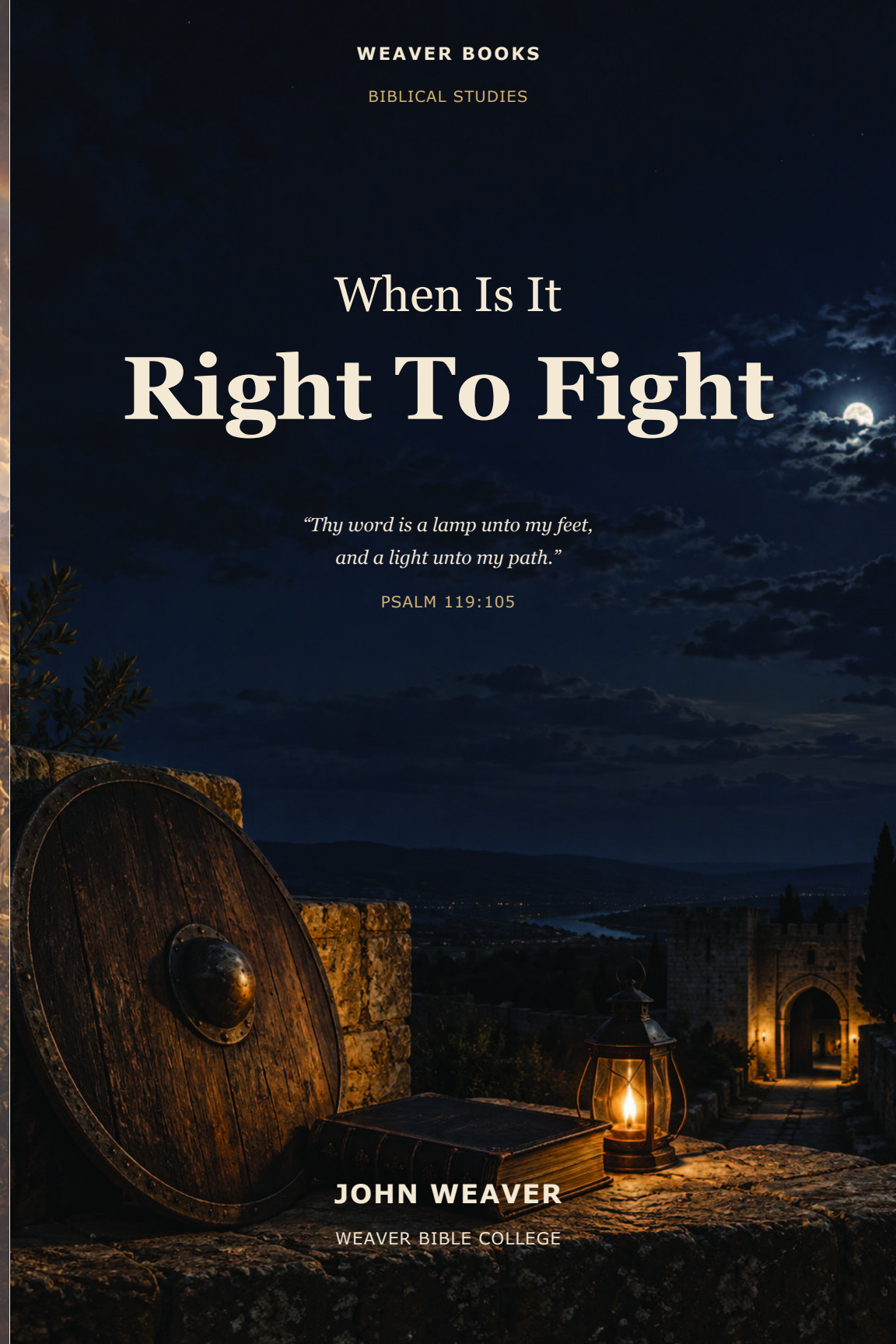
WEAVER BOOKS

BIBLICAL STUDIES

When Is It
Right To Fight

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

PSALM 119:105



JOHN WEAVER

WEAVER BIBLE COLLEGE



036

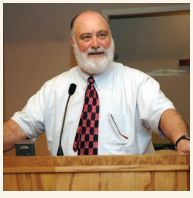
A time of war, and a time of peace.

ECCLESIASTES 3:8, EXCERPT

When is resistance required, and when should conflict be refused? John Weaver examines biblical accounts of warfare and the responsibilities associated with fighting. These three messages invite readers to consider courage, lawful authority, restraint, and the distinction between a conflict Scripture requires and one driven by fear or presumption.

“God says all three are exempt, not only because the family has priority over warfare, but because these individuals have not had time to experience the joys of covenant life.”

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.

WEAVER BIBLE COLLEGE

weaverbiblecollege.com

WEAVER BOOKS

When Is It Right To Fight

Family Government

John Weaver

Weaver Bible College

LIBRARY BOOK 036

When Is It Right To Fight

John Weaver

Weaver Books
Weaver Bible College

Edited from the sermon corpus of John Weaver.

Contents

Chapter 1: When Is It Right To Fight - 1 5
Introduction to Deuteronomy 20 and the Series 5
The Laws of Military Life 7
Fighting and War Are Assumed Realities in Scripture 8
Numerical Odds Are Inconsequential to a People of Faith 12
Superior Armaments Are Inconsequential to the People of Faith 18
The Stated Advantage: The Lord Thy God Is with Thee 21
Historical Example: God's Intervention in the American Revolution 23
Chapter 2: When Is It Right To Fight - 2 25
Deuteronomy 20 25
Review of Previous Teaching 27
The Reality of Death in Battle 28
Exemption for the Man with a New House 32
Exemption for the Man with a New Vineyard 34
Exemption for the Betrothed Man 35
Exemption for the Fearful and Fainthearted 36
Exemption for the Levites 36
Reasons for the Exemptions 37
Chapter 3: When Is It Right To Fight - 3 41
Review of Previous Messages on Deuteronomy 20 43
The Offer of Peace Before Attack 45
The Meaning of Tributary 46
Exception for the Canaanites 48
Principle: Avoid Bloodshed if Possible, but Fight to Win 49
War Not Against Creation but Against Man 51
Applications: Production Over Politics and Protection of Civilians 52
The Law of Booty: Reward and Restraint 54
Topical Index 63
Scripture Index 65
Study Guide Link 69

CHAPTER 1

When Is It Right To Fight - 1

SCRIPTURE READING - Deuteronomy 20:1-8 (KJV)

Introduction to Deuteronomy 20 and the Series

"When thou goest out to battle against thine enemies, and seest horses and chariots, and a people more than thou, be not afraid of them. For the Lord thy God is with thee, who brought thee up out of the land of Egypt. It shall be when you are come nigh unto the battle, that the priests shall approach and speak unto the people, and shall say unto them, Hear, O Israel, you approach this day unto battle against your enemies.

"Let not your hearts faint, fear not, and do not tremble, neither be ye terrified because of them. For the Lord your God is he that goeth with you to fight for you against your enemies, to save you." And the officer shall speak unto the people, saying, "What man is there that hath built a new house, and hath not dedicated it? Let him go and return to his house, lest he die in the battle, and another man dedicate it. And what man is he that hath planted a vineyard, and hath not yet eaten of it? Let him also go and return to his house, lest he die in the battle, and another man eat of it. And what man is there that hath

betrothed a wife, and hath not taken her? Let him go and return to his house, lest he die in battle, and another man take her." And the officers shall speak further unto the people, and they shall say, "What man is there that is fearful and fainthearted? Let him go and return into his house, lest his brethren's heart faint as well as his heart."

SCRIPTURE READING - Deuteronomy 20:10-20 (KJV)

And it shall be, when the officers have made an end of speaking unto the people, that they shall make captains of the armies to lead them. When thou comest nigh unto a city to fight against it, then proclaim peace unto it. It shall be, if it make thee an answer of peace and open unto thee, then it shall be that all the people that is found therein shall be tributaries unto thee, and they shall serve thee. If it be that they will make no peace with thee, but will make war against thee, then thou shalt besiege it. And when the Lord thy God hath delivered it into thine hands, thou shalt smite every male thereof with the edge of the sword. But the women, and the little ones, and the cattle, and all that is in the city, even all the spoil thereof, shalt thou take unto thyself, and thou shalt eat the spoil of thine enemies which the Lord thy God hath given thee. Thus shalt thou do unto all the cities which are very far off from thee, which are not of the cities of these nations, but of the cities of these people which the Lord thy God doth give thee for inheritance.

Thou shalt save alive nothing that breatheth, but thou shalt utterly destroy them, namely the Hittites and the Amorites and the Canaanites and the Perizzites and the Hivites and the Jebusites, as the Lord thy God hath commanded thee, that they teach you not to do after all their abominations which they have done unto their gods, so should you sin against the Lord your God. When thou shalt besiege a city a long time, in making war against it to take it, thou shalt not destroy the trees thereof by forcing an axe against them. For thou mayest eat of them, and thou shalt not cut them down, for the tree of the field is man's life to employ them in the siege. Only the trees which thou knowest that they be not trees for meat, thou shalt destroy and cut them down, and thou shalt build bulwarks against the city that maketh war with thee, until it be subdued.

The Laws of Military Life

Lord willing, today I bring the seventh message in this series on the biblical doctrine of war, or when it is right to fight. The first message was entitled “God Is a Warrior.” From both the Old and New Testaments, I showed that the general motif of Scripture is that God is a man of war. Exodus 15:3 says, “The Lord is a man of war, that is his name.” Numbers 21 refers to all those wars in the Bible as the wars of the Lord.

In lessons two through five, I dealt with holy war, showing repeatedly that war is to be sanctified and used in accordance with the Word of God. The cause must be holy, the camp must be holy, the army must be holy, and the leader must be holy. I dealt with the whole scope of war as holy.

I also dealt with just war, showing that just wars are not only defensive but sometimes offensive. Therefore, you cannot make a blanket statement that all defensive wars are just, because some defensive wars were wrong. Nor can you say that all offensive wars are right or all are wrong, because Scripture shows that many offensive wars were right as well.

Today we will look in Deuteronomy 20, a chapter wholly given to the laws of the militia, or the laws of military life. You will see in it only a smattering of a truth clearly taught throughout the Bible: there was a militia in the Old Testament; there was a militia in Israel. Here God gives laws, rules, and regulations concerning the militia.

The truth on which I will dwell, especially in the first four verses, is that all wars against Israel’s enemies were to be carried out in faith, without fear, and in absolute and total reliance and dependence upon the might and power of God.

The Scripture teaches that we are to be a people of faith in every situation and circumstance, in every area and sphere. There is never a time when the principle of faith ceases to function. Hold Deuteronomy 20; we will be preaching from there. Look in your Bibles to Ecclesiastes chapter 3. Ecclesiastes is followed by the Song of Solomon and then the book of Isaiah. Let us begin reading with verse 1.

“To everything there is a season and a time to every purpose under the heaven.” Now look what he says: “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 and a time to refrain from embracing, a time to get and a time to lose, a time to keep and a time to cast away, a time to rend and a time to sew, a time to keep silence and a time to speak, a time to love and a time to hate, a time of war and a time of peace.”

Are we to exercise the principle of faith in a time of peace? Yes. What about in the time of war? Very obviously, yes. Are we to exercise faith when there is a time to build? Yes. When there is a time to tear down? Yes. When there is a time to heal? Yes. When there is a time to kill? The answer is yes. Times and circumstances do not change the principle of faith. We are to exercise faith in times of war and turmoil, as well as in times of peace and prosperity.

Turn back in your Bible to Deuteronomy chapter 20. Look at verse 1. God says, “When thou goest out to battle against thine enemies, and seest horses and chariots, and a people more than thou, be not afraid of them, for the Lord thy God is with thee, which brought thee up out of the land of Egypt.”

Fighting and War Are Assumed Realities in Scripture

Now, number one, listen carefully. Fighting and wars are assumed facts and realities in Scripture. Fighting and war are assumed facts and realities in Scripture. Note carefully verse 1. Look what the Bible says. "When thou goest out against thine enemies to battle." Not if, or not maybe, or might, but when. In other words, it is an assumed fact that there is going to be a time to fight and a time to war. Look in your Bibles, if you would, to Deuteronomy chapter 21 and verse 10. Deuteronomy 21 and verse 10. Note again what God says. "When thou goest forth to war against thine enemies."

In other words, it's just an assumed fact and a stated reality that there's going to be a war, sooner or later. Look in your Bibles, Deuteronomy 23, verse 9. Deuteronomy 23, verse 9. "When the host

goeth forth against thine enemies, then keep thee from every wicked thing." But note what he says, "when the host goeth forth." there is going to be a time of war. And so God says, "when the host goeth forth."

