

Scriptures and Doctrine :: Does the new covenant teach non-resistance and non-participation in government?

Does the new covenant teach non-resistance and non-participation in government? - posted by Leo_Grace, on: 2009/10/10

Introduction.

Various threads exist in other sections of this forum where the above topics have been heavily debated without resolution. I am starting this thread to bring these important topics into focus in the correct section: Scriptures and Doctrine.

I begin by posting my view as shown to me by the Spirit. It is long, but I hope some will spare the time to read it. I pray that this thread will generate edifying discussion and not antagonism. As we post, let us remember that we are all human, and all subject to error. My post is not intended to correct others (for that is the realm of the Holy Spirit), but merely to reveal what I understand.

In quoting verses, I have taken the liberty of underlining the portions that were especially meaningful for me, and I have marked Christ's words in red.

The new covenant is a covenant of the Spirit.

In both the old and new testaments, God speaks of his new covenant as one where His Law will no longer be external to man, but internal - God will write His Law in our minds and on our hearts through the Holy Spirit.

Verses:
Jer 31:31-34 "The time is coming," declares the LORD, "when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and with the house of Judah. It will not be like the covenant I made with their forefathers when I took them by the hand to lead them out of Egypt, because they broke my covenant, though I was a husband to them," declares the LORD. "This is the covenant I will make with the house of Israel after that time," declares the LORD. "I will put my law in their minds and write it on their hearts. I will be their God, and they will be my people. No longer will a man teach his neighbor, or a man his brother, saying, 'Know the LORD,' because they will all know me, from the least of them to the greatest," declares the LORD.

2Co 3:5-6 Not that we are competent in ourselves to claim anything for ourselves, but our competence comes from God. He has made us competent as ministers of a new covenant - not of the letter but of the Spirit; for the letter kills, but the Spirit gives life.

Jesus and his disciples (including Paul) were all led by the Spirit of God.

Verses:
Ac 10:37-38 You know what has happened throughout Judea, beginning in Galilee after the baptism that John preached— how God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Spirit and power, and how he went around doing good and healing all who were under the power of the devil, because God was with him.

Ac 2:1-4 When the day of Pentecost came, they were all together in one place. Suddenly a sound like the blowing of a violent wind came from heaven and filled the whole house where they were sitting. They saw what seemed to be tongues of fire that separated and came to rest on each of them. All of them were filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak in other tongues as the Spirit enabled them.

Ac 9:17 Then Ananias went to the house and entered it. Placing his hands on Saul, he said, "Brother Saul, the Lord—Jesus, who appeared to you on the road as you were coming here—has sent me so that you may see again and be filled with the Holy Spirit."

The new covenant frees us from the letter of the Law but binds us to the Spirit of God.

We are no longer limited by anything except the will of God as revealed by the Spirit in us. And God's will is for us to act in love at all times - love for God, and love for others. If we can do this, then the whole of God's will (law and prophets) is fulfilled.

Verses:
Gal 5:18-23 But if you are led by the Spirit, you are not under law. The acts of the sinful nature are obvious: sexual immorality, impurity and debauchery; idolatry and witchcraft; hatred, discord, jealousy, fits of rage, selfish ambition, dissensions, factions and envy; drunkenness, orgies, and the like. I warn you, as I did before, that those who live like this will not inherit the kingdom of God. But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control. Against such things there is no law.

1Co 10:23-24 "Everything is permissible"—but not everything is beneficial. "Everything is permissible"—but not everything is constructive. Nobody should seek his own good, but the good of others.

Mt 22:36-40 "Teacher, which is the greatest commandment in the Law?" Jesus replied: "Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind." This is the first and greatest commandment. And the second is like it: "Love your neighbor as yourself." All the Law and the Prophets hang on these two commandments.

In his Sermon on the Mount, Jesus teaches that the new covenant calls us to be active and visible participants in the world. (Note: This is my view, others may see this differently).

Salt is not useful unless it is spread and mixed well with food. Light, to be useful, must be set so it is visible to many and not hidden. We cannot fulfill the will of God as salt and light if we withdraw and refuse to participate in the affairs of the world.

Verses:
Mt 5:13-16 "You are the salt of the earth. But if the salt loses its saltiness, how can it be made salty again? It is no longer good for anything, except to be thrown out and trampled by men. You are the light of the world. A city on a hill cannot be hidden. Neither do people light a lamp and put it under a bowl. Instead they put it on its stand, and it gives light to everyone in the house. In the same way, let your light shine before men, that they may see your good deeds and praise your Father in heaven."

