

**WAR,
KILLING**
and the
MILITARY

by David C. Pack

Should members of the Church of God go to war? Is it their *duty* to bear arms, fight and kill—“serve” in the military? Can wars be “just”? In war, does the end ever *justify* the means? What does God say?

Herbert W. Armstrong led the Worldwide Church of God (formerly The Radio Church of God until 1968) until his death in 1986. Hundreds of millions heard his voice and read his literature. God called him in the fall of 1926 and he was converted in the spring of 1927. Over the course of Mr. Armstrong’s ministry, God revealed through him a great many true biblical doctrines, which had been lost to the Church through the centuries. After his death, his successors ceased to believe and teach these doctrines. Although copyright law prohibits The Restored Church of God from reproducing and distributing literature produced while he led the Worldwide Church of God, we are committed to the preservation and teaching of all of these truths!

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Printed in the United States of America

The horror of war has wracked the world for thousands of years. Its fruits are terror, destruction, economic upheaval, orphaned children, population displacement, widespread devastation of the land, atrocities, hunger, disease, untold suffering, misery, despair, injuries, death and even genocide. All of this yields *greater* hatred and revenge, endless retaliation and more war, because nothing is ever permanently resolved through military conflict.

Ever since Cain killed Abel (Gen. 4), human history has been a chronicle of war. What began as family or tribal disagreements later developed into conflicts between nations. The conflict between Cain and Abel was motivated by jealousy and contempt, and so have been the agendas of nations throughout history.

Additionally, long-standing ethnic, tribal and religious differences, coupled with boundary disputes and outright aggression to seize the land or property of others, have always served to fuel the next war fought between the same peoples or nations.

War has affected all nations in every period of history. Many nations have made war their primary means of livelihood—not just a means of defense or protection. Those nations that chose not to actively pursue war had to at least expend much time, money and effort to protect themselves—sometimes having to “buy” peace by paying tribute to powers that could have dominated them.

In the mid-1960s, a Norwegian statistician programmed a computer to count all of the wars through the 6,000 years of mankind’s history. It concluded that 14,531 wars had been fought. But this was merely the number that were

known and recorded. How many more were not? And consider that this was several decades ago. Countless more have been fought since then. Of course, this does not count the endless stream of individual terrorist acts, such as suicide bombings and other assaults, which occur in undeclared wars.

Incredible new weapons technology has forever altered the face of war. “Smart” bombs, which are laser-guided to bring precision and efficiency to the art of killing, have replaced many types of “dumb” bombs. Military scientists have now developed cluster bombs, called “daisy cutters.” These cut down large numbers of human beings, like a lawnmower cuts grass. Also, there are new bombs called “bunker-busters” that can penetrate deep into the earth in pursuit of enemies hiding in caves before detonating and killing the inhabitants.

Various highly lethal kinds of attack aircraft now exist—helicopters, jets, bombers, gunships—that have brought conventional warfare to a pinnacle of destructive capability never before known. A 2,000 pound, precision, satellite-guided bomb has a “kill zone” of 1,300 yards radius (almost three quarters of a mile). It kills and maims indiscriminately. So this can sometimes involve “friendly fire” casualties, in which one’s own troops are hit.

Modern military thinkers and strategists are now forced to think and talk in terms of protection from, or delivery of, “weapons of mass destruction.” The killing capability of nuclear, chemical and biological weapons, and now radiological or “dirty bombs,” is almost indescribably horrible. Yet these weapons are now apparently in the hands of unstable countries and regimes, which may *not* be fully capable of controlling their use or safeguarding their inventory.

This is why the famous American General, Douglas MacArthur, stated, “Men since the beginning of time have sought peace...Military alliances, balances of power, leagues of nations, all in turn failed, leaving the only path to be by way of the crucible of war. The utter destructiveness of war now blocks out this alternative. WE HAVE HAD OUR LAST CHANCE.

“If we will not devise some greater and more equitable system, our ARMAGEDDON will be at our door. The problem basically is *theological* and involves a *spiritual* recrudescence, an improvement of *human character* that will synchronize with our almost matchless advances in science, art, literature, and all material and cultural developments of the past two thousand years. *It must be of the spirit if we are to save the flesh*” (April 19, 1951, speech to Congress).

Bear in mind that this speech was given sixty years ago! Since then, it seems the whole world has become a “killing field.” Men have sought to justify this state of affairs through rationalizing and moralizing about the “inevitability” and “necessity” of going to war.

How is this done?

The “Just War” Concept

Is it possible for human beings to come together to fight and kill each other and still be noble, just or righteous—even godly—in their cause? There is a greater

question: Are human beings even innately *capable* of making correct judgments about war—or other fundamental matters in life? The answer to these questions has much to do with *why* the world is filled with turmoil, strife and war.

Before examining the overall subject of this booklet, let’s look at what God says regarding human nature and judgment. This is vital to understand.

Wise King Solomon recorded several Proverbs that, when placed together, present a stunning picture. He wrote that “*All the ways of a man are CLEAN in his own eyes*; but the LORD weighs the spirits” (16:2) and that “*Every way of a man is RIGHT in his own eyes*; but the LORD ponders the hearts” (21:2). These similar scriptures make a profound statement. Anyone who has ever tried to correct someone who was wrong will have no difficulty believing them.

However, another Proverb reveals that this natural tendency of human beings—to believe that all that they do is clean and right—carries an even greater implication: “*The way of a FOOL is RIGHT in his own eyes*” (12:15).

When put together, these verses reveal that all people are born naturally foolish! If *all fools* and *all men* see themselves as right, then they are naturally one and the same.

Stop and ponder the impact of these verses—and then notice another twice-recorded Proverb: “There is a way that *seems right* unto a man, but the end thereof are the ways of *DEATH*” (14:12; 16:25).

War may *seem* right to puny, foolish men who do not consider that they have chosen a path that leads to *death*—both literally now, and eternally, if they do not repent of it. The natural human mind always deceives itself (Jer. 17:9) into thinking that its ways are clean and right. People do not naturally feel a need to seek God’s view on matters. They believe that they are inherently qualified to correctly make their own judgments.

Invariably, God is not consulted or included in men’s thoughts or plans, even on the most complicated social issues. The human reasoning of “experts” guides policy on abortion, the cloning of human beings, pornography, the definition of immorality, the definition of a family, the acceptability of “alternate lifestyles,” “mercy killing,” political correctness and many other social issues.

Men have devised ways to justify whatever they do. The greatest of all social problems, *war*, is no exception! And man’s pattern of not asking God what He thinks is also no exception. When nations have *already decided* that it is in their best interest to go to war, all that remains is the task of spelling out the human rationale to justify what they have *pre-determined* to do. Enter the moralists, ethicists, philosophers, politicians and religionists.

Here is an example. Recently, when several soldiers were killed in combat by “friendly fire,” it was said that they died “for a noble and just cause.” This was said to soften the grief of the families they had left behind. But who decided that their deaths were “noble and just”? Certainly not God!

In the same conflict, one high-ranking government official offered his assessment of why that war was being fought in the way that it was. He spoke

of the “infinite judgment of the *world community*” that stood behind the war. He stated that “*thoughtful people believe...*” such and such. He made other similar references to what world leaders, the United Nations, moralists and military strategists thought or felt.

But he neglected entirely to reference any opinion or instruction that *God* might hold in the matter! We will soon learn more about why.

During every war, endless television talk shows parade politicians, generals, colonels, war heroes and other “analysts” before the cameras. They offer non-stop “insight” into what it all means, what must be done and why. For instance, they speak of being “bold” and “innovative” in the world’s war on terror, which is deemed a “new kind of war.” Each “expert” seems to have a different opinion on what will, or will not, work. Where God is absent, disagreement abounds!

Again, not once have I heard a single one of these leaders, generals, war heroes or military planners ask what *GOD* thinks about war!

I have certainly heard a number of ministers, evangelists, religionists and theologians—usually representing a particular church denomination, ministry or organization—express their own *personal* view about particular wars. *But their views are nothing more than what they think or feel!* Without exception, such religious thinkers believe that war can be “just and noble” in purpose. Also, virtually without exception, these same churchmen were part of the country that was attacked. Is it surprising that they chose to agree with the opinion of the overwhelming majority surrounding them, which was *already* driving the course of the country? Modern religious leaders lack the moral and spiritual strength to reflect what *God* commands, so they caved to national peer pressure.

However, I *have* heard nearly all of these same churchmen ask God—*after the fact*—to BLESS what men had already decided to do through means of war. In their weakness, they have the gall to ask God to bless their sin—war!

In reference to one particular war, a great conference of religious leaders said that it was “regrettable but necessary,” and that they felt that military action was appropriate as long as “the principles of morality and human dignity” were followed. Another group of leaders stated the hope that a “wise, just and effective” response could occur. All of these statements flow from human reasoning. None are based on the Bible—and I did not hear any of these groups or individuals make a pretense that they were.

Asking God to bless the horrific nature of war is like asking Him to work through a Frankenstein monster!

Mankind, in his *rebellion* against God (Rom. 8:7), likes to present his civilization in the best possible light. But, through the prophet Ezekiel, God states that the *false prophets* of the modern-day descendants of ancient Israel will declare, “*Peace; and there [is] no peace*” (Ezek. 13:10). The Bible shows that peace will remain elusive to those who forsake God’s ways.

Similarly, *nations* at war also see themselves, ultimately, as part of a “peace process.” They depict war as a temporary interlude to the peace that they feel they are working toward in the only way available to them. Yet, since peace is usually followed by more war, “peace processes” inevitably become “*war processes*.”

No wonder the famous French World War I statesman, Georges Clemenceau, said, “I don’t know whether war is an interlude during peace or peace is an interlude during war.”

The Christian

God is calling people who are citizens of various nations on this earth. Most who are called in this age are privileged to live under the freedoms of a democracy. As such, they are taught that they have a special responsibility to “make the world safe for democracy.”

In free societies, where this belief is common (this is what so many were taught in school), suffering, injuries, untold atrocities, destruction and death are portrayed as “glorious.” But what is glorious—or just—about any of these things? Those who believe that war is glorious may be *sincere*, but they are *sincerely wrong!* Human beings are made in the image of God and are His potential spirit-born children. There is nothing glorious about fighting, maiming or killing them.

Therefore, we must ask some questions: Does God permit His servants to fight in the wars of men? The term “military service” comes from the idea that one who performs this duty is *servicing* his country. Should Christians attack, kill and maim their fellow human beings on behalf of their country? May Christians go to war as long as the general consensus is that it is a “just and noble cause”? Are Christians permitted to bear arms and kill as long as they are “making the world safe for democracy”?

What does God say?

Your Decision

Before examining God’s teaching on the subject of war, another aspect of this matter must be carefully explained. In one’s decision to either fight or not fight, both the individual and the Church of God have a direct responsibility that each must perform.

The following quote comes from the introduction to Herbert W. Armstrong’s booklet, *Military Service and War*. It carefully frames each individual’s responsibility in making his or her own decision after the Church has fulfilled its responsibility to teach what God says in His Word. This quote begins under the subhead “Decision YOUR Responsibility”:

“In compliance with this basic principle [that all people are free moral agents] laid down by the Creator, His Church does not attempt to make its

members' decisions for them. Each must make his own decision, and each is responsible before God for the result.

"God's Church teaches, as Jesus said (Luke 4:4), that we must *live* by 'every Word of God'—that is, guide our lives by every word of the Holy Bible.

"Here, then, is the teaching of the Word of God in regard to war, killing, and military service.

"At the outset, bear in mind that the Selective Service and the military authorities in the United States deal with 'conscientious objectors' according to the genuine sincerity of the individual, as *they*, not the individual, determine his sincerity. But also God Almighty judges according to each individual's sincerity of heart—and HE can never misjudge or be deceived!