Now it is mere fantasy and wishful thinking to indulge in ideology that envisions a world of peace without war, a world with perfect harmony, when the world as a whole hates Jesus Christ and rejects the Prince of Peace and will have absolutely nothing to do with him. Socialism, Communism, Utopianism, the United Nations, are wicked, deceitful failures from their inception. There is no such thing, nor can there be any such thing, as a humanistic, God-denying, Christ-rejecting, Bible-hating peace. It's impossible.

Hold Deuteronomy 20 and look in your Bibles, if you would, first of all, to Isaiah 57, Isaiah 57, and let's read verses 20 and 21. I've just made the statement that socialism, communism, utopianism, United Nations are all wicked failures from their inception. Why? Because they want a peace or a social order without God, without Christ, without the Bible. God says in Isaiah chapter 57, verse 20, "But the wicked are like the troubled sea when it cannot rest, whose water cast up mire and dirt. There is no peace, saith my God, to the wicked." There can be no peace. Most of you probably have read George Orwell's novel, 1984.

If you haven't, I challenge you to do so. But you know what George Orwell says concerning the future without Christ? He says, in his idea of showing what Communism, Socialism, Utopianism, United Nationism, if you want to see the outcome of that, he said, if you want to know what the future is, then you imagine a boot stamping in the human face forever. That's all the world can offer. Totalitarianism, tyranny. So without Christ, there can be no peace.

So many people misunderstand even the consequence of the first coming of Christ. Christ says, "Think not that I am come to send peace on earth. I came not to send peace, but a sword. For I am come to set a man at variance against his father, and the daughter against her mother, and the daughter-in-law against her mother-in-law, and a man's foe shall be they of his own household."

Did Jesus Christ purposefully come just to stir up trouble? He did come to bring peace. In fact, at His birth, the angel said, "peace on earth and goodwill toward men." But this passage deals with the consequence of the coming of Christ. Because Christ has come, and because Christ is who He says He is, there are going to be some that believe and some who do not believe. There will be some that receive and some that reject, and consequently there will be fighting and war based upon the very person of Jesus Christ.

This ought to forever erase from your mind the success of the United Nations, or the League of Nations, or anything of that caliber. Notice what our Lord says: "You shall hear wars and rumors of wars. See that you be not troubled, for all these things must come to pass, but the end is not yet. For nation shall rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom, and there shall be famines and pestilence and earthquakes in diverse places."

Now let me ask you a question. Can you stop the earthquakes from coming? Can you stop the famines and the pestilences? No. Well, neither can you stop the wars and the fighting. It's a fact of life. It is a reality of life. And in the Bible, fighting and wars are assumed facts.

Now, let me show you that one of our main problems in Christendom, and when I use that term, I'm talking about all professing Christians. That does not mean that they are real, genuine Christians. But at least they profess that and they go to churches, etc. One of the main problems of Christendom is that most professing Christians are not Biblicists. By that I mean they really do not believe the Bible.

You see, instead of acknowledging, as the Bible teaches, the absolute and total depravity of man, and because of this total depravity, there is in man a perverted tendency toward dominion orientation that will always lead to tyranny and totalitarianism. And also, if they believe the Bible, they would have to confess that the natural tendency of man is to play God. And the only way he can play God is by ruling over other people and forcing them to do what he would have them to do. That way he expresses his, quote-unquote, Godhood. But you see, the truth is, instead of most people believing that, what they want to believe is this, that somehow that man is

naturally good, and that somehow man is automatically just simply going to get along and work for the good of other people. Man does not do that by nature. Man looks out for number one by nature. He who is without Christ is only interested in himself.

Let me put it rather succinctly for you. Christianity and Communism have nothing in common. Christianity and Socialism have nothing in common. Christianity and humanism are diametrically opposed to each other. I want you to turn in your Bibles, if you would, to 2 Corinthians 6. And let's begin reading there with verse 14. Look carefully at this passage, 2 Corinthians 6, and begin there with verse 14. And in order to grant you a little understanding in our time, I want you to substitute a word every now and then, you'll see what I'm talking about, just to make it a little more where our minds can comprehend it. 2 Corinthians 6, verse 14, God says, "Be not unequally yoked together with unbelievers."

"For what fellowship hath righteousness with unrighteousness?" What fellowship hath righteousness with unrighteousness? Absolutely none. "And what communion hath light with darkness?" None. "What concord or union hath Christ with Belial, or the devil? Or what part hath he that believeth with an infidel?" None. "What agreement hath the temple of God with idols?" None. "For you are the temple of the living God, as God has said, I will dwell in them and walk in them, and I will be their God, and they shall be my people."

"Wherefore, come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean thing, and I will receive you, and will be a father unto you, and you shall be my sons and my daughters, saith the Almighty."

You could ask, what concord or agreement hath Christ with Communism, or with Humanism, or with Utopianism, or United Nationism? The answer is absolutely none. In other words, here you have opposites. Opposites cannot get along. Do you remember what he said in the book of Amos? "Can two walk together except they be agreed?"

Let me ask you a question. I know that America is not a Christian nation now. But let us suppose that America was once again a Christian nation. What kind of concord or agreement could we have with Russia or China? We would be willing to send missionaries to them and help them in the gospel, but we have no union—nothing that would even provide the basis for a union.

That is why, out of all the treaties that the United States and Russia have made together, Russia has never kept one. Not one! There is no agreement, no basis for agreement. One of the fallacies of our foreign aid to other countries is that we expect them to act as we act, have our values, and share our system of beliefs, when in reality they do not.

When in the world would you continually send millions and millions of tons of wheat to India for the rats and the cows? Do you realize that most of the foreign aid that goes to India is eaten by the rats, the bugs, and the cows? They will not kill a rat, a cow, or a bug because of their belief in reincarnation. That could be their dream. The cows walk in, eat what they want, and defecate where they want to defecate. The rats eat what they want to eat. What agreement do we have with people like that? We have absolutely nothing in common.

The truth is this: the Bible teaches an antithesis, an opposition, between Christ and the devil, between truth and error, and between light and darkness. There is no agreement, and there can be no agreement. Inevitably, consequently, sooner or later, light and darkness are going to clash. Truth and error are going to get into it. Fighting and wars, therefore, are an assumed fact and an assumed reality in Scripture.

Numerical Odds Are Inconsequential to a People of Faith

Now look back in your Bibles at Deuteronomy chapter 20. Let me show you something that should be exciting to you in this passage. He says in Deuteronomy 20:1, "...when thou goest out to battle against thine enemies, and seest horses and chariots and a people more than thou." Here is the second point: numerical odds are

inconsequential to a people of faith. He says, when you go out and see a people more than thou, be not afraid.

Let me ask you a question. If you are about to fight a battle and suddenly realize you are outnumbered three to one, does that give you a little cause for concern, a tinge of uncertainty? God says, when you see that there is a greater multitude than you, do not be afraid. Do not let it bother or upset you. Odds only count when you live by sight. They do not count when you live by faith.

I forget which general it was—I want to say Patton, but I do not think it was Patton. Some of you men can probably help me remember. They went to sleep one night, and when they woke up the next morning, the Chinese had absolutely and totally surrounded them, pinning them in on every side. The general gathered his men together and said, "Fellas, I have some good news for you. We have the enemy right where we want them. They cannot get away."

SCRIPTURE READING - Numbers 13:26–14:2 (KJV)

> "And they went and came to Moses and to Aaron and to all the congregation of the children of Israel and to the wilderness of Paran and to Kadesh and brought back word unto them and to all the congregation and showed them the fruit of the land. And they told him and said, We came into the land where thou sentest us and surely it floweth with milk and honey and this is the fruit of it. Nevertheless, the people be strong that dwell in the land, and the cities are walled and very great, and moreover we saw the children of Anak there," which were the children of the giants, by the way.
>
> "The Amalekites dwell in the land of the south, and the Hittites and the Jebusites and the Amorites dwell in the mountains, and the Canaanites dwell by the sea and by the coast of Jordan."
>
> "And Caleb stilled the people before Moses and said, Let us go up at once and possess it, for we are well able to overcome it. But the men that went up with him said, We be not able to go up against this people, for they are stronger than we are. And they brought up an evil report of the land which they had searched unto the children of Israel, saying, The land through which we have gone to search it is a land that eateth up the

> inhabitants thereof, and all the people that we saw in it are men of great stature."
>
> "And there we saw the giants, the sons of Anak, which come of the giants, and we were in our own sight as grasshoppers, so we were in their sight."
>
> "And all the children lifted up their voice and cried, and the people wept that night. And all the children of Israel murmured against Moses and against Aaron, and the whole congregation said unto them, Would God that we had died in the land of Egypt! Or would God we had died in this wilderness!"

"Wherefore hath the Lord brought us into this land to fall by the sword, that our wives and our children should be a prey? Were it not better for us to return to Egypt?" And they said one to another, "Let us make us a captain, let us return into Egypt." Then Moses and Aaron fell on their faces before all the assembly of the congregation of the children of Israel. Joshua the son of Nun and Caleb the son of Jephunneh, which were of them that searched the land, ripped their clothes, and spake unto all the company of the children of Israel, saying, "The land which we pass through to search it is an exceeding good land. If the Lord delight in us, then he will bring us into this land, and give unto us a land which floweth with milk and honey. Only rebel not ye against the Lord, neither fear ye the people of the land, for they are bread for us. Their defense is departed from them, and the Lord is with us. Fear them not."

But all the congregation bade stone them with stones, and the glory of the Lord appeared in the tabernacle of the congregation before the children of Israel. And the Lord said unto Moses, "How long will this people provoke me? And how long will it be ere they believe me, for all the signs which I have shown them? I will smite them with the pestilence and disinherit them, and will make of thee a greater nation and mightier than they." Because all those men who have seen my glory and my miracles which I did in Egypt and in the wilderness have tempted me, now these ten times and have not hearkened to my voice, surely they shall not see the land which I swear unto their fathers, neither shall any of them that provoke me see it.

“But my servant Caleb, because he had another spirit with him, hath followed me wholly or fully. Him will I bring into the land whereunto he went, and his seed shall possess it.” What is the difference between Joshua and Caleb and all the people? Joshua and Caleb were looking in faith. The others were looking by sight.

Hebrews 4:1-2 shows that none of those Old Testament people who came out of Egypt had faith, except Joshua and Caleb in this instance:

“Let us therefore fear, lest the promise being left us of entering into his rest, any of you should seem to come short of it. For unto us was the gospel preached as well as unto them, but the word preached did not profit them, that is, those people, not being mixed with faith in them that heard it.”

The word was not mixed with faith.

There they stood, saying, “We’re grasshoppers in the sight of these people. Look at the multitude of them. They have cities walled up in the heavens. Who are we? What can we do?” They were looking by sight and not by faith.

This is a comparison, or really, a contrast. Consider 1 Samuel 13:4-7: “And all Israel heard say that Saul had smitten a garrison of the Philistines, and that Israel also was had in abomination with the Philistines, and the people were called together after Saul to Gilgal.” Looking back at verse 3: “And Jonathan smote the garrison of the Philistines that was in Geba.” The Bible does not say here that anybody was with him. But do you remember the instance when he and his armorbearer went down and slew a whole number of the Philistines?

Just the two of them. What was Jonathan's idea? His idea was, "There's so many of them I can't miss, bless God." So he was fighting by faith. But look at the other people. There is a difference between fighting by faith and living by sight.

The Philistines gathered themselves together to fight with Israel: 30,000 chariots and 6,000 horsemen, and people as the sand which is on the sea shore in multitude. They came up and pitched in Michmash, eastward from Beth-Aven. When the men of Israel saw that they were in a strait, the people were distressed. Then the

people did hide themselves in caves and in thickets and in rocks and in the high places and pits. And some of the Hebrews went over Jordan. They left the land.

Look in your Bibles to 2 Chronicles, chapter 13. Here is a better contrast. "Now in the 18th year, King Jeroboam began Abijah to reign over Judah. He reigned three years in Jerusalem, and his mother's name also was Micaiah, the daughter of Uriel of Gibeah. And there was war between Abijah and Jeroboam." Jeroboam was king over Israel, and Abijah was king over Judah.

"And Abijah set the battle in array with an army of valiant men of war, even 400,000 chosen men." So he had 400,000. "Jeroboam also set the battle in array against him with 800,000 chosen men, being mighty men of valor."

