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BIBLICAL STUDIES

The Sin of
Refusing to Fight

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

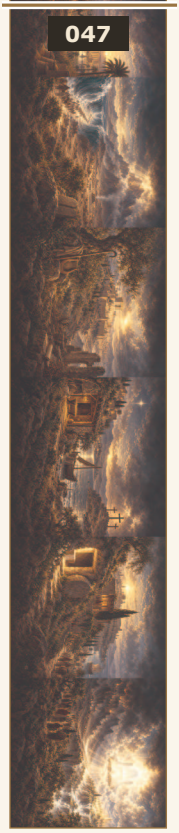
PSALM 119:105



JOHN WEAVER

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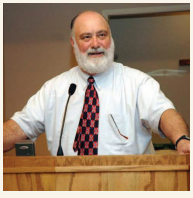
Watch ye, stand fast in the faith, quit you like men, be strong.

1 CORINTHIANS 16:13

The refusal to face a necessary conflict raises questions of duty and courage. John Weaver considers biblical examples of resistance, responsibility, and the consequences of withdrawal. These messages ask readers to distinguish the pursuit of peace from the abandonment of an obligation that Scripture requires.

“Scripture shows that it would be a sin to refuse to fight when God commands us to fight.”

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 Sin of Refusing to Fight

Introduction: The Sin of Refusing to Fight

The title of the message tonight is "The Sin of Refusing to Fight." Look at Numbers chapter 32 and verse 23. I am reading one verse right now, and we will come back and pick up the context momentarily. Numbers 32 and verse 23, where Moses said, "But if you will not do so, behold, you have sinned against the Lord, and be sure your sin will find you out." Hopefully, the title of this message not only piques your curiosity, but also grabs your attention as well. When one talks about the sin of refusing to fight, it is absolutely contrary to the thinking of everyday people. Most people believe it is a sin to fight.

Truthfully speaking, fighting can be a sin, especially when it is done in rebellion to God and His law. However, when it is done in obedience to God and His word, it is not a sin. When God commands us to fight and we do not fight, it is a sin.

God Determines Right and Wrong, Not Situation Ethics

This statement has absolutely nothing to do with situation ethics, where people say the situation determines whether or not something is right or wrong. No. God is the one who determines right and wrong, and He does so by His word and His law. In Numbers chapter 32, Moses makes it clear to the tribes of Reuben, Gad, and the half-tribe of Manasseh that if they do not fight, it is a sin, and their sin will find them out. Moses is making this clear in Numbers 32, as the context will show a little later.

Biblical Seasons for War

Now look in your Bibles to the book of Ecclesiastes, chapter 3. The passage contains verses 1 through 8, and Ecclesiastes comes immediately after Proverbs. Solomon writes, "To everything there is a season." Note that: "to everything there is a season and a time to every purpose under the heaven: a time to be born and a time to die; a time to plant and a time to pluck up that which is planted; a time to kill and a time to heal; a time to break down

"And a time to build up; a time to weep and a time to laugh; a time to mourn and a time to dance; a time to cast away stones and a time to gather stones together; a time to embrace, a time to refrain from embracing; a time to get, a time to lose; a time to keep, a time to cast away; a time to rend, a time to sew; a time to keep silent, a time to speak; a time to love, and a time to hate; a time of war, and a time of peace."

Notice, if you would, that he says in verse 1, "To everything there is a season, and a time to every purpose under heaven." In verse 3 he mentions that there is a time to kill, and in verse 8 there is a time of war. Obviously, then, God is stating that in everything there is indeed a season. Do you remember in 2 Samuel 11, verse 1, the Bible says, "And it came to pass at the time that the year was expired, at the time when kings go forth to battle, David tarried at Jerusalem."

Based upon this text, it does appear that there was a time for fighting and a time for war in the Old Testament, and it was seasonal. Usually, the time of fighting in the Old Testament, and in

the New Testament as well, would have been either spring or fall. John Gill gives this comment: "...a fit time to go out to war, when, as the commentators observed, the rains were over, and there were grass in the fields, and fruit on the trees, and corn ripe, and so food for horse and his men. This month was called Nisan, the military banners then erected. So by the Romans it is called Marchus, and by us March from Mars, the god of war. And though some take this to be the month of Tisri, entering the part of September and part of October, when all the fruits of the earth were gathered in, it is supposed to be a fit time for war, when the heat of the year was declining."

They did have seasonal warfare in the Old Testament, normally in the spring or fall. But the truth of the matter is that necessity oftentimes dictated when you fought. If you were attacked, you simply fought, because it was a matter of life and death. It was a fight-or-die situation.

The interesting truth in Numbers 32:23, the passage concerning when it is a sin to refuse to fight, is that preachers and Christians down through the ages have quoted it to demonstrate a simple truth: you cannot get away with sin. Moses said, "But if ye will not do so, behold, ye have sinned against the Lord, and be sure your sin will find you out." Thus preachers and Christians say, "It does not matter what your sin is or what you have done. Be sure your sins are going to find you out. You are going to be judged."

Context of Numbers 32: The Tribes' Request

The New Testament passage that would correlate to this concept would be Galatians 6:7–8: "Be not deceived, God is not mocked. For whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap. He that soweth to the flesh shall of the flesh reap corruption. He that soweth to the Spirit shall of the Spirit reap life everlasting." When this verse is quoted, as it is all the time, people say, "Be sure your sins will find you out."

But have you ever thought about this in context? Have you ever wondered what particular sin Moses was saying would find these people out? In Numbers 32:20, Moses is speaking to the tribe of Reuben, the tribe of Gad, and the half-tribe of Manasseh. He says,

"And Moses said to them, If you will do this thing, if ye will go armed before the Lord, and will go all of you armed over Jordan before the Lord, until ye have driven out his enemies from before him, and the land be subdued before the Lord, and afterward ye shall return, and be guiltless before the Lord, and before Israel, and this land shall be your possession before the Lord. But if ye will not do so," that is, if you will not go over armed, if you will not fight, "Behold, ye have sinned against the Lord, and your sin shall find you out."

Reuben, Gad, and the half-tribe of Manasseh asked for their inheritance on the east side of Jordan, the land of Og and Sihon. Numbers 32 records that they had a very great multitude of cattle and saw that the land of Jazer and Gilead was a place for cattle. They therefore came to Moses, Eleazar the priest, and the princes of the congregation, saying, "Ataroth, Dibon, Jazer, Nimrah, Heshbon, Elealeh, Shebam, and Nebo, and Beon, even the country which the Lord smote before the congregation of Israel is a land for cattle, and thy servants have cattle. Wherefore, said they, if we have found grace in thy sight, let this land be given unto thy servants for possession, and bring us not over Jordan."

Moses answered the children of Gad and the children of Reuben, with the half-tribe of Manasseh included, "Shall your brethren go to war, and you sit still?" All the children of Israel had fought to conquer the lands of Og and Sihon. Deuteronomy chapters 2 and 3 record how God gave this land to Israel. Now these tribes appeared willing to sit still while the rest of the Israelites crossed Jordan, fought, possessed the land, and dispossessed their enemies.

Their neighbors had put their lives in jeopardy to obtain this land. Would they now sit there and let others fight? Moses clearly said that if they refused to help, it would be sin on their part. If they refused to fight, it would be sin on their part. In fact, they had sinned against the Lord, and, as he warned, "be sure your sin will find you out."

Thus, in Numbers 32:23, the only alternative to sinning was to go over armed before the Lord and actually fight.

Numbers chapter 32, verse 16, records what they agreed to: "And they came near unto him, and said, We will build sheepfolds here for our cattle, and our cities for our little ones. But we ourselves will go

ready armed before the children of Israel, until we have brought them unto their place. And our little ones shall dwell in the fenced cities, because of the inhabitants of the land. We will not return unto our houses, until the children of Israel have inherited every man his inheritance. For we will not inherit with them on yonder side Jordan, and forward, because our inheritance fall unto us on this side Jordan, eastward."

They said they would build cities quickly for their wives and children, but would go over armed before the Lord, because they were not going to sin against Him.

In light of this passage, two questions should be asked and answered. When is it wrong, or a sin, to fight? And when would it be a sin to refuse to fight? The first question can be answered quickly and clearly: it is wrong to fight when one fights contrary to God and His Word. That is rebellion.

When It Is a Sin to Fight

Numbers chapter 14, beginning with verse 40, gives an interesting example. God had told Israel to fight, but they refused because the twelve spies had returned. Only Joshua and Caleb brought an honest report. The other ten said, "No, those people are great, big giants, and we were as grasshoppers in their sights," and that it was a land that "eateth up the inhabitants thereof." They brought back an evil report.

They refused to fight when God told them to go fight. God said their carcasses would fall in the wilderness; they would die, every one of them, and would not enter the land. Their children, whom they had said would be victims, were the ones who would receive the land. After refusing to obey God when He told them to go in and fight, and after God told them they would die in the wilderness, they suddenly changed their minds and decided they would fight.