"The Church cannot stress too emphatically, therefore, the life-and-death importance to our members that each be completely honest before God, and utterly sure of and sincere in his convictions and actions, after having studied thoroughly God's instruction, teaching and commands, in the Bible. [This quote continues under the subhead "Which Has Precedence?"]

"This whole question is one of man's relationship—and his responsibility—to his GOD *and* to his country.

"What is the relationship between the *individual* and GOD? What is the relationship—and responsibility—between the *individual* and his *country*? And what is the relationship between GOD and Country?

"The Church of God herein gives you the Biblical answer and teaching."

The Restored Church of God is determined to teach God's laws and principles to its members on all matters. *God* determines what is right and what is wrong—what is righteousness and what is sin. But the individual must decide whether or not he will *obey* God's instruction.

This is the Bible's clear teaching and, therefore, the official teaching and position of The Restored Church of God!

Why Men Cannot Find Peace

It has been said that all nations are either preparing for war, at war or recovering from war. This is partly because men often think they must go to war in search of peace. How ironic! The outcome of war usually involves a temporary truce, but always fails to yield permanent peace. This is because men cannot, and will never, find the way to peace on their own. They have *no chance* to solve the problem of achieving world peace.

Here's *why*.

As part of an extensive prophecy about world conditions in our time, the prophet Isaiah explains this: "*THE WAY OF PEACE THEY KNOW NOT; and there is no judgment in their goings: they have made them crooked paths: whosoever goes therein shall not know peace*" (Isa. 59:8). Men's solutions always lead to more wars, misery, death and destruction. The apostle Paul repeated, "And the way of peace *have they not known*" (Rom. 3:17). How true!

Verdun: A Study in Horror

The infamous battle of Verdun (France), fought during WWI, was the most costly battle ever, in terms of human lives. Fought from Feb. 1916 until Nov. 1918, never has a single battle lasted for so long. It captured the very essence of "war of attrition." Nearly one million soldiers died!

Visitors to the battle area (over 250 square kilometers) are cautioned not to stray from designated walkways. The danger of the multiple thousands of unexploded shells, which occasionally kill or maim, awaits any who dare to wander onto the battlefield. Imagine such an area under sporadic artillery duels for two and three-quarters years. Imagine the state of the terrain after artillery had hit every square meter many times.

Today, just scraping the surface with a shoe reveals rusted belt and canteen strap buckles, rifle shell casings and similar items. It would take many pages to adequately describe the scope of this battle. The constant artillery, chlorine, mustard and nerve gases stand as stark testimony to "man's inhumanity to man."

Here is a summary of the first two days of battle: "On Feb. 21st 1916, at 7:15 a.m., the enemy opened fire on the two banks of the Meuse [River], over a front of 40 kilometers. Simultaneously Verdun was systematically bombarded, the last residents being evacuated by the military authority at midday on the 25th.

"For ten hours, all the enemy guns and trench mortars kept up a running fire without intermission. In all the woods adjoining the front it was a regular firework display. A feature of

this overwhelming bombardment was the enormous proportion of heavy caliber shells, 150's and 210's coming over like hailstones.

"Under this deluge of projectiles all trenches were leveled, the woods became a twisted mass of trunks and branches, and villages collapsed and were blotted out.

"The infantry attack was launched at 5:15 p.m....Three [German] army corps...advanced. They thought they had only to march, with their rifles slung, over ground like a ploughed field.

"The [French] 51st...and 72nd Divisions...sustained the first shock and...covered the arrival of French re-enforcements.

"A heroic combat followed the most formidable artillery preparation hitherto known. The chasseurs [light cavalry troops] of Colonel Driant resisted the attack, inch by inch, in the wood of Caures. By nightfall the advance of the enemy was insignificant compared with their losses...

"[The next morning] with snow falling, the bombardment was resumed with, if possible, greater intensity. Colonel Driant in the wood of Caures was outflanked on both sides and died fighting, after first evacuating his chasseurs to Beaumont." (*Verdun, An Illustrated Historical Guide*, p. 24)

This long battle veered back and forth over one piece of ground! Today the battlefields are quiet, even more than when the German generals reported to their Crown Prince, "All is quiet on the western front," when things were temporarily static on the French front lines. This famous comment is still quoted often.

The governments of men simply do not work. They have *never* succeeded in finding permanent solutions to humanity's problems. They lack the answers to mankind's greatest questions. It has not yet been given to men to understand the path to peace—or, for that matter, the path to abundance, happiness, harmony, health and prosperity. No wonder the great thinkers, leaders, educators and scientists have failed miserably in their quest for world peace. God has not yet *revealed* to the vast majority of humanity the solution to its unending wars.

Whose World is This?

You may have supposed that the governments of modern nations reflect God's way. This is nearly everyone's assumption. While we will learn that God does, in fact, establish and remove nations, we will also learn that this is *not* God's world. This is why Christ foretold the coming of God's all-powerful, world-ruling supergovernment to replace the confused, ineffective and inefficient governments of man. They are powerless to solve any of the world's biggest problems.

How did the world come to be the way that it is? Why is it in such a state of confusion, suffering, misery and ignorance? Why cannot governments get along—avoid war—find peace and agreement? Why such constant instability, scandal and division among leaders? Why such seemingly endless revolutions and military coups? Why is there no shortage of demagogues, dictators and revolutionaries—who always *promise* to make things better, yet are only able to preside over continually worsening troubles, problems and conditions?

Despite these conditions, most theologians, religionists and ministers blindly assume that this is already God's world. Therefore, they conclude that if “all Christians would work together, in love and unity, to make this world and its governments a safer and better place for all, they could bring peace, happiness and prosperity to the world.”

This is a completely wrong view. Nowhere did Jesus say, “Go into all the world and strive to make it a better place by becoming part of it.” He taught, “Go you into all the world and preach the gospel.” Jesus did not come to make *this* world a better place. He came to announce the coming of a better, *different* world—under *His* government!

Blind, deceived men think that they can bring world peace through human effort alone. Ironically, this quest often involves the decision of “Christian” nations to strive for peace *through war*. They see certain evil forces at work and feel compelled to “do something about it.” They assume that Christ would be an “activist,” seeking to make the world a better place.

Be honest! Haven't you heard this many times? Haven't you heard churches urge people to “get involved,” or “take a stand,” in order to improve some local, national or world problem?

The Great Deceiver

Were you aware that your Bible speaks of “Satan, which deceives the whole world” (Rev. 12:9)? Notice that it says, “the *whole* world.” This is staggering understanding—but there it is in your Bible. How can the devil deceive almost *seven billion* people? What motivates him? This same verse in Revelation concludes, “he was cast out into the earth, and *his angels* were cast out with him.” Notice it says, “*HIS* angels.” These fallen beings are referred to as demons. What role, if any, do they play?

For now, let's focus on one aspect of this enormous understanding.

If Satan has deceived the entire world, then how can it be God's world? It has to be one or the other! Since the *whole* world is deceived, it must be cut off from God (Isa. 59:1-2). This will become clear.

If the devil practices deception throughout the world, it would certainly include influence upon, and control over, all its governments.

Now, if the devil deceives the whole world, and you do not accept Revelation 12:9 as coming directly from the mind of God, then any hope of breaking free of this terrible deception will be lost! The Bible is the plain Word of God! (If you doubt this, then take the time to prove it to yourself. Read our booklet *Bible Authority...Can It Be Proven?*)

The “god of this world”

The Bible refers to the “god of this world,” and it is not talking about the God of heaven. II Corinthians 4:4 records, “In whom the *god of this world* has blinded the minds of them which believe not, lest the *light* of the glorious *gospel*...should shine unto them.”

There is only one being who wants to “blind” this world to the truth of the real gospel—Satan the devil. The true gospel is about the prophesied soon-coming kingdom of God—His world-ruling government. (Our booklet *Which Is the True Gospel?* explains how Christ will return to earth and establish God's kingdom, thus replacing the devil, the present “god of this world.”) No wonder Satan wants to block people from understanding this marvelous truth. He wants no “light” shining on it, because he knows that it depicts a time when he will be banished from his current position of global influence.

Three times in the gospel of John, Christ refers to Satan as “the prince of this world.” John 12:31, 16:11 and 14:30 reveal that in the future, the “prince of this world” will be judged. Take time to read these verses. John 12:31 parallels the judgment of this world with Satan's judgment.

This is because this world *is* his! Let's make this plain.

Matthew 4 contains the well-known account of Christ's confrontation with the devil after fasting for forty days. The devil repeatedly *tempts* Christ through twisting scripture (one of his favorite devices). At one point, in verses 8 and 9,

“the devil took Him up into an exceeding high mountain, and showed Him all the *kingdoms of the world*, and the glory of them; and said unto Him, All these things will I give you, if you will fall down and worship me.”

This is a stunning account! Why?

First, notice that Jesus rebuked Satan (vs. 10), quoting Deuteronomy 6:13, answering, “You shall worship the Lord your God, and Him only shall you serve.” At no point did Christ say, “These kingdoms are *NOT* yours to give,” or “Who do you think you are, trying to offer Me what is already God’s?” He said no such thing.

Again, why? Because He knew *the kingdoms of this world ARE the devil’s kingdoms* (governments). Christ knew they *WERE* Satan’s to give.

Understand! This account describes the *temptation* of Christ. What the devil offered Him was designed to *tempt* Him. If both Christ and Satan knew the kingdoms of this world were not the devil’s to give, *then where was the temptation?* Surely, the devil would have known what Christ knew. Of course, Christ, who was God on earth, would have known the devil had the power and authority to offer those kingdoms. The temptation would carry no weight—would be hollow—if they were not Satan’s to offer.

For Christ to *overcome* the temptation, there had to *be* a temptation!

So that there can be absolutely no doubt that this is true, note the exact same account paralleled in Luke 4:6. The devil is speaking directly to Christ. It adds a key phrase that should hit you like a sledgehammer. He said, “All this power will I give You, and the glory of them: for that [it] *IS DELIVERED UNTO ME*; and *TO WHOMSOEVER I WILL I GIVE IT*.” Did you notice? It was completely *within the scope of the devil’s power and authority* to offer or withhold the kingdoms of this world. They were *his* to give or not to give. God had “delivered” them to him—to his CONTROL!

This world’s nations and governments, with “all the glory of them,” are still controlled by the “god of this world”—the “prince of this world”! Has anyone told you this before? This is the plain truth from your Bible—and it has a direct bearing on why the world is filled with war! This world, with its ways and systems, is under the control of the devil! (Read our booklet *A World in Captivity* to learn more about the devil’s role and influence.)

Satan’s Kingdom is Both Organized and Unified

Satan holds sway over all governments and nations. But is his own government, led by him and his demons, and ruling over human governments, unified? Is the devil himself divided? Let Christ answer these questions.

Christ and His disciples often had to cast out demons. I have done this on a number of occasions, and these can be very intense, dramatic encounters, not pleasant to witness. Those who do are often shocked by what they see. It is obvious that great power is present—both in the demon that is being cast out and the greater power necessary to achieve this. Christ’s accusers saw clear

evidence that He was backed up by *real power*! However, in Matthew 12:24-26, they accused Him of using the power of the devil to cast out (exorcise) demons.

Here is Christ’s response: “Every kingdom divided against itself is brought to desolation; and *every city or house divided against itself shall not stand*: And if Satan cast out Satan, he is divided against himself; how shall then his kingdom stand?” (vs. 25). Christ was saying that Satan would never cast out demons, because to do so would divide his own kingdom. The devil does have a kingdom. Since it *does* stand, it is clearly not divided!

Recall Revelation 12:9. It referred to Satan and “his” demons. This clearly means that they are *his*—they belong to him—he controls them.

Here is the point: Not only does Satan govern the kingdoms of this world, through his power and influence, but he also does it in an undivided, unified fashion, with the aid of hundreds of millions (Rev. 5:11) of demons.