The odds were two to one. "And Abijah stood up upon the mountains of Zemaraim, which is Mount Ephraim, and said, Hear me, thou Jeroboam, and all Israel. Ought you not to know that the Lord God of Israel gave the kingdom over Israel to David forever, even him and his sons, by a covenant of salt? Yet Jeroboam, the son of Nebat, the servant of Solomon, the son of David, has risen up and has rebelled against his Lord. And there are gathered unto him vain men, the children of Belial, and have strengthened themselves against Rehoboam, the son of Solomon, when Rehoboam was young and tender and could not withstand them. And now you think to withstand the kingdom of the Lord in the hand of the sons of David? And you be a great multitude, and there are with you golden calves which Jeroboam made for you for gods. Have you not cast out the priests of the Lord, the sons of Aaron and the Levites, and have made your priest after the manner of the nations of other lands, so that whosoever cometh to consecrate himself with a young bullock and seven rams, the same may be a priest of them that are

Abijah declared, “no gods? But as for us, the Lord is our God, and we have not forsaken him. And the priests who minister unto the Lord are the sons of Aaron, and the Levites wait upon their business, and they burn unto the Lord every morning and every evening, burnt sacrifices and sweet incense. The showbread also set they in order upon the pure table, and the candlestick of gold, with the lamps

thereof, to burn every evening. For we keep the charge of the Lord our God, but you have forsaken them."

"Watch now, and behold, God Himself is with us for our captain, and His priests with sounding trumpets to cry alarm against you, O children of Israel. Fight you not against the Lord God of your fathers, for you shall not prosper."

What was Abijah doing? They might outnumber Judah two to one, but that did not matter. They were serving God and were obedient to Him. God was on their side, but Jeroboam was warned not to start anything with them. Jeroboam would not listen, and if you read the rest of the chapter, you will find that Abijah beat him when the odds were two to one.

Here is another contrast. "And there came out against them Zerah the Ethiopian with a host of a thousand thousand and three hundred chariots." A thousand thousand soldiers would be a million, with three hundred chariots. "Then Asa went out against him and they set the battle array in the valley of Zephathah at Mareshah. And Asa cried unto the Lord his God, and said, Lord, it is nothing with thee to help, whether with many, or with them that have no power. Help us, O Lord our God, for we rest on thee, and in thy name we go against this multitude. O Lord thou art our God, let not man prevail against thee." So the Lord smote the Ethiopians before Asa and Judah; they fled, were overthrown, and could not recover themselves. They were destroyed before the Lord and before his host, and much spoil was carried away.

A million soldiers with three hundred chariots came against little Judah. Asa said, "Lord, it doesn't matter to you whether you save with many or with few. Help us, O Lord." They had no power against that great host, and God discomfited the Ethiopians. Here was someone fighting by faith.

It is absolutely amazing how easily we are distracted and discouraged when we see a vast multitude arrayed against us. What we have got to understand is this: numerical odds are inconsequential to God. We sit here and think, "Man, goodness, look how many are in the CFR and the Bilderbergers and all this

other—look how many are for the New World Order." It does not matter. The numerical odds are inconsequential.

Did you know that the Lord Jesus Christ took seven loaves and two small fishes and fed five thousand men, not counting the women and the children? Seven loaves and two small fishes. Gideon took three hundred men and defeated the entire army of the Midianites. The odds are simply inconsequential.

The people of faith do not see how great the multitudes are. The people of faith do not see how great the enemy is. The people of faith see how sovereign, how powerful, and how great God is. The very fact is, numerical odds are simply inconsequential. So what does God say?

Superior Armaments Are Inconsequential to the People of Faith

Deuteronomy chapter 20 says, "When thou goest to battle against thine enemies, and seest horses and chariots and a people more than thou, be not afraid of them." So very obviously God says, Do not be afraid. Numerical odds are basically inconsequential. Look back in verse 1 again: "...when thou goest out to battle against thine enemies, and seest horses, chariots, and a people more than thou, be not afraid." Now, wait a minute. He says, "...when thou seest horses and chariots."

Here is the third point: superior armaments are inconsequential to the people of faith. Superior armaments are inconsequential to the people of faith. I want to point out particularly that he says, "horses and chariots." Horses and chariots were normally offensive weaponry. It is true that you could use horses and chariots defensively, but whenever there was a vast number of horses and chariots, very obviously it was for an aggressive purpose. That is why, in Deuteronomy chapter 17, the kings in Israel were limited in the amount of horses that they could have.

Let me put this another way. Horses and chariots in Bible days were the tanks and the bombers of our day. Horses and chariots were the heavy artillery.

Many people become disillusioned when they see, hear, or learn of vastly superior weaponry that the enemy possesses. The attitude is: "How can we fight? How can we even survive?"

There is much less hope of defeating them when you look at the weapons they possess. But if you are a person of faith, superior armaments are meaningless.

When Israel left Egypt, Pharaoh and his army pursued them with chariots and horses. Israel had been a bunch of slaves and probably had very few weapons, if any. They had simply left. But what good are chariots and horses at the bottom of the Red Sea? What happened to Egypt's vastly superior weaponry? Israel stood on the other side, waited for God to drown them all, and then waited for the tide to wash some of those weapons onto the shore. They armed themselves then; basically, they had that vastly superior weaponry.

Do you see what I am saying? It is literally inconsequential to people of faith. The Amorites in Joshua chapter 10 had great armaments as well, but the Bible says that God rained stones down upon them from heaven, in all probability hailstones. What good is weaponry when it simply will not work?

I get so tickled every time I read through the Bible. It seemingly delights God to use little things to overthrow the great things of His enemies. Do you know what God used to run many of the Amorites out of the land? Hornets. He got rid of many people simply by sending hornets after them. "Brother Weaver, I've never run from a nest of hornets." I'll guarantee you, you will. You will leave the area if they infest it; I can assure you, they can move you. Armaments are meaningless. God can use a teeny-tiny little insect, and that is it.

I get tickled every time I think about how He brought the Philistines down. They smoked Israel, captured the Ark of the Covenant, put it in the house of Dagon, their god, and then God just smoked the Philistines with hemorrhoids. Many say that is what it was. I do not know, but whatever it was, it brought them to their knees, and they were willing to send the Ark of God back. We say, "Oh man, look at the weapons they have." Listen, that is absolutely meaningless.

Do you realize the well-trained, properly equipped, and heavily protected Goliath fell before David's slingshot? Here was a superior weapon in the hand of Goliath. Do you know what happened to Samson? The Philistines encompassed him about. He was up on top of a little rise, and they had surrounded him. Samson simply said, "Lord, help me," reached down, picked up the jawbone of an ass, and slew a thousand well-armed, well-trained Philistine soldiers. God says, "Hey, don't let superior weaponry upset you. Do not get terrified."

I can take care of that. The truth is this: slingshots and jawbones are sufficient weaponry when they are empowered and blessed by God. I had rather have a bow and arrow with the blessing and power of God upon it than a modern-day machine gun and a million rounds of ammunition without the blessing and power of God.

You say, "Brother Weaver, man, they've got mortars and howitzers and AK-47s." Listen, a little single .22 blessed by the power of God is sufficient to get whatever you need if there's a war. If God is not going to bless you, and if God is not going to put his power upon you, no amount of weaponry that you have is going to defeat the enemy.

Nothing is to daunt or deter the people of faith. Numerical odds are inconsequential. Superior weaponry is inconsequential. Therefore, look at what our text says in Deuteronomy 20, verse 1: "When thou goest out to battle against thine enemies, and seest horses and chariots and a people more than thou," the next statement is, "Be not afraid."

"For God has not given us a spirit of fear, but of power and of love and of a sound mind." God has not given us a spirit of fear. He says, "Be not afraid of them." Our Lord said we are not to fear a man. Do not be afraid of the man who throws your body into prison or into the fire. Do not fear man. Fear him who, after he has killed you, has the power to cast your body into hell. You fear God. Don't fear man.

So the Bible tells us that numerical odds and superior weaponry are inconsequential. I know many Christians do not want to read anything about what is happening because it upsets them. It makes them nervous; it frustrates them. They cannot eat or sleep.

Hogwash, folks. We are to be people of faith, knowing what our enemies are up to, what they have, and what they are doing.

But it should not sadden us or bother us. For greater is he that is in us than he that is in the world. Why should I be upset at what they have when I know what I have? I am not talking about physical weapons, but about God, who is sovereign over everything. A few hornets can take care of the enemy, and a few hemorrhoids can bring them to their knees. He has plenty of ways.

The Stated Advantage: The Lord Thy God Is with Thee

The major difference, or the stated advantage, is this: numerical odds are inconsequential, and superior armaments are inconsequential for the people of faith. He says, "When thou goest out to battle against thine enemies, and seest horses and chariots and a people more than thou, be not afraid of them." Here is the stated advantage: "for the Lord thy God is with thee." Someone has said, God and one man make a majority. I suppose that is true, but something is even truer: God is a majority in himself. He does not even need one man.

First of all, note the principle stated: "the Lord thy God is with thee." This phrase refers to the presence and the blessings of God. In Exodus 33:13, Moses says, "Now therefore I pray thee, if I have found grace in thy sight, show me now thy way, that I may know thee, that I may find grace in thy sight, and consider that this nation is thy people." God answered, "My presence shall go with thee, and I will give thee rest." Moses replied, "If thy presence go not with me, carry us not up hence."

God said, in effect, “Moses, do not be afraid; I am going to be with you.” Moses said, “Lord, if you are not going to be with me, do not carry me anywhere.” Now look at Joshua 1:5. It was Joshua who carried the people across the Jordan into the land and conquered it.

Look at what God says in Joshua 1:5. God tells Joshua, “There shall not any man be able to stand before thee all the days of thy life.” What a statement. There shall not any man be able to stand before thee all the days of thy life. Why? Here is why: “As I was with Moses, so will I be with thee. I will not fail thee, nor forsake thee.” So

here is the principle stated: “the Lord thy God is with thee.” It has reference to His presence and to His blessing.

Now look back to Deuteronomy 20, because I want you to see the principle applied in verses 2 through 4. Because the truth of verse 1 is a reality, here is what happens in verse 2: “And it shall be when you are come nigh unto the battle, that the priest shall approach and speak unto the people.” Now, let me tell you who this priest was. The priest was not necessarily the high priest. The term applied to this priest is the anointed of the battle. He was a priest like Phinehas in Numbers 31, who went with the armies and gave the blessing of God upon the army. So here is the priest before the battle, the anointed one of the battle. He comes and speaks to the people, and look what he says in verse 3: “Hear, O Israel, you approach this day into battle against your enemies.” In other words, you are fixing to have a fight. There is going to be a war.

Now look at this command: “Let not your hearts faint, fear not, and do not tremble, neither be terrified because of them.” Watch that. He is applying this principle, first of all, practically. There is to be no fainting, no fear, no trembling, and no terror. How can the priest stand before men who are about to enter battle and tell them not to faint, fear, tremble, or be terrified? How can he say that? Look at verse 4: “For the Lord your God is He that goeth with you to fight for you against your enemies to save you.”

He has made a practical statement, and now he makes a personal application in verse 4. Here is the presence of God: “for the Lord your God is he that goeth with you.” You have God with you. Note secondly, here is the power of God: “to fight for you against your enemies.” And thirdly, here is the protection of God: “to save you.” If God’s people, fighting God’s battles in a righteous cause and living righteously, have the presence, power, and protection of God, what more do you need? You follow what I am saying? That is sufficient.

I want to read briefly about the evacuation of Long Island from America's Providential History, written by Stephen McDowell and Mark Beliles. I was in a conference with Stephen McDowell, and he gave me this tremendous little book, which is full of tremendous material.

Historical Example: God's Intervention in the American Revolution

During the War for Independence, our forefathers constantly and consistently cried to God for His divine and miraculous intervention. Many of you have probably heard about this, but you have not been acquainted with all the details. Listen very carefully. One incident revealing God's supernatural care occurred shortly after the signing of the Declaration of Independence, in August of 1776. During fighting on Long Island, British General Howe and his army of 32,000 men had inflicted heavy losses upon the American army.

CHAPTER 2

When Is It Right To Fight - 2

Deuteronomy 20

SCRIPTURE READING - Deuteronomy 20:1-15 (KJV)

When thou goest out to battle against thine enemies, and seest horses and chariots, and a people more than thou, be not afraid of them. For the Lord thy God is with thee, who brought thee up out of the land of Egypt. It shall be when thou comest unto the battle, that the priests shall approach, and speak unto the people, and shall say unto them, Hear, O Israel, you approach this day unto battle against your enemies.