SCRIPTURE READING - Numbers 14:40-45; Deuteronomy 2:3-4 (KJV)

> Numbers chapter 14 verse 40: "And they rose up early in the morning, and gat them up to the top of the mountain, saying, Lo, we be here, and we'll go up into the place which the Lord hath promised, for we have sinned." "And Moses said,

> Wherefore now do you transgress the commandment of the Lord? But it shall not prosper. Go not up, for the Lord is not among you, that you be not smitten before your enemies. For the Amalekites and the Canaanites are there before you, and you shall fall by the sword, because you are turned away from the Lord. Therefore the Lord will not be with you."
>
> "But they presumed to go up into the hilltop. Nevertheless, the ark of the covenant of the Lord and Moses departed not out of the camp. Then the Amalekites came down, and the Canaanites which were up in that hill, and smote them, and discomfited them even unto Hormah."
>
> Isn't that amazing? God told them to fight, and they wouldn't fight. And God judged them for their disobedience. Now God tells them not to fight, and they say, we're going to fight. And so they're disobedient again. They're in rebellion to God. So it's a sin then to fight when God says, no, you're not going to fight. Do you understand that there are some people that God forbade Israel to fight against? In fact, there were times when God said, you are not going to make war with certain people. Deuteronomy chapter 2, beginning there with verse 3: God tells Israel, "You have compassed this mountain long enough, turn you northward." Verse 4: "And command thou the people, saying, You are to pass through the coast of your brethren, the children of Esau, which dwell in Seir.

God told Israel concerning Edom, “And they shall be afraid of you, take ye good heed unto yourselves therefore. Meddle not with them, for I will not give you of their land, no, not so much as a foot-breadth, because I have given Mount Seir unto Esau for possession. You shall buy meat of them for money, that you may eat, and you also shall buy water of them for money, that you may drink.” He reminded them, “For the Lord thy God hath blessed thee in all thy works of thy hand. He knoweth thy walking through this great wilderness these forty years. The Lord thy God hath been with thee, thou hast lacked nothing.” When they passed by their brethren, the children of Esau, which dwelt in Seir, through the way of the plain from Elath and from Ezion-gaber, they turned and passed by the way of the wilderness of Moab. And the Lord said, “Distress not the

Moabites, neither contend with them in battle, for I will not give thee of their land for possession, because I have given Ar unto the children of Lot for possession."

So there are times when God says no, you are not going to fight. That is all there is to it. What is the sin? It is a sin to fight when God forbids you to fight, when there are plain commands and plain principles in the Word of God.

I believe there is another answer as to when it is a sin to fight. It would be a sin, wicked, and wrong to fight when you are fighting for unbiblical and unscriptural reasons. Have you ever considered that most wars—probably ninety-nine out of a hundred—are wars over resources? For instance, all you have to do is look at how one nation desires and covets what another nation has. Look at all the wars and the people who have been killed over oil, gold, diamonds, and other precious resources.

Our American empire has sought to justify intrusions, police actions, and wars in other countries. However, the truth of the matter is that there is usually absolutely no justification for our wars in these other countries. They are not only unconstitutional; they are unbiblical as well. When we are trying to fight for unbiblical reasons, it would be a sin. Just to have an empire, to be able to dominate and control other people and other nations, would be a sin as well. If there is no biblical reason to fight, then it would be sin. Consider all the military men, politicians, and money-hungry citizens in this country and other countries who have fomented wars and started wars just so they could gain power, prestige, and money.

When It Is a Sin to Refuse to Fight

I can assure you of one thing: they will answer to God for every individual that died, and for all their covetousness and all of their sins. So it is a sin to fight when God forbids us to fight, or to fight for unbiblical and unconstitutional reasons.

When It Is a Sin to Refuse to Fight: God Commands It

Have you ever stopped to think about when it is a sin to refuse to fight? That is what Numbers 32:23 is all about—the sin of refusing to

fight. First of all, it is a sin to refuse to fight when God has commanded us to fight.

There are instances in the Word of God where God commanded His people to fight. These wars are known in Scripture as the wars of the Lord. How many wars of the Lord were there? I do not really know, but I know this: there were a sufficient number of them to be a book, because Numbers 21:14 says, “Wherefore it is said in the book of the wars of the Lord, What he did in the Red sea, and in the brooks of Arnon.” The Lord does engage in war, and He sends His people to war. He commands His people to fight many times.

For instance, Numbers 31:1 says, “And the Lord spake unto Moses, saying, Avenge the children of Israel of the Midianites, and afterward shalt thou be gathered unto thy people.” Moses told the people, “Arm some of yourselves unto the war, and let them go against the Midianites, and avenge the Lord of Midian.” Of every tribe, a thousand were sent to war. Twelve thousand were armed for war, and Moses sent them with Phinehas the son of Eleazar the priest, with the holy instruments and trumpets in his hand. “And they warred against the Midianites, as the Lord commanded Moses, and they slew all the males.” God initiated this war. God told Moses to arm the people and go against the Midianites. This was not necessarily a defensive war; it was an offensive war.

It is true that the Midianites had seduced Israel, and that they fell into idolatry and the worship of Baal Peor. But God said, “That’s over, and that was dealt with; now you take care of these Midianites.”

Here is another time when God commanded His people to fight. In 1 Samuel 15:1–3, Samuel said unto Saul, “The Lord sent me to anoint thee to be king over his people, over Israel. Now therefore, hearken thou to the voice of the words of the Lord. Thus said the Lord of hosts, I remember that which Amalek did to Israel, how he laid wait for him in the way when he came up from Egypt. Now go and smite Amalek, and utterly destroy all that they had, and spare them not. But slay both man and woman, infant and suckling, ox, sheep, camel, and ass.”

Saul gathered the people together and numbered them: “200,000 footmen and 10,000 men of Judah.” Notice that the Bible says God sent Saul against the Amalekites. What did God say? “I remember that which Amalek did to Israel.” You can read what Amalek did to Israel in Deuteronomy chapter 25, 400 years earlier. Now God said, “You go wipe them out.”

Understand this: this was an offensive war. God commanded this war. There are times when God commands us to fight. In 1 Chronicles 5:18–22, the sons of Reuben, the Gadites, and half the tribe of Manasseh were “valiant men, men able to bear buckler and sword, and to shoot with bow and skillful in war,” numbering 44,760 who went out to war. “And they made war with the Hagrites, with Jetur and Nephish and Nodab. And they were helped against them, and the Hagrites were delivered into their hand.” All who were with them cried to God in battle, and He was entreated of them, because they put their trust in Him. Scripture shows that it would be a sin to refuse to fight when God commands us to fight.

And they took away their cattle, of their camels fifty thousand, of their sheep two hundred and fifty thousand, and asses two thousand, and men a hundred thousand. Now watch, for there fell down many slain, because the war was of God. And they dwelt in their steads until the captivity. Have you ever stopped to think it was God that ordered the inhabitants of Canaan to be destroyed? It was God that ordered the destruction and the annihilation of Jericho. Not only did God ordain these wars, but God also sustained, supported, and encouraged His people who fought in those wars.

Moses knew that he was not going to go over and lead the people into the Promised Land. So in Deuteronomy 7 and verse 24, Moses said to Joshua, "And he shall deliver their kings into thine hand, and thou shalt destroy their name from under heaven. There shall no man be able to stand before thee until thou have destroyed them." Joshua was not to be concerned, because God would take care of this. When you get to Joshua chapter 1 in verse 5, here is what God says to Joshua: "There shall not be any man able to stand before thee all the days of thy life, as I was with Moses. So will I be with thee. I will not fail thee, nor forsake thee." Then, in Joshua 10 and verse 8, it cannot be any plainer: "For the Lord said unto Joshua, Fear them

not, for I have delivered them into thine hand, and there shall not a man of them stand before thee."

God not only ordained many wars, but He sustained, supported, and encouraged His people who fought in those wars. Obviously, it would be a sin to disobey God. God spoke to Israel, and they had to fight. If they refused to fight, it would have been sin. That is exactly what Numbers 32, verse 23, is all about.

Some say, "But Bro. Weaver, if God told me to fight, then I would fight." Really? God has spoken to you through His Word. The Word of God gives us truth. He still commands us to fight. There are truths and there are times for which we must be willing to fight and even to die. For instance, in Psalm 94 and verse 16, God asks, "Who will rise up for me against the workers of iniquity and who will stand for me against the evildoers?" If God wants you to stand against the evildoers and rise up against the workers of iniquity, what is that with fighting?

What is that with war? If God wants us to stand, if God wants us to fight, obviously, we must fight. In other words, we are to do everything that we can to incapacitate evil, expose the wicked, and bring them down. You remember the quote attributed to Edmund Burke? “The only thing necessary for the triumph of evil is for good men to do nothing.” In Psalm 97:10, the Bible says, “Ye that love the Lord hate evil.” In Amos 5:15, he says, “Hate the evil and love the good.”

So here is my question: If you love the Lord, are you going to defend Him? Are you going to fight for Him? If you love the good, are you going to fight for the good? Are you going to stand for that which is evil and wicked?

Here is another excellent quote. It is anonymous; I do not know who said it, but it is very practical: “When bad men combine, the good must associate, else they will fall one by one, an unpitied sacrifice in a contemptible struggle.” Stop and think about that. When bad men combine, good men must associate. That is the truth. We must get together and stand together.