Now notice an amazing account in Daniel 10:13-21. An actual spirit *war*, lasting three full weeks (vs. 13), is described! Michael, an archangel, fought with one called the “prince of the kingdom of Persia,” and later referred to another up-coming battle with an arch-demon called the “prince of Grecia.” Archangels do not need *twenty-one days* to defeat puny, little, physical men. Michael was battling these “princes,” who were powerful (fallen) spirit beings within Satan’s unified government, ruling over individual kingdoms (nations) within it.

Finally, Ephesians 6:12 explains how Christians wrestle “against principalities, against powers, against the *rulers of the darkness of this world*, against *wicked spirits* [the proper translation] *in high places*.” The context makes clear that these “high places” are within the governments or principalities of this world.

This is not God’s world! And it should now be evident that the devil governs a vast realm of fallen spirits. Together, they deceive, confuse and exert great influence over all the governments and activities of this world.

The worst of these is WAR!

But God Is Sovereign

Do not be confused! The above scriptural understanding does not disconnect God from this planet. He is still absolutely in charge and in control of His Plan—and this involves *all* human beings.

When Christ was on trial for His life before Pontius Pilate, He clarified the real source of Pilate’s authority over the outcome of the trial: “Then said Pilate unto Him, Speak You not unto me? Know You not that I have power to crucify You, and have power to release You? Jesus answered, You could have *no power* at all against Me, *except it were given you from above*: therefore he that delivered Me unto you has the greater sin” (John 19:10-11). Ultimately, Pilate’s authority came from God.

Benjamin Franklin once said, “The longer I live, the more convincing proofs I see of this truth, that God governs in the affairs of men. And if a sparrow cannot fall to the ground without His notice, is it probable that an empire can rise without His aid?” This is truer than Franklin probably ever understood.

When speaking to the Babylonian King Nebuchadnezzar about why he held office over the greatest empire on earth in his day, God said, through Daniel, “You, O king, are a king of kings: *for the God of heaven has given you a kingdom, power, and strength, and glory*” (2:37). Although Satan is the god of this world, he still rules under the sovereign control of the God of heaven.

Now read an important statement in Daniel 4:17: “This matter is by the decree of the watchers...to the intent that the living may know that *the most High rules in the kingdom of men*, and gives it to whomsoever He will, and sets up over it the BASEST OF MEN.” The word *base* means the bottom, under. If a house has a *basement*, it is located at the bottom or under the house. God says that the leaders of this world’s governments reflect Daniel 4:17.

Do not misunderstand. The kingdoms of this world are *not* God’s. Some have tried to cite this verse, completely missing the point, when they say, “God is working in the affairs of men (elections, wars, governments, etc.) and good Christians everywhere, if we can get out the vote, can put godly men in office”...“make the world safe for democracy”...“bring God’s kingdom to earth through human effort...” or similar things. This literally puts them in a position of potentially fighting God’s predetermined purpose, as seen in Daniel 4:17. Many religious leaders misunderstand this verse, believing that it is somehow their job to work out God’s purpose for Him. (Our booklet *Should Christians Vote?* explains why Christians do not participate in this world’s governments.)

Here is the point.

God is working out events in a plan that encompasses 7,000 years. He is allowing mankind to find out that his own ways, governments, values, religions, purposes—and WARS—have not, do not and never will work toward permanent and peaceful solutions. The Bible reveals that God sets up and removes rulers, and that governments only have power as long as He permits.

Why War?

We can now ask: What does God’s Word say about *why* nations continually go to war? You will be shocked at its simplicity! But will you accept it?

Recognize that no war can be fought unless there is an aggressor! Someone has to initiate or begin it. Like a football game, one team has to be on offense while the other plays defense. Yet, almost all nations speak in terms of their “Department of *Defense*” or of their “*Defense Budget*.” Theoretically, if all nations merely *defended* themselves, there would be no wars because there would be no aggressors. While someone must “start it,” combatants invariably see themselves as defending their interests, territory or rights.

The Bible reveals the true CAUSE of wars. James 4:1-3 reads, “From where come wars and fightings among you? Come they not hence, *even of your LUSTS* that war in your members? *You LUST*, and have not: *you kill*, and desire to have, and cannot obtain: *you fight and war*, yet you have not, because you ask not. You ask, and receive not, because you ask amiss, *that you may consume it upon your LUSTS.*”

God says that war is caused by humans *lusting* for what belongs to others. When all else fails, men scheme to obtain what they want by outright brute force.

Speaking from the worldly, human approach, military preparedness is an absolute prerequisite for existence in today’s hostile world. The citizens of all nations pay a huge price to maintain their national sovereignty. Without a ready military, there is the constant threat from a plundering, destructive invading force, seeking to secure land, wealth or power.

Are Christians obligated to participate when their nation “needs them” and calls upon them to “serve”? We must address one more question before answering this one.

Should Christians Always Obey Men’s Governments?

A Christian is one who follows—COPIES—Jesus Christ. He OBEYS God. Jesus continually spoke about God’s government being established on earth. Christians yield to and obey—SUBMIT themselves to—*that* government!

But must Christians also obey the governments of *men*? What should *your* responsibility be to the civil government that rules *your* country? What did Jesus teach about submitting to government authority?

Here is what Paul wrote: “*Let every soul be subject unto the higher powers.* For there is no power but of God: the powers that be are *ORDAINED OF GOD.* *Whosoever therefore resists the power, resists the ORDINANCE OF GOD:* and they that resist shall receive to themselves damnation” (Rom. 13:1-2). Does this verse instruct Christians to fight, bear arms and kill, if their government so directs them?

The apostle Peter also gave important instruction. He had no doubt what God expects of Christians in their responsibility toward civil governments. He wrote, “*SUBMIT yourselves to every ordinance of man FOR THE LORD’S SAKE:* whether it be to the king, as supreme; Or unto governors, as unto them that are sent by him for the punishment of evildoers, and for the praise of them that do well. For so is the will of God, that with well doing you may put to silence the ignorance of foolish men...Honor all men. Love the brotherhood. Fear God. Honor the king” (1 Pet. 2:13-15, 17).

It says, “SUBMIT yourselves.” And this is what Christians should do. The phrase “for the Lord’s sake” clarifies that it is God who expects us to submit to “every ordinance” of men’s governments.

Notice that Peter did *not* say, “OBEY every ordinance.”

Why? Because there are ordinances that are *contrary* to God’s direct instructions—they cannot be obeyed *without disobeying God*. The following account illustrates this.

The apostles had been commanded by the authorities (Acts 4:16-18) to no longer preach anything about Jesus Christ—or to invoke His authority. Here is how they responded: “But Peter and John answered and said unto them, Whether it be right in the sight of God to hearken unto you more than unto God, judge you” (vs. 19). The account continues in the next chapter, after the disciples had been arrested, imprisoned and called to account for *disregarding* the command to cease preaching Christ’s Name. Acts 5:29 states, “Then Peter and the other apostles answered and said, We ought to *obey God rather than men*.”

Sometimes, obeying God instead of the contrary instructions of human governments can mean *submitting to punishment*. For such circumstances, Paul wrote, “So that we may boldly say, The Lord is my helper, and I will not fear what man shall do unto me” (Heb. 13:6). Should you ever be faced with the decision to “obey God rather than men,” keep this encouraging verse close to heart. (Read our article “Should Christians Submit to Government Authority?” to understand more.)

What is a Christian?

The question of whether Christians should ever participate in war speaks to the heart of what a Christian is.

Just what *is* a real Christian? Is he one who “attends Church”—“professes Jesus”—“knows Christ”—has been “baptized”? Is there a single verse to which we can turn that gives the Bible definition of a Christian and eliminates all confusion?

Paul wrote, “For as many as are *led by the Spirit of God*, they are the sons of God” (Rom. 8:14). A Christian is one who has the Holy Spirit leading him. But is having God’s Spirit absolutely *essential* to being a Christian? Earlier, Paul had said, “But you are not in the flesh, but in the Spirit, if so be that the Spirit of God dwell in you. Now if any man have not the Spirit of Christ, *he is none of His*” (vs. 9)!

It is that simple! One either has the Spirit of God, and *is* a Christian, or one does *not* have it and is *not* a Christian—is “none of His.” All those who are truly converted must have the Holy Spirit in them.

But what does this mean? Is this all there is to Christianity and conversion or is there more to it?

When Jesus kept the Passover the night before He was crucified, He indirectly, through prayer, explained an important principle to His disciples: “I pray not that You should take them out of the world, but that You should keep them from the evil. They are *not of the world*, even as I am not of the world. *Sanctify them through Your truth: YOUR WORD IS TRUTH*” (John 17:15-17).

A Christian believes and follows the TRUTH, knowing it is *this* that sets him apart from all those around him—sanctifies him. He is not *of* the world and its ways, customs, and traditions. But what does this *mean*?

Are Christians required to obey the laws of God? What is the answer—the *truth*—from His Word?

Jesus never taught that people should just “believe on Him” to receive salvation. When a young rich man asked Him what he must do to have “eternal life”—receive salvation—Jesus told him, “If you will enter into life, KEEP THE COMMANDMENTS.” Hearing this, the disciples were shocked. (So are most ministers and churchmen.) They didn’t understand how this was possible and asked, “Who then can be saved?” Christ answered, “With men this is impossible; *but with God all things are possible*” (Matt. 19:17, 25-26).

In Mark 7:7-8, Jesus said, “Howbeit *IN VAIN do they worship Me*, teaching for doctrines the commandments of men. For laying aside the *commandment of God*, you hold the *tradition of men*.” It is possible to worship Christ in vain. It is possible to think about Him, talk about Him and refer to Him often as Lord—ALL IN VAIN!

War is a long-held TRADITION of men practiced by hundreds of millions of *traditional* professing Christians. However, notice: “Not every one that says unto Me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven [“of” not “in” heaven]; but he that DOES *the will of My Father* which is in heaven” (Matt. 7:21). Paul wrote, “the DOERS of the law [God’s] shall be justified” (Rom. 2:13).

The book of Acts speaks of “the Holy [Spirit], whom God has given to them that OBEY Him” (5:32). Receiving God’s Spirit is preceded by repentance and baptism. The Holy Spirit is given at baptism, upon one’s repentance of having broken God’s law (Acts 2:38). At this point, a new, spirit-begotten life begins. The newly begotten child of God is now a “joint heir of God...with Christ” (Rom. 8:16). He becomes part of the true Church that Christ promised to build and lead (Matt. 16:18; Eph. 1:22-23; Col. 1:18)—and feed—through His true ministry (Eph. 4:11-15).

But what about “having love”? Aren’t Christians merely those who “show love”? If so, what *is* love? Let’s consider several verses and clear up all confusion!

Paul wrote, “...*the love of God* is shed abroad in our hearts *by the Holy [Spirit]* which is given unto us” (Rom. 5:5). When a Christian receives God’s Spirit, he receives some of the love of God. Over time, through actively exercising it, the depth and amount of love *grows*.

There are two different ways of life. One is the “GIVE” way—the way of love and outgoing concern—God’s way. The other is the “GET” way—of selfishness and self-concern—the way of this world. Jesus taught that it is “more blessed to GIVE than to receive” (Acts 20:35).

With this in mind, what is the Bible definition of love?

The apostle John wrote, “FOR THIS IS THE LOVE OF GOD, THAT WE KEEP HIS COMMANDMENTS: and His commandments are not grievous” (I John 5:3).

Many who claim to have love believe that the commandments ARE grievous. God says they are not, and calls His Law “holy, just, good” and “spiritual” (Rom. 7:12, 14).

The Bible explains, through Paul, that the commandments and the law are the same: “Love works no ill to his neighbor: therefore *love is the fulfilling of the law*” (Rom. 13:10). The Bible definition of love is “the fulfilling of the law.” Keeping the commandments is fulfilling the law—and doing this “WORKS NO ILL TO HIS NEIGHBOR.” Killing and maiming *for any reason* cannot possibly fit *God’s* definition of love.

