "You may think you're going to whip me, but you're going to have a fight on your hand." Now that's a strong word of contrast.

This is what our Lord is using in Luke chapter 22 verse 35. He said, "When I sent you forth, did you lack anything?" They answered, "Nothing."

He says in verse 36, "But now, he that hath a purse, let him take it. Likewise a scrip. And he that hath no sword, let him sell his garment and get one." So our Lord is saying, here's a decisive change. Now, when He says, "when you go forth, take your purse." The Greek word is balantion, and the purse was a pouch or depository for money. And he says, "take your scrip." When you and I think of scrip, we think of paper. But a scrip in the Bible here, the Greek word is pēra, which literally means a wallet or a leather pouch in which they carried food. And then he says, "above all, if you don't have your sword, you sell your garment and get one." Now, the garment that he told them to sell is called the himation. That was the most needed and most necessary garment. The garment that he told them to sell was the outer garment that could be used for a multitude of reasons and a multitude of ways.

They would use the garment sometime as a cover to sleep in. They would use it for cold. They could use it many, many different ways. But the garment was the most important and the most expensive garment that they had. So our Lord is saying, "Before I sent you out and you had need of nothing, but now," He says, "You take your purse with you, you take your scrip with you, and if you don't have a sword, you sell your garment and you get one."

Why in the world this demand for this sudden and decisive change? Why is our Lord telling His disciples that now they must provide for themselves, for their food, and for their safety? He

explains it in verse 37: "For I say unto you that this that is written must yet be accomplished in me. And he was reckoned among the transgressors. For the things concerning me have an end." What is Christ saying? Christ is saying, "I'm about to be crucified. I'm going to be arrested. I'm going to be numbered with the transgressors. I'm going to be counted as a criminal."

We have a certain mentality that if someone is arrested, he must have done something wrong to get in trouble. Christ was arrested. He did nothing wrong. Yet he was numbered with the transgressors. Christ was and is the sinless Son of God. Oftentimes the apostles were arrested and thrown in prison. They did absolutely nothing wrong. But what is Christ saying in verse 37? Christ is saying, "Look, the things concerning me have an end. I came to die. I came to die for my people. I am going to die. I'm going to be arrested. I'm going to be thrown into prison, so to speak. I'm going to be crucified. I'm no longer going to be around to provide for you and protect you. You must be ready to provide and protect yourself."

John 15, beginning in verse 18, shows why He told His disciples to sell their garment and buy a sword. Our Lord said, "If the world hate you, you know that it hated me before it hated you. If you were of the world, the world would love his own. But because you're not of the world, but I've chosen you out of the world, therefore the world hateth you. Remember the word that I've said unto you." Here it is. "The servant is not greater than his Lord. If they have persecuted me, they will also persecute you. If they've kept my saying, they will keep yours also." He said, "Look, if they've treated me like a criminal, what do you think they're going to do to you? The servant is not greater than the master."

The servant is not better than the master. Our Lord said, "If they've hated me, they're going to hate you. If they have taken me and tried to persecute me and torture me, what do you think they're going to do to you?" So our Lord is saying, "Look, you might as well understand something. And that something is this. Troublesome times are going to be ahead of you. And you must prepare. You must be ready. You must learn to assume all responsibility for yourself."

Proper Balance: Using Means and Trusting God

Our Lord is telling us that we must use all reasonable means in accomplishing our Lord's work, and at the same time, providing for ourselves and protecting ourselves. What our Lord is telling His disciples is this, that all of these miracles that they had previously experienced, they are not going to continue on the same level as they had previously. Acts chapter 2, verse 22 calls Jesus Christ specifically a miracle worker.

Scripture says this, "Ye men of Israel, hear these words. Jesus of Nazareth, a man approved of God among you by miracles and wonders and signs which God did by Him in the midst of you, as you yourselves also know." Note the next verse, "Him being delivered by the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God, you have taken Him by wicked hands and crucified and slain." So Jesus Christ, the miracle worker, is going to be taken out of this world.

And so here's what our Lord is saying. "Before I sent you forth and you had need of nothing." "Now I'm sending you forth, you have to learn to provide for yourself. It is true miracles exist, but they do not exist on the same level and to the same degree that they did during the time of Christ or during the time of the apostles."

Our Lord is teaching us that we must definitely assume responsibility for ourselves. But in assuming that responsibility, there must be a proper balance. Our Lord told us to take our purse, He told us to take our scrip, He told us to take our swords. But we cannot depend upon our purse and our scrip and our sword to save us. Why? Because if we trust in our purse, our scrip, our sword, it is nothing more than a display of pride, arrogance, self-deceit, and self-conception. There's none of us that have enough money to really take care of ourselves.

You might think you do. I showed Alice a news article that appeared on the Drudge Report at the time. There is a millionaire in England who has already killed himself over the credit crisis. He jumped in front of a train. 47 years old.

If a millionaire can't take care of himself and if he goes nuts over something that's happening in this land, do you think our little amount is going to take care of us? No. We can't trust him. I don't

care if you had multi-millions. You still can't trust in money. You can't trust in anything like that. It's an arrogant display of pride.

There's a proper balance that has to be maintained. On the one hand, we must use the means that God has placed at our disposal. If we do not use those means, then it is simply tempting God and an act of blasphemy. Samson was surrounded by the Philistines in Judges chapter 15. He reached down and picked up the jawbone of an ass. And with the jawbone of an ass, he slew a thousand Philistines. He didn't have an AK-47. He didn't have an AR-15. He took the jawbone of an ass. In other words, that's all that God provided for him. And then he used that and God blessed it. And with it he slew a thousand Philistines.

On the one hand, we must use the means that God has provided. On the other hand, we must trust in God to make those means effectual. Without the blessing and the power of God, they would be useless. So on the one hand, if you take the attitude, "Well, I'm going to just sit here and let God protect me, I'm going to sit here and let God deliver me," then you're tempting God because you're failing to use the means that He's ordained. But if you take those means and say, "Bless God, this is sufficient for me," then you're at the same time blaspheming God because you're now saying, "God, I don't need your blessing upon these means. They're sufficient in and of themselves." We have to use the means that God has ordained, but at the same time, we must trust in God to make those means effectual.

The Command to Buy a Sword and 'It Is Enough'

Luke 22, verse 36: "Then said he unto them, But now he that hath a purse, let him take it, and likewise a scrip, and he that hath no sword, let him sell his garment and get one." "Let him sell his garment and get one." When the Bible says, "he that hath no sword, let him sell his garment to get one," it is in the imperative mode in the Greek. What's that mean? An imperative is a command. So literally what he was doing was commanding his disciples to sell their garments and get a sword.

Verse 38: "And they said, Lord, behold, here are two swords. And he said unto them, It is enough."

What do those three little words, "it is enough," mean? I can assure you these three little words have been variously interpreted. Christ did not say that two swords were enough. He just said, "It is enough." The disciples said, "Lord, here are two swords." And He said unto them, "It is enough." There are three ways it could possibly be interpreted. When Christ said, "It is enough," it could refer to the fact that He was saying that enough had been said on the subject. "Drop the subject. That's over."

Secondly, it could also refer to the reality that they would understand later exactly what He meant in greater detail. Thirdly, and this is the meaning that I believe is the more accurate, "it is enough" could also mean that the two swords would be sufficient to demonstrate His purpose.

Luke 22, verse 49: "When they which were about Him saw what would follow, they said unto Him, Lord, shall we smite with the sword?" Tie that in with verse 38: "And they said, Lord, behold, here are two swords. He said unto them, It is enough." Verse 49: "When they which were about him saw what would follow, they said unto him, Lord, shall we smite with a sword?"

It did not take the disciples long to figure out what the Lord meant when he told them to sell their garment and get a sword. Because the scripture says, "When they saw what would follow, they immediately asked, Lord, shall we smite with the sword?"

Matthew 26, verse 47 gives the overall picture: "And while he yet spake, lo, Judas, one of the twelve, came, and with him a great multitude with swords and staves from the chief priests and the elders of the people." Now, what has happened? They've been surrounded. Here's a great multitude.

Now they ask, "Lord, shall we smite with a sword?" In other words, it did not take them long to figure out, "We're in trouble. We're in danger." These men were surrounded by an armed, angry mob. They knew what would follow. If you're walking down the street on the sidewalk, and all of a sudden, four men step out with Coca-Cola bottles and log chains and knives, and you're walking down the street, and you're the only one by yourself. I hope you figure out this is not wise for me to continue walking straight toward

those four armed men. I think it'd be wise to cross the street or turn around and go back. It ought not take you long to figure out what is going to happen. An interesting thing is this, Luke is the only gospel that records this question, "Lord, shall we smite with the sword?" it is unclear as to when this question was asked.

Was this question asked before Peter struck the first blow? Or was this question asked only after Peter had struck the first blow and the other disciples were trying to determine whether they should join in on the action? Or was this question asked and before it could be answered, Peter's impetuosity drove him to smite with the sword? It's unclear exactly when this question was asked. Luke 22, verse 50 says:

"And one of them smote the servant of the high priest and cut off his ear." John 18, verse 10 identifies Peter as the man who struck with the sword. And the high priest's servant's name was Malchus.

I have been asked numerous times, "Pastor, do you believe that Peter meant to cut off Malchus' ear?" And the answer is, no, I do not believe he meant to cut off his ear. I believe he was aiming for the center of his head, he just missed. He really meant to take Malchus out.

Luke 22, verse 51: "And Jesus answered and said, Suffer ye thus far. And he touched his ear and healed him."

The word "suffer" in the context simply means this. "Don't resist any further. Allow them to take me." Christ is telling Peter that his blow is sufficient, let them seize me, let them go ahead and take me. Viewed in the context, the words of Christ are not and cannot be taken as denouncing either self-defense or condemnation of Peter's actions. But at this point, Christ does an absolutely remarkable thing. Peter had cut off Malchus' ear. Our Lord touches his ear and heals it and restores it. Had I been Malchus, and my ear had just been cut off, and Christ just touched my head and restored my ear, I think I would have had second thoughts about trying to take him. I would think that possibly I was on the wrong side. But our Lord simply restored his ear.

Peter's Actions Were Unwise

Consider three things. First, Peter's actions were unwise. Matthew 26, verse 52 tells what our Lord said to Peter. "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." Notice the only thing that Christ said to Peter, "put his sword up into his place." In another instance he said, "put your sword into its sheath." Now, Peter certainly acted unwisely in using the sword. And I will tell you that unwise is a very polite term.

I could have used the word stupid. I could say that Peter acted stupidly. But I'm going to stick with the word unwisely. One may act unwisely and still not act sinfully. It is our human limitations that frequently cause us to act unwisely. Simply because something is unwise does not necessarily mean that it is sinful. For years when we lived in Jessup, I drove back and forth to the church building every day. And I remember one instance when I drove from the church building to our house. I had something on my mind. I don't remember how many red lights I had to go through or how many stop signs I had to go through, but I know there was one railroad track that I had to cross. And when I got home, it dawned on me that I did not remember stopping for a red light or a stop sign or even looking both ways at the railroad track. Now, I probably did, but I didn't remember doing it.

Was that sinful? No, not necessarily. Was it unwise? Oh, yeah. You need to be conscious at a railroad track. You need to be conscious of a stop sign and its red light. But that doesn't necessarily make it sinful, just because you probably do it, but you do it without thinking. Very unwise.

How can I say that Peter's actions were unwise? In Luke 22, verse 36, our Lord said, "he that hath no sword, let him sell his garment and get one." Peter said, "Lord, here are how many swords?" Two. And our Lord just says, "It is enough." With that in mind, Matthew 26, verse 47 says, "And while he yet spake, lo, Judas, one of the twelve, came and with him a great multitude with swords, and staves from the chief priests and the elders of the people." Mark 14, verse 43 says:

This is emphasized throughout the Gospels. "And immediately while he yet spake cometh Judas, one of the twelve, and with him a great multitude with swords and staves from the chief priests and the elders and the scribes." Luke 22, verse 47: "And while he yet spake, behold, a multitude, and he that was called Judas, one of the twelve, went before them, and drew near unto Jesus to kiss him." And finally, in John 18 and verse 3, you'll read this, "Judas, that having received a band of men and officers from the chief priests and the Pharisees, cometh with lanterns and torches and weapons." It doesn't matter where you read, Scripture says, here's a great multitude, they're armed and they're angry. It is one thing to defend yourself against a multitude. It is quite another thing to start a fight with a multitude.

Practically speaking, what Peter did, not only endangered himself, but the other disciples as well. Why in the world would you want to further enrage and anger an already armed, angry multitude? There are times when discretion is the better part of valor. For instance, I'm walking down the sidewalk and two men step out and they look very menacingly. And I say, "This is my sidewalk. I'm not going to let them scare me off of it." "And if they start something, I believe I can whip both of them." And I keep walking. A few minutes, two more join them. I say, "There's four now. I still think I can take four. This is my sidewalk. And I'm not going to let them scare me off of it." I go a little further and four more join them. And you know, I get to thinking, "I might be good, but I'm not that good. You know, that sidewalk across the street belongs to me too. I think I'll just walk over there."

Does that make me a coward? No, I'm willing to fight. But I'm going to fight on my terms. I'm not going to fight on their terms. Genesis 34, verse 30 tells what Jacob said to Levi and Simeon. Shechem had raped their sister Dinah. And then they told those Shechemites, "We can't make any covenants with you and we can't let our daughter marry you unless you be circumcised."