In his Sermon on the Mount, Jesus teaches his disciples to be more righteous than the Pharisees by obeying th

e Spirit of the Law, not the letter of the Law, in keeping with the new covenant.

Jesus begins by telling his disciples that the new covenant does not seek to abolish the law, but to fulfill it. He then says that God wants them to far exceed the righteousness of the Pharisees - this they will accomplish through the Spirit under the new covenant.

Verses:

The Fulfillment of the Law

Mt 5:17-20 "Do not think that I have come to abolish the Law or the Prophets; I have not come to abolish them but to fulfill them. I tell you the truth, until heaven and earth disappear, not the smallest letter, not the least stroke of a pen, will by any means disappear from the Law until everything is accomplished. Anyone who breaks one of the least of these commandments and teaches others to do the same will be called least in the kingdom of heaven, but whoever practices and teaches these commands will be called great in the kingdom of heaven. For I tell you that unless your righteousness surpasses that of the Pharisees and the teachers of the law, you will certainly not enter the kingdom of heaven."

In the succeeding passages, Jesus emphasizes his requirement that the disciples' righteousness must exceed that of the Pharisees by citing some key aspects of the old Mosaic Law, and then exaggerating the new requirement under the new covenant to illustrate how much more pleasing to God is the covenant of the Spirit, and how much more the disciples can achieve through the power of the Spirit (this exaggeration for emphasis is called hyperbole). These passages were not meant to be taken literally (as some think). Notice that all these passages compare old standards with highly exaggerated new standards through hyperbole (e.g., "If your eye causes you to sin, gouge it out..."). They are all uniformly structured as follows: "You have heard it said..., but I tell you..." to underline the one common message: You can be much more righteous than the Pharisees by obeying the Spirit of God. (Note: This is my view and there are others who see it differently).

Verses:

Murder

Mt 5:21-26 "You have heard that it was said to the people long ago, 'Do not murder, and anyone who murders will be subject to judgment.' But I tell you that anyone who is angry with his brother will be subject to judgment. Again, anyone who says to his brother, 'Raca,' is answerable to the Sanhedrin. But anyone who says, 'You fool!' will be in danger of the fire of hell. Therefore, if you are offering your gift at the altar and there remember that your brother has something against you, leave your gift there in front of the altar. First go and be reconciled to your brother; then come and offer your gift. Settle matters quickly with your adversary who is taking you to court. Do it while you are still with him on the way, or he may hand you over to the judge, and the judge may hand you over to the officer, and you may be thrown into prison. I tell you the truth, you will not get out until you have paid the last penny."

Adultery

Mt 5:27-30 "You have heard that it was said, 'Do not commit adultery.' But I tell you that anyone who looks at a woman lustfully has already committed adultery with her in his heart. If your right eye causes you to sin, gouge it out and throw it away. It is better for you to lose one part of your body than for your whole body to be thrown into hell. And if your right hand causes you to sin, cut it off and throw it away. It is better for you to lose one part of your body than for your whole body to go into hell."

Divorce

Mt 5:31-32 "It has been said, 'Anyone who divorces his wife must give her a certificate of divorce.' But I tell you that anyone who divorces his wife, except for marital unfaithfulness, causes her to become an adulteress, and anyone who marries the divorced woman commits adultery."

Oaths

Mt 5:33-37 "Again, you have heard that it was said to the people long ago, 'Do not break your oath, but keep the oaths you have made to the Lord.' But I tell you, Do not swear at all: either by heaven, for it is God's throne; or by the earth, for it is his footstool; or by Jerusalem, for it is the city of the Great King. And do not swear by your head, for you cannot make even one hair white or black. Simply let your 'Yes' be 'Yes,' and your 'No,' 'No'; anything beyond this comes from the evil one."

An Eye for an Eye

Mt 5:38-42 "You have heard that it was said, 'Eye for eye, and tooth for tooth.' But I tell you, Do not resist an evil person. If someone strikes you on the right cheek, turn to him the other also. And if someone wants to sue you and take your tunic, let him have your cloak as well. If someone forces you to go one mile, go with him two miles. Give to the one who asks you, and do not turn away from the one who wants to borrow from you."

Love for Enemies

Mt 5:43-48 "You have heard that it was said, 'Love your neighbor and hate your enemy.' But I tell you: Love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you, that you may be sons of your Father in heaven. He causes his sun to rise on the evil and the good, and sends rain on the righteous and the unrighteous. If you love those who love you, what reward will you get? Are not even the tax collectors doing that? And if you greet only your brothers, what are you doing more than others? Do not even pagans do that? Be perfect, therefore, as your heavenly Father is perfect."