A far more detailed explanation of love is found in I Corinthians 13. Take the time to carefully consider each phrase of this chapter! You will have no doubt that it is incompatible with war, fighting and killing.

What is Sin?

God has defined love in His Word. But what about *sin*?

Here is His definition: “Whosoever commits sin transgresses also the law: for *sin is the transgression of the law*” (I John 3:4). Paul wrote, “the wages of sin is death” (Rom. 6:23). We do not concern ourselves with what men say, but with what the Bible says. God’s Word reveals the truth.

Sin is the opposite of obedience—it is the *transgression* of the law. If Christians are to obey God, then what are they to obey? The Ten Commandments. By doing this, they work “no ill” toward their neighbor.

Most societies have laws paralleling several of the Ten Commandments. There are laws against killing, stealing and bearing false witness under oath, etc. Some even outlaw adultery. Violators of men’s laws are considered guilty of a “crime.” God calls these same violations SIN!

In the Sixth Commandment, He thunders, “Thou shalt not kill!” (Ex. 20:13), and His servants obey Him!

The Sixth Commandment

Since Christians are those who follow—who copy—Jesus Christ (I Peter 2:21; Phil. 2:5), we must ask, what would He do if He were on Earth today? Would *Christ* bear arms and kill His fellow man? Did He teach something *different*, something contrary to the Ten Commandments? Did the apostles Paul and John merely record their own *opinions* about love, the law and sin?

What did Jesus actually teach about fighting, hating and killing?

Jesus was prophesied in Isaiah to come and “magnify the law” (42:21). Is there evidence that He did this?

Begin with Matthew 5:21-22: “*You have heard* that it was said by them of old time, YOU SHALL NOT KILL; and whosoever shall kill shall be in danger of the judgment: *But I say* unto you, That whosoever is angry with his brother without a cause shall be in danger of the judgment: and whosoever shall say to

his brother, Raca, shall be in danger of the council: but whosoever shall say, You fool, shall be in danger of hell fire.” This is serious instruction! It obviously *does* expand—“magnify”—the Sixth Commandment.

But the same chapter contains more: “*You have heard* that it has been said, AN EYE FOR AN EYE, AND A TOOTH FOR A TOOTH: *But I say* unto you, that you *resist not evil*: but whosoever shall smite you on your right cheek, turn to him the other also” (vs. 38-39). Where is room for physical or military retaliation in this verse?

The continuation of this instruction, a few verses later, removes all doubt: “*You have heard* that it has been said, YOU SHALL LOVE YOUR NEIGHBOR, AND HATE YOUR ENEMY. *But I say* unto you, LOVE YOUR ENEMIES, *bless* them that curse you, *do good* to them that hate you, and *pray for* them which despitefully use you, and persecute you” (vs. 43-44).

Three times Jesus said, “You have heard,” followed by, “But I say.” Each time, He proceeded to make the law *more binding*. Those who truly seek to please God will be unable to explain away the truth of these verses.

How important are these things to God? Verse 45 answers: “That you may be the children of your Father...in heaven.” Like any parent, God expects His children to obey Him. Christ’s command is so important that it qualifies who God considers to be His children.

Let’s leave absolutely no doubt about what God requires and what is at stake for those who ignore and disobey Him: “We know that we have passed from death unto life, because we love the brethren. He that loves not his brother *abides in death*. WHOSOEVER HATES HIS BROTHER IS A MURDERER: and you know that *no murderer has eternal life* abiding in him” (I John 3:14-15).

Ultimately, all violence, and the spirit of aggression, come from hate and anger. Jesus was very specific about the need to control these attitudes.

We have seen that God gives His Spirit to them that obey Him—those who have repented of sin. Now notice the following account: “Then came also publicans to be baptized, and said unto him, Master, what shall we do?...And the SOLDIERS likewise demanded of him, saying, And what shall *we* do? And he said unto them, *Do violence to no man*, neither accuse any falsely; and be content with your wages” (Luke 3:12, 14). When soldiers asked John the Baptist about baptism, *this* was his answer!

The Old Testament God who thundered from Mount Sinai, “Thou shalt not kill,” is the same Christ who thunders this to you and me today and further commands, “Do violence to no man.”

As a wise man once observed, “Christ is pictured as a rebellious young man who came to do away with His Father’s law.” He is not.

Here is one more proof. Have you realized that Jesus Christ *was* the God of the Old Testament? Paul proves that they were actually the same Person. When speaking of ancient Israel, He wrote, “And [Israel] did all drink the same spiritual drink: for they drank of that spiritual ROCK that followed them: *and that Rock was Christ*” (I Cor. 10:4). Theologians and religionists try to place Christ in conflict with—in opposition to—the God of the Old Testament. How absurd!

When David referred to God as “my Rock,” he meant CHRIST! Moses was given the Ten Commandments by Christ, and Abraham dealt with Him face-to-face (Ex. 3:14; John 8:58).

What if everyone obeyed Christ’s instruction to keep the law? What if the whole world kept the Ten Commandments? Sadly, few do. In Matthew 24, Christ described conditions that would precede His Second Coming. Verse 12 describes how “iniquity [lawlessness] shall abound,” and will result in “the love of many . . . wax[ing] cold.” But the time is coming when the whole world, under one government, will keep God’s law. (Read our book *The Ten Commandments – “Nailed to the Cross” or Required for Salvation?* to learn more.)

If Your Enemy Hunger...

Soldiers and armies seek to annihilate one another. The goal is to kill the enemy before he kills you. Each defeat must be avenged in the next battle. Payback—vengeance—is natural, even automatic, in war. But God also believes in vengeance.

Paul gave special instructions regarding how to deal with enemies: “Dearly beloved, *avenge not yourselves*, but rather give place unto wrath: for it is written, *Vengeance is mine*; I will repay, says the Lord. Therefore *if your enemy hunger*, FEED HIM; *if he thirst*, GIVE HIM DRINK: for in so doing you shall heap *coals of fire* on his head. Be not overcome of evil, *but overcome evil with good*” (Rom 12:19-21).

God’s way of dealing with enemies is very different from man’s. Men would “heap” mortar, tank or machine gun “fire” on their enemy’s heads, while God instructs the use of food and drink to overcome their evil. If payback or vengeance is necessary, God promises, for those who trust Him, that *He* will “repay”—vengeance is *His*.

Naive? Understand that it does take real faith for a Christian to believe that God will keep His promise. But He always does. Remember, vengeance is God’s. It belongs to Him. To exact it yourself is to steal from God!

Have you considered this?

Living by the Sword

We must consider one more direct admonition from Jesus about killing.

There is an often-quoted verse in the Bible, which is rarely practiced. As Christ’s accusers came to arrest Him, Peter defended Him by attacking the high priest’s servant (cutting off his ear) with a sword (John 18:10). Notice Christ’s instruction: “Put up again your sword into his place: for all *they that take the sword shall perish with the sword*” (Matt 26:52).

Due to careless misreading, some have misunderstood and misquoted this verse as “those who live by the sword shall die BY the sword.” This is not what it says! Besides condemning violence, Jesus said that those who resort to physi-

cal weapons for self-defense “shall perish WITH the sword.” In other words, as lethal as a sword is when used to attack another, in the end, it is not sufficient to save the life of the person who puts his trust in it. Eventually, those who go to war with a sword will die *with* it in their hand. Sooner or later, they will lose their life if they depend on their own ability to use physical weapons for protection.

In verse 53, Christ instructed Peter about what he should have understood. His words stand for us today: “Think you that I cannot now pray to my Father, and He shall presently give Me more than *twelve legions of angels*?” A legion equals 6,000. This means 72,000 angels could have been immediately available to Christ—and could be available to anyone today with the faith to believe that God will protect His servants!

True Christianity Hijacked!

The world has heard much talk from protestors about how terrorists and extremists have “hijacked” and “degraded” their own religion. These “hijackers” are purported to teach and believe things not found in their holy book. The approximately one billion adherents to orthodox belief within this religion have expressed outrage at the brutal atrocities and mass murder that a relatively small group of terrorists have committed in the name of their religion. Civilization has shouted in agreement!

But the teachings of real Christianity have also been “hijacked” and “degraded”! Why have two billion Christians not expressed similar outrage at the twisting and perverting of the Bible teaching about war, killing and the military (or, for that matter, practically everything else that Christ taught)? Why have they not opposed *this* “hijacking”—*this* “degrading”? Where is the hue and cry about how God’s Word has been completely ignored in favor of the opinions and traditions of men? The Bible states that it is possible for people to “kill and think that [they] do God service” (John 16:2).

Where is the voice of two billion “Christians”? Why are supposedly Christian nations and armies freely permitted to slaughter opponents with near impunity? Non-Christians can recognize when their religion has been hijacked. Why cannot Christians?

The answer lies in the fact that it is not merely the *few* in the professing Christian world who have participated in this “hijacking,” but rather that the ENTIRE so-called Christian world—“churchianity”—has participated in suppressing and denying the plain truth of God’s Word! As a result, the history of mankind has been filled with the horror of war. And it is prophesied to grow far worse before it grows better. (Read our brochure *The Red Horse—You Shall Hear of Wars* to learn more of what will soon happen.)

This booklet expresses God’s outrage at the hijacking of TRUE Christianity—while the whole world turns a blind eye!

Let’s now review a series of additional, related biblical principles showing why Christians cannot serve in the military.

Christians Are Not of This World

We have read that Christians “*are not of the world*, even as I am not of the world” (John 17:16). True Christians are set apart from this world by God’s truth. This sets the stage for repetition and powerful new instruction from Christ.

In the next chapter, Christ was on trial before Pontius Pilate. In verse 33, Pilate asked Him, “Are You the King of the Jews?” The exchange continued until its climax in verse 36. Of course, Christ had long since determined not to resist the fate He knew that Pilate and the Jews would choose for Him. His response to Pilate is in verse 36: “My kingdom is not of this world: *if* My kingdom were of this world, THEN WOULD MY SERVANTS FIGHT, that I should not be delivered to the Jews: but now is My kingdom not from hence [here, on Earth].”

Understand this! Christ said that *His* government (the New Testament term is kingdom) is not of this society, this civilization—this world! True Christians are part of another government—HIS government. They await the coming of *this* government to earth. Also, just based on this verse (and there are many others), Christ explains that God’s servants do not fight to defend His kingdom. How could they? It is not yet here. Since they do not even fight to defend *Christ’s* (God’s) kingdom, they certainly would never fight to defend any kingdom or nation governed by *men*, scheduled to be overthrown by Christ and His saints, anyway (Dan. 2:44; 7:18, 22, 27).

Remember that Christ’s kingdom is not here on earth—it is from another place. It is not the job of God’s servants to spread the kingdom of God, through participating in men’s governments or fighting in their wars. Since God’s kingdom comes from, and is headquartered in, heaven, His servants neither vote in, nor fight for, men’s kingdoms or governments.

So, Christians do not bear arms, fight or kill—under any circumstances—because they are part of *another* kingdom. In Matthew 6:9-10, Christ told them to regularly pray, “Thy kingdom *come*,” because His followers serve and *await* THAT kingdom.

Come Out of Babylon!

When speaking of the final, great revival of the religious and political system of Babylon, Revelation 18:4 gives direct instruction to God’s people: “And I heard another voice from heaven, saying, *Come out of her*, MY PEOPLE, that you be not partakers of her sins.” Babylon means *confusion*. The true servants of God must—and DO—come out of the confusion of this world and its system of religions, governments and wars (I Cor. 14:33)!

Of course, a Christian cannot live on Mars or in a cave. He cannot leave the planet or live as a hermit on a mountaintop, so that he is not “of” the world.