Well, they said, "Good, we'll do that." And on the third day, when all the men were sore, Levi and Simeon went in with their swords and killed every one of them and took their goods. And you know

what Jacob told his sons? "You've made my savor to stink in the eyes of the people of the land."

"Now they're going to environ us around and cut us off." He said, "Boys, you might could have killed the men in that city, but you can't kill all of these Amorites and Hittites and Jebusites and Hivites that are around us." How long do you think two swords would hold out against an armed, angry multitude? Not very long. Christ stopped the fight. He stopped the crisis by healing Malchus' ear. Peter's actions were unwise because, first of all, they were a declaration of pride. Matthew 26, verse 31, right before all this takes place, says: "Then said Jesus unto them, All ye shall be offended because of me this night. For it is written, I will smite the shepherd, and the sheep of the flock shall be scattered abroad. But after I am risen again, I will go before you into Galilee. Peter answered and said unto him, Though all men should be offended because of thee, yet will I never be offended. Jesus said unto him, Verily I say unto thee, that this night before the cock crow, thou shalt deny me thrice. Peter said unto him, Though I should die with thee, yet I will not deny thee."

The next phrase is, "Likewise also said all the disciples." Each one told Christ they would never be offended. They would never deny Him. They would never back down. In fact, Mark 14 verse 31 is even more emphatic. That's when the Bible says it, "Peter said, But he spake more vehemently, If I should die with thee, I will not deny thee in any wise." And then you read, "Likewise also said they all." And when you get to Luke 22 and verse 30, again, they're saying, "Christ, we're not going to be offended. We'll die with you."

Matthew 21, verse 32 says, Jesus said, "For John," that is John the Baptist, "came unto you in the way of righteousness, but you believed him not."

He said to the Pharisees: "But you believed him not, but the publicans and the harlots believed him. And you, when you had seen it, repented not afterwards that you might believe."

Christ said, "You bunch of Pharisees and reprobates and hypocrites, you didn't believe John. But the harlots and the publicans, they believed him. And they repented and they changed. You saw the change. And when you had seen it, you repented not

afterwards that you might believe." Christ is telling us that we're obligated, we're responsible to learn from what God does in the lives of other people. You and I are responsible to learn from the lives of these disciples. What is one thing that we can learn? Here these disciples have banded together. They're brothers, they're friends. They know each other. And Christ says, "Look, all of you are going to be offended in Me this night and you're going to be scattered abroad." "No, Lord. No, no, no, Lord. No." "We will never ever do that. Lord, we'll die with Thee." When we're together with folks who love us and believe like we believe, we're bold and we're brave and we're courageous and we can express our manhood and our valor. But When those disciples were indeed separated, one from the other, Every one of them fell.

Proverbs 16, verse 18 says, "Pride goeth before destruction, and a haughty spirit before a fall." I've heard men say, "Well I'll tell you one thing, if this happens, bless God, I'll do such and such." You don't know what you're going to do until it happens. And it's easy to be brave when you're not in trouble. It's a lot more difficult to be brave when you are in trouble. Not only were Peter's actions a declaration of his pride, his actions were a demonstration of perceived power.

John 18, verses 4–6 show this demonstration of perceived power. "Jesus, therefore, knowing that all these things that should come upon him, went forth and said unto them, Whom seek ye? They answered him, Jesus of Nazareth. Jesus saith unto them, I am he. And Judas also, who betrayed him, stood with him. And as soon as he said unto them, I am he, they went backward and fell to the ground." What did Jesus Christ say? "I am he!" And the Scripture says when he said, "I am," they went backward and fell on the ground.

No doubt Peter was emboldened. No doubt Peter saw the multitude fall backwards and he thought this. "Now wait a minute. Wait a minute. If just a few words will make people fall backwards, how much more would a little manly display of the sword cause confusion and consternation in their ranks? I think I'll give them a little demonstration of power myself." Peter not only had a declaration of pride, but when he saw that little demonstration of

power, he thought that he could add to it. Thirdly, There was really and truly never any need to display the sword. Why? Because the disciples were never really in any real danger.

John 18, verse 7 says, "Then asked He them again, Whom seek ye? And they said, Jesus of Nazareth. Jesus answered, I have told you that I am He. If therefore you seek Me, let these go their way, that the saying might be fulfilled which ye spake of them which thou gavest Me, I have lost none." The disciples were never in any real danger.

Number one, they only wanted Christ. Number two, those disciples were still under the protection and the power of Jesus Christ. And Jesus Christ is not going to lose any of His people. He said, "the Scripture might be fulfilled. Those which thou have given me, I have lost none."

Christ told Peter in Matthew 26, "Put thy sword up into its place. For they that take the sword shall perish by the sword." How are we to understand those words? There are three possible interpretations of what our Lord meant when he said, "they that take the sword shall perish with the sword." First, it could mean this: those who use the sword to resist lawful authority may perish by the sword. And there is a lawful use of the sword according to Romans chapter 13. Secondly, it could also mean that those who use the sword against the innocent shall perish by the sword.

In other words, divine vengeance will make sure that they die. You reap what you sow. And thirdly, and the most satisfactory answer to me is this, that Peter had acted rashly in endeavoring to attack a whole band of men and his unreasonable and imprudent actions might be the occasion of his own destruction. And what Christ is telling Peter is you're acting unwisely, rashly, impetuously, and you ought not to do that.

When Christ said, "He that takes the sword shall perish by the sword," He was enunciating a legal maxim. Revelation 13, verse 10 enunciates this principle again.

"He that leadeth into captivity shall go into captivity. He that killeth with the sword must be killed with the sword. Here's the patience and the faith of the saints." Now, "he that leadeth into

captivity must go into captivity. He that killeth with the sword must perish by the sword." That principle is taken from Isaiah 33, verse 1.

> "Woe to thee that spoilest, and thou wast not spoiled, and dealest treacherously, and they dealt not treacherously with thee. When thou shalt cease to spoil, thou shalt be spoiled. And when thou shalt make an end to deal treacherously, they shall deal treacherously with thee."

It is known as the Lex Talionis, that is, the law of retribution. That's why God says, "He that taketh the sword will be killed by the sword. He that leads in captivity shall be led in captivity. He that deals treacherously shall be dealt treacherously with." Another way to say this principle is, Galatians 6, 7 and 8, you reap what you sow.

Judges chapter 1, verse 7 gives an illustration. There was a king by the name of Adonai Bezek. And Adonai Bezek had a penchant for mutilating men. He took the kings that he captured and he cut off their thumbs and their great toes and made them eat meat under his table like dogs. You say, "What in the world would you do that for?" You cut off both your big toes and you try to run, you try to balance yourself. You cut off your thumbs, you can't grasp anything, certainly not a sword. And so Adonai Bezek was captured by the Israelites, and Judges 1, verse 7 says, "And Adonai Bezek said, Threescore and ten kings," that's 70 now, 70 kings, "having their thumbs and their great toes cut off, gathered their meat under my table, as I have done, so God hath requited me." So he had his thumbs and his great toes cut off as well. Once again, that is just simply the Lex Talionis.

That is the law of retribution. First of all, Peter's actions were unwise. They were a declaration of his pride, given in a demonstration of power, there was even no need to raise the sword, because he was under Christ's protection at all times. So his actions were unwise.

Peter's Actions Were Unnecessary

Secondly, Peter's actions were unnecessary. Matthew 26, verses 52 and 53 say:

> "Then said Jesus unto him, Put up again thy sword into its place, for all they that take the sword shall perish with the

> sword. Thinkest thou that I cannot now pray to my Father, and He shall presently give me more than twelve legions of angels?"

If Peter thought that his actions were protecting Christ, he was wrong. Christ informs Peter that his actions were totally and completely unnecessary. If it had been God's will for his son to be rescued, it certainly would have been done in a much different way. It would have been done through divine intervention. Christ said, "Look Peter, I can pray and my father will get me more than twelve legions of angels."

That number, would be quite sufficient to take care of everyone in the world. You've got to remember that a legion was 6,000. He said more than 12 legions. 12 times 6 is 72,000. If it was just 12 legions, that'd be 72,000. But he said more. Isaiah 37, verse 36 tells that one angel in one night with one stroke of the sword killed 185,000 Assyrian soldiers, I can assure you that 72,000 angels would not have any trouble with the men of this world.

Christ said, "Peter, you don't understand. All I've got to do is ask. All I've got to do is move my lips. All I've got to do is wiggle my little finger. And Peter, I don't need you to protect me. I don't need you, the 12, or any number of disciples to protect me. I'm quite capable of protecting myself and my Father will see to it that I'm protected if I ask for it."

So Peter's actions were not only unwise, they were unnecessary, and thirdly, they were unenlightened. Matthew 26, verse 54 shows this. After he said in verse 53, "Thinkest thou that I cannot now pray to my Father, and he shall presently give me more than twelve legions of angels," verse 54, "but how then shall the Scriptures be fulfilled that thus it must be?" In other words, "Peter, if you saved my life, if you rescued me, how in the world will the Scriptures be fulfilled?"

Peter's Actions Were Unenlightened

Peter's actions were not only unwise and unnecessary, they were unenlightened. Peter actually did not know what he was doing when he drew the sword and smote Malchus' ear. Evidently, Peter was still under the impression that the Messiah was not to die. Which of

course was contrary to scripture. John 18, verse 11 says, "Then said Jesus unto Peter, Put up thy sword into his sheath. The cup which my Father hath given me, shall I not drink it?" Peter, you can't save my life. I came to die. Peter evidently was still under the same unbiblical impression described in Matthew 16, verse 21. "From that time forth began Jesus to show unto his disciples how that he must go into Jerusalem and suffer many things of the elders and chief priests and scribes and be killed and be raised again the third day. Then Peter took him at the end to rebuke him, saying, This shall not be unto thee, be it far from thee, Lord, this shall not be unto thee. But he turned and said unto Peter, Get thee behind me, Satan, for thou art an offence unto me, for thou savest not the things that be of God, but those that be of men." So when our Lord began to tell his disciples how he was going to die, Peter said, "Not so, Lord."

"This can never happen to you." And our Lord said, "Get thee behind me, Satan."

"not the things that be of God, but the things which be of men." The truth is, Christ came to die. He was predestined to die as a substitute for His people. He said, "the cup which my Father had given me, shall I not drink it?" In John 12 and verse 27, our Lord says, "now is my soul troubled. And what shall I say? Father, save me from this hour, for this very cause came out into the world." Jesus Christ voluntarily laid down His life. In John 10, in verse 17, He said this, "Therefore doth My Father love Me, because I laid down My life, that I might take it again. No man taketh it from Me. I lay it down of Myself. I have power to lay it down. I have power to take it again. This commandment have I received of My Father." No man could take His life. Christ gave His life willingly. If Peter had saved Christ, how then would the Scriptures have been fulfilled? How would redemption have been accomplished? Christ came to save His people. And in order to save them, He must die as their substitute.

Matthew 1 verse 21 tells us, talking about Mary, "And she shall bring forth a son, and thou shalt call his name Jesus. Why? For He shall save His people from their sins." Christ would not be saved by Peter. Christ would not be saved by all the disciples. Christ would not be saved by every man in the world. He came to die. And as Scripture says in 1 Peter 3 and verse 18, "He died the just for the

unjust that He might bring us to God." While Peter's actions were not sinful, they certainly were unwise, unnecessary, and unenlightened. And Christ did not need protecting or defending.

Applications: Self-Defense Remains Biblical

Christ did not rebuke Peter for having a sword. In fact, Christ said, "he that hath no sword, let him sell his garment and get one." Christ did not rebuke him for wanting to defend himself. What Christ rebuked Peter for was his unwise, unnecessary, and unenlightened actions in regard to the use of the weapon.

First, The case of Jesus Christ is unique. There's none like it. Therefore, it's improper to take this special case and say that because Christ would not allow Peter to defend Him that all self-defense is wrong, wicked, unbiblical, and unjustified. No. Christ is a unique case. He didn't come to be delivered. He came to die. And moreover, Christ did indeed use a form of self-defense before His death.

He used avoidance in John 7 in verse 1. Because when the Jews tried to kill him, and of course it was not his time to die, he would not walk in Jerusalem anymore, the Bible said. He wouldn't go there. He just stayed out of their way. That's a form of self-defense. Avoidance. If I see a dozen men coming down the street with the intent of attacking me, I'm going to avoid them. That's self-defense. Again, Christ was not forbidding the use of weapons of self-defense, although He certainly forbade the unwise, unnecessary, and unenlightened use of them. In fact, the Bible says in James 1 in verse 19, "Wherefore, my beloved brethren, let every man be swift to hear, slow to speak, and slow to wrath." Now, if we're slow to wrath, what does that mean?

It means we'll think things through before we act. A modern day proverb goes like this. "Don't let your mouth overload your brain." Stop and think before you speak and before you act. Christ did not say to Peter, when Peter drew that sword, "Get thee behind me Satan." He did not say to Peter, "Throw that thing away." He didn't say to Peter, "Don't touch that sword. Don't have a sword." He didn't say any of those things.

He just said, "Put it back up into its sheath. Now is not the time to use it." Some have objected and said, "Look pastor, if everybody carried weapons, man we would turn our society back in the days of the Old West." I've heard that one. The Old West was not nearly as bad as Hollywood makes it out to be. You would do better to trust history and do your own research than to believe the movies.