All of the above passages underline the new covenant's superior righteousness in the command to "Love your neighbor as yourself". What is being taught here is the correct attitude of the heart (a self-sacrificing love for others) and not an actual rule to be taken as "the letter of the new covenant law". Unless other parts of the Bible consistently echo these teachings, they must be treated as mere hyperbole, not to be taken literally.

How can I make this conclusion? Because other parts of the new testament show that Jesus and his disciples did not consider some of these passages as rules to be followed dogmatically:

1. They did not always turn the other cheek - they rebuked those who hit them.

Verses:

Jn 18:22-23 When Jesus said this, one of the officials nearby struck him in the face. Is this the way you answer the high priest? "he demanded. "If I said something wrong," Jesus replied, "testify as to what is wrong. But if I spoke the truth, why did you strike me?"

Ac 23:1-3 Paul looked straight at the Sanhedrin and said, "My brothers, I have fulfilled my duty to God in all good conscience to this day." At this the high priest Ananias ordered those standing near Paul to strike him on the mouth. Then Paul said to him, "God will strike you, you whitewashed wall! You sit there to judge me according to the law, yet you yourself violate the law by commanding that I be struck!"

2. They resisted evil men.

Verses:

Ac 13:9-11 Then Saul, who was also called Paul, filled with the Holy Spirit, looked straight at Elymas and said, "You are a child of the devil and an enemy of everything that is right! You are full of all kinds of deceit and trickery. Will you never stop perverting the right ways of the Lord? Now the hand of the Lord is against you. You are going to be blind, and for a time you will be unable to see the light of the sun." Immediately mist and darkness came over him, and he groped about, seeking someone to lead him by the hand.

1Co 5:13 God will judge those outside. "Expel the wicked man from among you."

Mt 18:15-17 "If your brother sins against you, go and show him his fault, just between the two of you. If he listens to you, you have won your brother over. But if he will not listen, take one or two others along, so that every matter may be established by the testimony of two or three witnesses. If he refuses to listen to them, tell it to the church; and if he refuses to listen even to the church, treat him as you would a pagan or a tax collector."

3. They taught about righteous anger, and even Jesus was angry at men yet was without sin.

Verses:

Mk 3:4-5 Then Jesus asked them, "Which is lawful on the Sabbath: to do good or to do evil, to save life or to kill?" But they remained silent. He looked around at them in anger and, deeply distressed at their stubborn hearts, said to the man, "Stretch out your hand." He stretched it out, and his hand was completely restored.

Eph 4:26-27 "In your anger do not sin." Do not let the sun go down while you are still angry, and do not give the devil a foothold.

So, in conclusion, I believe that Christians must actively participate in all aspects of society to bring glory to God and to reach out to fellow men. I also believe that, under the new covenant, there is no such thing as a doctrine of non-resistance - instead, we are called to always act out of love for God and for others to fulfill God's will.

Scriptures and Doctrine :: Does the new covenant teach non-resistance and non-participation in government?

In Christ,
Leo

Re: Does the new covenant teach non-resistance and non-participation in government? - posted by Leo_Grace, on: 2009/10/4 15:38

Dear Brothers and Sisters,

A wonderful description and a clear example of what a new covenant Christian should be like is this post by ChrisJD from another thread:

Quote:
-----Many today believe that a martyr is simply someone who dies for his faith. Unfortunately, by this definition we have lost the true significance and depth of martyrdom. St. Augustine once stated, "The cause, not the suffering, makes a genuine martyr." In his play Murder in the Cathedral, T. S. Eliot describes a martyr as one "who has become an instrument of God, who has lost his will in the will of God, not lost it but found it, for he has found freedom in submission to God. The martyr no longer desires anything for himself, not even the glory of martyrdom."

In chapter one of the book, under a section titled Working Undercover, Pastor Wurbrand describes how one Christian Doctor played a part in his release:

When I was kidnapped by police and kept imprisoned for years in strictest secrecy, a Christian doctor actually became a member of the secret police to learn my whereabouts! As a secret police doctor, he had access to the cells of all prisoners and hoped to find me. All of his friends shunned him, thinking he had become a Communist. To go around dressed in the uniform of the torturers is a much greater sacrifice than to wear the uniform of a prisoner. The doctor found me in a deep, dark cell and sent word that I was alive. He was the first friend to discover me during my initial eight-and-a-half years in prison! Due to him, word was spread that I was alive and, when prisoners were released during the Eisenhower-Khrushchev "thaw" in 1956, Christians clamored for my release and I was freed for a short time. If it had not been for this doctor, who joined the secret police specifically to find me, I would never have been released. I would still be in prison—or in a grave—today.