WORLD WAR II: THE TOP TEN

Countries that suffered the greatest civilian losses

Deaths among civilians—many resulting from famine and internal purges, such as those in China and the USSR—were colossal in WWII, but they were less well-documented than those among fighting forces. These figures are best available from authoritative sources, but the precise numbers will never be known.

COUNTRY	KILLED
1. China	8,000,000
2. USSR	6,500,000
3. Poland	5,300,000
4. Germany	2,350,000
5. Yugoslavia	2,350,000
6. France	470,000
7. Greece	415,000
8. Japan	393,400
9. Romania	340,000
10. Hungary	300,000

Countries that suffered the greatest military losses

*Total, of which 7.8 million were battlefield deaths, 2.5 million were later deaths from wounds and disease, and 3.3 million were prisoner-of-war deaths.

**Including Australia, Canada, India, New Zealand, etc.

COUNTRY	KILLED
1. USSR	13,600,000*
2. Germany	3,300,000
3. China	1,324,516
4. Japan	1,140,429
5. British Empire**	357,116
6. Romania	350,000
7. Poland	320,000
8. Yugoslavia	305,000
9. United States	292,131
10. Italy	279,800

Countries with the largest armed forces of World War II

*At peak strength

Allowing for deaths and casualties, the total forces mobilized during the course of the war is, of course, greater than the peak strength figures: The total for the USSR, for example, has been put as high as 20,000,000; the U.S. - 16,354,000; Germany - 17,900,000; Japan - 9,100,000; and the UK - 5,896,000.

COUNTRY	PERSONNEL*
1. USSR	12,500,000
2. United States	12,304,000
3. Germany	10,000,000
4. Japan	6,095,000
5. France	5,700,000
6. United Kingdom	4,683,000
7. Italy	4,500,000
8. China	3,800,000
9. India	2,150,000
10. Poland	1,000,000



Dec. 7, 1941, Pearl Harbor: The U.S.S. West Virginia and U.S.S. Tennessee burn after the Japanese sneak attack.



Nov. 1943, South Pacific: Bodies of dead soldiers are sprawled along the beach of Tarawa.



March 1945: Lunebach, Germany.



April 16, 1945, Germany: Slave laborers in the Buchenwald concentration camp.



Aug. 8, 1945, Nagasaki, Japan: The second atomic bomb ever used in warfare is dropped.



Aug. 1945: An atomic bomb survivor suffers from having portions of her kimono burned into her skin.

SOURCES: National Archives and Records Administration; U.S. Army; American Memory (<http://memory.loc.gov>)



July 1863, Gettysburg: Aftermath of one of the most horrific and deadly battles of the American Civil War.

Circa. 1860s: Confederate (top) and Union (bottom) soldiers lie dead in the trenches of Fort Mahone.



March 22, 1918: Marine receives first aid before being sent to hospital at rear of trenches.



Dec. 19, 1918: What is left of a street corner in Poelcapelle, Belgium.

Sept. 26, 1950: Railroad yards burn after U.S. Air Force jets dropped napalm over Seoul, Korea.



Vietnam War, northwest of Quang Tri: U.S. soldiers climb aboard a Huey helicopter as they are extracted from a hilltop.



June 14, 1966: U.S. Air force jets drop bombs on a military target in North Vietnam.



Any war: How many have died just due to the killing effectiveness of the machine gun?

Some religious zealots misunderstand Christ's words and go live in monasteries or retreats to avoid contact with ordinary people. Christ did not mean for His servants to leave the *physical* world. He meant come out of its *system* of governments, education, religions and wars. Christians practice and believe the truth—not the popular ideas and traditions of men!

For instance, what if true Christians are serving in the military in Europe as the final beast of Revelation 17 arises? This great military, political, economic, religious power is foretold to come soon—and is already rising.

By fighting, Christians would literally be participating in establishing the final European counterfeit government prophesied to deceive the world and fight Christ at His Return! Would God have His servants assist in the final rise and ultimate revival of this Babylonish system? Of course not!

Citizens of Another Government

Now notice Philippians 3:20: “For our *conversation* [the Greek word here, *politeuma*, should be properly translated *citizenship*] is in heaven; from where also we look for the Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ.”

This is a fascinating verse. It reveals that a Christian's “citizenship” is held in heaven, not on earth. It explains WHY Jesus said, “My kingdom is not *of* this world.” It is from another place—from heaven. This scripture complements and reinforces John 18:36. Human leaders come from a certain city, state, province or country that they represent. So does Jesus. He comes from heaven. A Christian's citizenship is also held there and comes from there.

Christians Are Ambassadors

Let's now examine II Corinthians 5:20: “Now then we are AMBASSADORS for Christ, as though God did beseech you by us: we pray you in Christ's stead, be you reconciled to God.”

I attended AMBASSADOR COLLEGE, from 1967-1971, to prepare and train for the ministry. This was one of three colleges that was founded by Herbert W. Armstrong and operated within the Worldwide Church of God. Mr. Armstrong saw II Corinthians 5:20 and decided upon this name because it best reflected what Ambassador College students were intended to become.

Those who were accepted had to really know *why* they wanted to attend. And once they arrived, they were taught what it meant to be an “Ambassador.” As a student, I learned that I was in training to hold this office. High standards were set so that high standards could be attained. They addressed every facet of student life: Studies, finances, health, appearance, work, athletics, clubs, dating and spiritual growth. If anyone did not strive to reach them, he simply did not remain an “Ambassador” at Ambassador College.

The Greek word for ambassador—*presbeuo*—is also interesting. While it means *ambassador*, the word *president* comes from it, as does *Presbyterian*.

The most literal meaning of *presbeuo* is “representative.” In the United States, we have the House of Representatives. These elected officials answer to and, in fact, are supposed to represent the will of the people who elected them. All democratic governments, in which the people select their representatives, work in a similar fashion.

In one sense, it is the same with Christians, who are ambassadors, or *representatives*, of Jesus Christ. So, it could as easily be said that I attended “Representative College,” because I was training to become His representative.

Any ambassador knows that if he represents a country, such as the United States, as an ambassador to Russia, China or any other country, he cannot participate in the politics or affairs of the country to which he is appointed. This is because he participates in the politics of the country he represents. He is a “*presbeuo*” (representative), an ambassador, of another country. He also cannot fight or bear arms for the country to which he is sent. Would a United States ambassador fight for the French Foreign Legion? Would an Israeli ambassador fight for Syria or Egypt?

Of course not!

Christians are ambassadors for a different government—and citizens of it, of the kingdom of God. They can no longer participate in man’s systems of government. Their citizenship is derived and held by another authority—HEAVEN!

Serving Two Masters

The following verse summarizes the principles previously discussed. Notice Matthew 6:24: “No man can serve TWO MASTERS: for either he will hate the one, and love the other; or else he will hold to the one, and despise the other. You cannot serve God and mammon [money].”

No one can give equal allegiance, or complete loyalty, to two different masters. Eventually, one takes precedence over the other and dominates the thinking of the person. Christians must be totally loyal to the government that they represent. As with citizens of any country on earth, they cannot also participate in the politics of any nation other than their own. They can actually lose their rights of citizenship if they do this. Christians are no different! They cannot serve two masters.

Acts 5:29 explained that God’s servants must always “obey God rather than men.” If one is a citizen of a kingdom that is waiting in heaven to come to earth and replace all of the governments of earth, then he cannot stand with his feet resting in two opposing governments—God’s and Satan’s.

Look closer at this principle. How can a Christian obey the Sixth Commandment, along with Christ’s much additional instruction about it, and at the same time obey his national government’s instruction to fight and kill other people? In the end, he must choose whether his allegiance is to his spiritual Master in heaven or physical earthly “masters.”

God Hates Division

God hates division and discord between people. He wants them to live together in unity and harmony. Fighting and war would bring division directly into His Church. But how?

Psalms 133:1 states, “Behold, how good and how pleasant it is for brethren to dwell together in *unity*!” It is wonderful when people get along—when they agree. Read Romans 16:17 and Proverbs 6:19. God says He hates “[him] that sows discord among brethren.”

Paul asked, “Is Christ divided?” The obvious answer is no! Christ is NOT divided and neither is His Church (I Cor. 1:10, 13). We have seen that Christ also said, “Every kingdom divided against itself is brought to desolation; and every city or house divided against itself shall not stand: and if Satan cast out Satan, he is divided against himself; how shall then his kingdom stand?” (Matt. 12:25-26). It is interesting that even the devil has figured this out! He leads a vast kingdom of fallen spirits and recognizes that he cannot let it become divided.

War always divides those who engage in it. Division would be introduced into God’s Church the moment fighting and war were practiced by its members. Amos 3:3 asks, “Can two walk together except they be *agreed*?” Whether division is between people or nations, the painful answer is always NO! And war always involves intense disagreement!

What if true Christians from two different countries, fighting for two different purposes, participated in the *same war*? Brothers in Christ would be fighting each other in a kind of civil war. This is exactly what happened to many physical brothers who fought each other in the American Civil War of the 1860s.

War always breeds more division and hatred between individuals or nations. It would do the same to the Church of God if its members participated in it.

By Their Fruits

In Matthew 7:16, Jesus stated, “You shall know them by their fruits.” He repeated in verse 20, “Wherefore by their fruits you shall know them.” Matthew 12:33 says, “...for the tree is known by his [its] fruit.” These verses are primarily speaking about leaders, but they apply to almost any individual or organization. God’s servants are told to examine the “fruits”—the BY-PRODUCTS!—of any given matter, system or person.

What about war?

The first paragraph of this booklet listed the fruits of war as terror, destruction, economic upheaval, orphaned children, population displacement, widespread devastation of the land, atrocities, hunger, disease, untold suffering, misery, despair, injuries, death and even genocide—in other words, CHAOS! This is because war is inspired and influenced by the god of this world and his

wicked spirits in high places (Eph. 6:12). These fallen spirits sit at the real throttle of power behind the visible governments of nations.

The conclusion: War, as a means of addressing problems, has never worked, and its fruits are always disastrous.

Warfare, But Not After the Flesh

Study the entire New Testament. You will not find a single instance where God's people participated in men's wars. We have seen that James 4:1-4 refers to and *condemns* those who were drifting into "wars and fighting." However, there are many verses that indicate Christians *are* called to SPIRITUAL BATTLE—SPIRITUAL war—in their Christian struggle (I Tim. 6:12; Eph. 6:12-17). To overcome sin, they must battle the flesh, the pulls of the world and Satan.

Paul told Timothy to "war a good warfare" (I Tim. 1:18), and later explained, "You therefore endure hardness, as a *good soldier* of Jesus Christ. *No man that wars entangles himself with the affairs of this life; that he may please Him who has chosen him to be a soldier*" (II Tim. 2:3-4).

Truly, Christians *are* soldiers, but in a spiritual war. This does not include involvement in the carnal wars of nations. Paul wrote, "For though we walk in the flesh, we do *not* war after the flesh: (For the weapons of our warfare are *not* carnal [physical])" (II Cor. 10:3-4). So, all of God's servants *are* soldiers, but they fight on a *spiritual* plain.

"But Ancient Israel Went to War..."

Many have sought to justify war by citing the Old Testament wars of ancient Israel. Those who ignore the facts of scripture suppose that their fighting and warring represent God's will—or at least His license—for modern nations today. We will see that this is simply not true. It was *never* God's intention that Israel defend itself from its enemies.

Here are the facts!

Soon after Israel's exodus from Egypt, God gave the nation His law, the Ten Commandments (Ex. 20:1-17; Deut. 5:4-22). Just as the Sixth Commandment has always been "Thou shalt not kill," the Ten Commandments have been God's law from the very beginning. (Read our article "Did the Ten Commandments Precede Moses?" for proof.)