Spiritual and Cultural Fighting Precedes Physical

Now, I believe there are times—and I will share some of these with you from the Bible—when we will have to fight physically. But not all fighting is physical fighting. There is spiritual fighting, mental fighting, emotional fighting, and cultural fighting. When we think about fighting, we normally think about physical fighting. If I were to ask you how many godly Christian men really want to be in a war and shed a lot of blood, none of you would. I have no desire to be in a war. I have no desire to kill anybody; I do not even want to harm or hurt anybody.

But here is what I want to point out: If we refuse to fight in the areas that do not require physical fighting, then eventually our refusal to fight spiritually, culturally, and politically will ultimately involve physical fighting if we fail in those areas. If you will not fight in an easy arena, when it does not require physical fighting, what makes you think that you would fight when it comes down to a physical fight?

SCRIPTURE READING - 2 Chronicles 16:7-9 (KJV)

> I want to show you something. This is a very, very important truth. When we refuse to do what is right spiritually, one of the results is we'll end up with war; we'll end up with physical fighting.
>
> Look in your Bibles to 2 Chronicles chapter 16, beginning in verse 7. Note what Hanani the seer tells King Asa:
>
> "And at that time, Hanani the seer came to Asa, king of Judah, and said unto him, Because thou hast relied on the king of Syria, and not relied on the Lord thy God, therefore is the host of the king of Syria escaped out of thine hand. Were not the Ethiopians and the Lubim a very huge host, with very many chariots and horsemen? Yet because thou didst rely on the Lord, he delivered them into thine hand."

"For the eyes of the Lord run to and fro through the whole earth, to show himself strong on behalf of them whose heart is perfect toward him. Herein thou hast done foolishly. Therefore, from henceforth thou shalt have wars." Asa could have depended upon the Lord to work things out, as he had earlier with the Ethiopians, but he

did not. He had not violated the word of God and hired the heathen to help him. He would not fight spiritually or culturally. Consequently, he would end up fighting physically.

As you read through the Bible, you find this principle: Whenever a people obeyed and honored God, God always gave them peace. Whenever a people disobeyed and dishonored God, God always gave them war. If we will not fight when it is easy to fight, what makes us think we will fight when it is very difficult and hard? If we will not stand spiritually, culturally, politically, and educationally in all these arenas, what makes us think we will pick up an AR and AK, run out, slop through mud and rain and cold and sleet and snow, and fight?

Jeremiah said, "If thou hast run with the footmen, and they have wearied thee, how canst thou contend with horses? And if in the land of peace wherein thou trustest, they weary thee, how wilt thou do in the swelling of the Jordan?" If you cannot keep up with the footmen, what makes you think you will keep up with the horses? If you cannot do what is right when it is easy, without the land flooding, what makes you think you will do what is right when it is very difficult?

Preserving Culture and the Threat of Immigration

One area in which we should be engaged in fighting now is our Christian culture. Culture is religion externalized. It is usually defined as the way of life, especially the general customs and beliefs of a particular group of people at a particular time. Our nation was founded on Christian principles. That does not mean every individual in this country at that time was a Christian, but it does mean the nation was founded upon Christian principles. We are slowly, steadily, and surely losing every vestige of that Christian culture. For instance, the hordes of immigrants from all walks of life, religions, and political beliefs are crowding into this country, and they are detrimental to our way of life and culture. I read today that in Marseille, France, Arabic is the dominant language. French is second.

There are so many Muslims there. Our country is being inundated with people who do not wish to learn, submit, or integrate into our way of life. Rather, they demand that we accommodate them and

submit to their culture and religion. Islam is a political religion, and it wants nothing to do with the Bible or the Constitution of Christian America. In fact, they tell you point-blank that they want to dominate America and subdue it to Sharia law.

Abu Mousa, a spokesman for ISIS, told the media in an online video interview, “Don’t be cowards and attack us with drones. Instead, send your soldiers, the ones we humiliated in Iraq. We will humiliate them everywhere, God willing, and we will raise the flag of Allah in the White House.” My initial response to their threat of raising the flag of Allah in the White House is nothing but buffoonery. They are too late. Obama’s already beat them to it. One news article reported this.

Opposition to illegal immigration is higher in New England than in much of the rest of the country, according to a Reuters poll of mid-July. Seventy-six percent of people in the region said undocumented immigrants threatened American beliefs and customs, compared to seventy percent nationally. Seventy percent nationally is opposed to it? Seventy-six percent in the New England states? And yet the truth is that we are being overrun with people from all over the world who simply walk across our border and demand that we support, educate, and sustain them in every need. Then they demand that we bow to their gods, customs, and ways.

World Net Daily reported on August 9, 2014, that for the first time ever, United States public schools were projected that fall to have more minority students than non-Hispanic whites enrolled, largely because of growth in the number of Hispanic children. According to World Net Daily, there would be a greater number of Hispanics in public schools than white people.

Turn in your Bibles to Isaiah, chapter one. This happened to Israel, and it is happening today. Look at verse 7. Here is part of God's judgment: "Your country is desolate, your cities are burned with fire, your land, strangers devour it in your presence; it is desolate, as overthrown by strangers." Ferguson, Detroit—your country is desolate, your cities are burned with fire. If we cannot limit or control immigrants, if we cannot decide who is allowed in this country and who is not, then obviously we cannot preserve our lives, our country, our culture, or our people.

If we were attacked by an invading army, we would resist and defend ourselves in any way we could. What is the difference between resisting an invading army that has been subjugating us and an immense swarm of aliens that will do exactly the same thing by destroying our culture, our race, our economy, and our religion? Stop and think about that. It is the right of individuals, families, states, and nations to fight against their own destruction. We do not have to fight or be destroyed.

Israel was warned by God concerning its unique culture. Israel was to be a unique and special people. They were not to intermingle or intermarry with the pagans in the land; they were to preserve their culture. If they did not preserve it, they would be destroyed by the pagans.

Look in your Bibles at Numbers, chapter 33, beginning with verse 51. God tells them: "Speak unto the children of Israel, and say unto them, When ye are passed over Jordan into the land of Canaan, then ye shall drive out all the inhabitants of the land from before you, destroy all their pictures, and destroy all their molten images, and quite pluck down all their high places. And ye shall dispossess the inhabitants of the land, and dwell therein: for I have given you the land to possess it. And ye shall divide the land by lot for an inheritance among your families. To the more ye shall give the more inheritance, and to the fewer ye shall give the less inheritance. Every man's inheritance shall be in the place where his lot falleth."

“According to the tribes of your fathers ye shall inherit. But if ye will not drive out the inhabitants of the land from before you, then it shall come to pass that those which ye let remain of them shall be pricks in your eyes and thorns in your sides, and shall vex you in the land wherein ye dwell. Moreover it shall come to pass that I shall do unto you as I thought to do unto them.”

You don't preserve your culture, you don't preserve your faith, you'll be destroyed just like them. And I just thought today, none other than Nancy Pelosi is appointing a Muslim to some chair on Homeland Security. And look at all the Muslims that are already there in the White House. I'm just going to be pointing out the fact it's obvious our leaders are not concerned about our country at all. And if we don't get concerned, we're not going to have a country.

And if we're not willing to fight culturally, educationally, politically, spiritually, while we can, then ultimately we're going to end up fighting physically.

Now, let me give you the second point tonight. One, it is a sin to refuse to fight when God commands you to fight, and you refuse to do so. Secondly, it is a sin to refuse to fight when lives are in jeopardy. If you'll go back in your Bibles to the book of Numbers, chapter 32, look carefully at what was said beginning there in verse 20:

When It Is a Sin to Refuse to Fight: Lives Are in Jeopardy

"And Moses said unto them," remember now, he's talking to Gad, Reuben, and the half tribe of Manasseh. "And Moses said unto them, if you will do this thing, if you will go over armed before the Lord, and will go all of you armed over Jordan before the Lord until he has driven out his enemies before him, and the land be subdued before the Lord; then afterward you shall return and be guiltless before the Lord and before Israel, for this land shall be your possession before the Lord. But if you will not do so, behold, you have sinned against the Lord, and be sure your sin will find you out."

There was nothing in this text concerning Reuben, Gad, and the half-tribe of Manasseh simply praying for their brethren and wishing them well. God did not say, "If you are going to sit over here, you had better do a lot of praying. You had better really pray for your brethren while they are fighting." Nor did He say, "Do not sit over here and wish them well and just hope that somehow they will have victory." God said that if they did not get up, go over there, and help fight and preserve their lives, it was their sin.

I am certainly not against praying. If I am going to be fighting physically, I can assure you I am going to be praying. The more people I could get to pray for me while I am fighting physically, the better I would like it. But what God is telling us here is that there is a time to pray and a time to fight. Praying and fighting might mix well as you are fighting, but praying is absolutely useless when you are supposed to be fighting and are refusing to fight.

Look in your Bibles at Numbers chapter 25. Everyone is familiar with this passage. Here is what happened: “And Israel abode in Shittim, and the people began to commit whoredom with the daughters of Moab. And they called the people unto the sacrifices of their gods. And the people did eat and bowed down to their gods. And Israel joined themselves unto Baal Peor. And the anger of the Lord was kindled against Israel. And the Lord said unto Moses, Take all the heads of this people and hang them up before the Lord against the sun, that the fierce anger of the Lord may be turned away from Israel.”