If we may reflect on the significance of the lives and sacrifices of those who have given all at the hands of the governments of this world, we might also reflect on the sacrifices of those who have given all, within them, for the cause of Christ, or for righteousness in general. We might think of someone like William Wilberforce and how he labored to end slavery in Great Britain. We might also wonder too, what effect men and women might still have upon the governments of the free-world, if, in a clear conscience before God, they sacrificed even their political futures, in order to stand for Christ and for righteousness.

1Co 10:23-24 "Everything is permissible"—but not everything is beneficial. "Everything is permissible"—but not everything is constructive. Nobody should seek his own good, but the good of others.

Such is the true freedom of the believer.

2Co 3:17 Now the Lord is the Spirit, and where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is freedom.

In Christ,
Leo

Re: Does the new covenant teach non-resistance and non-participation in government?, on: 2009/10/4 15:38

The opposing view point -

http://www.sermonindex.net/modules/newbb/viewtopic.php?topic_id=30531&forum=35&163

Truly, I saw no need to post another whole thread when one has been in progress for sometime now. Must we all post our replies twice?

His Love & Peace to all.

Re: - posted by Leo_Grace, on: 2009/10/4 16:44

I understand what you are saying, and I realize that much of the discussion points will cover the same ground, but I think the topic to be discussed on both threads, as indicated in the title, is very different.

The old thread is entitled "Kill or be Killed". It forces participants to take extreme positions, which I believe is the reason why much enmity and finger-pointing has happened without clarifying the issue.

In truth, either of the two extreme positions is wrong - that's why no one can settle that argument. I thought that changing the title, moving it into the section on doctrines, and focusing on the doctrine of non-resistance instead of "Kill or be Killed" would help improve the spirit of the discussion.

The prevailing atmosphere in that older thread is no longer edifying.

In Christ,
Leo

Re: - posted by ChrisJD (), on: 2009/10/10 13:05

Hi everyone, and to Leo.

Leo,

"...actively participate in all aspects of society to bring glory to God and to reach out to fellow men."

I've been thinking about your statement off and on for some time now. Initially I had wanted to share something that I had read about a somewhat famous citizen of the place where I live but I came across something else today and it might be more of a benefit to everyone in general.

I had recalled reading on the forums a long while ago about the number of Methodists involved in civil government at one point. In looking for that I came across an article about a Methodist Circuit Rider named Peter Cartwright.

The article listed some interesting facts, and had a quotation from an historian about the number of Congressmen and Governors that were Methodists.

And it also related how the circuit rider Peter Cartwright, had lost a race for Congress to Abraham Lincoln in 1846, but had before won against him in a race for the Illinois legislature in 1832.

As I continued to search around on the topic I came across another article, this one also on this site, that mentioned the race between Cartwright and Lincoln. The article is titled "Lincoln and the Church".

Something in the article might help to underscore some of the feelings on either side(s) of this issue.

For the one, we may see how even men who would be esteemed for their great zeal and labor to publish the Gospel, have also participated in earthly affairs such as in civil governments.

On the other, we may see how doing so can be an occasion for temptations to evil and unjustness as some rightly point out.

To make that illustration it is easiest to post a section of the article, but before doing so I would like to point out that this is only one side of the incident and all of the necessary facts may or may not be presented for either. It may be that Mr Cartwright, for example, is not fairly represented in this history either. SO please keep that in mind.

The quote appears below in italics:

Part of Lincoln's reluctance to identify entirely with a Christian body, especially in his pre-Washington experience, was his keen sense of intellectual honesty. He was determined not to act a part in which he could not be involved with absolute integrity. Furthermore, in his Illinois days Lincoln had good reason to feel wounded by unfair opposition on the part of church members, including some prominent clergymen. When, in 1846, Lincoln was elected to Congress as the Whig repr

representative of the Seventh District of Illinois, his Democratic opponent was the old-fashioned Methodist circuit rider, Peter Cartwright. It is to Cartwright's discredit that he sought to make political capital out of the fact that Lincoln was not a church member. Lincoln had

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faced this problem before, especially in 1843, when he reported of himself that there was the strangest combination of church influence against him. It was contended, he said, "that no Christian ought to go for me, because I belonged to no church."⁴