Let not your hearts faint, fear not, and do not tremble, neither be ye terrified because of them. For the Lord your God is he that goeth with you to fight for you against your enemies, to save you. And the officers shall speak unto the people, saying, What man is there that hath built a new house, and hath not dedicated it? Let him go and return to his house, lest he die in battle, and another man dedicate it. And what man is he that hath planted a vineyard, and hath not yet eaten of it? Let him also go and return into his house, lest he die in the battle, and

> another man eat of it. And what man is there that hath betrothed a wife, and hath not taken her? Let him go and return into his house, lest he die in battle, and another man take her. And the officers shall speak further unto the people, and they shall say, What man is there that is fearful and fainthearted? Let him go and return into his house, lest his brethren's heart faint as well as his heart.
>
> It shall be, when the officers have made an end of speaking unto the people, that they shall make captains of the armies to lead the people. When thou comest nigh unto a city to fight against it, then proclaim peace unto it. It shall be, if it make thee an answer of peace and open unto thee, then it shall be that all the people that is found therein shall be tributaries to thee, and they shall serve thee. And if it will make no peace with thee, but will make war against thee, then thou shalt besiege it. And when the Lord thy God hath delivered it into thine hands, thou shalt smite every male thereof with the edge of the sword. But the women of the little ones, and the cattle, and all that is in the city, even all the spoil thereof, shalt thou take in thyself. Thou shalt eat the spoil of thine enemies, which the Lord thy God hath given thee. Thus shalt thou do unto all the cities which are very far off from thee, which are not of the cities of these nations.

"But of the cities of these people which the Lord thy God doth give thee for an inheritance, thou shalt save alive nothing that breatheth, but thou shalt utterly destroy them, namely the Hittites, the Amorites, the Canaanites, the Perizzites, the Hivites, the Jebusites, as the Lord thy God hath commanded thee, that they teach you not to do after all their abominations which they have done unto their gods, so should you sin against the Lord your God. When thou shalt besiege a city a long time, and making war against it, to take it, thou shalt not destroy the trees thereof by forcing an axe against them. For thou mayest eat of them, and thou shalt not cut them down.

"For the tree of the field is a man's life, to employ them in the siege. Only the trees which thou knowest, that they be not trees for meat, thou shalt destroy and cut them down. And thou shalt build

bulwarks against the city that maketh war with thee, until it be subdued."

We have been dealing with the biblical doctrine of war. Deuteronomy chapter 20, verses 1 through 4, concerns military regulations, and there are a number of regulations in this chapter, as well as others throughout the Bible. I pointed out at least four things last week, and I want to review them.

Review of Previous Teaching

First, fightings and wars are assumed facts in Scripture. They are an assumed reality. For instance, Deuteronomy 20, verse 1, says, "Thou goest to battle against thine enemies," not if, but when. So it is an assumed fact. I showed you other scriptures as well.

Secondly, according to verse 1, numerical odds are inconsequential to the people of faith: "When thou goest to battle against thine enemies and seest horses, chariots, and a people more than thou." Thirdly, superior armaments are inconsequential to the people of faith, because he talked about horses and chariots, the tanks and bombers in the Old Testament, so to speak.

Fourthly, the major difference, or the stated advantage, for the people of faith is this: "For the Lord thy God is with thee." Once again, in verse 4: "For the Lord your God is he that goeth with you to fight for you against your enemies to save you." The stated advantage that the people of God have over all the enemies of God and of God's people is the fact that God is with his people.

I am not going to take time to develop this one point from Scripture this morning, but I want you to understand that when the Israelitish militia was mustered, every male from twenty years and upward presented himself for that muster, or for that census. The mustering or census in the Old Testament was usually in reference to the military. That does not mean that all the men from twenty years old and upward always went to battle.

In fact, we find in numerous cases, as in Numbers chapter 31, that only a select few were sent to some battles. For instance, a thousand out of every tribe were sent, which indicated that simply twelve thousand men went to war. In some cases, others were sent, or a

larger number was sent. But in Deuteronomy chapter 20, we find certain military exemptions or exclusions. These exemptions were in effect in basically every war. Thus, we have several exemptions.

Why in the world were some individuals exempted from military service? I call your attention to verse 5, just to a phrase in it. If you look in the middle of the verse, actually toward the end of the verse, here is the phrase: “lest he die in the battle.” If you look in verse 6, “lest he die in the battle.” If you look toward the end of verse 7, “lest he die in the battle.”

The Reality of Death in Battle

Isn't it interesting that here is a truth most of us do not want to face? It is a very important fact that we understand: men die in battle. Even righteous men, fighting for a righteous cause, sometimes die in battle. These exemptions, at least these three, are based upon the fact that an individual might die. It is a general truth of Scripture that God protects His own in battle.

Hold Deuteronomy chapter 20, but look back in your Bibles to the book of Exodus chapter 30. I do not want to spend much time on this because I have gone over it several weeks ago, but I want you to remember Exodus chapter 30.

In Exodus chapter 30, beginning with verse 11, the Bible says, “And the Lord spake unto Moses, saying, When thou takest the sum, or the census, of the children of Israel after their number, that is, after their mustering, then shall they give every man a ransom for his soul unto the Lord, when thou numberest them, that there be no plague among them when thou numberest them. This they shall give everyone that passeth among them that are numbered a half-shekel after the shekel of the sanctuary. A shekel is twenty gerahs, a half shekel shall be the offering of the Lord. Everyone that passeth among them that are numbered from twenty years old and above shall give an offering unto the Lord. The rich shall not give more, and the poor shall not give less than a half a shekel, when they give an offering unto the Lord to make an atonement for your souls.”

“And thou shalt take the atonement money of the children of Israel, and shalt appoint it for the service of the tabernacle of the

congregation, that it may be a memorial unto the children of Israel before the Lord, to make an atonement for your souls." When the children of Israel went out to battle, each one gave a half shekel of this atonement money. It was given to the Lord for a remembrance, lest that individual die in the battle.

In Numbers chapter 31, 12,000 Israelitish militiamen went out against the whole cities of Midian. They slew all the men of Midian and brought back—you can read it for yourselves in Numbers 31—675,500 sheep, 72,000 cattle, 61,000 asses, and 32,000 unmarried women, all without losing one soldier. In the whole war, not one Israelitish militiaman was lost, and they brought back all of this spoil.

So the truth is, the Lord does protect His own. Although God is able to protect all of His soldiers at all times, He does not necessarily do so in every battle or in every war. Why would they say, in Deuteronomy chapter 20, that they would exempt an individual lest he die? They understood that although God sovereignly protects His soldiers and His armies, this does not mean that a righteous or godly man will never die in battle. They understood that people die in battle.

Generally speaking, do you realize that it is the Lord's will to heal most of the time? Do you understand that? How do we know that it is the Lord's will to heal most of the time? Because all of us have been sick and have gotten well. But it is not the Lord's will to heal all of the time, because if He did, no one would ever die.

And the wages of sin are death. So that means we have to die at some point, in some time, and in some way. The same thing is true in reference to war. War sometimes is just a means by which death is accomplished.

And let me tell you something about death. It is a part of life. You cannot live without dying. The truth of the matter is this: Scripture tells us that our Lord has taken the sting out of death for us. I can honestly say I do not want to die, but I am not afraid to die. There is a big difference. Certainly, everything that lives wants to live. But many times God, who has ordained the end, has also ordained the

means to the end, and sometimes it is God's will that righteous men die in battle.

The Bible asks in Job, chapter 7 and verse 1, "Is there not an appointed time to man upon earth? Are not his days also like the days of a hireling?" Is there not an appointed time to man upon the earth? Did you realize that your days are numbered? You are going to die. But God has not only ordained the day that you are going to die; He has also ordained the means, or the way, that you are going to die.

Job 14:1-5 says, “Man that is born of woman is a few days and full of trouble. He cometh forth like a flower and is cut down. He fleeth also as a shadow, and continueth not. And dost thou open thine eyes upon such one, and bringest me to judgment with thee?” Then comes the question in verse 4: “Who can bring a clean thing out of an unclean, not one?” Who can make himself clean before God? No one can do it in and of himself.

Now look at verse 5: “Seeing his days are determined, the number of his months are with thee, thou hast appointed his bounds that he cannot pass.” God says, “I have ordained the months, I have ordained the days, the minutes, the moments. I have appointed the bounds, and you cannot pass over those bounds.”

The truth is, we are not going to live any longer than God has ordained for us to live. But that does not mean you say, “Well, Brother Weaver, what I am going to do, then, is go out and get drunk every day, eat pork every day, and eat all the sugar I can eat every day.” God has also ordained the means to the end. If you start doing that, you will bring your time very quickly upon you. God has ordained the end, and sometimes that end is in battle.

If you understand what I am telling you today, you will not only understand why some men die in battle, you will also understand why some men can't be killed in battle. In Psalm 31:15, David says, "My times are in thine hand. Deliver me from the hand of mine enemies and from them that persecute me." What is David saying? My times are in your hand. God, you are the one that holds my soul, and you're the one that can deliver me from my enemy.

Psalm 66:9 speaks of God "who holdeth our soul in life and suffered not our feet to be moved." Do you know what names the Indians gave to George Washington? One of the names they called him was "Him Who Cannot Be Killed in Battle." There was one time in one battle, when Washington was fighting the French and the Indians with General Braddock, that Washington had three horses shot out from under him. He had four bullet holes in his coat, and he walked away unscratched. Also, he had his hat shot off of him. Several Indians who met Washington after this battle said they had purposely aimed their weapons at him and could not kill him. Even the enemies recognized that God was protecting Washington.

The point I'm trying to make is that God has ordained the end, and God has also ordained the means to the end. The reality is, sometimes righteous men die in the battle. I don't know about you, but if I were judging, humanly speaking, I'd much rather have had Stonewall Jackson live and William Tecumseh Sherman die. I'd rather have Stonewall alive and Grant dead. Grant was the drunkard. And by the way, Ulysses S. Grant never, ever freed his slaves, either. He had slaves during the war. I'm just simply pointing out. In Isaiah chapter 57, let me show you a passage.

Sometimes we wonder why righteous men are killed. Isaiah 57:1 is very enlightening: "The righteous perisheth, and no man layeth it to heart. And merciful men are taken away, none considering that the righteous is taken away from the evil to come." God sometimes allows righteous men to be taken away to protect them from the evil to come. Uriah the Hittite, a godly man, died in battle, while Joab, an ungodly man, lived. Stonewall Jackson was killed—not actually in battle, but of pneumonia resulting from a battle wound—while Sherman, Grant, Hooker, and some others were not killed in battle.

Warfare is not child's play. It is grim, gruesome, and ugly, but it is absolutely necessary from time to time. There is a song from the War of Northern Aggression called "Shiloh Hill," and I wish everyone could hear it. It concerns the men who were killed and wounded, lying there dying and praying that God would protect their wives and children back home. When you hear it, you cannot help but realize the awfulness and reality of death in battle.

In war, many people die. When war is waged upon God's terms, it is waged upon the wicked, who are under God's judicial sentence of death. That is why God instructed Israel, when they entered the land, to kill all those people—not only to prevent Israel from being contaminated by the heathen, but because those heathen were under God's judicial sentence of death.

Rushdoony, in his Biblical Institutes of Law, wrote: "If warfare is to punish and or destroy evil, the work of restoration requires that this be done, that an evil order be overthrown, and in some cases, some or many people executed." If you are waging war against evil, this requires not only the overthrow of a wicked and tyrannical system, but, in some cases, the execution of some or many people.

While that war is going on, there is always the possibility that righteous men may die in battle. Consequently, in Deuteronomy 20, we find exclusions and exemptions. I want us to go over them one at a time and show why God gives these exemptions for military service. First of all, look at verse 5.

Exemption for the Man with a New House

"And the officer shall speak unto the people, saying, What man is there that hath built a new house, and hath not dedicated it? Let him go and return to his house, lest he die in the battle, and another man dedicate it." So the first exemption, then, is for someone who has built a new house and has not dedicated it.

I've been trying to share with Rob for the last week or two the importance of words. One of the problems that you and I have as we read the Bible is that we assume that we know what words mean. We put our definitions upon words that occur in the Bible, and sometimes those words that occur in the Bible have absolutely no reference to what we put upon them.

For instance, if we read this passage and read about a man who has built a new house and has not dedicated it, many of you probably have been to what we call the dedication of a new house. The people of God gather around, the owner of that house is there, and usually the pastor reads some Scripture, prays a prayer, and gives this

house, this dwelling, to the Lord and to the Lord's people. All the person is saying is, "I realize God gave me this house."

"I want to use it in His ministry. If I can lodge any of the saints of God, or the missionaries, or preachers of God, I'm willing to do so." There is nothing wrong with that, but here's the point: usually, when we think about the dedication of a house, we think of a brief ceremony that lasts five or ten minutes. That is not what this means.