SCRIPTURE READING - Numbers 25:5-13 (KJV)

They were committing fornication and worshipping Baal Peor. God said, “And Moses said unto the judges of Israel, Slay ye every one of his men that were joined unto Baal Peor. And behold, one of the children of Israel came and brought unto his brethren a Midianitish woman in the sight of Moses, and in the sight of all the congregation of the children of Israel, who were weeping before the door of the tabernacle of the congregation. And when Phinehas, the son of Eleazar, the son of Aaron the priest, saw it, he rose up from among the congregation and took a javelin in his hand and he went after the man of Israel into the tent and thrust both of them through, the man of Israel and the woman through her belly. So the plague was stayed from the children of Israel. So those that died in the plague were 24,000. And the Lord spake unto Moses, saying, Phinehas, the son of Eleazar, the son of Aaron the priest, hath turned my wrath away from the children of Israel, while he was zealous for my sake among them, that I consumed not the children of Israel in my jealousy.”

“Wherefore, say, Behold, I give unto him my covenant of peace, and he shall have it, and his seed after him, even the covenant of an everlasting priesthood, because he was zealous for his God, and made an atonement for the children of Israel.”

Where were Moses and Aaron? Where were all the leaders? They were weeping; that is, they were praying before the door of the tabernacle. Evidently, Phinehas was there as well. When this man brought this Midianitish woman into the camp,

> Phinehas stopped praying, stopped weeping, got up, and killed both of them. God said that he stopped the plague. Twenty-four thousand people had died until he took care of those two wicked individuals.
>
> Why did God give him the covenant of peace? Why did God say his family was going to have this? Because he was zealous for the Lord God of Israel, and he fought when he needed to fight. There is a time to pray and there is a time to fight. God blessed Phinehas for his fighting. There are times when fighting is absolutely demanded and absolutely necessary.

David was a fighter and a warrior, yet he was a man after God's own heart. He fought the Lord's battles. In 1 Samuel 25:28, Abigail said, “I pray thee forgive the trespass that thine handmaid, for the Lord will certainly make my Lord a sure house, because my Lord fighteth the battles of the Lord, and evil hath not been found in thee all these days.” Please understand that David fought physically, destroying the Philistines and those who fought against the Lord and His people. He was a mighty warrior who learned to fight under God's protection and blessing. Facing Goliath in 1 Samuel 17:47, he said, “And all this assembly shall know that the Lord saveth not with spear nor sword, for the battle is the Lord's. And He'll give you into our hand.” David leaned upon and trusted in the Lord; he learned that God was indeed his protection.

In fact, God preserved David wherever he went. I looked up the phrase and found that it occurs four times. Listen to this astounding truth. 2 Samuel 8:6 says, “Then David put garrisons in Syria of Damascus, and the Syrians became servants to David, and brought gifts. And the Lord preserved David, whithersoever he went.” Verse 14 says, “And he put garrisons in Edom, throughout all Edom put he garrisons. And all the Edomites became David's servants, and the Lord preserved David, whithersoever he went.”

First Chronicles 18:6 says, “Then David put garrisons in Syria of Damascus, and the Syrians became David's servants, and brought gifts. Thus the Lord preserved David, whithersoever he went.” Verse 13 says, “And he put garrisons in Edom, and all the Edomites became David's servants. Thus the Lord preserved David,

wheresoever he went." Four times the Bible says that the Lord preserved David.

Think of all the battles he fought. How did he come out of them alive? God preserved him. Have you ever stopped to consider the absolute necessity of God's preserving power in a time of war? I remember boot camp, many moons ago, when we used M1s. They took us out to show us a field of fire at night.

We had two BARs. The rest of them were just M1s. It was an 11-man squad. Of course, you had your cross sections of fire, with the two BARs on each end and all these M1s. Every fifth bullet was a tracer. I remember when that firing commenced, all you could see was a solid sheet of red.

I thought to myself, Oh, Lord, how does anyone ever make it through that? Look at the multitudes that did. How did David make it through all those sword fights, and all those arrows and spears miss him? The Lord preserved David whithersoever he went. That is why David later wrote in Psalm 24:8, "Who is this King of Glory? The Lord strong and mighty, the Lord mighty in battle." Consequently, David acknowledged and confessed that it was God who sustained and helped him in all the battles. He said in 2 Samuel 22:40, "For thou hast girded me with strength to the battle, and them that rose up under me thou hast subdued."

I want to submit something to you. Think about this, folks: We have a problem in this country, in America, and in our churches. All the problems that we have in our country, our nation, and our churches stem from an individual problem: We have lost a warrior spirit and a fighting spirit. We have lost it.

We are unwilling to face our enemies or engage them. In fact, most people are just plain scared and unwilling to fight—culturally, educationally, and spiritually. I am not sure that we understand the impact of what I have just said. When God commands us to fight and we refuse to fight, and when God commands us to preserve lives and we refuse to preserve lives, we put ourselves under His curse.

For instance, look in your Bibles at Jeremiah 48:10. In this passage, God had commanded the destruction of Moab. God says, "Cursed be he that doeth the work of the Lord deceitfully, and cursed

be he that keepeth back his sword from blood." Go back up to verse 8: "And the spoiler shall come upon every city, no city shall escape, the valley also shall perish, and the plain shall be destroyed, as the Lord hath spoken." Then He says again in verse 10, "Cursed be he that doeth the work of the Lord deceitfully, and cursed be he that keepeth back his sword from blood." God had demanded and commanded the destruction of Moab. Those whom He sent, if they dealt deceitfully and did not do what they were supposed to do, were under His curse.

We have lost the warrior spirit, the fighting spirit. I think this is probably more true in the North than in the South, but it is coming this way in the South as well.

Every day, you can read the paper or listen to the news and find that an individual, or a couple of individuals, is attacked by a gang or mob, sometimes merely a group of teenagers. The victim or victims are beaten to a bloody pulp while onlookers and bystanders crowd around.

The most any will do is call 911 or use their cell phones to video everything. Not one will intervene or try to help. They stand around and look; they will not get involved. They do not care whether people die or not.

Brandon Smith wrote an article about self-defense. He said: "There's a rather insane notion within modern activist movements that self-defense represents an abandonment of a higher principle. They argue that to fight is to automatically lose, and to prepare for conflict is extreme. I would say that self-defense is actually the highest principle one can value. For without the courage to physically resist tyranny, without the will required to put one's life at risk to stand against the evils of the world, all other principles will be lost."

Even Gandhi, the man often idolized by pacifists and non-violent activists, recognized this fact. Now I just want to give a quote by Gandhi. I want you to listen. Here's what Gandhi said. "Hence also do I advocate training in arms for those who believe in the method of violence. I would rather have India resort to arms in order to defend her honor than that she should sit in a cowardly manner or become

or remain a helpless witness to her own dishonor. When violence is offered in self-defense or for the defense of the defenseless, it is an act of bravery far better than cowardly submission." Now although Gandhi was right, I'm certainly not a follower of Gandhi.

I want to follow the sovereign God of heaven and earth who has revealed himself in the Lord Jesus Christ. And I can assure you one thing, it is never wrong to emulate our Heavenly Father. So we have to ask this question, would God fight? Let me ask this question another way. Would God take lives in order to protect his people? Would God take lives in fighting? If self-defense is wrong, if defense of a people is wrong, and if it's wicked and sinful in and of itself, then God himself certainly would not engage in it, because we know that he is the Holy One of Israel, and in him is no sin at all. Do you know what God told King Hezekiah of Judah when the Assyrians were going to come and attack? He told Hezekiah in 2 Kings 19, verse 34, "For I will defend this city to save it for my own sake, and for my servant David's sake." God said, I will defend this city. He said, Hezekiah, you don't have to worry about this.

God as Defender and Our Example

Now, self-defense is wicked and wrong. God would never engage in it. Yet in 2 Kings 20:6, He tells King 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.” 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 declares, “For I will defend this city for my own sake and my servant David’s sake.” Isaiah 38:6 says, “I will deliver thee and this city out of the hand of the king of Assyria. I will defend this city.” Five times God said, “I’m going to defend Jerusalem.”

Since God defended Jerusalem, did God kill or take lives in the defense of Jerusalem? Oh yes. Isaiah 37:36 says, “Then the angel of the Lord went forth and smote in the camp of the Assyrians a hundred and fourscore and five thousand.” That is 185,000. “And when they awoke in the morning, behold, they were all dead

corpses," or all dead men. Those who did not die awoke and found 185,000 dead men. That is a pretty awesome figure.

Did God have to kill those men to save Jerusalem? No. What could God have done? He could have done to them exactly as He did to the Syrians. What did He do to the Syrians? Look in your Bible at 2 Kings, chapter 7. I love this passage. Let us begin reading at verse 3: 2 Kings 7, verse 3.

"There were four leprous men entering into the gate, and they said one to another, Why sit we here till we die?" Samaria was being besieged by the Syrians. Starvation was stalking the city. By the way, the lepers could not go inside the city, so they lived basically off the garbage thrown over the wall. But no garbage was being thrown over the wall. So they said, "If we say we will enter the city, then the famine is in the city, and we shall die there. If we sit here, we shall die also."