Richard Schenkman, author of Legends, Lies, and Cherished Myths of American History wrote that in 1878, the heyday of the cattle drive boomtowns in Kansas, Dodge City, remember Matt Dillon was there, Dodge City recorded just five homicides. It goes further, Ryan McMaken noted that all the big cattle towns of Kansas combined saw a total of 45 murders during the period of 1870 to 1885. Dodge City alone saw 15 people die violently from 1876 to 1885, an average of 1.5 per year.

Would it not be wonderful if we could go back to the days of the old west? Remember that an armed society is a polite society. I have a friend that lives down in Florida. He's a pastor. He's a little fella. He's an ex-Marine. I don't know how he got in the Marines. I mean, as small as he is, but he was in there. And back during the days, they wore these little pouches. Belly bags, pouches worn in the front. He wore one, and he probably still does. But he and his wife and two children were in a restaurant. And as they were walking out, a man came by, pushed into them, cursed them, and stormed out the door. When my friend got outside, he told the man, he said, "Sir," he said, "wait a minute."

He said, "You owe me an apology and you owe my family an apology." He said, "Not only am I a Christian, but" he said, "I'm a pastor." He said, "You've cursed and taken God's name in vain." And he said, "And you've run into us and you were rude and we want an apology." The man cursed him again, said he wasn't going to apologize. My friend said, "Sir, do you see my hand in this pouch? If I pull it out, one of us is either going to the hospital or the morgue, and it will not be me. Would you like to reconsider and apologize?" When it dawned on that man what was in that pouch, he immediately began apologizing, asking forgiveness.

If folks are armed, you will indeed be polite. I have another friend. He's a retired probation parole officer. He was going Savannah the

back way. He was the third car behind the school bus. There's a little old couple in the front car, an elderly couple in the front car, a young couple in the second car, and he was alone in the third car. And a big old boy got off that bus. Looked like a football player, about 18, probably about in the fourth grade. And the bus was stopped. That bus is not going to go until he clears the road. He came back to the first car where that old couple was. He drew his hand back and slapped the windshield. And of course, that old couple's trying to roll up their windows and lock their doors. My friend saw it.

He just opened his briefcase, rolled his window down. The big old boy came to the second car, slapped the window again. All the kids on the bus are laughing. That young couple trying to get their windows up and the doors locked. He came back to my friend's car. And when he drew his hand back, my friend just threw that .38 right out the window and said, "Hmm, I've been waiting on you. Slap my window now." The boy threw his books down and turned and ran. You say, "Boy, that was mean." That wasn't mean.

He probably saved that boy's life. Now, he wasn't going to shoot the boy. But I can assure you of one thing. You'll think twice if you have any inclination that someone is armed. An armed society is a polite society. The third application is this. Self-defense in defense of others is biblical and is required by the law of God. Taking a life in the act of self-defense is not murder if it is necessary and if it's done in obedience to the sixth commandment. Remember the positive side of the sixth commandment is "Thou shalt preserve life."

There is no contradiction between the Old Testament and the New Testament. And when Christ told Peter to put his sword back up into his sheath, it was not a condemnation of weaponry. It was not a condemnation of self-defense. It certainly was not a condemnation of the law of God. For Scripture does not contradict Scripture. And Christ said He came to fulfill the law, not to abolish it. Father, in the name of Jesus Christ, we ask for Your grace and Your mercy. We do pray, Lord, that You would teach us, instruct us, and build us up in the most holy faith. Enable us, Lord, to know the truth of Thy Word, that we may live and act accordingly. Give us grace, O Lord, that we may serve Thee acceptably with reverence and godly fear. In Thy name we ask and pray. Amen.

CHAPTER 3

The Biblical Doctrine of Self-Defense

Introduction and Reading of the Four Gospel Accounts

Open your Bible tonight to four passages, and mark them down, because we will be using each one. The first is Matthew 26, the second is Mark 14, the third is Luke 22, and the fourth is John 18. You will see how each of these passages relates to the subject. I began a message last night on the biblical doctrine of self-defense. I am going to continue that tonight, dealing with some objections to the biblical doctrine of self-defense.

In Matthew 26, beginning with verse 51, we read: “And behold, one of them, which were with Jesus, stretched out his hand and drew his sword and struck the servant of the high priest and smote off his ear. Then said Jesus unto him, Put up again thy sword into his place, for all that take the sword shall perish with the sword.”

In Mark 14, beginning with verse 47: “And one of them that stood by drew a sword and smote a servant of the high priest and cut off

his ear. And Jesus answered and said to them, Are you come out as against a thief with swords and with staves to take me?"

Now, in Luke 22, beginning with verse 49—and hold this passage, because we will be coming back to it very frequently—we read: "When they which were about him saw what would follow, they said unto him, Lord, shall we smite with the sword? And one of them smote the servant of the high priest and cut off his ear. And Jesus answered and said, Suffer ye thus far. And he touched his ear and healed him. Then Jesus said to the chief priests and captains of the temple and the elders which were come to him, Be ye come out as against a thief with swords and staves?"

Finally, in John 18, beginning with verse 10: "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? Then the band and the captain of the officers of the Jews took Jesus and bound him."

Last night, I began the message on the biblical doctrine of self-defense, and I pointed out that all through Scripture it is biblical.

It is right not only to defend one's life, but one's family, his friends and neighbors, even to the point of taking life, if necessary. The sixth commandment, Thou shalt not kill, has a positive. Every negative has a positive. And the positive of the sixth commandment is Thou shalt preserve life. So I proved one point last night, and that is that self-defense is obligatory. That is, we are obligated to defend ourselves. If we allow ourselves to be killed, without defending ourselves or at least attempting to defend ourselves, we're violating the sixth commandment.

You may lose the fight, but you still must fight based upon the Word of God. Now, I've read four passages tonight from the New Testament, and I ask that you hold these passages because we will be turning back and forth and using each one of them, hopefully in examining these passages. We're going to do away with all the objections, or at least the main objections against the biblical doctrine of self-defense.

The Leading Objection: Why Did Christ Tell Peter to Put Away His Sword?

Now, let me just try to phrase, I suppose, what I would consider the leading objection to what I taught last night. The leading objection is usually put in the form of a question that goes like this: If self-defense is obligatory, if self-defense is absolutely necessary to defend your life and the lives of others, why then did Christ tell Peter to put his sword back into its sheath? We could also ask the question like this: If self-defense is mandatory, if it's absolutely necessary, why did Peter and the other apostles not simply use their swords and hack their way to safety and deliver themselves and Jesus Christ as well? Well, certainly those are good questions and they deserve to be answered.

So I ask that you look in your Bible to the book of Luke, chapter 22, and let's begin there. Luke, chapter 22. And let's begin reading with verse 35 and verse 36, and we'll work our way through this passage. Luke, chapter 22. Verse 35, and he said unto them, so Christ is now speaking to his disciples, and he said unto them, When I sent you without purse and scrip and shoes, lacked ye anything? And they said, Nothing. Then said he unto them, But now he that hath a purse, let him take it, and likewise his scrip, and he that hath no sword, let him sell his garment and buy one.

The Command to Buy a Sword in Luke 22:36

Now, I want you to note, our Lord asked a simple question. He says, When I sent you out without purse, without scrip, without shoes, without anything, did you lack anything? And the answer was absolutely nothing.

You must always allow Scripture to interpret Scripture, and you must always interpret Scripture in its context. There is not only an immediate context, but also a remote context of Scripture as well. If you look back in your Bibles to Luke 9, you will see that which our Lord alluded to when He asked the disciples whether they lacked anything when He sent them out without the necessities. In Luke 9:3, He said to them, “Take nothing for your journey, neither staves, nor scrip, neither bread, neither money, neither have two coats

apiece." In Luke 10:4, He again said, "Carry neither purse, nor scrip, nor shoes, and salute no man by the way."

When Christ initially sent out His disciples, He told them they had need of absolutely nothing. They were not to prepare anything or take anything with them; He was going to take care of all their needs.

So we ask the simple question in verse 35: Do you recall, do you remember, that when I sent you out without all of these things, you had absolutely need of nothing? They answered, "That's exactly right. We did not have need of anything." When He told them not to take any staves with them, a stave would be considered a walking stick or staff. That walking stick could be used for a number of reasons, not only to aid walking, but also as a weapon of self-defense. Our Lord said, "When I sent you out, you did not have need of anything. You lacked for absolutely nothing," and they confessed that this was right.

But watch closely in Luke 22:35: "When I sent you without purse and scrip and shoes, lacked ye anything?" And they said, "Nothing." Now watch verse 36: "Then said he unto them, But now." Isn't that interesting? "But now." Mr. Gaynor has taught Greek for a number of years. There are two little words used in the Greek language for "but": alla, spelled A-L-L-A, and de, spelled D-E. Whenever the word alla is used, it indicates a strong contrast. Thus Christ contrasts what He did in verse 35: He sent them without anything, and they lacked nothing. But now He makes a strong contrast. Look what He says: "He that hath a purse, let him take it. And likewise, a scrip. And he that hath no sword, let him sell his garment and buy one."

What our Lord is saying is this: There is a decisive change that is about to take place. "As you go forth," says Christ, "you take your purse." The purse was a pouch or depository used for money. He also said, "You take your scrip with you." A scrip was not paper money; it was a wallet or leather pouch normally used to place food in.

Then He says, "He that hath no sword, let him sell his garment and get one." The word for garment is himation. It was the most needed and necessary garment, the outer garment, and it could be used in a multitude of ways. It was not only the most needed and necessary; oftentimes it was the most expensive and most desirable.

Our Lord said, “In time past, I sent you out without anything and you lacked nothing.” But now He says, “You take your purse, you take your pouch, and you take your garment, the most valued garment that you have, and sell it and buy yourself a sword.” Literally, here is what He is saying: Whatever it takes, get a weapon.

Now you have to ask the question: Why this sudden demand for change? Why now is our Lord emphasizing that the disciples must carry their own food, their own money, their own sword, and their own protection? Why is He making the change now? Look in verse 37. Our Lord says, “For I say to you that this that is written must yet be accomplished in me. And he was reckoned among the transgressors: for the things concerning me have an end.”

The Reason for the Change: Christ's Impending Death and Persecution

Here is why the change is coming about: “I am about to be crucified. I am going to be counted as a criminal. I am going to be numbered with the transgressors.” You do not have to be a criminal in order to be counted as a criminal.

Christ was the sinless Son of God. Look at the apostles. They were oftentimes arrested and thrown in prison. When we hear today that someone is arrested, somewhere in the back of our mind we tend to think, well, they had to do something wrong to be arrested. That is certainly not the case. If you really and truly want to be arrested today, you do not have to go out and rob a bank, shoot anyone, or kidnap someone. You just stand for righteousness, open your mouth, and speak out and expose the wickedness and corruption going on in our government and society today. Sooner or later, you are going to be arrested. You do not have to do anything wicked to be arrested. Our Lord certainly did not do anything wicked. He was the sinless Son of God, and Jesus Christ came to die for sinners.

He knew that He was going to die for the sins of His people. He knew that He would no longer be around to provide for and protect His disciples. Therefore, what He was telling them in verse 36 was, “You are now responsible to provide for yourself. When I was here, when I was with you, I took care of you. I provided for you. I protected you. But I am about to be taken away from you. Now, you

get your own money, you get your own scrip, and you get your own sword."

Why would our Lord tell His disciples that? In John 15, beginning with verse 18, our Lord says this to His disciples: "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."

Now our Lord is saying, look, the disciples are going to be treated like their Lord. If you live in a society that counts Jesus Christ as a criminal, is it not likely they're also going to count his followers as criminals as well? If you live in a society that hates Jesus Christ, is not that society going to hate the followers of Jesus Christ? So if the master is despised, detested, and rejected, the followers will be treated in the same way. Thus, in Luke chapter 22, our Lord is preparing his disciples for troublesome times ahead.

He's telling them they must prepare, fulfill, and assume all responsibility. Our Lord is also teaching them to use all reasonable means in accomplishing his work, conducting themselves, and protecting their lives. The miracles they had experienced in times past would not continue on the same level after he was gone.

If you look in your Bibles holding Luke 22, but look in the book of Acts chapter 2 and verse 22. And here is a statement concerning Christ and certainly he was indeed the miracle worker, but notice if you would in Acts chapter 2 and verse 22. The Word of God says, Ye men of Israel, hear these words; Jesus of Nazareth, a man approved of God among you by miracles and wonders and signs, which God did by him in the midst of you, as ye yourselves also know. So here's what Christ is telling his disciples: Look. It is true, I'm the miracle worker, but the miracle worker is about to be taken from you. I'm going to be counted with the transgressors. I'm going to be counted as a criminal. I'm going to be put to death.

Therefore, you must assume responsibilities for yourself. And let me tell you, yes, there are miracles, even miracles today. But the miracles do not exist in the same degree that they did when our Lord was alive upon this earth. And so Christ is just simply assuming once again and stating once again, that we must take responsibility for the totality of our lives. Now, let me just take a few moments to repeat something that I said last night. I'll say it in a different way: we have to have a proper balance in our lives. By proper balance in our lives, I simply mean this: We must use the means that God has provided for us. And at the same time, we must trust God to make those means effectual.

