

Defense

(Blog 0013 AndrewHadden.org)

God told me to blog about defense of ourselves, our families, and others in need of it. He said:

“Defense – blog that. Self-defense is scriptural – and defense of the weak, those needing protection. Turning the other cheek – that’s enduring social insult, not bodily harm. Peter had a sword – but used it wrongly, to thwart my plan to lay down my life for mankind. I made a whip – and used it – to purify my house of defilers, thieves. I told my disciples to buy a sword – there are legitimate uses. Government bears the sword to protect. So can you. My prophets bore swords – Moses, Samuel. Others bore staffs, rods – they were weapons when occasions arose. **Tell my people to defend themselves, and their own – wives, children, elderly, the helpless, those in need.** The government’s role is to punish, yours is to defend. The government can’t be everywhere. It’s impossible. Defend your own, when necessary. Guns aren’t evil – some people are.”

After the Lord said what he did, he told me to add scriptures. Let us start with where Christ said to “turn the other cheek.” It says:

38 "You have heard that it was said, 'An eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth.' 39 But I tell you not to resist an evil person. But whoever slaps you on your right cheek, turn the other to him also." (Matthew 5:38-41 NKJV)

The reference to “an eye for an eye, and a tooth for a tooth” is a reference to the law God gave to Moses to make judicial punishment match the crime. But the Jews in Jesus’ time had taken it as a license for personal vengeance. Christ was speaking against that misinterpretation of the scripture. A slap in the face was a social insult, not serious bodily harm. He encouraged us to endure social insult and give slight injury a good stopping point. But he is not saying to forgo the right of self defense and submit to violence and bodily harm, for oneself or ones we are in the right to protect.

He is also not saying it is wrong to defend one’s country in war as a soldier. Christ ministered to soldiers and did not tell them to cease being soldiers but to be honest in collecting taxes and in carrying out punishments.

14 Likewise the soldiers asked him, saying, "And what shall we do?" So he said to them, "Do not intimidate anyone or accuse falsely, and be content with your wages" (Luke 3:14 NKJV).

If being a soldier, carrying and using a weapon, were wrong, Paul would not have encouraged Timothy this way:

3 You therefore must endure hardship as a good soldier of Jesus Christ.
4 No one engaged in warfare entangles himself with the affairs of this life, that he may please him who enlisted him as a soldier. (2 Tim 2:3-5 NKJV)

At the Last Supper, just before Christ was going to be arrested and crucified, he encouraged his disciples to buy a sword. Too many have twisted their interpretations of what Christ said to match their pacifist assumptions. The passage says:

35 And He said to them, "When I sent you without money bag, knapsack, and sandals, did you lack anything?" So they said, "Nothing."

36 Then He said to them, "But now, he who has a money bag, let him take it, and likewise a knapsack; **and he who has no sword, let him sell his garment and buy one.**

37 For I say to you that this which is written must still be accomplished in Me: 'And He was numbered with the transgressors.' For the things concerning Me have an end."

38 So they said, "Lord, look, here are two swords." And He said to them, "It is enough."
(Luke 22:35-38 NKJV)

This did not mean he wanted them to defend him when arrested, because that would work against the plan of salvation for mankind. When Peter mistakenly attempted that with his sword, Christ stopped and rebuked him (John 18:11). He also indicated that those that attempted to defend him against those there to arrest him would die (they were outnumbered by professionals). It is a mistake to extend what he said of that moment to say that forever all who take up a sword would die by it. At the last supper he was warning them they would need the swords as protection, such as against bandits on the road in their future journeys. The context was future journeys. The contemporary historian Josephus notes that the Essenes, a very devout religious sect of Jesus' day, carried swords for protection on the road. Again, many interpreters have imposed their pacifist leanings on their interpretations of what Jesus said here, and his intent.

Christ is now, in our present day, warning his current disciples, as he did the original disciples, that the times will require being prepared to defend ourselves and those rightfully under our protection.