SCRIPTURE READING - 2 Kings 7:4-7 (KJV)

> "Now therefore, come and let us fall into the host of the Syrians. If they save us alive, we shall live. And if they kill us, we shall die." And the Lord said, "You're not going to be any more dead." And they rose up in the twilight to go into the camp of the Syrians. And when they were come to the uttermost part of the camp of Syria, behold, there was no man there. For the LORD had made the host of the Syrians to hear a noise of chariots, and a noise of horses, even the noise of a great host. And they said one to another, "Lo, the king of Israel hath hired against us the kings of the Hittites, and the kings of the Egyptians to come upon us." Wherefore they arose and fled in the twilight, and left their tents, and their horses, and their asses, even the camp as it was, and fled for their life." All God did was to cause him to hear sound. He never had to kill one Syrian, but he killed 185,000 Assyrians.

So could God have saved Jerusalem without taking the lives of the Assyrians? Yes. Did He do so? No. Is anyone so blasphemous and wicked as to charge God with murder? God does not violate His own law. God is the infinitely Holy One.

We must understand that life and death are in the hands of the Lord. He does as He pleases and chooses. David confessed in Psalm 7:10, “My defense is of God who saveth the upright in heart.” Throughout Psalms, David repeatedly says the Lord is our defense and the Holy One of Israel is our King. We may rightly conclude that, as God defended His people in the Old Testament, He defends His people today. Moreover, He defends His honor, His glory, and His kingdom.

It is never wrong to emulate our Heavenly Father. When lives must be taken in lawful self-defense or defense of others, it is not murder; it is obedience to God and His laws. Recall Jonathan and his armor-bearer in 1 Samuel 14. The Philistines invited them to come unto them, and Jonathan said, “The Lord has delivered them into our hands.” Then Jonathan took out his sword and began to slay the Philistines.

And he slew up to about 20 of them. The Lord then sent an earthquake and caused the Philistines to tremble in fear. They turned and began to slay each other. First Samuel 14:23 says, "So the Lord saved Israel that day, and the battle passed over to Beth-aven." God killed more in the earthquake than Jonathan did, or any of the Israelitish army. God took them out.

David oftentimes relied upon the Lord for wisdom and direction. One time the Philistines had assembled themselves to attack. David asked, Shall I go up and attack them? He had done so previously and won. In 1 Chronicles 14:14-16, God said, No, do not make a frontal assault. Go around behind them. When you hear the wind in the top of the mulberry trees, it is me going out before you. Just follow on, and you will take care of them. That is exactly what he did.

In 1 Samuel 23, David heard that Keilah was being attacked by the Philistines. David had nothing in Keilah, but the Philistines were attacking that city. The Scripture says, "Then they told David, said, Behold, the Philistines fight against Keilah, and they robbed the threshing floors. Therefore David inquired of the Lord, saying, Shall I go and smite these Philistines? And the Lord said unto David, Go and smite the Philistines, and save Keilah." David had no family there, but they needed help. God said, Go take care of it; go smite those Philistines and save Keilah. It is lawful to fight against those

who are wicked and maliciously attacking others. It is lawful to take life if necessary in such circumstances.

We have to remember two important truths. First, we must remember the wickedness of the wicked. The wicked think absolutely nothing of violating God's law or taking lives. For instance, look in your Bibles at Psalm 14:4. This is an amazing, astounding verse. We must understand what David meant in Psalm 14:4 when he was talking about the wicked. Look what he says.

"Have all the workers of iniquity no knowledge? Who eat up my people as they eat bread and call upon the name of the Lord?" Take note: he says the wicked eat up my people as they eat bread. John Gill said of this verse, "Who eat up my people as they eat bread, not David's people but the Lord's people, whom he chose for his people, who were his covenant people, and who professed his name and were called by it. These the workers of iniquity ate up, devoured, and consumed by reproaching and persecuting them, doing injury to their persons, property, and character. They devoured their persons by using them cruelly and putting them to death. They devoured their substance by spoiling it and converting it to their own use, as the Pharisees were said to devour widows' houses, and they destroyed their good names and characters with devouring words. And this they did with as much ease, delight, and pleasure, and without any remorse of conscience, as constantly as a man eats bread." They think nothing of devouring the saints. It is like sitting down to a meal. We need to consider the wickedness of the wicked.

The Duty to Preserve Life

Secondly, we must remember that every negative has a positive. When God said, "Thou shalt not kill," the positive is, "Thou shalt preserve life." Consider Deuteronomy 22, beginning with verse 23: "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 of 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 humbled his neighbor's wife, so shalt thou put evil from among you. But if the man find a betrothed damsel in the field and the man force her and lie with her, then the man only that lie

with her shall die. But in the damsel thou shalt do nothing, there is in the damsel no sin worthy of death. For it is when a man rises up 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 is none to save her."

Consider the woman in the city. God says to take the man and the woman and stone them with stones. But the woman in the field—only the man died. Why? He says that in the city the woman cried not. She had to be consenting to the sin; she had to be consenting to the crime, or else she would have cried out.

What are the implications of that? If she had cried out, it would mean that anyone who heard her would have had the obligation and duty to protect her and preserve her. The woman in the field was not put to death because she cried. There was none to hear. There was no one to deliver her. God said, “Just execute the man.” Preservation of life is a duty; it is an obligation.

Look in your Bibles to Acts chapter seven. You know the story in the Old Testament, but I do not know whether you know it in the New Testament. Acts chapter seven, beginning with verse twenty-two: “And Moses was learned in all the wisdom of the Egyptians, and was mighty in words and in 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. For he supposed his brethren would have understood how that God by his hand would deliver them, but they understood not. And the next day he showed himself unto them as they strove, and would have set them at one again, saying, Sirs, you are brethren, why do you wrong one to another? And he that did his neighbor wrong thrust him away, saying, Who made thee a ruler and a judge over us? wilt thou kill me as thou didst the Egyptian yesterday? Then fled Moses at this saying, and was a stranger in the land of Midian, where he begat two sons.”

Interestingly, Moses is not condemned in the Old Testament, nor in the New Testament, for killing this Egyptian and defending the Hebrew. In fact, you could say that God commended him because He listed him among the heroes of faith in Hebrews chapter eleven.

Moses did not flee because he violated God's law. He fled because a wicked, reprobate ruler, Pharaoh, was seeking to kill him for doing that which was right. His flight was also an act of self-defense, because flight is a legitimate means of preserving your life. Moses protected his brother. He preserved life, and it is right to preserve life.

Application: Woe to Those at Ease in Zion

Now let me make a couple of applications. Turn in your Bibles to Amos chapter 6 and verse 1. Here is the first application, but you have got to see this verse in its context. In this passage, God condemns those who are at ease in Zion when they should be fighting. Amos 6:1 says, "Woe to them that are at ease in Zion, and trust in the mountain of Samaria, which are named chief of the nations, to whom the house of Israel came."

The mountain of Samaria was the capital of the northern kingdom; it represented the government there. So God says, “Woe to them that are at ease in Zion and trust in the government of Samaria.” What? It seems to me like I have heard this before: We do not have to be defensive, learn self-defense, or prepare. The government is going to protect us, feed us, house us, and take care of our medical needs. When we are in trouble, all we have to do is call 911.

Yes, that is true—but when you call 911 and need immediate help, they may be only twenty minutes away, or thirty, or an hour away. In light of a total breakup of society, they may never come.

In Zephaniah 1:12, listen to this: "And it shall come to pass at that time, that I will search Jerusalem with candles, and punish the men that are settled on their lees, that say in their heart, The Lord will not do good, neither will he do evil." God said He would punish those who were settled on their lees. I am sure you do not know what lees are. Lees are the refuse of the wine; they settled to the bottom. If you left the wine on its lees, it became extremely bitter and was defiled. God says that those who sit back and become hardened and stiffened in their sin, rebellion, and unwillingness to obey Him shall be destroyed.

It is a sin to fight when God forbids you to fight. It is a sin to fight when there is no biblical principle and biblical reason to fight. But it is also a sin to refuse to fight when God commands you to fight, when lives are in danger, or when biblical principles are to be upheld.

Next time you hear someone say, “Be sure your sin will find you out,” you ask them, which sin? Because that is talking about the sin of refusing to fight, and, by the way, that is the sin of most Christians, most preachers, and most churches. We want to be so sweet and so sinless.

I have a message titled “Comest thou peaceably?” Did you know that when Samuel, the little prophet Samuel, went to Bethlehem to offer the sacrifice, before he ever got to the city, they sent a committee out to him and asked him, “Comest thou peaceably?” Why would you ask a preacher, “Why are you coming peaceably?” Well, if you read 1 Samuel 15, little Samuel took a sword and hewed Agag in pieces before the Lord, cutting him up in little tidbits. They were afraid he was coming to do that to some of them. “Comest thou peaceably?” Can you imagine? You are a pastor going to the local city council or county council meeting, and before you ever get on the step, somebody runs up and says, “Preacher, are you coming peaceably?”

The problem is our enemies know that we will not fight. And it is our sin. Father, in the name of Jesus Christ, we ask you for your blessing and your help. Teach us to go to the supper of the most holy faith. Give us grace to serve Thee, we pray, in Christ’s name, Amen.