Balancing Means and Trust in God

Very simply, when people trust in themselves, when they trust in their money, when they trust in their weapons, what they are doing, in essence, is demonstrating nothing less than pride and arrogance and self-deception. You're saying, I'm fully capable of taking care of myself without God. Well, if that's the case, I want to challenge you to try to grow a crop without him. I want to challenge you to try to live without breathing his air. You see, it's absolutely impossible, and it's nothing but pure arrogance. But on the other hand, if you and I do not use the means that God has provided and has given to us, it is equally sinful, for it is a failure to use those means, and it's tempting God.

It's like when the devil tempted our Lord, said, Cast thyself down from the pinnacle of the temple. Why don't you know he'll give his angels charge over thee, lest thou dash thy foot against a stone? And our Lord said, Get thee behind me, Satan. No, I'm not going to do that. What I'm talking about using means: you remember when the Philistines came upon Samson. Samson did not have an AK-47. He didn't have an AR-15. He didn't have a Glock. He didn't have anything.

And he looked down, and there was the jawbone of an ass. With the jawbone of an ass, that which God provided in Judges chapter 15 and verse 16, he slew a thousand Philistines.

All I’m trying to say is this: it doesn’t matter what you have. If the blessings of God are upon it, it will be effectual. So the biblical

solution is this: We must use whatever means God has ordained, and at the same time, we must trust God to make those means effectual. We must not, on the one hand, tempt God, and on the other hand, we must not assume to be arrogant and boastful and proud.

Now, in Luke 22, verse 36, he says, "But now he that hath a purse, let him take it." The interesting thing is that when he says, "Let him," it is in the imperative mode, which means it is a command. God commands him to take the purse, to take the scrip, and to take his garment, sell it, and get a sword.

In verse 38, the disciples answer, "Lord, behold, here are two swords." And he said unto them, "It is enough."

Now, I'm going to be absolutely honest with you. These three little words, "It is enough," have been variously interpreted. What in the world was meant when our Lord said, "It is enough"? Christ did not say that two swords were enough. He just said, "It is enough."

We oftentimes read into Scripture. I heard a preacher speak this past week, and he said that God knocked Saul of Tarsus off his horse on the road to Damascus. But go back and read Acts chapter 9. There is no mention of a horse. It is true that he was knocked to the earth, but it does not say that he was on a horse. We assume that he was riding one, but we do not know that for a fact. So Christ is not saying here that two swords are enough. He simply says, "It is enough." What in the world does that phrase mean?

Let me give you three possible interpretations, and I'll tell you which one I favor. First, "It is enough" could refer to the fact that enough has been said on the subject. Our Lord may be saying, "I don't want to talk about it anymore. That's enough." Secondly, it could refer to the fact that they would understand later exactly what he meant.

But thirdly, and I probably lean this way, the meaning would be that two swords would be sufficient to demonstrate His purpose and His teaching. In other words, those two would suffice for what He wanted to teach them at that time. Luke 22, verse 49, says, "When they which were about him saw what would follow, they said unto him, Lord, shall we smite with the sword?"

The Disciples' Question: 'Lord, Shall We Smite with the Sword?'

Our Lord had asked the disciples, “When I sent you without anything, did you lack anything?” No. But now our Lord said, “Here’s a change. You carry your money, you carry your food, you sell your garment, you get a sword.” Why? “I’m going to be crucified. I’m going to die for the sins of my people. Get your sword.” The disciples answered, “Lord, here are two swords.” It’s sufficient. It will do to teach them exactly what He wanted to teach them at that time.

In other words, when they came to verse 49, when they who were about Him saw what would follow, knowing now that they had two swords, they said unto Him, “Lord, shall we smite with the sword?” It did not take the disciples long to figure out exactly what our Lord meant when He told them to sell their garments and to buy a sword. When they who were about Him saw what would follow, they recognized instantly and immediately that they were in danger. Undoubtedly, they assumed that now was the time to use the sword.

Luke says, “When they which were about him saw what would follow.” Matthew gives us the larger picture. Matthew 26, verse 47: “And while he yet spake, lo, Judas, one of the twelve, came, and with him a great multitude with swords and staves from the chief priests and elders of the people.”

When you are surrounded by an armed, angry mob, it does not take long to figure out, “I need some protection. I need some help. I’m in trouble here.” It is like walking down the street, minding your own business, and suddenly seeing four or five thugs step out of an alley with baseball bats, log chains, knives, and brass knuckles. The average man does not have to wonder whether he should keep going or cross the street. He recognizes that danger lies ahead and must figure out something very quickly.

Interestingly enough, Luke is the only Gospel that records this question. In Luke 22:49 we read: “And when they which were about him saw what would follow, they said unto him, Lord, shall we smite with the sword?”

It is unclear exactly when this question was asked. Was it before Peter struck the first blow, or afterward? Were the others determining whether they should join in and begin a fight? "When they which were about him saw what would follow, they said, Lord, shall we smite with the sword?"

What did Peter accomplish? He pulled out the sword and struck off the ear of Malchus. According to John 18:10, Scripture identifies the swordsman as Peter and the man he struck as Malchus. I have been asked on several occasions, "Pastor, do you really think that Peter meant to cut off Malchus's ear?" My answer is no. I do not think he meant to cut off his ear. I believe he was aiming for the center of his head; he just missed. He meant to do more than cut off his ear.

Look at Luke 22:50-51: "And one of them smote the servant of the high priest and cut off his ear, cut off his right ear. And Jesus answered and said, Suffer ye thus far. And he touched his ear and healed him." When our Lord said, "Suffer ye thus far," the context indicates that He was saying, "Resist no further. Don't do any more fighting. Stop right there. Allow them to take me. This is what I want."

Peter's Actions Were Unwise

Christ said to Peter, "Put up thy sword." Peter had cut off Malchus's right ear, and Jesus said, "Suffer ye thus far," then touched his ear and healed him.

Let me ask you a question. After Peter had cut off Malchus's ear, and our Lord looked at Peter and said, "Suffer ye thus far," was that a rebuke to Peter? The answer is no. It was not a condemnation of Peter. I do not believe Christ's words can be taken as denouncing either what Peter did or the biblical doctrine of self-defense. I am going to explain that momentarily.

But notice what our Lord did after Peter cut off Malchus's ear. He said, "Suffer ye thus far," and then touched his ear and healed him. Look at the circumstance. If I were with an angry, armed mob and had come out to capture a man, to imprison him, to arrest him, or to do him harm, and suddenly someone cut off my ear, then Christ

looked at Peter and said, “That’s enough,” and either reached down and put my ear back on or merely touched it and healed it instantly, I think I would have second thoughts. I would wonder, Am I in the right place and with the right crowd? Am I fighting against the wrong man? I do not know what went through Malchus’s mind, but I know what would have gone through mine.

Our Lord said to Peter, “Suffer ye thus far.” Nor can we view these words, or Christ’s command to Peter to put his sword back in the scabbard, as denouncing self-defense or denouncing what Peter did. Now let me explain this passage.

Peter's Actions Were Unwise

I want you to consider three things with me. The first one is this: Peter’s actions were unwise. I chose that word carefully. Peter’s actions were unwise. In Matthew 26:52, after Peter cut off Malchus’s ear, Jesus said, “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.”

Peter certainly acted unwisely in using the sword. I could use another word and say he acted stupidly, but “unwise” is sufficient, and I will stay with that word. Yet understand this: one may be unwise and not necessarily be sinful. It is our human limitations that frequently cause us to act unwisely. We do stupid things.

Driving from church to our house, I encountered numerous red lights, stop signs, and railroad tracks. I had things on my mind. When I got home, it suddenly dawned on me that I did not remember stopping at a red light or stop sign. I did not even remember looking both ways when I crossed the track. I know I did, but I do not remember any of it.

Am I telling you that it is wise to drive down the road without thinking? No, it is not wise. It was not necessarily sinful, but it was certainly unwise—something I would call very stupid. Yet simply because you are unwise in something does not necessarily mean that you are sinful. How, then, can I say that Peter’s actions were unwise?

Remember Luke chapter 22 and verse 38. Our Lord said, “He that hath no sword, let him sell his garment, and get one.” The disciples

said, “Lord, here are two swords.” So the disciples then had two swords.

Now look at Matthew 26:47. Here is how we can say that Peter’s actions were unwise: “And while he yet spake, lo, Judas, one of the twelve, came, and with him a great multitude with swords and staves from the chief priests and the elders of the people.” Look also at Mark 14:43: “And immediately, while he yet spake, cometh Judas, one of the twelve, and with him a great multitude with swords and staves from the chief priests and the scribes and the elders.” In Luke 22 and John 18, you still find a great multitude of armed men.

They were angry, upset, and armed to the teeth. What does Peter do? He draws a sword and starts a fight. It is one thing to defend yourself against a multitude; it is quite another thing to start a fight with a multitude. Practically speaking, what Peter did endangered all the disciples. Why would you further anger an already angry, armed mob?

Remember Genesis 34: Shechem and Hamor. Shechem defiled Jacob’s daughter Dinah. Simeon and Levi told Shechem, “You want to marry with us, but you have to be circumcised. We can’t intermarry with uncircumcised people.” All the men consented to be circumcised. On the third day, when they could barely move, Simeon and Levi went in and slew every man in the city.

When Jacob found out what had happened, he said, “Boys, you’ve made my savor to stink in the inhabitants of the land. Now they will environ us around and cut us off”—in other words, they would kill them. God sovereignly protected Jacob, but what Simeon and Levi did certainly was unwise, with probably a good deal of sin involved as well. Why anger and endanger an entire family when you could not fight a vast multitude? Peter acted unwisely. Christ stopped the fight with His words, “Suffer ye thus far,” and He stopped it by restoring Malchus’s ear.

So you have to ask yourself: What would encourage Peter to draw a sword and start a fight against such enormous odds? First of all, his actions were a declaration of pride.

Matthew 26:31 says, “Then said Jesus unto them, All ye shall be offended because of me this night: for it is written, I will smite the

shepherd, and the sheep of the flock shall be scattered abroad." "But after I am risen again, I will go before you into Galilee." Peter answered and said unto him, "Though all men should be offended because of thee, yet will I never be offended." Jesus said unto him, "Verily I say unto thee, That this night, before the cock crow, thou shalt deny me thrice." Peter said unto him, "Though I should die with thee, yet will I not deny thee."

Notice this phrase: "Likewise also said all the disciples." Our Lord told them what would happen before the night was over: He would be taken, and they would be scattered. Peter said, "No, sir, not me. I will never deny you. I will never forsake you. I will die with you. I will not let anyone take you." Likewise, they all said the same thing. Mark 14:31 records it again: "But he spake more vehemently, If I should die with thee, I will not deny thee in any wise. Likewise also said they all." Luke 22:33 records the same declaration: each one vowed that he would die rather than be scattered and be offended in Christ. It was a declaration of pride.

We have to benefit from the actions of these disciples. One of our biggest problems as Christians is that we never benefit from the work of God in the lives of others. Do you remember what our Lord told those Pharisees in Matthew 21:32? "John came unto you in the way of righteousness, preaching repentance, but ye believed him not."

"But the publicans and the harlots believed him: and ye, when ye had seen it, repented not afterward, that ye might believe." They saw firsthand the work of God in the lives of others. Though they did not believe John, the publicans and harlots believed him, and these people saw the change in their lives. Yet when they saw it, they did not repent and believe. Our Lord said that we are responsible to benefit from the work God does in the lives of others. Whether it is good or bad, we are still responsible to learn. We need to learn this simple principle from these disciples.

When these disciples were alone with Jesus Christ, or surrounded by their friends and fellow believers, they were bold, brazen, brash, and courageous. "We will never forsake thee. We will never deny thee, Lord. We will die with thee." Yet when they were separated from their brethren, they fell one by one. Our pride will bring us low.

I have heard many Christian men brag about what they will do in a certain situation. My advice to them is the same advice that wicked Ahab gave to the king of Syria: “Let not him that girdeth on his harness boast himself as he that putteth it off.” The battle had not been fought yet. Do not brag about what you are going to do, because you do not know what you are going to do. “The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked.”

The Bible says, “Pride goeth before destruction, and an haughty spirit before a fall.” We can get together and say, “We’ll do this and we’ll do that.” But let the ball and chains come and the bullets start flying, and it is a horse of a different color. First of all, what made Peter pull out that sword and strike? It was a declaration of pride.

Secondly, his actions were also a demonstration of perceived power. Look in your Bibles to John chapter 18. Judas, having received a band of men and officers from the chief priests and Pharisees, cometh thither with lanterns and torches and weapons. Jesus therefore, knowing all things that should come upon him, went forth and said unto them, “Whom seek ye?” They answered, “Jesus of Nazareth.” Jesus saith unto them, “I am he.” And Judas also, which betrayed him, stood with them. As soon then as he had said unto them, “I am he,” they went backward and fell to the ground.

When our Lord says, “Whom seek ye?” and they answer, “Jesus of Nazareth,” He says, “I am he,” and they go backward and fall to the ground. Think about this. If you were a disciple of Christ and were there when Christ spoke those words, and all He did was say, “I am,” and they went backward and fell to the ground, you would have perceived the power there. You might have thought, If the words of Christ will drive these men to the ground, how much more will a manly display of power and a little swordplay put the fear of God in them? Undoubtedly, Peter probably thought, Now would be a good time to act before they regain their composure. There was a perception of power there—not only pride, but power.

But notice, thirdly: in reality, there was not even any reason for Peter to pull the sword. John 18, beginning with verse 7, says: “Then asked he them again, Whom seek ye? And they said, Jesus of Nazareth. Jesus answered, I have told you that I am he: if therefore ye seek me, let these go their way: that the saying might be fulfilled,

which he spake, Of them which thou gavest me have I lost none." After that, Peter drew the sword.