In our effort to judge the intensity of the conflict between the preacher and the young politician it is not necessary to rely on the folklore which developed and which some biographers have credited. We have Lincoln's own account of the controversy in a letter dated August 11, 1846, addressed to Allen N. Ford, who was editor of the Gazette, published at Lacon, Illinois. "Shortly before starting on my tour through yours, and the other Northern counties of the district," Lincoln wrote, "I was informed by letter from Jacksonville that Mr. Cartwright was whispering the charge of infidelity against me in that quarter . . . I incline to the belief that he has succeeded in deceiving some honest men." Lincoln continued with a discussion of moral philosophy in which the key sentence is, "I believe it is an established maxim in morals that he who makes a denunciation without knowing whether it is true or false, is guilty of falsehood."⁵ Lincoln was too astute to condemn a denomination because of the act of one leader, but the lack of ethical sensitivity deeply shocked him. It seemed reasonable to him to expect that a sincere Christian would feel constrained to exhibit great care in guarding the reputations of others. The handbill printed in chapter one was produced as Lincoln's effort to counter what seemed to him to be an unfair attack, but he wisely refrained in the handbill from mentioning Cartwright by name.

Whether or not this is the best representation of the history of this incident, I do think it helps to underscore how others can feel about this issue, and how entering public life can present a potential for great harm for a Christian also.

Apparently, Lincoln was being charged as being an unbeliever.

I found a reproduction of his response (the handbill) and the letter that was mentioned (<http://books.google.com/books?id2o561jt4Ct4C&pgPR11&lpgPR11&dqLincoln+letter>) here. See pages 139-140.

Wish you all well.

Re: - posted by MaryJane, on: 2009/10/10 13:37

Greetings Leo

Dear brother I must say that it almost comes across as if you are determined to convince others that your opinion and belief is gospel and therefore must be adhered to.

you wrote: So, in conclusion, I believe that Christians must actively participate in all aspects of society to bring glory to God and to reach out to fellow men.

My response to you is this: these are your opinions as you state yourself, they are not doctrine. I do not believe as you do, I have studied the scriptures just as you have, I have prayed about this for a long time and humbly searched through a number of different articles and teachings wanting to walk in what Father would have for me and yet my conclusions are not the same as yours. I do not feel as if I am walking out a fellowship with the Lord by not taking part in the running of this government, nor do I feel that I must be involved in order to faithfully seek to share the good news or further His Kingdom. I do agree that we need to be out there sharing the truth with those that the Lord leads us to, but that does not mean that I have to vote, write letters, hold up picket signs, or be in the military. I will however pray diligently for those in positions of power to see their need for Jesus and to repent as each of us must do. I know that you and Chris (from the other thread) feel differently and that is ok, I have no problem with you walking out what Father is leading you to... I trust that the Lord is big enough to show us in His timing what His will is on this matter. I hope you can do the same and we will not have to have another 25 pages of heated and angry arguing:-)

Let me close this by saying that I value some of the posts that you have made here and I value Chris participation as well. He is always faithful to step up and offer prayer for others when asked and I am grateful for that, but I do not think that

having another thread on this topic is going to be helpful.

God Bless you brother
maryjane

edit: I was sharing this topic with my darling hubby and he reminded me rightly that Jesus did not call us to be debaters either:-) So on that note I will adhere to my hubby's very good advice and bow out of this discussion. I just want to say that I love you (and everyone) in Christ even though we may not agree on this particular issue:-) Have a great weekend and be blessed in Him!!

Re: - posted by ccchhhrrriiiss (), on: 2009/10/10 14:38

Hi Sister MaryJane...

I'm not sure if you are speaking in regard to me or ChrisJD. However, please permit me to convey another opinion about this too. This same concern that you expressed in regard to the fact that this is Leo's opinion is also true of those who would create multiple "non-resistance" threads. It is an opinion. Yes, like Leo's, it is an opinion about what some might call a doctrine...but it is an opinion nonetheless.

Personally, I have no problem with individuals sharing their opinion. There is a concern, however, when someone shares a personal opinion as if it is the only one that mattered because of some belief that such opinion is the indisputable thought of God on the matter.

When I reacted as you just did, saying that I have studied the issue, prayed about it for a long time, and have drawn a somewhat different conclusion about this topic, I was publicly dismissed with words that ranged from an accusation of being a part of "false Christianity" and believing "damnable heresy" to even been the target of a suggestion that I would be in a foxhole "fighting for the antichrist." Others also dismissed the opinion - which they are well within their right to do. However, it is often in the manner of which they disagree that causes the contention. It is as if some want to replace one brother's prayerful view with their own prayerful opinions. Unfortunately, this sort of *opinion* is often not expressed as such. It is often presented as if it were an undeniable truth where any other opinion of the matter is heresy.