The word dedicate is the Hebrew word hanak. It literally means to narrow, to discipline, to train, to dedicate, to begin, and to initiate. The Hebrew word is Hanukkah and is translated trained in Genesis 14:14. We went over that passage in the last several weeks. You remember the Bible said when Lot, Abraham's nephew, was taken by those kings, that Abraham went and armed his 318 trained servants. It's the same word.

Hold Deuteronomy chapter 20; we are coming right back there. But look in your Bibles at 1 Kings chapter 8 and verse 63. I want you to understand what is happening in this passage. Solomon has been dedicating the temple to the Lord, and the Bible says, “And Solomon offered a sacrifice of peace offerings, which he offered to the Lord, two and twenty thousand oxen and a hundred and twenty thousand sheep. So the king and all the children of Israel dedicated the house of the Lord.” Now, if you will look at 2 Chronicles 7 and verse 5, you will see basically the same truth: “And King Solomon offered a sacrifice of 22,000 oxen and 120,000 sheep, so the king and all the people dedicated the house of God.” What does the word dedicated here mean?

It has reference, number one, to a beginning, to an initiation. They were initiating or beginning the worship in the house of God. But let me tell you something: if you are offering 22,000 oxen for sacrifice and 125,000 sheep, you are not only initiating something; you are training the priests and the Levites in handling all of those offerings.

Now, look at Proverbs 22 and verse 6. Watch this carefully. “Train up a child in the way that he should go, and when he’s old, he will not depart from it.” Many of you can recall this passage. What is the first word? Train. Would you like to guess what the Hebrew word is?

Dedicate a child in the way that he should go. Initiate a child in the way that he should go. Begin a child in the way that he should go. The Hebrew word hanak was the word which was to train, to dedicate, to begin, to initiate. These ideas are tied together: dedication is a beginning, an initiation, and training.

Modern-day Jewry, the Jews around the world today, are celebrating a feast they call Hanukkah. Why are they celebrating Hanukkah? Because this feast of dedication, this Hanukkah, marks a new beginning. The Feast of Hanukkah was started in 165 B.C. after the problem with Antiochus Epiphanes, when the worship of the temple was restored. So they have what they call Hanukkah, which is literally a new beginning or a new initiation.

Let us go back to Deuteronomy, chapter 20, and put this together. "And the officer shall speak unto the people, saying, What man is there that hath built a new house?" Note that the house is already in existence; he is through building it. "What man is there that hath built a new house and hath not dedicated it? Let him go and return to his house. Lest he die in battle and another man dedicate it."

The dedication of the house was not a ceremony, but its initiation, its setting up. It was the discipline and training of the wife and little children. God says the man has not had time to train his children. Let him be exempted and return to train them, lest he die in battle, another man marry his wife, and train his children.

The application, I hope, will be seen before I close. This man is exempt because he has started a new home. He has a wife and little children, and they have not been trained. God says he may go back and train his children.

Now look at verse 6. Here is the second exemption: "And what man is he that hath planted a vineyard, and hath not eaten of it? Let him also go and return unto his house, lest he die in the battle, and another man eat of it." This refers to anyone who had planted a vineyard. An olive yard, I suppose, would be the same thing.

Exemption for the Man with a New Vineyard

What most of us do not understand, or what we do not perceive, is the long-term exemption implied in these two cases. Training little

children is probably something that will last four or five years. Here is a man who has planted a vineyard and has not been able to eat of it. This exemption could excuse a man from military service for up to five years. You say, how in the world could it exempt a man up to five years?

Leviticus 19:23–25 says, “And when ye shall come into the land, and shall have planted all manner of trees for food, then ye shall count the fruit thereof as uncircumcised for unclean three years, shall it be uncircumcised unto you, it shall not be eaten of you. But in the fourth year all the fruit thereof shall be holy, to praise the Lord withal. And in the fifth year shall ye eat of the fruit thereof, that it may yield unto you the increase thereof. I am the Lord your God.”

So God said that during the first three years after planting a vineyard, all the fruit is unclean; let it fall to the ground. In the fourth year, everything on those vines belongs to God. In the fifth year, He says, you may eat. Here is a man who has just planted his vineyard: he cannot serve in the military for six years. If a man has already had it planted for three years, it will be another two years, at least, before he can serve in the military. So God is saying, here is an exception. Not only the man who has built a house and has not had time to train his children, but also the man who has planted a vineyard and has not had time to eat from it.

The third exemption is in verse seven: “And what man is there that hath betrothed a wife and hath not taken her? Let him go and return unto his house, lest he die in battle, and another man take her.”

Exemption for the Betrothed Man

God says, here is a man who is engaged. A betrothal in the Bible was more than an engagement. If you were betrothed, you were really considered married, although you had not begun living together. It was that serious. Here is a man betrothed to a wife, but he has not lived with her. God says that man is exempted from military service. Let him go back and take that woman, lest he die in battle.

The reason this verse was not to be heard too closely is that Deuteronomy 24:5 says: “When a man hath taken a new wife, he

shall not go out to war, neither shall he be charged with any business, but he shall be free at home one year, and shall cheer up his wife which he hath taken." Pastor Peacock once asked me to talk with his sons when they got married and tell them all the things the Bible says about marriage. I asked, "Now, brother, are you sure you want me to tell them everything that the Bible says about marriage?" When I showed him this verse, he said, "No, don't tell them that."

But literally, that is what the Bible says. That is why the man was exempt for one year: so he could spend time with his wife. It even included an exemption from military service. If I tell your children everything, they are not going to work for you for a year. Their business may go down the drain; you will simply have to have someone run it for you. Once you take a new wife, God says you are to be free for a year.

Exemption for the Fearful and Fainthearted

The fourth exemption in Deuteronomy, chapter 20, is given in verse 8: "And the officers shall speak further unto the people, and they shall say, What man is there that is fearful and fainthearted? Let him go and return unto his house, lest his brethren's hearts faint, as well as his heart." What is this exemption? It is for anyone who is scared silly. They are simply afraid. The word fainthearted means tender, easy, soft, or weak.

Look at what happened with Gideon's army in Judges, chapter 7, verses 2 and 3: "And the Lord said unto Gideon, The people that are with thee are too many for me to give the Midianites into thine hands, lest Israel vaunt themselves against me, saying, Mine own hand hath saved me." The Lord then said, "Now therefore go to proclaim in the ears of the people, saying, Whosoever is fearful and afraid, let him return and depart early from Mount Gilead. And there returned the people twenty and two thousand." There remained 10,000. Two-thirds had the courage to say, "We're scared. We don't really want to fight." God said, Let them go home.

Exemption for the Levites

There is a reason for this. Although it is not listed in Deuteronomy, chapter 20, there is a fifth exemption. In Numbers, chapter 1, we

find a class that was always exempt from military service. Can anyone guess what that group was? The priests, the preachers, or the Levites. During the military census, when Moses was mustering or taking the number of all the tribes, notice verses 48 and 49: “For the Lord had spoken unto Moses, saying, Only thou shalt not number the tribe of Levi, neither take the sum of them, according to the children of Israel.” So the Levites, who were the pastors and teachers, were automatically exempt from military service.

But as you study the Bible, you will find something else. Although they were exempt, many of them volunteered and fought. In fact, when you go over David’s list of mighty men, you will find some Levites in that list. So the Levites, or the preachers, were exempt. Let’s draw things together and ask ourselves: Why in the world does God give these exemptions for military service? Let me begin with number one.

Reasons for the Exemptions

As important and necessary as defense is—we have to defend our country, our nation, and our state—the Bible teaches that the family has priority over warfare. Soldiers cannot be produced without solid, stable homes. If there are no families, there is really nothing to fight for. Without solid, stable families, you cannot have a home, a church, a state, or a nation. One of the problems we have in America today is that our families are in utter chaos and confusion. There is no solidity, cohesion, or binding force holding them together.

The current practice of the military, when it takes a husband and wife and separates them for a year or more, is as unbiblical, ungodly, and immoral as it can be. It produces adultery, fornication, and the breakup of marriages and homes. I do not want to be separated from my wife for a year or two because the government decides to send me across the country to fight somebody else's war. That's not right.

A young husband who has just been married cannot be single-minded in battle. If I am in a foxhole, I do not want somebody sitting over there daydreaming about his wife or sweetheart back home while the enemies are rushing in. I want somebody thinking about killing the enemy. What God is doing here has not only a theological purpose but a practical purpose as well. The man with a

young family, who has not had time to train them, is exempt. The man who has just gotten married is exempt. He cannot fight with a single heart; let him go home.

Similarly, farmers are to be exempted, since someone has to feed the army. Here are three exemptions: the man who has built his home but has not had time to discipline or train his children; the man who has planted a vineyard but has not had time to eat of it; and the man who is betrothed to a wife but has not yet had time to take her. God says all three are exempt, not only because the family has priority over warfare, but because these individuals have not had time to experience the joys of covenant life.

Micah 4:4 says, “But they shall sit every man under his vine and every man under his fig tree and none shall make them afraid for the mouth of the Lord has spoken it.” This saying occurs several times in the Old Testament.

The blessings of covenant life mean that men enjoy their homes, their wives, and their vineyards or their wine. The home, the wife, and wine are all symbols of the covenantal blessing of God. God is saying that here are some young people, so to speak, who have not had time to appreciate the blessings of God.

Most of you know that I enjoy hunting. I have not gotten to do much of it this year, but I do enjoy hunting. I try to follow God’s law when I hunt. I never kill a mother and a child on the same day, which the Scripture forbids. I have another practice: when I see a baby or a young deer, I never kill him. I do not care if it is a buck, and I do not care if it is a little doe; I simply do not kill babies.

A little buck passed by me a month or two ago. He had antlers sticking about that high and probably weighed only about eighty pounds. I just watched him. Someone might say, “Brother Weaver, that would have been good meat. That would have been tender meat. Why did you not kill him? You could have legally killed him, not only according to the Bible, but according to law.”

That is true; I could have. But I appreciate so much the fact that God has allowed me to be an adult, to be mature, and to have my home, my children, and my food.

Why can't he grow up and get him a wife and enjoy his life a little bit, too? That's what God is saying about these people: they haven't had time to experience all of this. I hope God gives me another fifty years with my wife. I trust He will. But if He doesn't, I still have thirty-four good years. I've had time to enjoy my home, my wife, and my children. But the man who's only been married a year or two doesn't have to. Most people don't realize this, but you don't even know what marriage is all about until you've been married about twenty-five years. That's when you just begin to learn.

The opposite is shown in Deuteronomy 28:30. When the curse of God is upon the people, they do not enjoy these covenantal blessings. This is the curse that comes from disobedience: "Thou shalt betroth a wife and another man shall lie with her. Thou shalt build a house and thou shalt not dwell therein. Thou shalt plant a vineyard and thou shalt not eat the grapes thereof." Why? Because the curse of God is upon you; you violated the covenant. These are covenant blessings that these people have not had time to enjoy. God says, let them be exempt, that they may live, lest they die in battle and not experience the joys of covenantal life.

Fourthly, the fearful and the fainthearted are to be released for two basic reasons. God's battles are always to be fought in faith. Fear is the opposite of faith. If you're afraid, you're not exercising faith.

Secondly, God says, let them go lest they discourage the heart of their brethren. If I'm fighting for my life, I don't want someone quivering in the foxhole beside me saying, "Oh, we're going to get killed. We need to get out of here. We need to run away." I want somebody to say, "Bless God, let's get them." I don't want to be discouraged; I want to be encouraged. God said, let the fearful and the fainthearted go, lest they discourage the hearts of their brethren.

God's battles are to be fought in faith. What I have preached this morning—not only the exemption, but the fact that God has appointed not only our end but also the means of that end—should have great significance for you. You should understand that I cannot die, and I cannot be killed, until it is God's time for me.

One of my favorite stories about Stonewall Jackson is that he and one of his aides stopped to eat blackberries during a battle. The

enemy was shooting at them; bullets were whizzing by, and Jackson sat there eating blackberries. Finally, a bullet hit near his horse, Little Sorrel, and the horse jumped. Jackson calmly looked at his aide and said, "We'd better get out of here before one of the horses gets hit."

It is told that Robert E. Lee was sitting on the front porch drinking buttermilk when a bullet lodged in the wall right beside him. He finished his buttermilk and got up. Why? These men understood the providence of God. That is how you can fight God's battles in faith: if God has not ordained that you die in that battle, you are not going to die in it. It is that simple. That is how you can have boldness and courage.

How does the old saying go? A man is immortal until God is through with him. And that is the truth. The enemy cannot kill you while God is protecting and using you. While some will die in battle, there will be a multitude of others who will never die in battle, for that is not the way God has ordained their end.