These disciples were under the protection and authority of Jesus Christ. Christ had never forsaken His own and never will forsake His own. The multitude were not after Peter, nor were they after any of the other disciples. They were after Christ, and Christ had identified Himself: "I'm he."

"If you want me, take me. Let these go their way." Now note the words of our Lord in Matthew 26. Go back to verse 52, because Peter has pulled the sword and cut off Malchus's ear. Our Lord says in verse 52, "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." Peter, after seeing the power of Christ, draws the sword and cuts off Malchus's ear. Christ heals him and tells him, "Put my sword back into its place." Then He says, "Those that take the sword will perish with the sword."

Christ Did Not Condemn Self-Defense or Weapons

Notice what our Lord did say in verse 52. He told Peter, "Put up again thy sword into his place." But notice what Christ did not say. He did not say, "Throw that thing away, boy. Don't ever touch that thing. That sword is evil." He never said, "Get thee behind me, Satan." He never said, "Thou shalt not kill." No, He did not say any of those things. He simply said, "Peter, put it up," indicating that now was not the time to use it.

There is nothing inherently sinful, evil, or wicked in weapons. I could have a .357 laying up here, an M1 laying up here, or a bazooka laying up here. Those weapons are not sinful in and of themselves. Nothing material is. Sin is not anything material; sin is in man. Therefore, our Lord did not say that those weapons were sinful at all.

But notice that our Lord did issue a legal maxim: "Put up again thy sword into his place: for all they that take the sword shall perish with the sword." What does that mean? Several interpretations have been offered. First, it could mean that those who use the sword to resist lawful authority shall die by the sword. Certainly, according to Romans chapter 13, the civil magistrate is to be God's minister of

justice, and he does have the power of the sword. Secondly, it could also mean that those who use a sword against innocent people shall also perish by the sword.

Divine vengeance will make them reap exactly what they have sown. But, thirdly, I believe the more satisfactory explanation and interpretation is that Peter acted rashly and unwisely in attacking a whole band of men, and his unseasonable and imprudent actions may have caused his own destruction. Peter, why in the world are you going to draw a sword when you have a whole multitude here? You cannot fight everybody. Do not start something. Do not be stupid. I believe that is a good interpretation. Notice, however, that Christ is speaking against Peter's rash, impetuous actions.

This legal maxim is repeated in Revelation 13:10: "He that leadeth into captivity shall go into captivity: he that killeth with the sword must be killed with the sword. Here is the patience and the faith of the saints." He that leadeth into captivity shall go into captivity; he that killeth with the sword must be killed with the sword.

This maxim originated in Isaiah 33:1: "Woe to thee that spoilest, and thou wast not spoiled; and dealest treacherously, and they dealt not treacherously with thee: when thou shalt cease to spoil, thou shalt be spoiled; and when thou shalt make an end to deal treacherously, they shall deal treacherously with thee."

This is known as the lex talionis of Scripture—the law of retribution. God always makes the punishment fit the crime. One quick illustration appears in Judges 1. Those who take the sword will perish by the sword; it is the lex talionis: you reap what you sow. God granted His people victory, and the Bible says: "And Judah went up; and the LORD delivered the Canaanites and the Perizzites into their hand: and they slew of them in Bezek ten thousand men. And they found Adoni-bezek in Bezek: and they fought against him, and they slew the Canaanites and the Perizzites. But Adoni-bezek fled; and they pursued after him, and caught him, and cut off his thumbs and his great toes."

Now try walking without your big toes, and try holding a sword without your thumbs. Adoni-bezek said, "Threescore and ten kings, that's 70 kings, having their thumbs and their great toes cut off,

gathered their meat under my table: as I have done, so God hath requited me." Let me give you a simpler explanation of the lex talionis: you reap what you sow.

What Peter has done is this: He either acted without consulting Christ, or he acted without waiting for authority or permission from Christ to act. In either case, he was unwise. Even if you have to defend yourself with a weapon and lawfully kill someone, the truth is that the use of a weapon, even legally and lawfully, always entails legal consequences, even when it is used in self-defense.

Christ is saying, "Peter, you have just acted unwisely in this instance." You do not draw a sword against a multitude of armed men. You do not start something. You might try to finish it if they attack you, but you do not intentionally anger a group of armed men.

Peter's Actions Were Unnecessary and Unenlightened

Secondly, Peter's actions were unnecessary. In Matthew 26:52, our Lord says, "Put up again thy sword into his place: for all they that take the sword shall perish with the sword." Then He asks, "Thinkest thou that I cannot now pray to my Father, and he shall presently give me more than twelve legions of angels?"

If Peter thought he was protecting Christ, he was wrong. Christ informs Peter that his actions were not only unwise but unnecessary. If the Son of God was to be rescued, it would have been done through divine intervention. Christ said, "Peter, put your sword back up. Don't you know that I could ask and have at my disposal more than twelve legions of angels?"

A legion was 6,000. More than twelve legions would have been 72,000 angels. One angel, in one night and with one stroke of the sword, killed 185,000 Syrians. I think 72,000 would not have had too much trouble with this old world.

Christ is saying, "Look, Peter. All I have to do is ask. All I have to do is speak. Peter, I do not have to do that. I can just wiggle my little finger, and I can have at my disposal more than twelve legions of angels. Peter, I do not need the help of twelve weak, frail men, especially when only two of you have a sword." Peter's actions were not only unwise; they were certainly unnecessary.

Thirdly, look in Matthew 26 and verse 54, because Peter's actions were also unenlightened. Our Lord says, "But how then shall the scriptures be fulfilled, that thus it must be?" Christ had told him to put his sword back up. He had said that He could call and have at His disposal twelve legions of angels or more. Then He asked, "But how then shall the scriptures be fulfilled, that thus it must be?" Peter was not only unwise, and his actions were not only unnecessary; his actions were also unenlightened. He did not know what he was doing when he struck with the sword.

Years ago, I had the blessed privilege and opportunity to visit with Dr. Martin Lloyd-Jones in England. We had a wonderful conversation. I have, I suppose, read about everything he ever wrote. To be honest, I do not know whether I read this account in one of his works or whether he told it to me in conversation, but he related one of the great fires they had in London.

It was a large warehouse. He said that most people really do not know what they are doing. They had formed a bucket brigade, and people were taking buckets of water, passing them along, and pouring them on the fire. A huge, strong man, something like a blacksmith who worked with metal, ran into the building with a sledgehammer. He began beating on a metal beam that was already hot, striking it four or five times.

Finally, someone saw what he was doing and stopped him. "What are you doing? Do you not realize that if you succeed in bending that beam, you are going to bring the building down upon us? What are you doing?" The man responded, "I do not know. But under the circumstances, I thought I would be doing something." That is the way most of us are. We do not really think things through; under the circumstances, we think we ought to be doing something.

Peter, when I say that he was unenlightened, evidently had at least one time the misconception that the Messiah was not to die. He did not want Christ to die. Our Lord told Peter in John 18:11, "Put up thy sword into the sheath: the cup which my Father hath given me, shall I not drink it?" Did Peter think he was defending Christ? Probably. But Christ said, in effect, "Peter, I do not need you."

Matthew 16:21-23 shows Peter's comprehension at that time: "From that time forth began Jesus to shew unto his disciples, how that he must go unto Jerusalem, and suffer many things of the elders and chief priests and scribes, and be killed, and be raised again the third day. Then Peter took him, and began to rebuke him, saying, Be it far from thee, Lord: this shall not be unto thee. But he turned, and said unto Peter, Get thee behind me, Satan: thou art an offence unto me: for thou savourest not the things that be of God, but those that be of men."

Undoubtedly, Peter must have thought that he was defending Christ. Yet Jesus said, "The cup which my Father hath given me, shall I not drink it?" The truth is that Jesus Christ came to die. He was predestinated to die; God the Father had ordained His death and every aspect and avenue of it. He had given Christ His cup, and Christ realized that He must drink it.

In John 12:27, He said, "Now is my soul troubled; and what shall I say? Father, save me from this hour: but for this cause came I unto this hour." The Word of God tells us in John 10 that He laid down His life for His sheep: "Therefore doth my Father love me, because I lay down my life, that I might take it again."

"No man taketh it from me, but I lay it down of myself. I have power to lay it down, and I have power to take it again. This commandment have I received of my Father." He came to die. If Peter had saved Christ, how would the Scriptures have been fulfilled? How would redemption have been accomplished? Scripture says that Christ came to die to save His people. Matthew 1:21 says of Mary, "And she shall bring forth a son, and thou shalt call his name JESUS: for he shall save his people from their sins." Christ could not and would not be saved by Peter, the rest of the disciples, or the multitude of disciples. He came to die. First Peter 3:18 says that He died, the just for the unjust.

Peter's actions, while not sinful, were certainly unwise, unnecessary, and unenlightened. Christ did not need protecting or defending. Christ did not rebuke Peter for having a sword or for being prepared to use it. He rebuked him for his unwise, unnecessary, unenlightened actions in regard to the use of weapons.

So the next time someone asks, “If self-defense is obligatory, why did Christ tell Peter to put his sword back into the scabbard?” I hope you can explain it. Anytime someone raises this objection to the biblical doctrine of self-defense, understand that the case of Jesus Christ is unique. There is none like it. Therefore, it is improper to take this special case and say that Christ would not defend Himself, nor would He allow Peter to defend Him, and therefore all self-defense is unjustified, wicked, unbiblical, and wrong. No, this is a unique case. Christ came to die, and He came to obey the Father’s will in every avenue and every action.

By the way, Christ did use a means of self-defense before the time of His death. Look in your Bible at John chapter 7, verse 1: “After these things Jesus walked in Galilee: for he would not walk in Jewry, because the Jews sought to kill him.” What did Christ do? He avoided them. He stayed out of the way. Avoidance is a means of self-defense.

If I am walking down the street and see fifteen men gathering to attack me, I am going to turn and go into a building, or turn and go around the corner. I am not going to walk headstrong into them. I will avoid them. You say, “Well, you are just scared.” No, I am not scared, and I do not mind fighting, but I am going to fight when it is a little more equal, I can assure you. So Christ just stayed out of their way.

They tried to kill Him. Fine, I will just stay out of your way. Do not let someone tell you that Christ would not allow Peter to defend himself and therefore did not use self-defense. He did use self-defense. Again, by way of application, think about this: Christ is not forbidding the use of weapons. He is not forbidding the right of self-defense. What He is forbidding is the unwise, unnecessary, and unenlightened use of weapons. James 1:19 says, “Wherefore, my beloved brethren, let every man be swift to hear, slow to speak, slow to wrath.”

Practical Applications and Conclusion

What does that mean? It means you had better think things through before you act. A modern-day proverb that is equally applicable is this: Do not let your mouth overload your brain. Think before you

speak, and think before you act. When you begin to talk about self-defense, inevitably you are talking about carrying weapons, either carrying them openly or carrying them concealed.

This objection always comes up: “When you are talking about using weapons and carrying weapons, you are trying to bring us back to the days of the Old West.” Well, let me tell you something: Hollywood movies to the contrary, the Old West was much safer than we are today. Richard Shenkman, author of Legends, Lies, and Cherished Myths of American History, wrote that in 1878, the heyday of cattle-drive boomtowns in Kansas, Dodge City recorded just five homicides. Ryan McMaken noted that all the big cattle towns of Kansas combined saw a total of forty-five murders from 1870 to 1885. Dodge City alone saw fifteen people die violently from 1876 to 1885, an average of 1.5 per year. May we have the days of the Old West again. It was much safer back then.

An armed society is a polite society. One of my pastor friends who lived in Jacksonville, Florida, was a small man. He was short and probably did not weigh 130 or 140 pounds soaking wet. Believe it or not, he was an ex-Marine. How he got in the Marines, I do not know, but he had a backbone like a railroad tie.

At that particular time, little pouches were very popular, and he wore one around his waist. He and his wife and children were coming out of a restaurant when a much larger man rudely came up behind them, bumped into them, knocked them out of the way, cursed them, and took God's name in vain as he went through the door.

My young preacher friend confronted the man. He said, “Sir, you owe my wife, my children, and myself an apology. Not only are we Christians, but I am a pastor. You have cursed God and taken God's name in vain in front of my wife and children. I would like to ask you to apologize.”

The man laughed and cursed again. My young pastor friend said, “Sir, would you look where my hand is?” His hand was in that pouch. “Now, sir, if I have to bring my hand out of this pouch, one of us is going to the hospital or the morgue, and I do not think it is going to be me. Would you like to reconsider and apologize?” When the man

realized he had a weapon in the pouch, he said, "Yes, sir, I would like to reconsider. I do apologize, and I am sorry. I ask your forgiveness."

Certainly, an armed society is indeed a polite society. Let me tell you one more application. This happened, so help me. We had a man in our church who was a probation and parole officer. He was required to carry his weapon with him at all times. He was on his way to Savannah, Georgia, going down a back road, and he was behind a school bus. There were two other cars in front of him.

The school bus stopped, and this big old boy, a strapping teenager, got off the bus. He went back and slapped the windshield of the car right behind the bus. A young couple was inside. They were trying to roll up their windows and lock the doors, and everybody on the bus laughed.