At Mt. Sinai, God made a covenant with Israel, promising them blessings of good weather, good health and healing, sufficient food and water, and protection from aggressors. Immediately after giving them His law and judgments, in chapters 20 through 23 of Exodus, here is what God promised: "Behold, I send an Angel before you, to keep you in the way, and to bring you into the place which I have prepared...*if you shall indeed obey His voice, and do all that I speak*; THEN I WILL BE AN ENEMY UNTO YOUR ENEMIES, AND AN ADVERSARY UNTO YOUR ADVERSARIES. For My Angel shall go before you, and

bring you in unto the Amorites, and the Hittites, and the Perizzites, and the Canaanites, and the Hivites, and the Jebusites: and *I will cut them off*" (Ex. 23:20-23).

God expected His nation to keep the Ten Commandments, including the sixth, as "their end of the bargain." He thus bound Himself to protect Israel as long as they obeyed Him.

Israel's acceptance of God's terms is found in Exodus 24:7: "And he [Moses] took the book of the covenant, and read in the audience of the people: and they said, All that the LORD has said *will we do, and be obedient.*"

Faith and Obedience Short-lived

Their obedience, however, never lasted very long. All through the period of the judges, Israel was "on again, off again" in their submission to God. Each time they rebelled and forsook Him to serve the gods of the nations around them, God sent them into captivity.

After a period of time, Israel would cry out for deliverance and promise to do better. God would send a judge (Jdg. 2:16-18) to deliver them, and they would remain on track for a short while. As soon as the judge died (Othniel, Ehud, Deborah, Gideon, Tola, Jephthah, Samson, etc.), the pattern would repeat itself.

This continued for hundreds of years, until the time of Samuel. Eventually, the country had become so corrupt and immoral that the book of Judges ends with "In those days there was no king in Israel: *every man did that which was right in his own eyes*" (Jdg. 21:25).

As Samuel's life drew to a close, his sons having departed from worshipping God, the leaders of Israel approached him with a demand: "Then all the elders of Israel gathered themselves together, and came to Samuel unto Ramah, and said unto him, 'Behold, you are old, and your sons walk not in your ways: now *make us a king* to judge us *like all the nations*'... And the LORD said unto Samuel, 'Hearken unto the voice of the people in all that they say unto you: for they have not rejected you, *but they have REJECTED ME, that I should not reign over them*'" (I Sam. 8:4-7).

Israel wanted to "be like everybody else." They refused God's rule and form of government and, in so doing, directly rejected God. The rest of mankind had rejected God's government long before Israel, and has continued rejecting it ever since. Now, with their own king, Israel could better "fit in." Peer pressure did not begin in the modern age.

Israel continually lacked the faith to believe that God would keep His promise. They wavered constantly and began to establish their own standing army. Even as they departed from Egypt, with Pharaoh's army in hot pursuit, God told them through Moses, "Fear you not, *stand still* and see the salvation of the Eternal, which He will show to you today...*the Eternal shall fight for you, and you shall hold your peace*" (Ex. 14:13-14).

Of course, the Red Sea parted and God swallowed Pharaoh's army with no need for help from Israel. Even the Egyptians said, "Let us flee from the face of Israel; for the LORD fights for them" (Ex. 14:25). Verses 27 and 31 explain that "the LORD overthrew the Egyptians."

It was always God's intention that Israel "stand still...holding their peace," and watch Him fight and win their battles!

Deuteronomy 1 is a long account of Israel's continual faithlessness and rebellion in the face of God's willingness to fight for them. (See verse 30.)

Israel: Sometimes God's "Executioner of the State"

God did not want Israel to be led by a physical king (Saul and David were the first two). He *permitted* it because *Israel* made this choice. Samuel warned them in great detail not to do this and why, but they rejected his advice and did it anyway. Israel rejected virtually everything God told them to do, in order to follow their own ideas and customs. Since Israel was determined to have their own king, God gave them instructions for how to do it.

The same thing happened regarding war. God instructed Israel that He would protect them—that they did not need to fight and protect themselves. However, they rejected this instruction—and *protection*—so that they could participate in the adventures and conquests of war waged by the nations around them. Again, God *allowed* them to do this, but gave them instructions—*rules* of war—that they were to follow if they did. These rules are found in Deuteronomy 20.

Notice, none of them involved the actual teaching of war skills, strategies and tactics—the *art* of war—to Israel. They also allowed for certain ones to receive military exemptions (vs. 5-9). Study the chapter. God said (twice) that He would now fight "with" them (vs. 1, 4) at the time they actually went to war. He would no longer *exclusively Himself* defeat Israel's enemies.

But this did allow Israel to be able to drive out certain degenerate, idolatrous peoples from the Promised Land. Yet, Acts 7:45 reveals who was really responsible for their success. Stephen, before he was stoned, referred to "the Gentiles, whom *God drove out* before the face of our fathers."

God created life. He has the right to take it. He can use any tool to do this if that is what *He* wishes. It was not *Israel* that defeated, and sometimes annihilated, the peoples that God wished them to dispossess. It was God who did this *through* them.

Capital punishment was practiced in the Old Testament for certain offenses. Israel did not do this of her own choice—God's Word instructed, indeed commanded, them to do this under certain circumstances. God holds the prerogative, as the Giver of life, to decide that certain utterly degenerate, rotten nations should be put to death, wholesale.

We must ask: Did *Israel* execute capital offenders when they were following God's direct instructions, or did *God* execute them through Israel?

Similarly, did *Israel* go to war against and execute specific nations that God instructed them to remove, or did *God* execute them? You see the point.

Only God has the right to give or take away life. He relinquishes this authority to no one, and anyone—leader or nation—who presumptuously takes this prerogative is in direct rebellion against God.

What About David?

God called the great King David "a man after My own heart, which shall fulfill all My will" (Acts 13:22). Yet, David was a warrior of great renown. How is this explained?

Here is what David said to his son Solomon near the end of his life. He was speaking of his desire to build God a "house"—a temple: "My son, as for me, it was in my mind TO BUILD AN HOUSE unto the name of the LORD my God: But the word of the LORD came to me, saying, *You have shed blood abundantly, and have made great wars*: you shall not build an house unto My Name, *because you have shed much blood upon the earth in My sight*. Behold, a son shall be born to you, who shall be a man of rest [peace]; and I will give him rest from all his enemies round about: for his name shall be Solomon, and I will give peace and quietness unto Israel in his days. He shall build an house for My Name; and he shall be My son, and I will be his Father; and I will establish the throne of his kingdom over Israel for ever" (I Chron. 22:7-10).

God made it very clear to David that He was displeased with David's constant war-making. The Bible shows David eventually repented of this. Though he often "sinned big," he also "repented big." Psalm 51, among others, describes the depth of David's repentance and sorrow for some of his greatest sins. Though God loved this quality, and praised the purity of David's heart, his tendency and practice of going to war prohibited God from allowing him to build the temple.

David repented of war! *Nations* can also repent of war!

Going to war, fighting and killing are choices that nations make. Whole countries, like people, possess free moral agency. All people and nations do everything that they do because they made the *choice* to do it! They can either choose to trust God or to "perish with their sword."

Ancient Israel chose war and never repented. They were eventually taken into captivity (721-718 B.C. by Assyria), and the result was that ten of Israel's twelve tribes have lost their identity to this day. David chose to go to war, but repented—and, as a result, numerous prophecies show he will one day rule over all the tribes of Israel at the Return of Christ.

Some Cases in Point

The history of ancient Israel contains several dramatic examples of how God delivered them from powerful aggressors who otherwise could have easily defeated them.

First, in Exodus 14, God miraculously delivered Israel from certain destruction at the hand of the Egyptian army by parting the Red Sea. Israel quickly forgot this, just three chapters later, when they were ready to fight the Amalekites.

The *second* example has to do with King Asa of Judah when he faced an enormous army of *one million Ethiopian soldiers*, with 300 chariots! II Chronicles 14:11-12 relates this account. Take time to read it and see how “The LORD smote the Ethiopians before Asa, and before Judah; *and the Ethiopians fled.*” This is an astonishing statement about the power of God. How many nations TODAY have armies of such tremendous size? Yet, for God, it was no problem.

Sadly, not long after this account, Asa neglected to rely on God. Instead, he sought out and hired an ally (II Chron. 16:1-3) when he felt threatened by the nation of Israel (the other ten tribes that had split away from Judah during the reign of Solomon’s son). Because of Asa’s faithlessness, God said, “*Therefore from henceforth you shall have wars.*” God told him that he had done foolishly and that his “heart [was no longer] perfect toward [God]” (vs. 7-9). In other words, because Asa sought war, God sentenced Him and Judah to *non-stop* war.

The *third* account involves Asa’s son Jehoshaphat, also the king of Judah. This entire account is found in II Chronicles 20. It is a fascinating story and worth careful study. Jehoshaphat and Judah faced three huge armies that had formed an alliance and come against them. Verse 12 describes Jehoshaphat saying to God, “our eyes are on You.” Verses 15-17 show how God told them, “You shall not need to fight in this battle...for the battle is not yours, *but God’s.*”

Jehoshaphat instructed all of Judah to sing to and praise God. And as “they began to sing and praise,” God intervened and utterly destroyed the army. The account records that “none escaped” (vs. 24).

Can you imagine a modern-day general or national leader demonstrating this kind of faith in God? Yet, if one did, and *truly* repented of *all* that he was doing to displease God, it would yield the same result. God says to all nations today, “I am the LORD, *I change not*” (Mal. 3:6).

Nations may not choose to repent and change, but individuals can. Jehoshaphat’s *faith*, mixed with *courage*, allowed him to break away from his father’s pattern.

The *fourth* example is found in II Chronicles 32. Once again, it involves a king of Judah, Hezekiah. A huge and historically fierce Assyrian army came against Judah and Jerusalem and besieged them. Hezekiah told his subjects that God will “fight our battles” (vs. 8). The people believed him, and God utterly destroyed this army. Verse 21 says, “the LORD sent an angel, which cut off all the mighty men...and the leaders and captains in the camp...of Assyria.” The king, with a few other survivors, slipped home in defeat.

The account goes on to add that, during Hezekiah’s reign, Israel was given peace for a number of years.

Like the Ninevites, who repented due to Jonah’s warning, nations today are free to seek, yield to and obey God. But prophecy shows that this will not happen until Christ’s Return and the abolition of war.

Paul said that the events in the Old Testament stand for us “for *ensamples* [types]: and they are written for *our* admonition, upon whom *the ends of the world are come*” (I Cor. 10:6, 11).

Will you be part of copying ancient Israel’s mistakes, or will you learn from David and copy his righteousness?

Message About Government

Like a newscaster born way ahead of His time, Jesus came announcing a complete change in the way the world will one day be governed. Everywhere He went, He spoke about the coming *kingdom of God*. It was the subject of most of His parables. But when He used the term “kingdom,” what did He mean?

Prior to the birth of Jesus, an angel appeared to His mother, Mary. The following extensive passage describes this encounter and what she was told. Notice: “The angel Gabriel was sent from God unto...Nazareth, to a virgin espoused to a man whose name was Joseph, of the house of David; and the virgin’s name was Mary. And the angel came in unto her, and said, Hail, you that are highly favored...You shall conceive in your womb, and bring forth a Son, and shall call His name Jesus. He shall be great, and shall be called the Son of the Highest: and the Lord God shall give unto Him the THRONE OF His father DAVID: And He shall REIGN over the house of Jacob for ever; and of His KINGDOM there shall be no end” (Luke 1:26-33).

Recall that in John 18:36, Jesus stated, “My KINGDOM is not of this world.” In this account, He stood before Pilate, on trial for His life. Pilate asked Him, “Are you a KING then?” Christ responded, “You say that I am a king. *To this end was I born*, and for this cause came I into the world” (vs. 37).

Jesus Christ was born to be a KING!