You and I had better learn to enjoy the covenantal blessings of God while we can. We had better enjoy our homes and our wives, our children, our grandchildren, and the blessings of God upon us, because when the curse of God is full and final on this nation, we will not have some of these things. You had better thank God for them and enjoy them on a daily basis.

Father, in the name of Jesus Christ, we bow to Thee this day. We thank You for the clear teaching of Your Word. We thank You, Father, for the priority of the family, the priority of covenantal blessings, and the enjoyment of those blessings. We are thankful, Lord, that Your Word is not only theologically correct, but practical and full of common sense. We ask You, Father, not only to prepare our hearts to enjoy the things that You have given us, but to prepare us, Lord, to fight Your battles in faith. In the name of Jesus Christ we pray. Amen.

CHAPTER 3

When Is It Right To Fight - 3

SCRIPTURE READING - Deuteronomy 20:1-15 (KJV)

When thou goest forth to battle against thine enemies, and seest horses and chariots, and a people more than thou, be not afraid of them: for the Lord thy God is with thee, which brought thee up out of the land of Egypt. And it shall be, when ye are come nigh unto the battle, that the priest shall approach and speak unto the people, and shall say unto them, Hear, O Israel, ye approach this day unto battle against your enemies.

Let not your hearts faint, fear not, and do not tremble, neither be ye terrified because of them; for the Lord your God is he that goeth with you, to fight for you against your enemies, to save you. And the officers shall speak unto the people, saying, What man is there that hath built a new house, and hath not dedicated it? let him go and return to his house, lest he die in the battle, and another man dedicate it. And what man is he that hath planted a vineyard, and hath not yet eaten of it? let him also go and return unto his house, lest he die in the battle, and another man eat of it. And what man is there that hath betrothed a wife, and hath not taken her? let him go and return unto his house, lest he die in the battle, and another man take

> her. And the officers shall speak further unto the people, and they shall say, What man is there that is fearful and fainthearted? let him go and return unto his house, lest his brethren's heart faint as well as his heart.
>
> And it shall be, when the officers have made an end of speaking unto the people, that they shall make captains of the armies to lead the people. When thou comest nigh unto a city to fight against it, then proclaim peace unto it. And it shall be, if it make thee answer of peace, and open unto thee, then it shall be, that all the people that is found therein shall be tributaries unto thee, and they shall serve thee. And if it will make no peace with thee, but will make war against thee, then thou shalt besiege it: and when the Lord thy God hath delivered it into thine hands, thou shalt smite every male thereof with the edge of the sword: but the women, and the little ones, and the cattle, and all that is in the city, even all the spoil thereof, shalt thou take unto thyself; and thou shalt eat the spoil of thine enemies, which the Lord thy God hath given thee. Thus shalt thou do unto all the cities which are very far off from thee, which are not of the cities of these nations.

"But of the cities of these people, which the Lord thy God doth give thee for an inheritance, thou shalt save alive nothing that breatheth: but thou shalt utterly destroy them; namely, the Hittites, and the Amorites, the Canaanites, and the Perizzites, the Hivites, and the Jebusites; as the Lord thy God hath commanded thee: that they teach you not to do after all their abominations, which they have done unto their gods; so should ye sin against the Lord your God. When thou shalt besiege a city a long time, in making war against it to take it, thou shalt not destroy the trees thereof by forcing an axe against them: for thou mayest eat of them, and thou shalt not cut them down (for the tree of the field is man's life) to employ them in the siege: only the trees which thou knowest that they be not trees for meat, thou shalt destroy and cut them down; and thou shalt build bulwarks against the city that maketh war with thee, until it be subdued."

Review of Previous Messages on Deuteronomy 20

Now, this whole chapter is given to what I call militia or military regulations. Let me take a few moments and review. I have already preached two messages on this chapter. First, in verse 1, fighting and wars are assumed facts and realities in Scripture. For instance, God says, "when thou goest to battle against thine enemies." Secondly, numerical odds are inconsequential to the people of faith, because when you go to battle, he said, "and see a people more than thou, be not afraid." Thirdly, superior armaments are inconsequential to a people of faith. For he said, "when thou goest out and seest horses and chariots, and the people more than thou." The horses and chariots were the bombers and tanks in Bible days. Once you see superior weaponry, be not afraid.

Fourthly, I showed you the major advantage, or the major difference, and the stated advantage: "the Lord thy God is he that goeth with you and fighteth for you to save you." Then we looked at some military exemptions in this chapter. Although all of the people, all of the males from twenty years and over, were mustered for the battle, not every man went to battle. Here were some of the exemptions.

First of all, the man who had built a new house and had not dedicated it was exempt. I am not going to explain that today, since I dealt with it last Sunday, but the word dedication does not refer merely to holding a little ceremony. The man who had not trained his household yet was exempt, and this exemption could last for several years.

The man who had planted a vineyard and had not yet eaten of it was exempt, and that exemption could last up to five years. For the first three years, the fruit of the vineyard was unclean. In the fourth year, all the fruit was holy unto the Lord, and in the fifth year the man could eat of his vineyard, which means that in the sixth year he would be ready for war. Of course, men who had already had vineyards for five years, or for four years, would soon be available. They would not necessarily have a five-year exemption. Thirdly, there was the man who had betrothed a wife and had not taken her.

God said that he was exempt. Then there were those who were fearful and faint-hearted—those who were literally scared silly. God said, Let them go home. You do not need them anyhow, and all they will do is discourage the brethren. There was another group I pointed out who were exempt but are not listed in this passage. Who were they? The Levites. They were automatically exempt because the pastors, the teachers, were not included in this military census.

God says that when all these people are exempted, then—and then only—you are to make captains to lead the people. One reason they were exempted was that God said, “lest he die in the battle.” Although a man may be righteous, fighting in a righteous cause and a righteous war, there is still the possibility that he may die in battle. Although God generally protects His own, it is not God’s will to protect them all the time, because if He did, no one would ever die. The Bible teaches that the wages of sin are certainly death. Then we made some applications.

The family has priority over defense and over warfare. Covenant life is to be enjoyed by all of God's people, and all of this enters into these military exemptions and exclusions.

Man has deviated so far from the principles of the Word of God in every area and every sphere of his life that, when men hear the simple teaching of the Word of God, they are both amazed and horrified. They are amazed, first of all, at its simplicity, justice, and straightforwardness. Secondly, they are horrified at implementing the Scriptures. The standard response is one of unbelief: “It will never work. Times have changed.”

“This is the 21st century. We don't do things like that anymore.” We never stop to think that probably one of the reasons we fail so often is that we don't do things like that anymore. Although times may change, although the centuries roll by, and although people may change, God and His Word never change. That is why He said in Malachi 3:6, “I, the Lord, change not.”

When we speak of the immutability of God, we are speaking of the unchangeableness of God. The Bible says in Psalm 119:89, “Forever, O Lord, is thy word settled in the heavens.” Not only does God not change, but His Word does not change. Therefore, the principles of

the Word of God invariably remain the same. What worked 4,000 years ago will work today. What did not work 4,000 years ago will not work today, either.

SCRIPTURE READING - Deuteronomy 20:10-18 (KJV)

The Offer of Peace Before Attack

> When thou comest nigh unto a city to fight against it, then proclaim peace unto it. And it shall be, if it make thee an answer of peace, and open unto thee, then it shall be, that all the people that is found therein shall be tributaries unto thee, and they shall serve thee. And if it will make no peace with thee, but will make war against thee, then thou shalt besiege it: and when the Lord thy God hath delivered it into thine hands, thou shalt smite every male thereof with the edge of the sword: but the women, and the little ones, and the cattle, and all that is in the city, even all the spoil thereof, shalt thou take unto thyself; and thou shalt eat the spoil of thine enemies which the Lord thy God hath given thee.
>
> Thus shalt thou do unto all the cities which are very far off from thee, which are not of the cities of these nations. But of the cities of these people, which the Lord thy God doth give thee for an inheritance, thou shalt save alive nothing that breatheth: but thou shalt utterly destroy them; namely, the Hittites, and the Amorites, the Canaanites, and the Perizzites, the Hivites, and the Jebusites; as the Lord thy God hath commanded thee: that they teach you not to do after all their abominations, which they have done unto their gods; so should ye sin against the Lord your God.

Before there is an open attack, before there is a declaration of war, an offer of peace is to be extended to the enemy. First, this offer of peace is not a negotiation. Secondly, it is not a compromise of righteousness. The righteous cause must always be maintained.

What then does this offer of peace mean? It means that the enemy must yield, submit, or surrender to the offer of peace. It is peace, but peace on terms of justice and righteousness. That is why it is not a negotiated peace. God gives this offer because it will avoid excessive violence and bloodshed. All the people have to do to avoid violence

and bloodshed is submit to righteousness, submit to justice, and submit to that which God demands. If they refuse the offer of peace on God's terms, then full-scale war is to be waged and all the males are to be annihilated.

Thus, the enemy may have peace and life on terms of God's justice, or death and destruction on those same terms. If the enemy receives the offer of peace—if they open their gates—no one there is to be killed; they are to become tributaries.

The Meaning of Tributary

Verse 11 says, "And it shall be, if it make thee answer of peace, and open unto thee"—that is, you can simply walk in; you do not have to fire a shot—"then it shall be, that all the people that is found therein shall be tributaries unto thee, and they shall serve thee."

When we think of a tributary, we normally think of a slave. Although someone who is a tributary might be considered a slave in a practical sense, this does not necessarily include slavery in a real sense. The term tributary can be used in the Bible not only in the form of labor—working for someone—but also in terms of tribute or taxes.

Judges 1:30 says concerning the Canaanites who dwelt in the land: “Neither did Zebulun drive out the inhabitants of Kitron, nor the inhabitants of Nahalol; but the Canaanites dwelt among them, and became tributaries.” These were Canaanites whom God had told the Israelites to kill, yet they did not kill them; they simply became tributaries. The passage gives a clear example: the Canaanites were not destroyed, but were subdued and placed under tributary obligation to Israel. What does that mean? It means those existing Canaanites either labored for the Israelites or were so subdued that they paid tribute and supported the Israelitish social order. Turn to 2 Chronicles 8, and look at verse 8.

As for all the people that were left of the Hittites, and the Amorites, and the Perizzites, and the Hivites, and the Jebusites, which were not of Israel, but of their children, who were left after them in the land, whom the children of Israel consumed not, them did Solomon make to pay tribute until this day.

What were they doing? They were basically taxed. They were recognizing that they were a conquered people and paying tribute to a superior nation. In 2 Chronicles 10:18, the Bible says, “Then king Rehoboam sent Hadoram that was over the tribute; and the children of Israel stoned him with stones, that he died. But king Rehoboam made speed to get him up to his chariot, to flee to Jerusalem.” In this instance, the king of Judah was trying to tax the tribes of Israel. He sent Hadoram, who was over the tribute. What was he over? He was over the taxes. A tributary is literally someone who pays taxes, someone who recognizes that they have been conquered.

Does that ring a bell? Now you know why we pay taxes, because we’ve been conquered. Our Lord was asked, “Did he pay taxes?” He asked, “Are the children then free?” Very obviously, yes, the children are free. He said, “Of whom do the kings of the earth take custom or tribute? of their own children, or of strangers?” They said, “Of strangers.” He said, “Then are the children free.” So we are counted as strangers in our own land because we are paying tribute to a conquering power, basically speaking.

Esther 10:1 says, “And the king Ahasuerus laid a tribute upon the land, and upon the isles of the sea.” He was laying a tax upon the land. Very obviously, a tributary was a conquered people, but that did not necessarily mean they were slaves in the sense in which we think of slaves. A tributary was someone who went about normal, everyday life and functioned as usual. The only problem was that now they paid tribute: a portion of their livelihood, a portion of their living, to the conqueror.

When I said that the conquered nation was paying tribute to a superior nation, I did not necessarily mean superior militarily.

Do you realize that many times Israel had an inferior military, and yet conquered superior armies? What, then, am I referring to when I say that the enemy has to recognize a superior nation? Look in Deuteronomy 4, beginning with verse 6. God is talking about His laws, judgments, and statutes. He says, “Keep therefore and do them; for this is your wisdom and your understanding in the sight of the nations, which shall hear all these statutes, and say, Surely this great nation is a wise and understanding people. For what nation is there so great, who hath God so nigh unto them, as the Lord our God

is in all things that we call upon him for? And what nation is there so great, that hath statutes and judgments so righteous as all this law, which I set before you this day?"

So God's people are to have a superior society and government because our society and government are to be based upon the law of God.