All the students were laughing. So he came to the second car, containing an older couple, and slapped their window. They, too, were trying to roll up everything. Dean saw what was coming. He opened his briefcase, rolled down his window, and held on to his pistol. When that young boy came to the third car to slap the windshield, Dean threw the pistol right in his face. He said, "All right, son, go ahead, slap my windshield. I want you to." The boy dropped his books and ran.

Now you say that was bad. No, sir, that was good. It probably saved that young boy's life and probably stopped him from doing something stupid in the future. Let me tell you something, people: You let someone begin acting brashly, wickedly, and unwisely, and inevitably, invariably, he is going to come up against the wrong individual. He will find out that an armed society is not only a polite society, but one that can defend itself.

The last application is this: self-defense based upon the law of God is biblical. It is not only biblical; it is required by the law of God. If you happen to take a life in defending yourself or others, if it is necessary, it is not murder. The sixth commandment, "Thou shalt not kill," has as its positive command, "Thou shalt preserve life." You are required and responsible under God to preserve your life and the lives of others, even if it means taking another life in doing so.

Let us pray. Father, we ask Thee tonight, in the name of Jesus Christ, that Thou wouldst help us, teach us, build us up in the most holy faith, and help us to see that there is indeed a truth in Scripture: God has given us a commandment to preserve our lives and do whatever is necessary to protect ourselves and our families. Father, help us, we pray.

By Thy sovereign protection, if it comes to it, Lord, may we never have to do anything like that. Help us to understand what the Scripture teaches, so that, if necessary and needed, we would never hesitate or be in a situation where we did not know what Thy Word declared. Give us grace to serve Thee acceptably, with reverence and godly fear; give us wisdom and understanding. May we live for Thee and Thy name. We ask and pray. Amen.

CHAPTER 4

Biblical Doctrine of Self Defense

Introduction: The Need for a Worked-Out Doctrine

Our topic is the biblical doctrine of self-defense. The text is, of course, Exodus 20 and verse 13, where God literally says, “Thou shalt not kill.”

This is something that you need to know and have worked out in your mind. You need to have it understood, because if you ever get into a position where you have to defend your life or the life of anyone else, it is too late to sit there and try to figure out, “Now, Lord, what do you allow in this situation?” Usually, when you get into a life-and-death situation, you have about thirty seconds to maybe sixty seconds to respond. So you had better already know what the Word of God says, and you had better know how to defend yourself.

Historical Precedent: Armed Church Attendance in Colonial America

One of my favorite stories is about the old pilgrim pastor who was going to church. As he was walking, he was carrying his blunderbuss on his shoulder. One of the men came alongside him and said, “Preacher, let me ask you a question. Do you believe in the absolute sovereignty of God?” The preacher said, “Well, most certainly I do.”

The man said, “Preacher, let me ask you another question. Do you believe that God is in control of everything?” The pastor said, “Well, most certainly I do.” He said, “Pastor, let me ask you one more question. Do you believe that when it comes your time to die, you are going to die and there is absolutely nothing you can do about it?” He said, “Absolutely.”

The man continued, “Now, Pastor, if you believe that God is absolutely sovereign, that God is in control, and that when it has come your time to die you are going to die and there is nothing you can do about it, why are you carrying that blunderbuss on your shoulder?” The pastor said, “That’s simple: in case I meet an Indian whose time it is to die.”

So very clearly, he was informing and teaching that individual. Obviously, many people have misunderstood our forefathers because they not only carried weapons everywhere they went; they went to church armed. There is a book I would encourage you to get if you have never read it: The Sabbath in Puritan New England, written by Alice Morse Earle. I found an old copy and bought it, and then discovered that the book had recently been reprinted. It is very informative, and chapter two is especially so. It tells us that our forefathers always went armed to church, even on the Lord's Day, and also why they did so. In order to sanctify the loading of their weapons on the Lord's Day, they were instructed by their pastors not to discharge those weapons on the Lord's Day unless it was at an Indian or a wolf, which at that time were the two greatest dangers to anyone.

Trumbull, the historian of Connecticut, writes in jest concerning this Sunday arm-bearing in his McFingal. His poem is: "So once for fear of Indian beating, our grandsires wore their guns to meeting.

Each man equipped each Sunday morn with psalm book, shot, and powder horn, and looked in form as almost grand, like the ancient church militant." He was making fun of carrying arms to church. But in the formation of our nation, all bore arms to church, even on the Lord's Day.

In fact, many people do not understand that it was required. There were laws. For instance, in 1640 in Massachusetts, it was ordered that attendants at church should carry a competent number of pieces, fixed and complete, with powder and shot and sword, every Lord's Day to the meeting house. Swords were demanded then as rifles. In Connecticut, in 1643, those who failed to bring their arms to church were fined twelve cents for each offense.

We laugh at 12 cents, but 12 cents was a lot of money back then. In 1644, a law demanded that the fourth part of an armed band of trained fighting men come to church each Sunday. The sentinels were ordered to keep their matches lit for the matchlocks in case they had to use those weapons for an Indian attack. In 1692, the Connecticut legislature ordered that one-fifth of the soldiers in each town attend the Sunday meeting so that the churches might be protected. In colonial America, Cranmer, a historian, shows that church security was often mandated by law.

Hence, in 1619 here in Virginia, not only was church attendance required, but also, in the words of the law, "all such as bear arms shall bring their pieces, swords, powder, and shot with them," under penalty of a three shilling fine if they did not. This was phrased in 1623 to require that "all men that are fitting to bear arms shall bring their pieces to the church," a requirement restated and made law in 1738. Bearing arms in church was certainly not limited to the southern colonies.

An account of the Plymouth colony in 1627 tells of a Sabbath day procession up the hill to worship, with every man armed and marching three abreast. This reality is captured by George H. Boughton's famous 1867 painting of pilgrims going to church. In the mid-seventeenth century, church gun carrying was mandated by law in Plymouth: "It is enacted that every township within this government do carry a competent number of pieces fixed and complete with powder and shot and swords every Lord's Day to the

meetings, one of a house from the first of September to the middle of November, except there be some just and lawful impediment." Connecticut required church attendees to bring a musket, a pistol, or some piece with powder and shot to each meeting.

These early requirements to keep and bear arms were primarily for defense against Indians. However, there were other reasons as well. In South Carolina, a 1743 statute required every male to bring a gun and at least six rounds of ammunition to church. Other provisions required church wardens, deacons, or elders to check each man coming in to make sure that he was armed.

Many of our modern-day habits and customs actually are derived from these old days, and I noticed this when I was a boy. Of course, I mentioned to you that I was raised in church. We went to church every Sunday morning, Sunday night, Wednesday night, and any night there was a special meeting. When I was a boy, I noticed that all the men in our church sat on the ends of the pews.

I did not know why, but when I grew up, I started sitting on the edge of the pew as well. When I got married, I still sat on the edge of the pew. Then I found out there was a reason. In colonial America, every man carried his weapon to church. Those weapons were usually stacked in the aisle, and all the men sat on the ends of the pews, with the women and children on the inside. If the church was attacked, the men could simply reach over, grab their weapons, and go out in order to fight. The women and children would not be in the way, and they would be protected by the pews as well. All these weapons were basically kept at arm's length.

I particularly like this next little tidbit of history. Have you noticed that it is the custom of the pastor, after the sermon, to walk to the back door or the front door, wherever that door is, and open it? Someone says, “Yes, we know that. The pastor goes back there so he can shake hands with everyone.” Really? I do not have to walk to that door to shake your hand. If you want to shake my hand, you could walk up here just as easily as I could walk over to that door.

Do you know why that custom arose, where somebody is praying and the pastor slips out during the prayer and stands by the door? The pastor was the under-shepherd under Christ. He was

responsible for his people, and he was armed. He would always go to the door first, open it, and look out to make sure there were no Indians or wolves, and later on, British soldiers. Once he was safely out and believed everything was safe, he would summon the men, and the men would then come out, followed by the women and children. This custom of the pastor going to the door first arose for that reason. I particularly like this because the pastor always preached with his loaded weapon by his side on the pulpit.

All the other weapons were stacked in the aisle. But the pastor, who was the best shot in the community and had the best rifle, usually preached with that weapon right beside him. It was his responsibility to protect his sheep, and that was exactly what he was going to do.

This custom proved excellent, especially in 1775, at the outset of the war for independence. In fact, the Provincial Congress, or the Continental Congress, recommended that men within twenty miles of the seacoast carry their arms and ammunition with them to the meetinghouse on the Lord's Day and all other days for public worship. The wisdom of that enactment was found many times over before the war ended in 1783.

Were our forefathers right and biblical in carrying those arms? Were they right and biblical in carrying them to church? I can assure you they were right and biblical. Is there any precaution that we should take in light of the violence and everything happening today, and in light of what our forefathers experienced?

Modern Examples of Church Attacks

Consider what happened in Cape Town, South Africa, on July 25, 1993. Peter Hammond, from that area and associated with Frontline Fellowship, had one missionary in that church, Charles Van Wyk. You can read his book about it. That church was attacked by a group of terrorists. Five terrorists came to St. James Church, the largest evangelical church in Cape Town, shortly after the evening service began. One terrorist, wearing a ski mask, rolled a hand grenade into the packed assembly without warning and then opened fire with an AK-47, shooting from the hip as he sprayed the worshippers in a

deadly attack that left 12 people dead at that particular account and more than 50 severely wounded.

Another terrorist was about to lob a grenade and open fire with his AK-47, but he was deterred. These terrorists were with the Communist ANC, Nelson Mandela's group. The missionary, Charles Van Wyk, began firing at the second terrorist with the only weapon he had, a .38 revolver. He pulled out that revolver and began shooting, and the terrorists began ducking.

Finally, they all fled and got into a Mercedes. Charles Van Wyk went out and emptied his revolver into that Mercedes as they drove away.

That church averaged over a thousand in attendance on Sunday evening. The reason the other terrorist did not get to throw his hand grenade was simply because of Charles. He was ducking for cover. The police are actually giving one armed Christian man the credit for saving a hundred lives.

Let me tell you something. If you study a little history, you will find that communists and terrorists always like to attack churches, and they always like to attack homes. The reason is that is where you feel the most secure, where you believe you are safest. That is usually where people are unarmed, generally speaking, on Sunday morning. There are exceptions, I can assure you, but they are always known to terrorize churches.

So we have to ask this question: Was this missionary right in carrying his weapon to church? Was he right in defending his life? Was he right in defending the lives of other people?

Or we could ask some other questions. Were these Christians in South Africa wrong because they did not want to die? If they are Christians and understand that to be absent from the body is to be present with the Lord, were they unspiritual because they did not want to die at that particular time at the hands of the terrorists? Or we could ask it like this: Was it right for the Christians to be killed and the communists to live? Had you not rather have the Christians live and the communists die? Before we answer some of these questions, I want to give you something that happened in America. I want you to listen carefully.

February 14, 2010, Richmond, California: three hooded men walked into the Gethsemane Church of God in Christ, opened fire, and fled. A fourteen-year-old boy and a nineteen-year-old man were shot.

March 8, 2009, Maryville, Illinois: Terry Joe Sedlacek, twenty-seven, of Troy, walked into First Baptist Church and shot Pastor Fred Winters dead at point-blank range. Several church members were injured by a knife as they struggled to control him; he cut them before he was subdued.

July 27, 2008, Knoxville, Tennessee: a gunman opened fire in a church during a youth performance, killing two people and injuring seven. December 9, 2007, Colorado: three people were killed and five wounded in two shooting rampages, one at a missionary school in suburban Denver and the other at a church in Colorado Springs. The gunman in the second incident was killed by a guard. On August 12, 2007, Eiken Elam Simon opened fire at a Missouri Micronesian church, killing the pastor and two other churchgoers.

On May 20, 2007, a standoff between police and a suspect in the shooting of three people at a Presbyterian church in Moscow, Idaho, ended with three dead, including one police officer. On October 2, 2006, at an Amish school in Lancaster County, Pennsylvania, a gunman killed five girls and then himself; although it was not a church building, the school was targeted. On May 21, 2006, a man killed four people at the Jesus Christ Church in Louisiana. On February 26, 2006, a man killed two people at Zion Hope Missionary Baptist Church in Michigan; he reportedly went there looking for his girlfriend and later killed himself. On April 9, 2005, a twenty-seven-year-old airman was shot and killed at a church in College Park, Georgia, where he had once worked as a security guard. On March 12, 2005, a man entered a service of the Living Church of God in Milwaukee and opened fire, immediately killing seven people. On October 5, 2003, a woman opened fire in Turner Monumental AME Church in Kirkwood, east of Atlanta, killing the pastor and two others.

On September 16, 1999, seven young people were killed when a man opened fire during a prayer service for teens at Wedgwood Baptist Church in Fort Worth, Texas. On September 18, 2011, in

Lakeland, Florida, authorities and family members said a man shot and killed his wife at their Lakeland home and then shot two others at a nearby church. These are only some; there have been a multitude of others.

The questions are these: Is it right to defend yourself? Is it right to defend other people? Is it right to bring a weapon to church? Is it right to use it at church? You may have heard recently about a church in Texas that was attacked by a man carrying a shotgun under his long coat. He targeted, first of all, the church security team, and they were unobservant. He killed two armed men before they could get their weapons out. Then one man, from fifteen yards away, made a headshot, killed him, and stopped him from killing anyone else. That was just one of the last year. I am simply pointing out the fact that we have to deal with these issues. You need to know what in the world you can do and what you cannot do based upon the Word of God.