Here is what was prophesied about Christ in Isaiah: “For unto us a child is born, unto us a Son is given: and the GOVERNMENT shall be upon His shoulder: and His Name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, The mighty God, The everlasting Father, The PRINCE OF PEACE. Of the increase of His GOVERNMENT AND PEACE there shall be no end, upon the THRONE OF DAVID, and upon His KINGDOM, to order it, and to establish it with judgment and with justice from henceforth even for ever” (9:6-7).

When Jesus Christ establishes God’s divine *government* on earth, it will bring *peace* to all nations! But, in order to bring peace, He will have to literally “declare war against war.” After He does, permanent peace *will* “break out.” (Read our booklet *How World Peace Will Come!* to learn how and when this will happen.)

Fighting God's Punishment

The last phases of God's great Plan are now being carried out at the end of mankind's rule. It is possible to directly fight against God's unfolding prophesied purpose. Christians must be very careful to both understand and remain in harmony with it. They must never consciously or unconsciously work against it.

The United States, along with the generally English-speaking democratic peoples of the Western World, are the modern-day nations descended from the ten "lost tribes" of ancient Israel. Today's Israelis represent one of the twelve tribes (Judah) that descended from the patriarch Jacob (later named Israel).

(Take time to read our book *America and Britain in Prophecy* to learn where these tribes are found today.)

These nations, with the entire world, have rebelled against God. Their sins have cut them off from Him (Isa. 59:1-2). They rejected and disobeyed the wonderful laws that He had once given them! In addition to a few others, the modern nations of America, Canada, Australia, New Zealand, South Africa, Israel and the United Kingdom will be the special recipients of a prophesied time of terrible national punishment for their spiritual crimes, lawlessness and sins against God!

Carefully examine this extensive prophecy concerning our peoples' short-term and long-term future. It begins with bad news, but ends with a wonderful picture of *good news*. Let's read the prophecy before discussing it:

"And these are the words that the LORD spake concerning ISRAEL and concerning JUDAH. For thus says the LORD; We have heard a voice of *trembling, of fear, and not of peace*. Ask you now, and see whether a man does travail with child? wherefore do I see every man with his hands on his loins, as a woman in travail, and *all faces are turned into paleness*? Alas! for that day is *great*, so that none is like it: *it is even the time of Jacob's trouble*; but he shall be saved out of it...Therefore fear you not, O My servant Jacob, says the LORD; neither be dismayed, O Israel: for, lo, *I will save you* from afar, and your seed from the land of their captivity; and Jacob shall return, and shall be in rest, and be quiet, and none shall make him afraid. For I am with you, says the LORD, to save you: though I make a full end of all nations where I have scattered you, yet will I not make a full end of you: but *I will correct you* in measure, and *will not leave you altogether unpunished*. For thus says the LORD, Your bruise is incurable, and your wound is grievous. There is none to plead your cause, that you may be bound up: you have no healing medicines. *All your lovers* [allies] *have forgotten you*; they seek you not; for *I have wounded you* with the wound of an enemy [our enemies are merely tools in God's hands], with the chastisement of a cruel one [certainly this is the very essence of war and terrorism], for the multitude of your iniquity [lawlessness]; because your sins were increased. Why cry you for your affliction? your sorrow is incurable for the multitude of your iniquity: because your

sins were increased, I HAVE DONE THESE THINGS UNTO YOU. Therefore all they that devour you shall be devoured; and all your adversaries, every one of them, shall go into captivity; and they that spoil you shall be a spoil, and all that prey upon you will I give for a prey. For *I will restore health* unto you, and *I will heal you* of your wounds" (Jer. 30:4-7, 10-17).

First, notice that this remarkable prophecy pertains to *both* Israel and Judah. These are not one and the same! Then notice how many times God speaks of "fear," "trembling," no "peace" and "faces turned to paleness," in what He describes as the "great...time of Jacob's trouble."

Next, notice how many times God describes these nation's incurable "wounds," "bruises" and "sorrow," and our loss of "lovers" (allies). Now notice how many times God says that all of this has come upon us because of our "iniquities"—our "sins."

Further, notice how God repeatedly says that *HE* is the One doing this to Israel and Judah—"I have scattered...I have wounded...I will correct...I have done these things..." These verses bluntly describe that what is happening—and will continue to happen—to our lands is God's doing!

Finally, notice how many times God states that He will "restore...heal...save..." Israel and Judah. God absolutely promises a time of restoration, healing and deliverance—as surely as He promises a time of terror, wounds, punishment and correction to precede it.

These prophecies are certain. God keeps His promises and fulfills His purpose!

In the end, the good news is that America, her Israelite allies and the rest of the world will finally have world peace when Christ returns and establishes the kingdom of God.

World Peace—But Not by Human Effort

Those who go to war invariably believe themselves to be serving some higher purpose. But they are directly contradicting God's Purpose and the prophesied punishment in store for both mankind and the modern descendants of Israel.

God's people are not activists seeking to "make this world a better place"—to bring world peace. They have their "*feet shod* with the preparation of the *gospel of peace*" (Eph. 6:15). They walk with their "feet" covered in the knowledge of how the true gospel spells the way to final world peace. They understand the certainty that the kingdom of God is coming. They know what lies ahead for this world.

They do not go off to serve and kill in the endless, futile wars of men and nations. They do not take matters into their own hands, thereby effectively seeking to thwart or neutralize God's purpose, which is to show man that he is not capable of governing himself.

Paul wrote, "For yourselves know perfectly that the day of the Lord comes as a *thief in the night*. For when they [leaders and religionists] shall say,

The History of Conscientious Objection

A conscientious objector is a person who, on the grounds of conscience (primarily religious, not simple preference), stands firm against a person or influence—especially in regards to military service.

Conscientious Objector status has been granted to those who can prove by their convictions that they will not kill for any reason and are willing to undergo great hardships to avoid military service. In the past, they had to suffer ridicule, contempt, persecution, imprisonment, torture and even death.

Members of the Church of God do not claim any government of this world as their sole authority. Their citizenship is in heaven. Jesus stated in John 18:36: “My kingdom is not of this world: if My kingdom were of this world, then would My servants fight...but now is My kingdom not from hence [here].”

Conscientious Objection can be traced back many hundreds of years. In A.D. 173, an official of the Roman Empire, referring to those who refused to serve in the military, stated, “If all men were to do as you, there would be nothing to prevent the emperor from being left in utter solitude and desertion and the forces of the empire would fall into the hands of the most lawless barbarians” (*Catholics and Conscientious Objection*, James H. Forest, 1981).

Conscientious Objection has been a long tradition in the Church of God. Before the United States was established, there were “historic peace churches” stemming from the Protestant Reformation. The most dominant were the Brethren, the Quakers, the Mennonites and the

Anabaptists. Although the Church of God can trace its roots to well *before* this time, most historians group it with these other churches.

For the most part, these historic “peace churches” were small, unorthodox assemblies with an unvarying position against war. The Anabaptists (some of whom were members of God's true Church) separated themselves from the concerns of the world, choosing to live away from the worldly activities of society. Because their ways were considered unorthodox, both Catholics and Protestants persecuted them. (For more information on who some of these Anabaptists were, read our book *Where Is the True Church? – and Its Incredible History!*)

Conflict arose between militias and pacifists shortly after the first Quakers landed in North America. The early colonial militias were run independently from each other. Members of the peace groups were anti-war and ran into trouble almost immediately with the local officials. Punishment for not joining the militia ranged from forced service, fines and/or imprisonment. For example, in 1666, the fine in Virginia was 100 pounds of tobacco (*Conscience in America*, Schlissel, p. 30).

When a group of Quakers was brought before George Washington for not complying with local authorities, he said, “They choose rather to be whipped to death than to bear arms.” Seeing their dedication and conviction, he released them (*New Conscientious Objection*, Moskos and Chambers, p. 27).

Among the early peace groups was the Rogerenes: “The divine

commands regarding religion as set forth in the New Testament they would strictly obey, but they would, ‘for conscience’s sake’ obey no command of men in this regard. The purely civil laws they held themselves bound to observe, according to Christ’s command...At a period when no men were more in favor of war than those who preached—in parts—the gospel of Him who bade His followers to forgive their enemies, to love them and pray for them and to return good for evil, the Rogerenes stood for uniform peace and good will on the part of Christians, according to the spirit and the letter of the Master’s teachings...Driven by the tolerance of their times to protect their obnoxious sect from extinction at the hands of powerful enemies, as best they could, the Rogerenes employed, at critical periods, a peaceable yet effective mode of defense, in the line of the gospel testimony, which engaged their opponents while it kept them fairly at bay. This was the climax of their tolerance” (*The Rogerenes*, Anna B. Williams, pp. 12-13).

One of the earliest laws exempting men from combat on religious grounds took effect in Rhode Island, 1673. Those exempted had to serve in other ways, including taking care of “weak and aged impotent persons, women and children, goods and cattle.” However, this law was revoked four years later under a different government. In 1701, Quaker William Penn passed laws stating that no conscientious objector “shall be in any case molested or prejudiced” (*New Conscientious Objection*).

On Jan. 16, 1704, Prussia’s King Frederick decreed, “those persons...shall not be recruited by the regular army nor be pressed into service by the use of force or physi-

cal violence...nor also by any other means shall such be enlisted” (www.ncl.ac.uk).

The U.S. Civil War brought with it the first nationwide draft of its young men. With it came the need to address the Conscientious Objector issue on a national scale. In Iowa, a small Church of God congregation petitioned the state government for their church to be exempted from military service. Primarily due to this petition, a law was passed in their favor. This is one of many small groups to which the Church of God today can trace its roots.

From the early days of the U.S. to the Civil War, the conscientious objector was required to pay a fine or hire someone to serve in his stead. Imagine not wanting to kill, but hiring someone to kill for you! Many who viewed this as still contributing to the act of killing refused to pay fines or hire a substitute. Instead, they were imprisoned. However, some Advent groups did pay the fines in order to buy exemptions for their members.

On Feb. 24, 1864, an amendment providing for Conscientious Objector status was passed. It stated as follows: “Members of religious denominations, who shall by oath or affirmation declare that they are conscientiously opposed to the bearing of arms, and who are prohibited from doing so by the rules and articles of faith and practice of said religious denominations, shall, when drafted into the military service, be considered noncombatants, and shall be assigned by the Secretary of War to duty in the hospitals, or to the care of freedom, or shall pay the sum of 300 dollars” (*Statutes at Large*, 13, 1864).

This only allowed members of historic peace churches to claim

Conscientious Objector status. Neither the North nor the South honored any request from members of mainstream churches or for secular reasons. Members of churches that allowed for going to war and would not back up an individual's request for exemption did not qualify.

On the night of April 15, 1865, President Abraham Lincoln was assassinated. As the nation mourned, the Church thanked God that Lincoln had signed laws granting Christians exemption from war!

At the beginning of the 20th Century, there was trouble in Europe. The U.S. again implemented the draft. The Draft Law of 1917 allowed exemptions for anyone from any religion as long as its "existing creed or principles forbid its members to participate in war in any form" (*Statutes at Large*, 40, 1917, p. 78). Again, this only applied to members of the historic peace churches. President Woodrow Wilson opened the door to others who claimed conscientious objection but could not claim association with one of these groups. Roughly 76.5% of those who applied were found to be insincere and did not qualify for exemption. (*Conscription of Conscience: The American State and the Conscientious Objector*, Mulford Q. Sibley and Philip E. Jacob, p. 12).

Between 1940 and 1945, approximately 5,000 persons claiming conscientious objection in the U.S. were imprisoned. The Selective Service Act of 1948 stated that conscientious objection must be based on religious convictions and the belief in a Supreme Being. But in 1970, the Supreme Court removed that requirement. This allowed objection based on an ethical system with no reference to a Supreme

Being. A 1971 ruling by the same court refused to allow an objection to a specific war. An estimated 50,000 to 100,000 men left the United States in order to avoid serving in Vietnam.