CHAPTER 2

The Sin of Refusing to Fight - 2

Introduction and Review

Numbers 32:23 says, "But if you will not do so, behold, you have sinned against the Lord and be sure your sin will find you out." This is part two of "The Sin of Refusing to Fight." Last week we saw the context of Numbers chapter 32 and verse 23 and observed that the sin that would find us out specifically was a sinner refusing to fight.

Last week, I endeavored to answer two questions. The first was, when is it a sin to fight? The answer is that it is a sin to fight when God has not commanded us to fight or when the fight is contrary to clearly defined scriptural principles. Usually, fights for resources, control, power, and dominion are condemned in Scripture.

The second question was, when is it a sin to refuse to fight? Again, the answer was very clearly given to us in Scripture: it is a sin to refuse to fight when God commands us to fight and we refuse to fight.

God Commands Fighting Today Through His Word

You have to understand that God does not speak today the way He did in the Old Testament. In the Old Testament, the Lord used prophets, dreams and trances, and even the Urim and the Thummim. But those things are no more, because now we have the completed, full, and final revelation of God that is given to us. God does speak in His Word, and God does speak through principles. These principles are clearly enunciated, and there are areas in which we are commanded to fight.

I gave you some examples last week. We must fight for our Christian faith, for our culture, for our heritage, and for our society. We must fight for truth and righteousness. You have to remember that tyranny always seeks to destroy those things. Consequently, we must always fight against tyranny and evil in every form. Psalm 94:16 asks, "Who will rise up for me against the evildoers? And who will stand up for me against the workers of iniquity?" Very clearly, God is asking for someone to fight for Him. It is a declaration of war upon the wicked.

It Is a Sin to Refuse to Fight When Lives Are in Danger

Today I want to come to the second truth in Numbers chapter 32 and verse 23. Last week I shared with you one point: it is a sin to refuse to fight when God commands us to fight. We looked at a number of passages in the Bible where God did command His people to fight. But secondly, it is a sin to refuse to fight when lives are in danger or in jeopardy.

By that, I mean your life and the life of your family, your friends, and your neighbors. As you look at Numbers chapter 32, consider this question: What would be one of the sins of the tribes of Reuben, Gad, and the half-tribe of Manasseh? The answer is the sin of failing to protect and fight for the lives of their brethren. The other tribes were going to war. They had yet to subdue their enemies and receive their inheritance. They needed help—armed help. They needed men who would fight. If these two and a half tribes sat back and refused to fight, it would be sin on their part.

Now look again at Numbers 32, beginning with verse 20, and see what God said specifically to Reuben, Gad, and the half-tribe of Manasseh: "And Moses said unto them, If you will do this thing, if you go armed before the Lord to war, and will go all of you armed over Jordan before the Lord, until He hath driven out His enemies from before Him, and the land be subdued before the Lord, then afterward you shall return and be guiltless before the Lord and before Israel, and this land shall be your possession before the Lord. But if you will not do so, behold, you have sinned against the Lord, and be sure your sin will find you out."

Notice carefully that in this passage there was absolutely nothing about praying for their brethren or simply wishing them well. I am certainly not minimizing prayer. Prayer is needed and necessary. If I am going to be fighting, I am going to be praying; and if I am going to be fighting, I want everybody who would pray for me to be praying. However, at that time, prayer was not what was needed.

SCRIPTURE READING - Numbers 25:1-13 (KJV)

Prayer Without Fighting Is Useless When Fighting Is Mandatory

It was men who were willing to fight. I am not minimizing benevolent desires. We should certainly want our brethren to have the best that is sure. But if you simply wish someone well when they need help, that is not sufficient, according to the Word of God. Praying might be mixed with fighting, but prayer without fighting when it is absolutely necessary is useless. You cannot simply pray and refuse to fight.

"And Israel abode in Shittim. And the people began to commit whoredom with the daughters of Moab. And they called the people into the sacrifices of their gods. And the people did eat and bowed down to their gods. And Israel joined himself unto Baal Peor. And the anger of the Lord was kindled against Israel. And the Lord said unto Moses, Take all the heads of the people and hang them up before the Lord against the sun, that the fierce anger of the Lord may be turned away from Israel. And Moses said unto the judges of Israel, Slay ye every one of his men that were joined unto Baal Peor. And behold, one of the

> children of Israel came and brought unto his brethren a Midianitish woman in the sight of Moses, and in the sight of all the congregation of the children of Israel, who were weeping before the door of the tabernacle of the congregation.
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> "And when Phinehas, the son of Eleazar, the son of Aaron, the priest, saw it, he rose up from among the congregation and took a javelin in his hand. And he went after the man of Israel into the tent and thrust both of them through, the man of Israel and the woman through her belly. So the plague was stayed from the children of Israel, and those that died in the plague were twenty and four thousand. And the Lord spake unto Moses, saying, Phinehas, the son of Eleazar, the son of Aaron, the priest, hath turned away my wrath from the children of Israel, while he was zealous for my sake among them, that I consume not the children of Israel in my jealousy. Wherefore say, Behold, I give unto him my covenant of peace, and he shall have it, and his seed after him, even the covenant of an everlasting priesthood; because he was zealous for his God, and made an atonement for the children of Israel."

Note where Moses and all the elders of Israel were. In verse 6, an Israelite brought a Midianitish woman to his brethren in the sight of Moses and all the congregation, who were weeping before the door of the tabernacle. Undoubtedly, they were praying while they were weeping. Many times in Scripture, Moses, Aaron, and others were there praying because of the sin of the children of Israel. But when this man brought the Midianitish woman into the camp, Phinehas, who was also there, ceased praying, took a spear or javelin, and slew both of them. In other words, there was a time to quit praying and weeping and do the fighting. That is exactly what Phinehas did.

David as a Model of Fighting the Lord's Battles

God blessed him for doing so. He gave him a covenant of peace and said that he would have it forever. There are times when fighting is absolutely required and demanded. Remember that David was a fighter and a warrior, and that he fought the Lord's battles. Abigail said this to David in 1 Samuel 25:28: "I pray thee, forgive the trespass of thine handmaid: for the Lord will certainly make my lord

a sure house; because my lord fighteth the battles of the Lord, and evil hath not been found in thee all thy days." She said, "because my lord fighteth the battles of the Lord." David, when fighting the battles of the Lord, was fighting physically.

He was destroying the Philistines and those who fought against the Lord and against His people. David was a mighty warrior, and he learned to fight under the protection and blessings of the Lord. He understood this truth: each battle and every battle belongs to the Lord; all battles belong to the Lord. David learned this early when he fought Goliath.

In 1 Samuel 17:47, David said, "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 give you into our hands." He was talking to Goliath, but said that the assembly would know God does not necessarily need to save with sword or spear. The battle is the Lord's, and He would give Goliath into their hand. David leaned upon the Lord and trusted in the Lord. The battle belonged to the Lord.

The Bible teaches us that God preserved David everywhere he went. I have no idea how many battles David was in; he was in a multitude of battles. At least four times, the Bible specifically states that God preserved the life of David as he was fighting the battles of the Lord.

In 2 Samuel 8:6, we read, "Then David put garrisons in Syria of Damascus: and the Syrians became servants to David, and brought gifts. And the Lord preserved David whithersoever he went." Verse 14 says, "And he put garrisons in Edom; throughout all Edom put he garrisons, and all they of Edom became David's servants. And the Lord preserved David whithersoever he went." In 1 Chronicles 18:6, "Then David put garrisons in Syria-damascus; and the Syrians became David's servants, and brought gifts. Thus the Lord preserved David whithersoever he went." Verse 13 says, "And he put garrisons in Edom; and all the Edomites became David's servants. Thus the Lord preserved David whithersoever he went."

Four times the Bible specifically says that while David was fighting, it did not matter where he was; God sovereignly preserved

and protected him. Later David wrote Psalm 24:8: "Who is this King of glory? The Lord strong and mighty, the Lord mighty in battle."

David says the Lord is mighty in battle. Consequently, he learned to confess and acknowledge that it was God who sustained, preserved, and protected him throughout all his battles. He said in 2 Samuel 22:40, "For thou hast girded me with strength to battle: them that rose up against me hast thou subdued under me."

I want you to listen to what I'm about to say. I read all those scriptures to tell you this. We have a problem in our country. We have a problem in our churches. We have a problem in our families, and we have a problem in individual lives. What is that problem? We have lost our warrior spirit. We have lost our fighting spirit. Do you realize we are unwilling to face our enemies? We're unwilling to engage our enemies and just plain scared and unwilling to fight.

What do you say? That's not so bad? Oh, until you understand that the curse of God is upon such a nation, such a church, such a family, and such an individual. You see, when God commands us to fight, and we refuse to fight, it's not only sin; the curse of God comes upon us.

The Curse of Refusing to Fight

Jeremiah chapter 48 and look at verse 10. Here's a very interesting verse. Jeremiah 48 and verse 10. Look what God says. God says this: "Cursed be he that doeth the work of the Lord deceitfully, and cursed be he that keepeth back his sword from blood."

Wait a minute. Did I read that right? God says you are under the curse if you do the work of God deceitfully, and you are under the curse if you keep back your sword from blood.