The Sixth Commandment: 'Thou Shalt Not Kill'

When you look at Exodus chapter 20 and verse 13, the Bible says, “Thou shalt not kill.” Literally, I want you to understand that this is God’s law. This is not Jewish law. This is not the Gemara, the Mishnah, or the Talmud. No, this is God’s law. God says, “Thou shalt not kill.” What in the world does that mean? “Thou shalt not kill” literally means, “Thou shalt not murder.” It means, “Thou shalt not take life unjustly,” or, stated another way, “Thou shalt not take life except it is on God’s terms.”

When you look at that sixth commandment in the New Testament, the Greek word there also means, “Thou shalt not murder.” Taking a life can be murder, but taking life is not always murder. There are lawful reasons given in the Bible where life can be taken. Life may be taken justly, righteously, and biblically, as long as it is taken upon God’s terms.

Without going into depth or commenting on these, I want to give you very quickly eighteen reasons why life may be lawfully and legitimately taken on God’s terms. I will not quote all the Scripture, but I have given it to you. Number one, life is to be taken for murder,

but not for accidental killings: Exodus chapter 21. Number two, life is to be forfeited for striking or cursing a parent.

Young people, listen to that. Life is to be taken for striking or cursing a parent. You will find that in Exodus 21:15, Leviticus 20:9, Proverbs 20:20, Matthew 15:4, and Mark 7:10. Our Lord quotes that as well.

Number three, life is to be taken for kidnapping. You kidnap, and God says you deserve the death penalty. You will find that in Exodus 21 and Deuteronomy 24. The death penalty is given for adultery in Leviticus chapter 20. Fifthly, the death penalty is given for incest, in Leviticus chapter 20. Sixthly, the death penalty is required and pronounced for bestiality, in Exodus 22 and Leviticus 20. Seventhly, the death penalty is required for sodomy or homosexuality, in Leviticus 20:13. The death penalty is required for unchastity, in Deuteronomy 22:20–21. Ninthly, the death penalty is required for the rape of a virgin, which we will talk about a little later, in Deuteronomy 22.

Then the death penalty is required for witchcraft. Exodus 22:18 says, “Thou shalt not suffer a witch to live.” Number eleven, the death penalty is required for offering human sacrifice. Leviticus chapter 20 and verse 11 or 21 it is. Number twelve, the death penalty is demanded for incorrigible delinquency or habitual criminality, in Deuteronomy 21:18–21. Number thirteen, the death penalty is required for blasphemy, in Leviticus 24. It is also required for Sabbath desecration, in Exodus 35 and Numbers 15. Number fifteen, the death penalty is required for the propagation of false doctrine, in Deuteronomy 13. Number sixteen, the death penalty is required for sacrificing unto false gods, in Exodus 22. Number seventeen, refusing to abide by the decision of a biblical court and denying God’s law: the death penalty is required. Deuteronomy 17:8–13. Number eighteen, failing to restore the veil of the pledge or the bailment, in Exodus 18:12–13.

There are eighteen reasons given in the Bible why life may be lawfully and justly taken on God’s terms. Whether you understand these or not, whether you agree with them or not in your mind right away, the fact is, they are biblical. They are listed here in the Bible.

So here are eighteen reasons why life may be lawfully taken on God's terms.

Self-Defense as the 19th Lawful Reason

The sixth commandment also forbids all unjust violence as well as murder. When God forbids any act, He simultaneously forbids anything and everything that would lead up to that act. If God says, "Thou shalt not steal," He is also forbidding me to covet, to lust, and even to think about stealing. When God says, "Thou shalt not murder," He forbids hatred, anger, ill will, and anything that would lead to that act.

Thus, when we consider the sixth commandment—"Thou shalt not kill," or "Thou shalt not murder"—we understand it to mean, "Thou shalt not take life, except on God's terms." I have given you eighteen reasons why life can be lawfully taken on God's terms. Now I will add one more, the nineteenth reason. This is not adding to Scripture, as you will see: life may be lawfully taken on God's terms because of self-defense.

God's law is given in negative terms. If you look at the Ten Commandments, you will notice that only two commandments are positive: the fourth, "Remember the Sabbath day to keep it holy," and the fifth, "Honor thy father and thy mother." Those are positives. However, those two positives are undergirded by many negatives as well. Usually God's law is couched in negative terms for a specific reason: a negative law deals with a specific crime or sin. "Thou shalt not steal" deals with theft in any form whatsoever—fraud, deception, or taking—but it addresses a particular crime or sin.

Every time you see a negative—"Thou shalt not steal," "Thou shalt not kill," "Thou shalt not bear false witness," or "Thou shalt not commit adultery"—you have to stop and ask yourself, What is the positive? Every negative has a positive, and every positive has a negative. Whenever you read a positive in the Word of God, ask yourself, What is the negative? You cannot have a positive without a negative, or a negative without a positive. "Thou shalt not commit adultery" means, positively, "Thou shalt live a holy, righteous, godly, sanctified life."

Of course, the New Testament answers this. You are to work with your hands, laboring at that which is good, that you may not only provide for yourself, but also have something to give to those who need it. The opposite of theft is not simply refraining from stealing; it is having a generous, gracious attitude according to the Word of God.

When God says in the sixth commandment, "Thou shalt not kill," that is the negative. The positive is, "Thou shalt preserve life." In other words, you have a duty and a responsibility to preserve life. Based on the sixth commandment, self-defense is obligatory. We must defend ourselves and the lives of others, even if it involves taking the life of another individual.

Suppose Brother Lacey comes to me and says, "Brother Weaver, I'm upset with you. I'm going to kill you." If I answer, "Go ahead, brother. That will just put me in the presence of the Lord a whole lot sooner. If it will make you happy, go ahead and kill me," and allow him to do that, then I am guilty of self-murder. I have a duty and a responsibility to preserve my life. If it means taking his life to preserve mine, then I am required to do it. If I do not, I am in violation of the sixth commandment myself.

Biblical Examples of God Defending and Using Human Agents

If we do not defend ourselves, we are guilty of self-murder. If we do not defend our families, we are guilty of self-murder. I once preached on Romans 13 in Indianapolis, Indiana, and mentioned self-defense in passing. Afterward, a young man with a wife and four or five children said, "Brother Weaver, I agree with everything you said except this business of self-defense. I don't think you should want to hurt anybody." I answered, "I don't want to hurt anybody, but I don't want anyone to hurt me either." He said he would never defend himself, his wife, or his children. I told him, "Sir, the only thing I can say to you is that I'm thankful I'm not married to you and I'm not your child."

Those of you who are in the military or were in the military remember Article three of the United States military code. Listen to it: "If I am captured,"

"I will continue to resist by all means available. I will make every effort to escape and to aid others to escape. I will accept neither parole nor special favors from the enemy."

Why in the world is that in the military code? It is not just so that, if you could escape, you could return to your officer in charge and give him information. No, you have a duty to escape. Why? Because you have a duty to preserve your life. You have a duty to help others escape from the enemy. Why? Because you have a duty to help preserve their lives. That is in the military code of justice. We are taught that we have a duty to escape.

So, is self-defense wrong? I am going to give you some Scriptures. Listen, because if you think self-defense is wrong, then you have to take the issue up with God Himself, because God defended His people. Here is what God tells Hezekiah in 2 Kings 19:34: "I will defend this city, to save it, for Mine own sake, and for My servant David's sake."

God said concerning Jerusalem, "I will defend this city." He told Hezekiah, "Don't you worry about this. I'm going to defend this city. The Assyrians are not going to come in here." In 2 Kings 20:6, God said, "And I will add unto thy days fifteen years"—that was Hezekiah—"and I will deliver thee and this city out of the hand of the king of Assyria. And I will defend this city for Mine own sake and for My servant David's sake."

Isaiah 31:5 says, "As birds flying, so will the Lord of hosts defend Jerusalem; defending also He will deliver it; and passing over He will preserve it." Isaiah 37:35 says, "For I will defend this city for My own sake and for My servant David's sake." Again, in Isaiah 38:6, God said, "I will defend thee and this city out of the hand of the king of Syria, and I will defend this city."

Five times God said, "I will defend this city." He would defend His people not only for His honor, but for His servant David's sake. Did God defend Jerusalem? Yes, He did. Did God take lives in defending Jerusalem? Yes. Isaiah 37:36 says, "Then the angel of the Lord went forth and smote in the camp of the Assyrians a hundred and eighty-five thousand." "And when they arose early in the morning,

behold, they were all dead corpses." Out of all the Assyrians, God slew 185,000 soldiers.

Did God have to slay them? No. Remember the lepers at the gate—not Jerusalem, but Samaria. There was a famine because the city had been surrounded by the Syrians. The five lepers looked at one another and said, "Why should we here till we die? If we go in the city, we're going to die of starvation. If we sit here, we're going to die," because lepers usually lived from the food thrown over the wall—the garbage.

They said, "Come, let us fall to the Syrians. If they kill us, we will but be dead. But it may be they will save us alive." So they went, and all the tents were empty. All the food was there. God had made the Syrians hear the host of a great army. They thought the king of Samaria had hired the Ethiopians against them, and they fled. There were no Ethiopians coming and no great army. God simply caused them to hear the noise, and they fled. Could God have done that with the Assyrians? The answer is absolutely. But He did not. He killed 185,000 of them.

Did you know that David said in Psalm 7 in verse 10, "My defense is of God who saveth the upright in heart"? If you read the book of Psalms, you will find over and over that David claims God as his defense. In Psalm 89 in verse 18, he said, "For the Lord is our defense and the Holy One of Israel is our king." Notice: the Lord is our defense. We may rightly conclude that God does indeed defend His people.

It is never wrong to emulate our heavenly Father. Someone will object, "Yes, but Brother Weaver, what God does and what we do are two different things." That is certainly true in one sense. You are not God, I am not God, and I never will be God. Only God is God. But have you ever read the book of Judges? Do you know why God raised up judges? Listen to Judges chapter 10 and verse 1: "And after Abimelech, there arose to defend Israel Tola, the son of Puah, the son of Dodo, a man of Issachar, and he dwelt in Shamir in Mount Ephraim." Who raised up those judges? God did. He raised them up to defend His people. Did these judges take the lives of enemies who were trying to destroy the people? Yes, they did. Read about Gideon

and all of these judges. You will find that they took life after life after life.

In 2 Samuel, chapter 23, you have a listing of David's mighty men. Verse eight says, “These be the names of the mighty men whom David had.” “The Tachmonite that sat in the seat, chief among the captains; the same was Adino the Eznite: he lift up his spear against eight hundred, whom he slew at one time.” That does not mean he threw the spear one time and it went through eight hundred people. He took that spear to one battle and killed eight hundred people.

Verse nine says, “And after him was Eleazar the son of Dodo the Ahohite, one of the three mighty men with David, when they defied the Philistines that were there gathered together to battle, and the men of Israel were going away. And he”—we are talking about Eleazar—“arose and smote the Philistines until his hand was weary and his hand clave unto his sword.” Verse ten continues, “And the Lord wrought a great victory that day and the people returned after him only to spoil.”

Then, in verse eleven, we read, “And after him was Shammah the son of Agee the Hararite. And the Philistines were gathered together into a troop, where was a piece of ground full of lentils. And the people fled from the Philistines. But he stood in the midst of the ground and defended it and slew the Philistines. And the Lord wrought a great victory.”

“His hand clave unto the sword” means his hand literally cramped around his sword handle. To get that sword out of his hand, they would basically have to pry his fingers apart. His hand was frozen there. He fought so. The Bible says again, “He arose and smote the Philistines until his hand was weary and his hand clave unto the sword.”

But notice again: “And the Lord wrought a great victory that day, and the people returned after him only to spoil.” The Lord wrought a great victory. What? I thought it was Eleazar who was doing the fighting. It was. Well, how did the Lord work a great victory? It was the Lord who was enabling, empowering, and strengthening him to fight. You will find the same thing down in verse twelve about Shammah.

"And he stood in the midst of the ground and defended it and slew the Philistines. And the Lord wrought a great victory." Note that the Lord wrought a great victory, but it was Shammah who was doing the fighting. God enabled these men, strengthened them, gave them a fighting spirit, and gave them the ability to fight. One of my favorite verses is Psalm 144, verse one: "Blessed be the Lord my God who teacheth my fingers to fight and my hands to war." God taught David how to fight; He taught these men how to fight.

Here is the principle we must understand: We have to use the means that God has ordained while trusting in the Lord. These great men used their swords, bows, and other weapons, yet they trusted in the Lord to make them effectual. Means are worthless in and of themselves.

You can ask me, "Brother Weaver, do you keep loaded weapons in your house?" My answer is yes. Every weapon I have is loaded. "Well, you're trusting in those weapons." No, I'm not. A weapon is nothing more than a tool. I am trusting in the Lord. If someone broke into my home intending to murder me, and God did not awaken me in time, did not allow me to get my weapon, or did not allow me to shoot straight, my weapon would be worthless and useless.

Case Studies: Moses, David, and the Nighttime Thief

I could have a dozen cannons in my room or a tank in my room. That would not matter if God did not awaken me in time or enable me to fight against the enemy. I am not trusting in a weapon merely because I have one; I am trusting in the Lord.