Some say, "Brother Weaver, don't you know that this is the age of multiculturalism, and that all cultures are equal to ours?" That ain't so, folks. It's just not true. If you really believe that, go over and move to India and worship the rats and the cows and starve to death with the rest of them. I believe our culture is far superior to that of India, China, Africa, or any other nation. Why? Because when our culture began, it was based upon the Christian religion and the laws of God.

Very obviously, God says that if this nation answers with peace, opens to you, and becomes your tributary, why? Because it is supporting God's law and God's work. You will have free access to its cities and states, and free access to preach and teach the Word of God and His law. Here, then, is an offer of peace to be extended to the enemy. I do not know whether the enemy attacked first or whether this was some other incident not explained in the Word of God, but God says that before an open attack, before a declaration of war, make an offer of peace.

If they accept, fine; then you have no problem. If they do not accept, then all the males are to be killed.

Exception for the Canaanites

The interesting thing is that, if you look back in your Bibles to Deuteronomy 20, the only exception to this offer of peace was the Canaanites, those who then dwelt in the land. Look at what God says in verse 15: "Thus shalt thou do unto all the cities which are very far off from thee, which are not of the cities of these nations," that is, of the Canaanites. Verse 16 says, "But of the cities of these people… thou shalt save alive nothing that breatheth"; verse 17 names "the Hittites, and the Amorites, the Canaanites, and the Perizzites, the

Hivites, and the Jebusites." God said, "I want you to kill every one of them. Man, woman, boy, girl, suckling, ox, ass, kill everything."

Why? First of all, because they were under the ban, under the curse, under the judicial sentence of death from God. God said, "I want you to exclude them because I have sentenced them to death." Secondly, God says in verse 18, "that they teach you not to do after all their abominations, which they have done unto their gods; so should ye sin against the Lord your God." God said, "I don't want you learning their ways. I want them exterminated."

Let me draw a biblical principle before I go further. Here is a principle I think we can see from this offer of peace: God is telling us that we are always to try to avoid bloodshed, if possible. Let me give you an illustration. Back when those riots were happening a few years ago out in Los Angeles, California, some of them filtered down to Atlanta and some of the little surrounding towns. Usually, especially if I have my wife with me, I am always armed. When I travel, I always carry a weapon. Always. You never know what is going to happen.

Principle: Avoid Bloodshed if Possible, but Fight to Win

I was riding down a street that I have gone down all my life. Yes, it was in a black neighborhood, but I had driven there ever since I had been driving. There was one little black juke joint on the left, and four or five black men were standing outside. And Fitzgerald. All of a sudden, I was by myself, and they started waving at me, "Come on, come on," and shook their fists.

I looked in the seat beside me and saw a pistol with a 15-round clip and hydroshocks in it. I looked at them, smiled, and said, "You really don't want me to stop. You just think you want me to stop." Then I kept going. You say, "Well, Brother Weaver, why didn't you stop and fight?"

Because I would end up shooting somebody. I would either kill one of them, or they would kill me, or I would kill them all. All I have to do is laugh at them and keep going. So, if I can avoid bloodshed, I am going to avoid bloodshed.

Here is the principle: If we are to avoid bloodshed, we should try to do so if at all possible. But if it is not possible to avoid bloodshed, God is telling us to fight to win so that we will not have to fight again. If they open unto you, fine; they have just become your tributaries. But if they will not open unto you, what do you do? Kill all the males.

Let me ask you a question. If you go to a city or a nation and exterminate all the males, how soon will you have to be back there fighting again? It will be a while. Of course, that would be referring to the men. What would that do to that city, state, or nation? It would literally destroy their culture. You would not be back there any time soon, I can assure you.

God says that we are to avoid bloodshed if at all possible. But if it is not possible, we fight to win, so that we will not have to do it over again.

When I was a boy, I had to ride the school bus, and there was a neighbor boy who would come up and try to wrestle me every day. Although I was older than he was, he was larger than I was. Every day I would wrestle him down. Usually I would get him in a headlock, and sometimes I would put my knuckles up under there where it really hurt. But every day he would come back and wrestle me again. He never won. The reason he did that was because the older boys in the back would say, "I'll give you a nickel," or, "I'll give you fifty cents; go up and slap John back to the head."

All they wanted to do was see a fight, and they never gave him the money. He wasn't very smart, so he got whipped every day. I told my father, "Dad, I'm getting so tired of fighting Jack. Every day I have to wrestle him down on the bus." Daddy said, "Son, if you hurt him one time, he'll stop." I said, "Yes, sir."

I got on the bus that afternoon and said, "Now, Jack, I want to tell you something. If you mess with me this afternoon, I'm going to hurt you. I don't want to hurt you, but if you mess with me, I'm going to hurt you. Just remember that." We got down the road, and sure enough, I looked up in the mirror and saw Jack slipping up behind me so he could slap me back to the head. I stood up, turned around, and said, "Jack, remember what I told you when you got on the bus. If you mess with me, I'm going to hurt you."

I turned around and sat back down. Sure enough, he came up and slapped me right back to the head, then turned around to run to the back of the bus. I was up, grabbed him, and spun him around. When he spun around, I balled my fist up and hit him as hard as I could in the stomach. He doubled over, and you could hear the breath going out of him. I came up with an uppercut and hit him in the jaw. I knocked him so hard that I knocked him over a school bus seat, which I know fractured a rib. He was crying, and blood was coming from everywhere. When I got off the bus, I told my dad, "You're probably going to get a call from Jack's parents."

Let me tell you what I did. You told me if I hurt him, he'd leave me alone. He did leave me alone for a couple of days, until the boy said, "I'll give you a dollar." But that boy became one of my best friends. He was converted later on under my ministry, and he's now dead. He died of cancer a number of years ago. The amazing thing is that Dad said, "Son, if you hurt him, he'll leave you alone." Here's the principle.

If you've got to fight, fight to win so you won't have to fight again. “When thou shalt besiege a city a long time, in making war against it to take it, thou shalt not destroy the trees thereof by forcing an axe against them: for thou mayest eat of them, and thou shalt not cut them down (for the tree of the field is man's life) to employ them in the siege: only the trees which thou knowest that they be not trees for meat, thou shalt destroy and cut them down; and thou shalt build bulwarks against the city that maketh war with thee, until it be subdued.”

Here is the second principle: War is not to be waged against creation, but against man. Let me say that another way: war is not to be waged against nature, but against man.

War Not Against Creation but Against Man

These scriptures forbid what you and I would call a wanton destruction of the earth. Let me say it another way: these scriptures forbid the scorched-earth policy. These scriptures were violated by Sherman and many others like him who looted, pillaged, burned, and destroyed everything in their path. God says that if you have to build bulwarks, you cut down the trees that are not meat or

food-bearing trees. Do not use pear trees. Do not use peach trees. Do not use any tree that is going to be good for food. Cut down one that you know is not going to be good for food. Why?

Creation is not the sinner. Man is the sinner. Ecclesiastes 5:9 says, “Moreover the profit of the earth is for all: the king himself is served by the field.” So the earth, the profit of the earth, is for all. If you cut down the fruit trees, you are hurting yourself. You can live from those fruit trees just as your enemies could. The principle here is this: no fruit-bearing trees are to be destroyed, only those that are not fit for food. Why? Let us make some applications.

Applications: Production Over Politics and Protection of Civilians

First of all, production has priority over politics. Production has priority over politics.

Think with me about the War of Northern Aggression, the War for Southern Independence, or, as some like to call it, Lincoln’s War. Lincoln’s War was a war of politics. Why? Because in his war of politics, he did not fight against the men in the South, per se; he fought against the South. He tried to destroy everything in the South—the fields, the crops, the trees, everything. In other words, he wanted the South starved into submission. That is why, when Sherman marched to the sea, he burned, raped, pillaged, and plundered everything in his path.

Up until that time in our country, there had been no war as such against production. I want you to understand something: after Lincoln’s war, production no longer had priority over politics. Politics had priority over production. After Lincoln, many others followed in his vein, but the prime imitator of Lincoln was Franklin Delano Roosevelt. Why? Because production is now controlled by politics.

If you do not believe that, I challenge anybody in here to try farming for one year. You can only plant what the government tells you you can plant. You say, "Bless God, I'll plant whatever I want to plant." Go ahead. You cannot sell it—not unless you can find individuals who will buy it. You will not sell it on the market without

their permission. God is saying that production has a priority over politics.

There is a second implication: war is not to be waged against productive citizens. Let me explain. Look in your Bibles to Psalm 1. I am not going to read all of these passages, but I do want you to see Psalm 1. Many of you can quote that Psalm. You will find the same truth in Judges 9. Many times in the Bible, men are compared to trees. A tree in the Bible is a symbol for man. "Blessed is the man that walketh not in the counsel of the ungodly, nor standeth in the way of sinners, nor sitteth in the seat of the scornful."

"But his delight is in the law of the Lord; and in his law doth he meditate day and night. And he shall be like a tree planted by the rivers of water, that bringeth forth his fruit in his season; his leaf also shall not wither; and whatsoever he doeth shall prosper. The ungodly are not so: but are like the chaff which the wind driveth away."

Here men are compared to trees, and especially Christian men are the productive ones. The principle is this: war is not to be waged against productive citizens. Civilians, those who are not fighting, those fruit-bearing, productive citizens, are not to be attacked. Why? They will be a base of support after you have defeated your enemy.

Let me give you a classic example. Many of you know that our bombers bombed Germany left and right. But does anyone know of one city that was bombed that had absolutely no military significance at all—no ammo dumps, no plants to manufacture bombs—was a center of culture and art? Dresden? Why was Dresden bombed? Nothing there. Maybe morals, so to speak. All they had there was art and that kind of stuff.

The thing that really upsets me is hearing about someone killed in a drive-by shooting. Why would you shoot someone, number one, that you do not even know; number two, that is not an enemy of yours; and number three, that is minding his own business?

It makes absolutely no sense. That is what God is saying in this principle: Do not destroy the fruit-bearing people, because after the victory they will be the ones who provide the base of support for a reconstructed, godly social order. Many people do not know it, but

after Japan was defeated, thousands of missionaries went to Japan. In fact, they asked MacArthur to send them; MacArthur requested that missionaries be sent there. The point is this: If you are going to conquer somebody, and you destroy the base of support, then you are going to have to provide everything yourself. God says, no, you are to make war against man, not war against his creation.

The Law of Booty: Reward and Restraint

The third principle from this passage is that the law of booty provides a reward for the soldiers. Booty is the spoils. Deuteronomy 20:14 says, “But the women, and the little ones, and the cattle, and all that is in the city, even all the spoil thereof, shalt thou take unto thyself; and thou shalt eat the spoil of thine enemies, which the Lord thy God hath given thee.”

Remember what Caleb said when he was trying to get the people to attack the enemy and conquer Canaan after they had said, “Man, those people are big and we’re just grasshoppers in their sight”? Caleb said, “They are bread for us. They are bread for us.”

Numbers 31:21 says, “And Eleazar the priest said unto the men of war which went to the battle, This is the ordinance of the law which the Lord commanded Moses; only the gold, and the silver, the brass, the iron, the tin, and the lead, every thing that may abide the fire, ye shall make it go through the fire, and it shall be clean: nevertheless it shall be purified with the water of separation: and all that abideth not the fire ye shall make go through the water. And ye shall wash your clothes on the seventh day, and ye shall be clean, and afterward ye shall come into the camp.” The Lord then said to Moses, “Take the sum of the prey that was taken, both of man and of beast,” and the war had been won. They had the prey, the booty, the spoils. The command continues: “...both of man and of beast, thou, and Eleazar the priest, and the chief fathers of the congregation: and divide the prey into two parts.”

Numbers 31 gives the law of booty: "between them that took the war upon them, who went out to the battle, and between all the congregation: and levy a tribute unto the Lord of the men of war which went out to the battle: one soul of five hundred, both of the persons, and of the beeves, and of the asses, and of the sheep: take it

of their half, and give it unto Eleazar the priest, for an heave offering of the Lord. And of the children of Israel's half, thou shalt take one portion of fifty, of the persons, of the beeves, of the asses, and of the flocks, of all manner of beasts, and give them unto the Levites, which keep the charge of the tabernacle of the Lord. And Moses and Eleazar the priest did as the Lord commanded Moses."

Notice verse 29: "Take it of their half." Verse 30 says, "And of the children of Israel's half." Verse 42 says, "And of the children of Israel's half, which Moses divided from the men that warred."

Here is the principle. Suppose 200,000 men are mustered for a war, but only 100,000 actually have to go to war. The battle is won, and there is a great deal of spoil. God says to give half to the men who went to war and the other half to those who did not go. They were mustered, but they did not go to war. The spoil was divided between them. Then God says to levy a tribute upon each hand, and that tribute is to be given to the Lord, recognizing His provision, protection, and blessing.