In reality, I often reconsider replying to many of these sorts of threads because I know that any difference of opinion will often be met with rhetorical disdain. I know what I believe and why I believe as I do. Thus, involvement in these types of discussions often does little to help me in terms of reassessing particular doctrinal views (even though I reassess such things daily and with much prayer and study). Yet I often feel compelled to present a different perspective on this issue. You see, there are quite a few others who hold an opinion that is different than what might be presented as a "doctrinal truth" here in the forums of SermonIndex. Yet many such brethren do not respond.

At times, I feel the need to show that there is a variance of opinion on the matter. I do not for once believe that anyone's particular view of what they think is "Biblical non-resistance" or complete and utter "non-involvement" is the exclusive view of all believers. There is plenty of variance regarding these concepts amongst those who embrace the various aspects of such a philosophy. There are also plenty of views out there that go unpublished or unspoken.

I suppose that the thing that concerns me the most is the lack of grace that is often shown when presenting a view. Far too often, we present things that we hold to be truths as if they are undeniable. We often leave no room for disagreement or even prayerful consideration. In fact, such things are often presented in a manner as if they are truths to be immediately embraced rather than something to consider or discuss. A presentation of this sort rejects the notion that we are individuals who are working out our "own salvation with fear and trembling." It leaves no room for walking before God with a "clear conscience" because we are often presented a view as if it were the inarguable thoughts of God on a matter. Where does that leave those with whom the initial poster might disagree?

Anyway, I think that I have made my views at least partially clear on this matter in the many, many threads that have been started by "non-resistant" brethren. I hope that I haven't come across in a manner that seems as though I thought that my view was the only one that matters. I also hope that it is clear that there are legitimate Scriptural questions in regard to various persuasions of this topic.

Like you, I am disappointed when I see such discussions turn into long, heated and angry arguments. There are so many believers from diverse backgrounds and levels of maturity on this website! We do not always agree on some issues. I

am also disappointed when individuals of an opposite persuasion or viewpoint are singled out in public (or even in private) and scolded due to incorrect and erroneous "spiritual" judgments. This sort of loose speech should, at best, have a limited place in the Body of Christ.

Re: - posted by MaryJane, on: 2009/10/10 15:32

Greetings Chris

I was referring to you actually:-) Brother I appreciate your heart in what you have shared here. Thank you. I hope I did not come across as doubting your sincerity in what you believe, your words reveal your heart to be one that desires to walk in what the Lord is showing him. I know that we do not agree on this matter and that is ok really it is because in the end God is going to walk with us both and show us His heart on this (as long as we don't let our hearts be hardened, including me in that) in His good and perfect timing. We can walk together, pray for one another and just trust Him to do the rest. At least this is my heart. When I wrote the above post I was hesitant to include your name and I should have gone with that leading from the Lord. I ask you to forgive me. I addressed that post to Leo and I should and left it at that. I am sorry brother.

As you said we are all in different places in our walk and Father is working these things out in our hearts daily, I hope we can give each other enough room to grow and learn in Him in His timing. Honestly I have no clue what I would do if I was in a situation that some have been placed in, I only pray I would have the courage and faith to trust in the Lord to walk out what He has placed on my heart. I read about the testimony of a father in China who was told he would never see his young son again if he did not reject the name of Christ. This man was thrown into prison, where he is treated terrible and has had no contact with his family in many months and yet Jesus sustains him. That is the kind of faith I long to have and I know from what you share that is your heart as well. I am sorry that words have been written that have given you pain, that is why it is vital that we choose what we say with great care because our words can cut just like a sword.

On another note, just so I do not give the wrong impression I did seek the guidance of my hubby before I posted again and he agreed that it would be good for me to come and share my heart with you Chris in light of what you shared:-)

God Bless you
maryjane

edited to fix a typing mistake:-)

Re: , on: 2009/10/10 15:35

I think if we stick to solely what Jesus taught, including the Sermon on the Mount, then it remains simple. If a child was to read what Jesus taught about our enemies, I wonder what conclusion he would come to? We look to the early church, prior to Constantine, and we see a pacifist church. We look to post Constantine and we see the "just war, war emerge. Obviously the Catholic church had no problem with killing, as they killed men down through the centuries in the name of God. Calvin seemed to have little problem with this either, as witnessed by what happened to the Anabaptists and others. The modern church seems to have no problem either with this as they have sanctioned, prayed for and blessed soldiers as they go into battle. So, it seems that for the majority of church history, the church has not been a pacifist church. This speaks volumes to many. Thoughts and opinions formed over 1700 years are the prevailing thoughts of today within what is called the church.