In the context of Jeremiah 48, God had pronounced His wrath and judgment upon Moab. He had sent His army to destroy Moab. In verse 8 He says, “And the spoiler shall come upon every city, and no city shall escape: the valley also shall perish, and the plain shall be destroyed, as the Lord hath spoken.” Then, in verse 10: “Cursed be he that doeth the work of the Lord deceitfully, and cursed be he that keepeth back his sword from blood.”

What is God saying? “I have ordained this war. I have ordained this fight. I have sent you to destroy these people, these cities, and these plains because of their sin and wickedness. This is My judgment.” If you do the work of God deceitfully, it is not only sin, but you are under the curse. If you hold back your sword from blood, you are under My curse as well. Wow.

How in the world would this apply to us today? I am going to show you. But think about this: not a week goes by, if you read the news, whether in the paper or on the Internet, that you do not read of individuals being attacked by gangs, mobs, and even rampaging teenagers. What do bystanders and onlookers do when they see an individual being attacked? They do what is expected.

They stand by and look on. The most any of them will do is use a cell phone to call 911 or video the fight, but they will not lift one simple finger to help the individual being beaten to a pulp. You know why? That attitude is, “I don’t want to get involved. I don’t want to get involved. I don’t want to get hurt.” Thus, we will let someone be beaten absolutely to death and not do one thing. It is a sin, and it is a curse.

Let me give you a quote. Brandon Smith wrote a column, and in three short paragraphs, two of them quoting Gandhi, he said this. Gandhi was the pacifist, the Indian guru. Listen to what he wrote: “There is a rather insane notion within modern activist movements that self-defense represents an abandonment of control.”

“They argue that to fight is to automatically lose and to prepare for conflict is extreme. I would say that self-defense is actually the highest principle one can value, for without the courage to physically resist tyranny, without the will required to put one’s life at risk, to stand against the evils of the world, all other principles will be lost.”

Now listen, even Gandhi, the man often idolized by pacifists and nonviolent activists, recognized this fact. Now listen to what Gandhi said. He quotes, "Hence also do I advocate training in arms for those who believe in the method of violence. I would rather have India resort to arms in order to defend her honor than that she should, in a cowardly manner, become or remain a helpless witness to her own dishonor. When violence is offered in self-defense or for the defense

of the defenseless, it is an act of bravery far better than an act of cowardly submission." That was Gandhi. Now, let me tell you, I am not a follower of Gandhi. Gandhi certainly was right in these two instances, but I'm not a follower of Gandhi. I'm a follower of the Lord Jesus Christ, who is the sovereign God of heaven and earth.

And I can assure you of one thing. It is never wrong to emulate our heavenly Father. So you have to ask yourself this question. Would God fight? Or as the world used to say, what would Jesus do? Well, I will tell you this, Jesus would take a scourge of cords and run them out of the temple. Yes, He would fight. He would fight. Let me go a little bit further. Would God fight? We can ask it like this. Would God go so far as to take lives?

God Defends His People and Takes Lives in Their Defense

In defending His people and in defending His great and dreadful name, is it wrong to defend ourselves? Is it wrong to defend our families, our neighborhood, or our friends? Is it wrong to kill in order to preserve life? I can assure you again that it is never wrong to emulate our heavenly Father. We can always follow His example and be assured that we are right.

Turn in your Bibles to 2 Kings chapter 19. We will look at two passages in 2 Kings and then go to the book of Isaiah. Notice what God said to King Hezekiah. Here is what God said to King Hezekiah in 2 Kings 19, verse 34: “For I will defend this city to save it for mine own sake, and for my servant David’s sake.”

God tells King Hezekiah of Judah that He is going to defend Jerusalem and His people from the king of Assyria. Hezekiah does not need to worry because God is going to undertake his defense. God is not merely promising deliverance; He is declaring that He Himself will defend the city. If self-defense and the defense of the lives of others happen to be wrong, wicked, and vile, I can assure you that God Himself would never engage in it. But God is saying, “I’m going to defend my people. I’m going to defend my city, and I’m going to defend my holy name.”

In 2 Kings 20:6, God says to 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.” That is twice that God has said it.

In Isaiah 31:5, 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.” This is the third time. Isaiah 37:35 says, “For I will defend this city to save it for mine own sake, and for my servant David’s sake.” That is four times. Then Isaiah 38:6 says, “And I will deliver thee and this city out of the hand of the king of Assyria, and I will defend this city.”

Five times God says, “I’m going to defend this city. I’ll defend it for David’s sake. I’ll defend it for my own honor’s sake. But I’m going to defend this city.” The question has to be asked: Did God defend Hezekiah and the people of Jerusalem? Yes, He did. Did God take lives in defending Hezekiah and the people of Jerusalem? The answer is yes.

Isaiah 37:35 says, “For I will defend this city to save it for mine own sake, and for my servant David’s sake.” Then the angel of the Lord went forth and smote in the camp of the Assyrians a hundred and eighty-five thousand. When they arose early in the morning, behold, they were all dead corpses.

Those few Assyrian soldiers who were still alive woke up to 185,000 dead corpses in their camp. Did God take life? The answer is absolutely yes.

Now, let me ask you another question. Could God have delivered Jerusalem without taking lives? The answer is yes. He had done it before. Look in your Bibles to 2 Kings, chapter 7. Let me show you how He previously saved them. Beginning with verse 3: “And there were four leprous men at the entering in of the gate: and they said one to another, Why sit we here until we die? If we say, We will enter into the city, then the famine is in the city, and we shall die there: and if we sit still here, we die also.”

SCRIPTURE READING - 2 Kings 7:3-7 (KJV)

"Now therefore come, and let us fall unto the host of the Syrians: if they save us alive, we shall live; and if they kill us, we

> shall but die. And they rose up in the twilight to go unto the camp of the Syrians: and when they were come to the uttermost part of the camp of Syria, behold, there was no man there. For the Lord had made the host of the Syrians to hear a noise of chariots, and a noise of horses, even the noise of a great host: and they said one to another, Lo, the king of Israel hath hired against us the kings of the Hittites, and the kings of the Egyptians, to come upon us. Wherefore they arose and fled in the twilight, and left their tents, and their horses, and their asses, even the camp as it was, and fled for their lives."
>
> So what did God do? God simply caused them to hear a noise. They said, "It's the noise of a great army, and they're coming after us. The king has hired all these people against us," and they ran. Could God have done the same thing in Isaiah 37? Of course He could have, but He didn't. He killed 185,000 Assyrian soldiers. Now, here's my question: Is anyone going to be so blasphemous as to charge God with murder? Could God have delivered Jerusalem without killing these 185,000? Yes.

But He did not choose to do so. Although God is above His law and is not bound by His law, God does not violate His law. He is the infinitely holy One, and whatever He does is right.

You have to understand that David, along with other saints, confesses and acknowledges that God is our defense. David said in Psalm 7:10, “My defense is of God which saveth the upright in heart.” David claims God as his defender. I could multiply passages: Psalm 59:9; Psalm 59:16–17; Psalm 62:2, 6; and Psalm 94:2, 22. David repeats over and over that God is his defense. He relied totally and completely upon the mercy and power of God. David said in Psalm 89:18, “For the Lord is our defense; and the Holy One of Israel is our king.”

Please take note that David claimed God as his defender, and we may rightly conclude that God not only defends His people, but He defends His name and His honor as well. As I said earlier, it is never wrong to emulate our heavenly Father. When lives must be taken in self-defense or in the defense of others, it is not murder, wrong, wickedness, or sin. Let me show you. Turn to 1 Samuel 14. Jonathan and his armor-bearer show themselves to the Philistines.

SCRIPTURE READING - 1 Samuel 14:10-14 (KJV)

> There is a battle going on. Jonathan said, "If they call us and tell us to come to them, then God has delivered them into our hands." He said, "But if they say thus, Come up unto us; then we will go up: for the Lord hath delivered them into our hand: and this shall be a sign unto us."
>
> "And both of them discovered themselves unto the garrison of the Philistines: and the Philistines said, Behold, the Hebrews come forth out of the holes where they had hid themselves. And the men of the garrison answered Jonathan and his armourbearer, and said, Come up to us, and we will shew you a thing. And Jonathan said unto his armourbearer, Come up after me: for the Lord hath delivered them into the hand of Israel. And Jonathan climbed up upon his hands and upon his feet, and his armourbearer after him: and they fell before Jonathan; and his armourbearer slew after him. And that first slaughter, which Jonathan and his armourbearer made, was about twenty men, within as it were an half acre of land, which a yoke of oxen might plow."

Jonathan and his armor bearer have killed about twenty men. What happens next? “And there was trembling in the host, in the field, and among all the people: the garrison, and the spoilers, they also trembled, and the earth quaked: so it was a very great trembling. And the watchmen of Saul in Gibeah of Benjamin looked; and, behold, the multitude melted away, and they went on beating down one another.”

Notice, if you would please, God sent an earthquake. The people became so frightened, they turned against each other. If you skip down to verse 23, the Bible says, “So the Lord saved Israel that day: and the battle passed over unto Beth-aven.” Jonathan and his armor-bearer only killed about twenty. The rest of them God killed. What few were killed afterwards, when Israel chased them, was still nothing in comparison to those that God killed. So God was defending His people.

