

“What Must I Do To Be Saved?”

Acts 16:30

Learn The Gospel

John 6:45; Romans 10:17; James 1:22-25

Believe On GOD In CHRIST

Hebrews 11:6; John 3:16; James 2:14-26

Confess CHRIST

Romans 10:9-10; Matthew 10:32-33; 7:21

Repent Of Sin

Acts 3:19; Matthew 3:8

Be Baptized

Mark 16:16; Romans 6:3-6; 1st Peter 3:21

Be Steadfast

1st Corinthians 15:58; Revelation 2:10

“Let Your Requests Be Made Known To God”

Philippians 4:6

Let us pray with and for our sister **Janeth Nickerson** who is being tested for cervical cancer.

Bryan Dockens is in need of better employment to provide for his family.

Jessica Winstead was recently robbed of her sole means of transportation besides the bus.

Christopher Solano needs our encouragement as he begins his walk with Christ.

“Sound Doctrine”

Titus 2:1

A BIBLE AND A GUN

by Bryan Matthew Dockens

In his hit song “The Wanderer” Johnny Cash sang, “I went out walking with a Bible and a gun”. Regardless of Cash’s intent with these lyrics, it is an interesting image to ponder. These two objects – a copy of the sacred text and a lethal weapon – are seen by many as totally incompatible. Is it hypocritical to be a gun toting Bible thumper?

Jesus did preach, “*You have heard that it was said, ‘An eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth’. But I tell you not to resist an evil person. But whoever slaps you on your right cheek, turn the other to him also*” (Matthew 5:38-39), but a slap on the cheek is not life threatening; it is insulting. Christians must learn to “*accept wrong*” (1st Corinthians 6:7), and refrain from vengeance (Romans 12:17-21). Teaching the need to tolerate mistreatment is not at all comparable to demanding non-resistance in the face of mortal danger.

The Lord also said, “*all who take the sword will perish by the sword*” (Matthew 26:52). Accepted literally and without qualification, this statement would be false. Too many police officers, soldiers, marines, and others have died peacefully in their sleep for this to be an unconditional statement. For a better understanding, the context must be considered.

On the occasion He said this, Jesus was about to be arrested by a hostile mob (Matthew 26:47) and Peter sought to protect his Master by striking Malchus with the sword (Matthew 26:51; Luke 22:49-50; John 18:10). In response, Christ uttered -- Continued on page 2 --

“The Assembling Of Ourselves Together”

Hebrews 10:24-25

Sunday

10:15 am.....Worship

Las Vegas Library

833 Las Vegas Boulevard North

Monday

7:00 pm.....Acts Study

On hiatus.

Tuesday

7:00 pm.....Ladies’ Study

Cory Barajas residence

Wednesday

7:00 pm.....Various Studies

Jerry & Beverly Dockens residence

“Give Attention To Reading”

1st Timothy 4:13

Your reading assignments for this week are as follows:

Sunday.....2nd Timothy

Monday.....Titus; Philemon

Tuesday.....Hebrews 1-2

Wednesday.....Hebrews 3-5

Thursday.....Hebrews 6-8

Friday.....Hebrews 9-11

Saturday.....Hebrews 12-13

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the remark under consideration (Matthew 26:52), then commented that if He needed protection from the threats of mortal men He could overwhelm His adversaries with more than twelve legions of angels (Matthew 26:53). However, no such protection was called for because His death was necessary (Matthew 26:54; Luke 22:51; John 18:11). Thus, He was not issuing an absolute prohibition against self-defense, but pointing out that a spiritual kingdom cannot be advanced through carnal warfare (John 18:36; cf. 2nd Corinthians 10:4-6).

Far from upholding pacifism, the scriptures teach that there is *“a time to kill”* (Ecclesiastes 3:3). God has authorized the government to bear the sword punitively (Romans 13:1-4), and permits His own people to function in a military capacity (Luke 3:3, 10-14; Acts 10:1-8, 34-48; 11:18). Moreover, He charges men with the duty of providing for their households (1st Timothy 5:8), which includes the use of armed force to protect property and loved ones. According to Jesus, *“When a strong man, fully armed, guards his own palace, his goods are in peace”* (Luke 11:21). Consider the example of the patriarch Abraham who commanded his own private army. *“When Abram heard that his brother was taken captive, he armed his three hundred and eighteen trained servants who were born in his own house, and went in pursuit as far as Dan. He divided his forces against them by night, and he and his servants attacked them and pursued them as far as Hobah, which is north of Damascus. So he brought back all the goods, and also brought back his brother Lot and his goods, as well as the women and the people”* (Genesis 14:14-16). Abraham subsequently received God’s blessings (Genesis 14:18-20; 15:1).

Jesus even ordered His apostles to arm themselves. He had sent His disciples, first the twelve (Luke 9:1-6), then seventy (Luke 10:1-17), on two preaching campaigns. Each time, He had told them to take no provisions along, but to rely on the generosity of those they would preach to, since their efforts would be directed toward their own countrymen (Matthew 10:5-6). Prior to His death, after which He would send them on a worldwide campaign (Matthew 28:18-20), Jesus prepared His apostles for something different. He asked, *“When I sent you without money bag, knapsack, and sandals, did you lack anything?”* So they said, *‘Nothing.’* Then He said to them, *‘But now, he who has a*

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money bag, let him take it, and likewise a knapsack; and he who has no sword, let him sell his garment and buy one” (Luke 22:35-36). Jesus knew that thieves preyed upon travelers (Luke 10:30), so He urged His disciples to prepare accordingly. So important was this point that He taught them it was better to be armed than clothed.

Since two swords among the twelve was deemed a sufficient quantity (Luke 22:38), it is evident the Lord did not want them armed for aggressive, but defensive purposes. Nonetheless, they were armed. Some have argued that these swords were nothing more than pocket knives – tools rather than weapons, but such a claim only proves the ignorance of those who would argue such. The Greek word translated “sword” in this text is always translated “sword” and is unquestionably a weapon used for killing (Acts 12:2; 16:27; Hebrews 11:34, 37).

Notice that, when prompted, the disciples were able to immediately say, *“Lord, look, here are two swords”* (Luke 22:38). They didn’t even need to sell their cloaks in order to acquire these weapons; they already had them, meaning that Jesus kept regular company with armed civilians.

While we conclude that gun ownership is not at all inconsistent with discipleship, it is imperative to remember that Christians wield a far more powerful weapon: *“the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God”* (Ephesians 6:17), *“for the word of God is living and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the division of soul and spirit, and of joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart”* (Hebrews 4:12).

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Romans 16:16

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