There seems to be two broad categories of thought. There is the prevailing thought of the majority that war is necessary at various times for Christians to fight, and there is a small minority who do not hold to this. Both sides claim careful thought and prayer. Lincoln was once asked whose side was God on in the Civil war and I believe that he replied that the question was wrong and that "let us not pray that God is on our side in a war or any other time, but let us pray that we are on God's side."

The majority and minority views on this subject will never find common ground, they are fundamentally and diametrically opposed. Like David and Saul or the prodigal son and his brother, there is definitely a spiritual element to the two opposing sides. So, whose side is God on? "let us not pray that God is on our side in a war or any other time, but let us pray that we are on God's side."Frank

Scriptures and Doctrine :: Does the new covenant teach non-resistance and non-participation in government?

Re: - posted by Leo_Grace, on: 2009/10/10 16:51

Dear maryjane,

Forgive me if this reply comes late. I had given up this thread for lost since the moderator moved the old thread "Kill or be Killed" into the Scriptures and Doctrine section.

When I said that my intention was merely to present my view of this "non-resistance doctrine", I meant it. If my presentation came across as being too passionate, it was probably because I wanted to show some people that my view had solid Scripture behind it, and that I was neither an anti-Christ nor a heretic. You know from the other thread that we had been called these names by others because we could not accept their view.

You said you disagree. I can accept that and still embrace you as a sister in Christ for I know that this issue is not an essential element of the gospel. Differences here are not worth debating, as your wise husband pointed out. You may have noticed that my posts in the old thread grew sparse, for even then I felt that it was not worth the enmity being generated. But when another person with a different view keeps hurling insults (not just insults but spiritual insults) at a few of us who dared disagree, I, like Chris and rbanks, could not just let that slip by.

In the old thread, I already stated that I had no problem with turning the other cheek as a response to a personal attack. In fact, I have done this often in my life, even at great personal cost. My "sin", for which I was called a heretic and an anti-Christ, is I didn't see any Scriptural basis for it to be considered a doctrine of the faith to be applied under all circumstances. I pointed towards "Love your neighbor" as the true unchanging doctrine of the faith.

After responding to you, I will probably remain quiet regarding this topic, for it has indeed run its course as a subject for debate. Let's hope that no one starts posting insults again. I am grateful that you were interested enough to post in this thread. Thank you also for reminding everyone that the opening post is just my opinion - it is nothing more.

Re: - posted by Leo_Grace, on: 2009/10/10 16:54

Quote:

appolus wrote:

I think if we stick to solely what Jesus taught, including the Sermon on the Mount, then it remains simple. If a child was to read what Jesus taught about our enemies, I wonder what conclusion he would come to? We look to the early church, prior to Constantine, and we see a pacifist church. We look to post Constantine and we see the "just war, war emerge. Obviously the Catholic church had no problem with killing, as they killed men down through the centuries in the name of God. Calvin seemed to have little problem with this either, as witnessed by what happened to the Anabaptists and others. The modern church seems to have no problem either with this as they have sanctioned, prayed for and blessed soldiers as they go into battle. So, it seems that for the majority of church history, the church has not been a pacifist church. This speaks volumes to many. Thoughts and opinions formed over 1700 years are the prevailing thoughts of today within what is called the church.

There seems to be two broad categories of thought. There is the prevailing thought of the majority that war is necessary at various times for Christians to fight, and there is a small minority who do not hold to this. Both sides claim careful thought and prayer. Lincoln was once asked whose side was God on in the Civil war and I believe that he replied that the question was wrong and that "let us not pray that God is on our side in a war or any other time, but let us pray that we are on God's side."

The majority and minority views on this subject will never find common ground, they are fundamentally and diametrically opposed. Like David and Saul or the prodigal son and his brother, there is definitely a spiritual element to the two opposing sides. So, whose side is God on? "let us not pray that God is on our side in a war or any other time, but let us pray that we are on God's side.".....Frank

I just had to respond: Very well said. Thank you, Frank.

Re: - posted by ccchhrrriiss (), on: 2009/10/10 17:07

Hi Sister MaryJane...

Thank you for your kind reply. In fact, I don't see anything that you wrote that would require any sort of forgiveness. I appreciate words...even rebukes...that are spoken in the tenderness that comes from belonging to the family of Christ. I hope that I didn't come across as being pretentious with my post.