The following occurred in Turkey, in May 1998: A Turkish citizen "is the first conscientious objector in Turkey openly to declare his refusal to perform military service for reasons of conscience...charging him with 'desertion' and 'insubordination'... unless there is a change [he] will be condemned to endlessly repeated convictions for the same 'offence'—effectively life imprisonment" (www.amnesty.org).

On Dec. 23, 1998, the Israeli Supreme Court ordered the government to cease granting draft exemptions to thousands of ultra-Orthodox students. This was said: "The precedent-setting decision is likely to have a far-reaching impact on Israel's delicate religious-secular balance of power. It is also likely to exacerbate the dispute between religious and secular leaders over the Supreme Court's right to rule at all on controversial religious issues...Ultra-Orthodox leaders vowed to battle the decision...Should the Knesset...fail to pass such a bill, ultra-Orthodox youths would go to prison or leave the country rather than enter the military" (The Christian Century Foundation).

The U.S. would once again lean in the direction of drafting young men, and possibly young women, into the armed services. If this happens, and because of the scope of uncertainty in the world, the exemption for conscientious objectors may be challenged. Governments may even do away with "alternative service" and simply throw individuals into prison—or worse!

Peace and safety; then sudden destruction comes upon them, as travail upon a woman with child; and they shall not escape. But *you, brethren, are not in darkness*, that that day should overtake you as a thief" (1 Thes. 5:2-4).

All who understand the truths in this booklet need never again be in the dark about God's Plan!

It is interesting that Paul also wrote, citing Isaiah 52:7, "How beautiful are *the feet* of them that preach the *gospel of PEACE*, and bring glad tidings [the good news of the gospel] of good things" (Rom. 10:15). In verse 16, he went on to cite another passage from Isaiah: "But they have not all OBEYED the gospel. For Isaiah said, LORD, *who has believed our report?*" (53:1).

Most people will *not* believe "God's report" of what is ahead for the world. And they will *not* believe that they are unable to bring world peace through human effort. Many will shout, "Peace, peace!"—"when there is no peace" (Jer. 6:14; 8:11, 14-15)—and most will eagerly believe their false predictions.

Will you?

Millions of professing Christians will continue desperately striving to bring about world peace. Deceived religious leaders will tell them that this is their "Christian duty." Some will see this as the sole mission of their church. They will seek happiness, abundance, peace and security around every corner, but will be terribly disappointed. This is because world conditions, leading into a final devastating period of global calamity, will get *much* worse before they ultimately get better.

Faith in the Promise of Protection

The Bible is a book of many distinct promises. Every time a person demonstrates faith in God, it involves a specific promise. It can involve healing, answered prayer, blessings (Jms. 1:4-8), guidance in a difficult decision and, most importantly, receiving salvation. In every instance, faith involves claiming a *specific promise* made by God in His Word. Therefore, it is important to search His Word to find what He promises.

Consider! Paul recorded, "Above all, taking the SHIELD of faith, where-with you shall be able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked" (Eph. 6:16). Now notice this Proverb, inspired by God: "Every word of God is pure: He is a SHIELD unto them that put their trust in Him. Add you not unto *His words*, lest He reprove you, and you be found a liar" (Prov. 30:5-6).

When put together, these two verses show that God, through faith, becomes the SHIELD to all who trust in *exactly* what His Word says. To doubt His Word, or to alter it in any way, is to call God A LIAR! That is serious! In fact, God says of all such people that *they* are liars—also *very* serious.

When God makes a promise, He keeps it. While human beings may break their promises, God does not! If He tells you that He will do something for you, He will perform His promise—if you meet certain conditions. You have faith as an assurance that He will.

Browbeating yourself into faith is silly, because it suggests that there is doubt that God will do His part after you have done yours. Faith is relaxed. It is calm. It is sure. Whereas most people might have great doubt, the person led by faith is confident that God is always guiding the final outcome of matters.

When you claim one of God's promises, expect Him to carry it out. Do not try to figure out when or how He will do it. I have learned two things about answered prayer. First, God *always* answers my prayers, *if* I seek His will. And secondly, He *almost never* answers it in the way that I expected. This is why walking by faith cannot include sight (II Cor. 5:7). "Looking" for God to answer prayer in a certain way or in a certain time frame is a waste of energy. Besides, it is far more important that God *does* answer our prayers and fulfills His promises than HOW He does it.

It takes faith to personally reject the practice of war and national self-defense and rely solely on God. But this is possible (Matt. 19:26). (You may read our booklet *What Is Real Faith?* to truly understand what faith is.)

You Need Not Be Terrified of Prophecy

In Matthew 24, Christ warned of a time of "wars and rumors of wars" to intensify just prior to His Return. Paralleling this account, Luke records, for all true Christians living at the time of the end, "But when you shall hear of wars and commotions [extreme and ongoing forms of terrorism is at least a "commotion," if not a "war"], *be not terrified*: for these things must first come to pass; but the end is not [yet]. Then said He unto them, Nation shall rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom: and great *earthquakes* shall be in various places, and *famines*, and *pestilences*" (21:9-11). (Read our brochures *The Black Horse—There Shall Be Famines* and *The Pale Horse—There Shall Be Pestilences* to learn more about how these prophecies are beginning to accelerate.)

Those who know the truth and are in harmony with God, His laws and His plan, do not need to worry. They do not need to be "terrified" or frightened of prophesied events. God promises a place of safety to those individuals who humble themselves, and yield to and obey Him. You *can* escape (vs. 36) the far worse calamities and horror that still lie ahead for America, the other modern-day nations of Israel and, eventually, the whole world! (Another vital booklet, *Promised Protection – Secret Rapture or Place of Safety?*, reveals God's plan for those who obey Him.)

When War Will Not Be Taught

I grew up in a family filled with Army and Navy officers—some of them senior career officers. Even both of my "girl" cousins married Navy officers. Another step-cousin was an army officer. His brother attended Annapolis, and I was appointed there as well, though I declined because God was calling me into His truth at that time. My uncle (on my mother's side) studied the Civil

War most of his life and had an enormous Civil War library. My father was an Army officer and pilot in WWII, and his brother was a Navy officer and pilot who was present at Pearl Harbor during the attack. Their father (my grandfather) fought in WWI. I was born on December 7, 1948, and my mother always referred to me as her "Pearl Harbor child."

In short, I am a classic example of how some grow up hearing and learning much about war.

Understand! People must *learn* about war. They are not born knowing about it or skilled in it. Of course, this is true of virtually everything in life. Children must *learn* to walk, talk and ride a bicycle. People *learn* to feed and dress themselves, master subjects at school, play instruments, drive a car or use a computer. With practice, all of these things can become "second nature." The same is true of war. While people must *first* learn it, war has now become second nature to the *entire world!*

An amazing prophecy is found in two separate places in the Old Testament. It pictures a time when God's government will have been established over all nations. The "art" of war will no longer be taught, or learned:

"*But in the last days* it shall come to pass, that the mountain of the house of the LORD shall be established in the top of the mountains, and it shall be exalted above the hills; and people shall flow unto it. And many nations shall come, and say, Come, and let us go up to the mountain of the LORD, and to the house of the God of Jacob; and *He will teach us of his ways*, and *we will walk in His paths*: for the LAW [all of God's law, including The Ten Commandments] shall go forth of Zion, and the word of the LORD from Jerusalem. And He shall judge among many people, and rebuke strong nations afar off; and *they shall beat their swords into plowshares*, and their *spears into pruninghooks*: NATION SHALL NOT LIFT UP A SWORD AGAINST NATION, *NEITHER SHALL THEY LEARN WAR ANY MORE*. But they shall sit every man under his vine and under his fig tree; and *none shall make them afraid*: for the mouth of the LORD of hosts hath spoken it" (Micah 4:1-4 and Isa. 2:1-4).

There is coming a time when the entire world will no longer "learn" war. But it has not yet come. Therefore, because men also do not know the way to peace, peace is impossible now.

Today, people are *taught*, in some cases from the crib, to be constantly suspicious of others, and to hate, in an almost routine fashion! And many are *taught* anger and revenge as an everyday way of life. Millions more are *taught* by experts to refine their killing to a cold efficiency.

But this will all soon change!

Eventually, military academies around the world will be closed. There will be no more "boot camps" and no more "GI's." Terrorist training camps will be dismantled. All warships, attack aircraft and military vehicles will be converted or scrapped. Every weapon of conventional or mass destruction will be melted down, and either made into something productive or destroyed. And all the weapons manufacturers will either go out of business or manufacture some-

thing else. Military bases will all be closed or redesigned—including buildings like the Pentagon. National defense budgets will be apportioned for different and better purposes. All prisoners of war will be released. Every soldier on earth will have to get another job. No more treaties, rules of war or “non-aggression pacts” will ever be necessary. The fear and sadness caused by war will vanish. There will be no more ethnic or religious rivalries and no more enemies. All forms of killing and hatred will be outlawed, because God’s law will be taught around the world!

This extraordinary prophecy of Micah and Isaiah is another towering proof that God opposes war. When His government arrives, *all* forms of war will disappear and, with them, all of the learned knowledge of how to practice it! When war disappears forever, so will its many destructive and terrible fruits.

What a wonderful future. World peace lies just over the horizon!

Christ is AGAINST War

This final quote comes from the conclusion of Mr. Herbert Armstrong’s previously cited booklet, *Military Service and War*, under the subhead “God’s Government Will End War.” It is an extraordinary summary of a long booklet:

“Jesus Christ came preaching the good news of the government or RULE of God. That rule is based on the *Ten Commandments*—God’s spiritual Law.

“Jesus *magnified* that Law and showed its spiritual intent and purpose. He taught that if we even *hate* our brother, we are spiritually *guilty of murder*! Jesus taught that men should OBEY the laws of God and prepare for His coming kingdom by yielding themselves to let God’s laws—His *character*—be placed within them.

“When God’s government does come very soon now to this earth, His LAW will go forth as the standard of conduct of all nations (Micah 4:1-2). At that time, God *alone* will wage war to punish rebellious nations in perfect wisdom and justice.

“As for the peoples of the world themselves? ‘Nation shall not lift up a sword against nation, *neither shall they learn war any more*’ (verse 3).

“War involves *learning* to hate and kill! Young men will no longer be forced to LEARN an attitude which is diametrically opposed to the rule of God’s law of love!

“But meanwhile, true Christians must work and pray for God’s kingdom of peace, and we must realize that the spirit of war is the spirit of MURDER—and avoid it with all of our strength.” (From this point, the quote continues under the subhead, “Jesus Christ and War.”)

“Speaking before the League of Nations, Dr. Harry Emerson Fosdick put this thought in a very powerful way: ‘We cannot reconcile Jesus Christ and war—that is the essence of the matter. That is the challenge which today should stir the conscience of Christendom. War is the most colossal and ruinous social sin that afflicts mankind; it is utterly and irremediably unchristian; in its total

method and effect it means everything that Jesus did not mean and it means nothing that He did mean; it is a more blatant denial of every Christian doctrine about God and man than all the theoretical atheists on earth ever could devise. It would be worthwhile, would it not, to see the Christian Church as her own this greatest moral issue of our time, to see her lift once more as in our father’s days, a clear standard against the paganism of this present world and, refusing to hold her conscience at the beck and call of belligerent states, put the kingdom of God above nationalism and call the world to peace? *That would not be the denial of patriotism but its apotheosis.*’ (Emphasis is Mr. Armstrong’s.)

“The essence of the matter is that Jesus Christ is against the *spirit of war* in every form. He is *against war*—and someday He will put an end to it forever!

“He is against all malice and envy and hate. Jesus Christ taught the dignity of man and the sacredness of human life—‘Created in the image of God.’

“And the great Father of Jesus Christ, the Almighty GOD who governs the universe from His throne in heaven, that God *thunders* at an age of violence and rebellion: ‘*Thou shalt not kill.*’”

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