In 1 Samuel 30, the Philistines attacked Ziklag and burned it with fire. They took the wives, children, and spoils of David and his men. David pursued them. "And David's two wives were taken captives, Ahinoam the Jezreelitess, and Abigail the wife of Nabal the Carmelite. And David was greatly distressed; for the people spake of stoning him, because the soul of all the people was grieved, every man for his sons and for his daughters: but David encouraged himself in the Lord his God." David asked whether he should go after them, and God said yes. Verse 10 says, "But David pursued, he and four hundred men."

David had six hundred men. Two-thirds were able to go to battle, but two hundred were so faint that they could not go over the brook Besor. As the Scripture says, “for two hundred abode behind, which were so faint that they could not go over the brook Besor.” They were distressed and weeping because their wives and children had been taken.

In verse 19 we read, “And there was nothing lacking to them, neither small nor great, neither sons nor daughters, neither spoil, nor any thing that they had taken to them: David recovered all.”

David also took all the flocks and herds, “which they drave before those other cattle,” and said, “This is David’s spoil.” The Philistines had already been looting, so this included not only what they had taken from David’s families, but also the spoil from other places.

David came to the two hundred men who had been too faint to follow him, whom they had made to abide at the brook Besor. When David came near the people, he saluted them. Then certain wicked men and men of Belial said, “Because they went not with us, we will not give them ought of the spoil that we have recovered, save to every man his wife and his children, that they may lead them away, and depart.” Their attitude was, “We did the fighting; we are keeping the spoil. Just give them back their wives and children.”

But David said, “Ye shall not do so, my brethren, with that which the Lord hath given us, who hath preserved us, and delivered the company that came against us into our hand.” He continued, “For who will hearken unto you in this matter? but as his part is that goeth down to the battle, so shall his part be that tarrieth by the stuff: they shall part alike.” From that day forward, David made it a statute and an ordinance for Israel. Those who went to war and those who remained with the baggage divided the spoil equally, fifty-fifty.

Understand this principle as more than a monetary matter. It is true in a family and in a church. I have used this passage many times when sharing with Alice things God enables me to do that she is not able to do. Simply because she supports me, whatever victory and blessing I have from God, half of it goes to her.

This principle applies to this assembly. Not everybody travels across this country preaching and teaching. God has allowed me to do so. But the blessings and victory God gives me, half of them go to you. That’s the way God counts things. If it were not for you, I could not do so. Someone, somewhere has to tarry by the stuff; someone, somewhere has to farm and support an army. So God says they shall split and split alike.

Out of all the spoils, all the booty, and all the prey, part of it always went to the Lord and His work. Look back in your Bibles to Numbers 31. We just read it, but I am going to start there and read it

one more time before going forward. Numbers 31:28 says, “And levy a tribute unto the Lord of the men of war which went out to the battle: one soul of five hundred, both of the persons, and of the beeves, and of the asses, and of the sheep.” Here was a percentage of their spoil given to the Lord. Verse 47 says, “Even of the children of Israel's half, Moses took one portion of fifty, both of man and of beast, and gave them unto the Levites, which kept the charge of the tabernacle of the Lord; as the Lord commanded Moses.” God received a portion from the men who actually went to battle, and God received a portion from those who did not go to battle.

Turn to 1 Chronicles 26. You may be in for a real surprise as you read this verse. The temple was an elaborate building, containing all kinds of gold, silver, brass, precious stones, and everything else. Where in the world did all that gold and silver come from? Look at 1 Chronicles 26:27. The Bible says, “Out of the spoils won in battles did they dedicate to maintain the house of the Lord.”

Then you read about how David gave up his spoils, and all the captains and all the mighty men gave up their spoils. Therefore, all the gold and silver in the temple came from war. The spoils won in battles were dedicated to maintain the house of the Lord.

Look in your Bibles, if you would, to Hebrews 7. Remember the first war mentioned in the Bible, in Genesis 14. You will also find this in Genesis 14, but I want to read it from the New Testament because so many people are funny when they say, “But that's in the Old Testament,” as though the Old Testament were not the Word of God. I want you to see the same truth in the New Testament. Hebrews 7:4 refers to Abraham, who came back from the slaughter of the kings, and says, “Now consider how great this man was, unto whom even the patriarch Abraham gave the tenth of the spoils.” Abraham gave Melchizedek a tithe of the spoils from the battle. Thus, out of the spoils of battle, they dedicated and maintained the house of the Lord.

Now, let me make a couple of applications. First, I think it is very obvious that it is proper, in one sense of the word, to have soldiers paid for their services, and certainly the law of booty offers a good incentive to fight. By the way, the law of booty does not mean to rape, plunder, pillage, steal, or take anything that you can get on

your own. Whatever the enemy had, it was divided. No one had the right simply to say, "I'm going to take this for myself and that and that." It was not every man for himself.

The principle is that there is an incentive for soldiers to fight. There is also an aspect here of what we would call war indemnity, or a penalty imposed upon the enemy for being the aggressor, starting the war, or causing the war; therefore, they had to pay to defray the cost of the war.

The booty was halved between those who fought and those who did not fight. Then there was a tithe given to the Lord from each half. So the soldiers got some, the congregation got some, and the Lord got some. But did you notice? No booty went to the state. None went to the government.

If you look back in your Bibles to 1 Samuel, chapter 30, you will see that David voluntarily shared some of his booty with those who had helped to hide and defend him, the elders. He did not have to, but he did so voluntarily. 1 Samuel 30, verse 26: "And when David came to Ziklag, he sent of the spoil unto the elders of Judah, even to his friends, saying, Behold a present for you of the spoil of the enemies of the Lord."

He sent it "to them which were in Bethel, and to them which were in south Ramoth, and to them which were in Jattir, and to them which were in Aroer, and to them which were in Siphmoth, and to them which were in Eshtemoa, and to them which were in Rachal, and to them which were in the cities of the Jerahmeelites, and to them which were in the cities of the Kenites, and to them which were in Hormah, and to them which were in Chorashan, and to them which were in Athach, and to them which were in Hebron, and to all the places where David himself and his men were wont to haunt." David took some of his own share and shared it with these elders and leaders because they had helped hide and defend him.

No special duty was given to the commanders, captains, or leaders of the armies. In Judges chapter 8, Gideon had to ask his men for something special. They voluntarily gave it, but it was not his simply because he was the leader. “And Gideon said unto them, I would desire a request of you, that ye would give me every man the earrings

of his prey. (For they had golden earrings, because they were Ishmaelites.) And they answered, We will willingly give them." Gideon had to ask for it. He did not receive it merely because he happened to be the commander.

Why is this point important? Since no booty went to the state, no spoil went to the government, and none went to the politicians, the absence of governmental or political spoils of war placed a great restraint upon them and kept them from fighting. One of the main problems in America today is that there are huge economic benefits from war that go to our government and politicians. That is an incentive for them to keep your sons in battles all across this world, because they get rich by it. War is a multi-billion-dollar industry. But if they get nothing from war, restraint is placed upon them. Why fight? It is not going to benefit us.

That does not mean that we are not to defend ourselves. I am saying that war is taken out of politics and government and brought down to defense for liberty and freedom, while the spoils go to the people. I have not gotten my share from the Gulf War, Korean War, World War II, or World War I. But the government has gotten millions of shares, not only from the spoils, but from the people in taxes.

The law of booty excludes the state and places restraint upon politicians and governments.

Father, thy word is so clear and so practical and so simple, and yet we have erred and deviated so far from it. Our nation is in a mess, and most nations are, because they reject and refuse thy word. Teach us, Lord, that we may submit to Thee, honor Thee, glorify Thee, and live for Thee. In the name of Jesus Christ, we pray. Amen.

This program was produced by Dominion Ministry. For more information about Pastor Weaver's sermons, you may contact Dominion Ministry by mail at 7400 Abercorn Street, Suite 705, PMB 175, Savannah, Georgia, 31406. Or give us a call at 912-925-7000. You can also visit our website at www.dominionministry.com.

Source Notes

Chapter 1: When Is It Right To Fight - 1
JW00904 | SermonAudio

Chapter 2: When Is It Right To Fight - 2
JW00902 | SermonAudio

Chapter 3: When Is It Right To Fight - 3
JW00900 | SermonAudio

Topical Index

Chapter titles and section headings are listed with the pages on which they begin.

A

Applications: Production Over Politics and Protection of Civilians p. 52

D

Deuteronomy 20 p. 25

E

Exception for the Canaanites p. 48

Exemption for the Betrothed Man p. 35

Exemption for the Fearful and Fainthearted p. 36

Exemption for the Levites p. 36

Exemption for the Man with a New House p. 32

Exemption for the Man with a New Vineyard p. 34

F

Fighting and War Are Assumed Realities in Scripture p. 8

H

Historical Example: God's Intervention in the American Revolution p. 23

I

Introduction to Deuteronomy 20 and the Series p. 5

N

Numerical Odds Are Inconsequential to a People of Faith p. 12

P

Principle: Avoid Bloodshed if Possible, but Fight to Win p. 49

R

Reasons for the Exemptions p. 37

Review of Previous Messages on Deuteronomy 20 p. 43

Review of Previous Teaching p. 27

S

Superior Armaments Are Inconsequential to the People of Faith p. 18

T

The Law of Booty: Reward and Restraint p. 54
The Laws of Military Life p. 7
The Meaning of Tributary p. 46
The Offer of Peace Before Attack p. 45
The Reality of Death in Battle p. 28
The Stated Advantage: The Lord Thy God Is with Thee p. 21

W

War Not Against Creation but Against Man p. 51
When Is It Right To Fight - 1 p. 5
When Is It Right To Fight - 2 p. 25
When Is It Right To Fight - 3 p. 41

Scripture Index

Scripture references identified in chapter readings, headings, and manuscript text are listed with their page locations.

Genesis

Genesis 14 p. 57

Genesis 14:14 p. 33

Exodus

Exodus 15:3 p. 7

Exodus 33:13 p. 21

Leviticus

Leviticus 19:23-25 p. 35

Numbers

Numbers 13:26-14 p. 13

Numbers 21 p. 7

Numbers 31 p. 22, p. 29, p. 54, p. 55, p. 56, p. 57

Numbers 31:21 p. 54

Numbers 31:28 p. 56, p. 57

Deuteronomy

Deuteronomy 4 p. 47, p. 48

Deuteronomy 20 p. 5, p. 7, p. 9, p. 20, p. 22, p. 25, p. 27, p. 32, p. 43, p. 48, p. 49

Deuteronomy 20:1 p. 12, p. 13

Deuteronomy 20:1-15 p. 25, p. 41

Deuteronomy 20:1-8 p. 5

Deuteronomy 20:10-18 p. 45

Deuteronomy 20:10-20 p. 6

Deuteronomy 20:14 p. 54

Deuteronomy 21 p. 8

Deuteronomy 23 p. 8, p. 9

Deuteronomy 24:5 p. 35, p. 36

Deuteronomy 28:30 p. 39

Joshua

Joshua 1:5 p. 21, p. 22

Judges

Judges 1:30 p. 46

Judges 9 p. 53

1 Samuel

1 Samuel 13:4-7 p. 15

1 Samuel 30 p. 55, p. 58

1 Chronicles

1 Chronicles 26 p. 57

1 Chronicles 26:27 p. 57

2 Chronicles

2 Chronicles 7 p. 33

2 Chronicles 8 p. 46

2 Chronicles 10:18 p. 47

Esther

Esther 10:1 p. 47

Job

Job 14:1-5 p. 30

Psalm

Psalm 1 p. 53

Psalm 31:15 p. 30

Psalm 66:9 p. 31

Psalm 119:89 p. 44, p. 45

Proverbs

Proverbs 22 p. 33, p. 34

Ecclesiastes

Ecclesiastes 5:9 p. 52

Isaiah

Isaiah 57 p. 9

Isaiah 57:1 p. 31

Micah

Micah 4:4 p. 38

Malachi

Malachi 3:6 p. 44

2 Corinthians

2 Corinthians 6 p. 11

Hebrews

Hebrews 4:1-2 p. 15
Hebrews 7 p. 57
Hebrews 7:4 p. 57

WEAVER BIBLE COLLEGE

Your companion study guide

When Is It Right To Fight

Follow the Scripture references, reflect on each lesson,
and use the written-response space to apply what you learn.



Scan to open the matching study guide

Downloadable PDF | 8.5 x 11 inches
No sign-in required

studyguides.weaverbiblecollege.com

If you cannot scan the code, visit the address above
and search for this book by title.