May I remind you of Moses? Stephen, giving his testimony in the book of Acts, says, "And Moses was learned in all the wisdom of the Egyptians and was mighty in words and in deeds. And when he was full forty years old, it came into his heart to visit his brethren, the children of Israel. And seeing one of them suffer wrong, he defended him and avenged him that was oppressed and smote the Egyptian. For he supposed that his brethren would have understood how that God by his hand would deliver them, but they understood not."

Notice what the Bible says: Moses saw this Israelite being beaten, and he defended him. Do you realize there is not one word of condemnation in the Old Testament concerning what Moses did, nor is there one word of condemnation in the New Testament concerning what Moses did? In fact, I could say that there is a commendation in the New Testament, because God listed Moses among the heroes of faith in Hebrews chapter 11.

But you say that Moses had to flee. Yes, he did—but not because he violated the law of God, but because Pharaoh was a tyrant, and Pharaoh was after him to destroy him in five ways. I do not have time to preach and teach it tonight, but what Moses did in fleeing was in obedience to the sixth commandment. He was getting out of Dodge. He was getting out of trouble. He was getting out of the way of the tyrant. If I can avoid trouble, that is exactly what I am going to do. So the point is that Moses was never, ever condemned in either the Old Testament or the New Testament.

Now consider David and Goliath in light of the biblical doctrine of self-defense. This story is so wonderful. Everybody knows this story, but I want you to see it. Beginning in 1 Samuel chapter 17, verse 43, notice how Goliath, the enemy, purposely and deliberately pressed the attack. Look what he says: "And the Philistine said unto David, Am I a dog, that thou comest to me with staves? And the Philistine cursed David by his gods. And the Philistine said to David, Come to me, and I will give thy flesh unto the fowls of the air and to the beasts of the field."

Goliath was not only much larger and stronger than David; he was a man of war from his youth. David was probably around seventeen at this time.

Remember, he is still a shepherd. He is still at home. Note the response David gives to Goliath in verse 45: "Then David said to the Philistine, Thou comest to me with a sword and with a spear and with a shield. But I come to thee in the name of the Lord of hosts, the God of the armies of Israel, whom thou hast defied. This day will the Lord deliver thee into mine hand. And I will smite thee and take thy head from thee, and I will give the carcasses of the host of the Philistines this day to the fowls of the air and to the wild beasts of the earth, that all the earth may know that there is a God in Israel."

Note plainly what David said: "You're threatening me? You're coming to me with all this weaponry? I'm coming to you with a little sling, but I'm coming to you in the name of the Lord of hosts. It is God who's going to give me your head. It's God who's going to give me the victory. It's God who's going to fight for me. You're the one that's in trouble. The Philistines are the ones that's in trouble." Did David intend a death blow upon Goliath? Well, of course. He said, "I'm going to cut your head off." Did he intend the death blow on those Philistines?

And the answer is yes. What was David doing? David was defending himself, and he was also defending the people of Israel. So notice, it is still self-defense.

Exodus 22, beginning with verse 1, says, “If a man shall steal an ox or sheep and kill it or sell it, he shall restore five oxen for an ox and four sheep for a sheep.”

“If a thief be found breaking up and be smitten that he die, there shall no blood be shed for him. If the sun be risen upon him, there shall be blood shed for him, for he should make full restitution. If he have nothing, then he shall be sold for his theft.”

This whole section is on restitution. If a man shall steal an ox or a sheep, or kill it or sell it, he shall restore five oxen for an ox and four sheep for a sheep. In other words, the ratio of restitution is based upon the value and the usefulness of that which is stolen. Now notice verse 2: “If a thief be found breaking up,” or breaking in, “and be smitten that he die, there shall no blood be shed for him.”

God’s law allows the taking of life in certain situations. If a thief breaks into your home during the night, you do not know who he is, whether he is armed, or what he intends to do. God says, “If you kill him, if you smite him, that he die, there shall be no bloodshed for you.” In other words, you are free, biblically speaking.

Now notice verse 3: “If the sun be risen upon him, there shall be bloodshed for him, for he should make full restitution. If he have nothing, then he shall be sold for his theft.” If the sun be risen, do not kill him. You can see and identify him, and you can see whether or not he has a weapon. In this case, do not kill him; just hold him. He is to make full restitution.

There would be a way that you could lawfully kill him during the daytime: if he was armed and turned around and pointed that weapon at you, or tried to harm you, then you would still be able to defend yourself. But here is what God is saying: if someone is breaking in and stealing at night, you do not know who he is, where he is, or what he has. In other words, he should not be there. Notice what is being stolen: oxen and sheep. Those things do not live in the house; they are usually in the barn. You are talking about somebody simply breaking in on your property. God says, "If the sun is risen on him, you do not kill him if he is not armed. He is to make full restitution."

Life may be lawfully taken on God's terms. Years ago, I was in Greenville, South Carolina, and a Christian, or at least a professing Christian, came to me and said, "I need to ask you a question." He asked, "What would you do if you woke up during the night and someone was breaking in your bedroom window?" I said, "Well, that depends." He asked, "What does it depend upon?" I said, "It depends upon whether or not I get my hands on a gun. If I get my hands on a gun, I would shoot him. If I could not get the gun, I would pick up a baseball bat and hit him upside the head."

He said, "I do not think you ought to do that." I said, "Tell me what you think I ought to do." He said, "I think you ought to go in another room and pray about it." I said, "You mean to tell me I should be in another room while a man is in there raping my wife and murdering my children? I would pray. I would pull that baseball bat back and say, 'Dear Lord, do not let me miss him this time.' That is exactly how I would be praying."

This is what the Scripture says. If someone is breaking in at night, you do not know who they are, what they are up to, or whether they are armed. This is exactly what God says: he should not have been there to begin with. I get so aggravated when young teenage boys and young men break into homes at night, and then they are shot and killed by the homeowner. The parents say, "Well, he did not have to kill him." No, he did not have to. He could have sat there and beaten the guilt himself because those teenagers were armed as well.

SCRIPTURE READING - Deuteronomy 22:22-27 (KJV)

Duty to Defend Others: The Crying Damsel and the Lost Animal

> You see what I'm saying? You've got to be stupid to break in at night. You've got to be stupid to do anything like that. And if you break in at night, you're just asking for judgment. That's what you're asking for. Don't do that.
>
> This answers a question that was asked of me yesterday. In Deuteronomy 22, verse 22: "If a man be found lying with a woman married to a husband, then they both shall die."
>
> Verse 23: "If a damsel"—that is a virgin—"be betrothed unto an husband, and a man find her in the city and lie with her, then ye shall bring them both out unto the gate of that city and ye shall stone them with stones that they die; the damsel, because she cried not, being in the city; and the man, because he hath humbled his neighbor's wife."
>
> "So shalt thou put evil away from among you. But if a man find a betrothed damsel in the field, and the man force her and lie with her, then the man only that lay with her shall die. But unto the damsel thou shalt do nothing; there is in the damsel no sin worthy of death. For as when a man riseth up against his neighbor and slayeth him, even so is this matter. For he found her in the field, and the betrothed damsel cried, and there was none to save her."
>
> Now, let's go back to verse 22. He said, "If a man be found lying with a woman married to a husband, then they both shall die." By verse 23: "If a damsel that is a virgin be betrothed unto a husband"—engaged—"and a man find her in the city and lie with her, then ye shall bring them both out of the gate of that city and ye shall stone them with stones that they die; the damsel, because she cried not, being in the city; and the man, because he hath humbled his neighbor's wife. So shalt thou put evil away from among you."

“The damsel, because she cried not, being in the city.” If the woman did not cry out, that meant she was consenting to the sin, and

therefore she was just as guilty as the man and deserved the death penalty. But if she cried out—in other words, if that woman was not consenting—what does that imply? Anyone who hears her cries has the duty, responsibility, and obligation to save her.

But if a man find a betrothed damsel in the field, and the man force her, and lie with her, then the man only that lay with her shall die. Why? "But unto the damsel thou shalt do nothing; there is in the damsel no sin worthy of death." And he tells you why in verse 27: "For he found her in the field, and the betrothed damsel cried, and there was none to save her."

In other words, in the city, the woman could cry out, and anyone who heard her would have the responsibility and duty to protect her and preserve her. In the field, it is the man who is put to death. Why? Because, clearly, the woman cried out and there was no one around to defend her. There was no one around to save her. So the obligation to protect the lives of others is the same as the obligation and duty to protect our lives.

Some of you may remember this illustration from 1964. There was a woman by the name of Kitty Genovese. She was brutally murdered. She was stabbed seventeen times, raped, robbed, and left for dead on the city sidewalk. She screamed, she cried, and she pleaded for help. Thirty-eight people had either heard her screams and cries or observed some part of the crime, but never lifted a finger to save her.

According to God's law, those who did nothing to preserve life are just as guilty as the one who took her life, because the sixth commandment has as its positive, "Thou shalt preserve life." God is fastidious about this responsibility. The obligation is not merely to avoid taking life ourselves, but to preserve life when another person cries out and there is no one else to save or defend that person.

Look, if you would, at Deuteronomy 22, beginning with verse 1:

"Thou shalt not see thy brother's ox or sheep go astray, and hide thyself from them. Thou shalt in any case bring them again unto thy brother. If thy brother be not nigh unto thee, or if thou know him not, then thou shalt bring it into thine own house, and it shall be with thee until thy brother seek after it, and thou shalt restore it unto him again. In like manner shalt thou do with his ass, and so shalt

thou do with his raiment, and with all lost things of thy brother's, which he hath lost, and thou hast found, shalt thou do likewise, and mayest not hide thyself. Thou shalt not see thy brother's ass or his ox fall down by the way, and hide thyself from them. Thou shalt surely help to lift them up again."

So God says, if you see your brother's animal out of the fence, walking along the road, you had better help your brother get that animal back in. You cannot hide yourself.

I'll tell you a funny story. I preached on this text years and years ago. All my girls were small, and my girls, like myself, have always loved animals. We were coming home from church. My wife and the girls were in one car, and I was behind because I was the pastor and was always later. There was a scraggly old, dirty, stinking goat beside the road. Everybody tried to catch that goat, but nobody could catch it. The goat was in danger of being hit by a vehicle. My girls have always had a wonderful way with animals, and they caught that goat. I just happened to come by as they caught it.

I was in the truck, and they said, "Daddy, this goat's wandering around in the highway. We don't know who this goat belongs to, and she's going to get killed. Can we take her home with us?" Before I could answer, they said, "You remember what you preached this morning, don't you?" I said, "Yes, we'll take her home." Then I asked, "But how did you catch her? Evidently, no one else could catch her."

They said it was easy: they knelt down, called her, and she came to them. They picked her up and took her home. Two days later, my neighbor came looking for the goat he had bought at the sale on Saturday. She had gotten out on Saturday night, and we restored the goat.

This is what God said: You cannot hide yourself. If you come to visit me and see my cow down, having trouble delivering a calf, God says, "You are obligated to help me." I will tell you why in just a little bit.

But watch this. You say, "I do not mind helping you. I do not mind helping Pastor Brink, Bill Potter, or my brothers." Really? Look, if you would, in Exodus chapter 23, beginning with verse four: "If thou meet thine enemy's ox or his ass going astray, thou shalt surely bring

it back to him again. If thou see the ass of him that hateth thee lying under his burden and wouldest forbear to help him, thou shalt surely help with him."

Now it is not your brother; it is your enemy—the man who hates you and has caused you all kinds of heartache. God says that if you see his animal going astray, you cannot hide yourself. You must capture that animal and bring it back to him. If you see his ass or his cow lying under its burden, you cannot pretend you did not see it. God said you must help him. Why? Why? Listen to me.

In the Bible, this is known as arguing from the lesser to the greater. If I have a duty and obligation to help preserve Pastor Brink's sheep if they get out in the road, and to preserve the lives of his animals, how much more duty and obligation do I have to preserve his life and the life of his wife and children? If I have a duty and responsibility to preserve my enemy's animals, how much more do I have to help preserve his life? God is arguing from the lesser to the greater.

We have a duty given to us: we must protect our lives, the lives of our families, the lives of our friends, and the lives of our neighbors, because the sixth commandment is not only negative; it is positive as well.

Conclusion: The Obligation to Preserve Life

Would it not be a horrible anomaly if God allowed all the animals to protect their lives and their families, but did not allow us to do the same? Years ago, when I was at the university, our neighbor had an old tomcat. We did not have a cat, but in one of the bushes in our front yard there was a mockingbird with her nest. When that old tomcat came strolling close to the bush, the mother mockingbird came out and pecked the cat's head until she ran out of the yard.

What was she doing? She was defending her family and the lives of her children. If God allows animals to do that, do you not think that He will allow us to do it? Did our Lord not say in Matthew chapter 10 and verse 31, "Fear ye not therefore, for ye are of more value than many sparrows"? We have a duty, a responsibility, and an obligation to protect our lives and the lives of others.

Whenever you get into a position, remember that the sixth commandment has a positive as well as a negative. God requires us to preserve life.

Father, in the name of Jesus Christ, we bow to Thee. We thank You for Thy Word and Thy truth. We ask that You would teach us, build us up in the most holy faith, and give us, Lord, Thy grace and mercy. In the name of Jesus Christ, we ask and pray. Amen.

Source Notes

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JW01383 | YouTube

Chapter 2: The Biblical Doctrine Of Self Defense - Part 2 of 2
JW01384 | YouTube

Chapter 3: The Biblical Doctrine of Self-Defense
JW00826 | SermonAudio

Chapter 4: Biblical Doctrine of Self Defense
JW00149 | SermonAudio

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