In 1 Chronicles chapter 14, beginning with verse 14, you see David, the mighty warrior, always relied upon God for wisdom and direction. David usually asked permission to fight. He asked what

God's will would be. "Therefore David inquired again of God; and God said unto him, Go not up after them; turn away from them, and come upon them over against the mulberry trees. And it shall be, when thou shalt hear a sound of going in the tops of the mulberry trees, that then thou shalt go out to battle: for God is gone forth before thee to smite the host of the Philistines. David therefore did as God commanded him; and they smote the host of the Philistines from Gibeon even to Gazer." David, the mighty warrior, got directions from God. He did as God commanded him, and God went forth before him to smite the host of the Philistines.

Again, in 1 Samuel chapter 23, David asked permission to fight. In this instance, David was not being attacked, and David's men were not attacked. A city was attacked by men who were looters and robbers. "Then they told David, saying, Behold, the Philistines fight against Keilah, and they rob the threshingfloors." The town of Keilah was being attacked. "Therefore David inquired of the Lord, saying, Shall I go and smite these Philistines? And the Lord said unto David, Go, and smite the Philistines, and save Keilah." David asked permission, and God said, "Yes, go." Why? Because you are defending lives; you are preserving lives. Go. It is lawful to fight against those who are wicked and maliciously attacking others. It is biblical and lawful to take life, even if necessary, in such instances.

Now, let me remind you of two principles. I want you to think about this. First of all, we must remember the wickedness of the wicked. What do I mean by that? We must remember the wickedness of the wicked. The wicked think absolutely nothing of violating God's law. They think absolutely nothing of murder, of theft, of rape. I want you to look in Psalm 14 and verse 4 at a verse. You talking about an illuminating verse? Look in Psalm 14 and verse 4 where God is talking about the wicked and listen to what He says. And this is what I mean when I say we must remember the wickedness of the wicked. Psalm 14, verse 4. Psalm 14, verse 4, God says, "Have all the workers of iniquity no knowledge? who eat up my people as they eat bread, and call not upon the Lord." Watch: "Have all the workers of iniquity no knowledge? who eat up my people as they eat bread, and call not upon the Lord." I want you to pay careful attention to this one little phrase where God says that the wicked eat up His people as they eat bread.

I want to give you what John Gill in his commentary said on this verse. Just one paragraph. Listen carefully. John Gill writes, "who eat up my people as they eat bread"—not David's people, but the Lord's people whom He chose for His people, who were His covenant people and who professed His name and were called by His name. These, the workers of iniquity, ate up, devoured and consumed by reproaching and persecuting them, doing injury to their persons, property and character. They devoured their persons by using them cruelly and putting them to death. They devoured their substance by spoiling them of it and converting it to their own use.

As the Pharisees are said to devour widows' houses, and they destroyed their good names and characters with devouring words. And this they did with as much ease and as much delight and as much pleasure and without any remorse of conscience as constantly as a man eats bread. I want you to stop and think about that. The wicked think no more of violating God's law and doing wickedly than they do of thinking of taking up a piece of bread and eating it.

You see, this verse, Psalm 14, verse 4, also teaches us that there is the inclination in the wicked to devour the saints, that is what they're inclined to do, just like they're inclined to eat. It's nothing to them. What does a hungry man do? He devours his food. What does the wicked man do? He devours the righteous. That's why God asked, "Have the workers of iniquity no knowledge? who eat up my people as they eat bread?" So we have to remember the wickedness of the wicked.

Biblical Duty to Preserve Life

Secondly, we have to remember that every negative has a positive. The sixth commandment says, “Thou shalt not kill.” The sixth commandment is a negative, but every negative has a positive. The positive side of the sixth commandment is, “Thou shalt preserve life.” We have a duty, an obligation, not only to preserve our lives, but the lives of others if we are going to keep the sixth commandment.

Consider how clearly this is taught in Scripture. Deuteronomy 22:23 says, “If a damsel that is a virgin be betrothed unto an

husband”—that is, she is actually engaged to be married. But remember, betrothal in the Bible meant that they were counted as husband and wife before they ever came together as husband and wife. So it was a serious thing. The passage continues: “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 neighbour's wife: so thou shalt 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 unto the damsel thou shalt do nothing; there is in the damsel no sin worthy of death: for as when a man riseth against his neighbour, 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.”

Note the differences between verses 23 and 24 and verses 25 and 26. In verses 23 and 24, the woman was in the city. God said to take the man and the woman, bring them to the gate of the city, and stone them with stones. But the man forced the woman. You have to understand this: the Bible says she, being in the city, cried not. If she had not been consenting to the sin and consenting to the crime, she would have cried out. What does that imply?

It implies that anyone who heard her would have been duty bound and obligated to save her. Because she was in the city, a multitude of people were around. When you get, however, to verses 25 and 26, the woman is in the field, and the Bible says she cried out, and none was there to save her. So the man only was to be put to death, and not the woman. Here you have a very clear distinction between someone who could help and someone who could not get help. If you hear the cry of distress or danger, if someone's life is in danger, according to Deuteronomy 22, you are duty bound and obligated to do whatever is necessary to save that life. That's obvious and clear. That's why it is wicked and wrong for onlookers and bystanders to stand by and look on while people are being beaten and killed.

In Acts chapter 7, beginning with verse 22, we read: "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 his brethren would have understood how that God by his hand would deliver them: but they understood not. And the next day he shewed himself unto them as they strove, and would have set them at one again, saying, Sirs, ye are brethren; why do ye wrong one to another? But he that did his neighbour wrong thrust him away, saying, Who made thee a ruler and a judge over us? Wilt thou kill me, as thou diddest the Egyptian yesterday? Then fled Moses at this saying, and was a stranger in the land of Midian, where he begat two sons."

The Bible says in verse 24 that Moses saw one of his brethren being wronged; in other words, his life was in danger. What did Moses do? He defended the Israelite, and in defending him, he killed the Egyptian. Moses is never condemned, either in the Old Testament or in the New Testament, for killing the Egyptian. In fact, Moses was commended for doing that, because he is listed in Hebrews chapter 11 as one of the heroes of faith.

You may say, “But the Bible also tells us that Moses had to flee from Egypt.” Yes, but he fled not because he had violated God’s law. He fled in obedience to God’s law, because Pharaoh, the king of Egypt, was seeking to take his life because he had taken the life of an Egyptian. Moses fled in order to preserve his life, which is clearly in obedience to the sixth commandment. Moses did not violate the law of God at all. He was fleeing to preserve his life and to keep Pharaoh from violating the law of God as well.

What the Bible teaches us is that it is right to defend life. It is right to defend your life, and it is right to defend the lives of others. If other people lose their lives, it is not a violation of the law of God if you have to take life to save life.

Application: Woe to Those at Ease in Zion

We are living, I believe, in extremely dangerous times. We see people being attacked, even in what is called the knockout game. You can go to YouTube and see people being beaten while thirty or forty people look on and nobody lifts a finger to help them. Do you realize that is

a sin? We are under the curse of God when we fail to obey the law of God. God condemns those who are at ease in Zion when they should be fighting. Amos 6:1 says, “Woe to them that are at ease in Zion, and trust in the mountain of Samaria, which are named chief of the nations, to whom the house of Israel came!”

Samaria was the capital of the northern kingdom; it was the government. Here is what God is saying: “Woe to them that are at ease and trust in the government.” What? “The police will come in and resolve this conflict.” Yes—after the man is beaten to death. They can draw a chalk line around the body, but you could have saved his life by intervening. You could have saved his life by picking up a baseball bat and hitting the attacker in the head, but you did not. Therefore God says, “Woe to them that are at ease in Zion, and that trust in the mountain of Samaria.”

What does this mean? When seconds count, the police are only thirty minutes away. You have a responsibility under God to preserve life.

Listen to Zephaniah 1:12: “And it shall come to pass at that time, that I will search Jerusalem with candles, and punish the men that are settled on their lees: that say in their heart, The Lord will not do good, neither will he do evil.” God says He will punish the men settled on their lees, who say in their heart, “God is not going to do good or evil.” In other words, God is not going to judge me for what I have done or what I have not done. This expression, “these men that are settled on their lees,” is taken from making wine.

The dregs in the bottom would be the lees. And the longer the wine sets on the lees, the more harsh and bitter it becomes. And so God says these men that are sitting on their lees becoming more defiled and more hardened in their heart. And thus, they're saying, "God's not going to judge me one way or the other. God will not do good. God will not do evil."

What we need to understand is this: what Moses said in Numbers 32 and verse 23, "But if you will not do so, be sure your sin will find you out." The sin was refusing to fight when God had commanded us to fight. It is a sin to sit by and allow your life, or the lives of your

loved ones, or the lives of your friends to be taken, and you do absolutely nothing.

There's a time to pray. There's a time to wish each other well. And there's a time to fight. And when it's time to fight, you better be prayed up, because you will not usually have prayer time except saying, "Lord, help me." It's a sin to refuse to fight when fighting is necessary.

Father, in the name of Jesus Christ, we bow to Thee this day. We thank You for Your love. Thank You for Your Word. We thank You for Your truth. And we pray that You will teach us, build us up in the most holy faith, and help us. In Christ's name we pray. Amen. Amen.

Source Notes

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