I do hear what you are saying too. I have prayed about and studied and considered this issue for a long time. I certainly am encouraged by those who choose to lay down their lives for the Lord. In fact, I am very much opposed to any use of

physical action unless a situation might warrant it. And, of course, I certainly believe that Christ is our eternal king and our eternal citizenship is in Heaven. However, I am mindful that I am still here in the land and nation to which God placed me. Like Paul, I acknowledge that temporary citizenship, resolved to the understanding that my eternal citizenship is vastly more crucial than the temporary one.

I agree that we must be careful with our words. Our tongues can be just as deadly and eternally harmful as a physical sword. In fact, our tongues can be rudders that serve to turn an entire ship in the wrong direction.

Knowing this, it is difficult to discuss many issues that are prone to debate. For many centuries, people have debated divisive topics without reaching a consensus of view (such as the merits of Calvinism, the gifts of Spirit, the timing and manner of the Lord's return, the best translation of Scripture, etc...). Often, these discussions end with brethren in sharp disagreement and lacking the patience to overlook a difference of opinion. As such, I believe that the most dangerous portion of such discussions comes when we act in a manner that forgets the search that we ourselves went through before arriving to an opinion.

In issues like this, there is room for disagreement. There is no final consensus or established tradition of the Church (or even within the SermonIndex community) in regard to this matter...even if we try to argue that it is so. We can try to "argue our point" until the "cows come home," but it is meaningless if the underlying purpose of our discussion is not centered in the love of Christ. My biggest concern is that such love is forgotten in an effort to merely prove a point that we think is correct.

Anyway, I appreciate your comments, sister. I think that nearly all of us can agree that we need to show the same patience to one another with our words and views as the Lord has shown with us.

Re: - posted by MaryJane, on: 2009/10/10 17:17

Greetings Leo

Thank you for your response to me. I appreciate your willingness to allow Father to work in each of our lives as He deems best on this matter. I want you to know brother that I did not mean to come off critical of you for posting this new thread...it was simply that the last thread left with me such a heavy heart that I dreaded seeing another one go the same way. I understand that things were said in the other thread and I pray that for all those concerned each will examine their hearts and attitudes before the Lord and make right with their brothers so that the enemy would not be given a foothold.

I am glad we can come together brother in Christ and walk this out, even in this there is room for us to grow in His likeness as we seek to share and care for one another. May be Jesus be lifted up and glorified in this and all things.

God Bless you:-)
maryjane

Re: - posted by ccchhhrrriiisss (), on: 2009/10/10 17:20

Hi Frank...

Quote:
-----I think if we stick to solely what Jesus taught, including the Sermon on the Mount, then it remains simple. If a child was to read what Jesus taught about our enemies, I wonder what conclusion he would come to? We look to the early church, prior to Constantine, and we see a pacifist church.

I can't say that I agree with this part, Frank. You might point to what little written evidence is available in regard to the early Church, but I'm not sure that it is accurate to say that they were "pacifists" or that this modern understanding of it was the indisputable, prevailing view of the early Church. Likewise, I read the Sermon on the Mount as a physical child and as a spiritual babe in Christ, but I never saw a particular brand of "non-resistance" to the extent that it is sometimes preached here on SermonIndex. Again, this could be a matter of perspective.

I'm not certain that this discussion can merely be broken into two categories since there appears to be differences of opinion

ns in regard to if, when and how a believer can physically "resist." I don't think that it is a majority/minority debate. Personally, I think that it is an issue of seeking God in order to ascertain His thoughts and view of this matter. Consequently, I do agree with the rest of your post. We should endeavor to be on God's side of this discussion. I am confident that this is the prayer and motivation of all of us. Ultimately, I think that we should be mindful of this...and determine ourselves to treat one another accordingly.

Re: - posted by ChrisJD (), on: 2009/10/10 17:45

Hi again everyone,

In continuing to read here and to also read through some of the article called "Lincoln and the Church", I noticed some things that might at least give us some helpful perspective in remembering what a difficult position the leaders of Government have (2Sa 23:3).

One portion from the article follows:

The President found it hard to be patient with some clergymen, especially with those who were perfectly certain that they knew exactly how the nation should proceed. Prime examples of such certitude were provided by both the clergy who belonged to the peace party and those who were extreme Abolitionists. "I am approached," said Lincoln, "with the most opposite opinions and advice, and that by religious men, who are equally certain that they represent the Divine will."16 The Chaplain of the Senate, the Reverend Byron Sunderland, clearly irked the President by his tendency to turn his prayers into lectures, informing the Almighty on subjects of all kinds. In one prayer, for instance, he alluded critically to Lincoln's having been at the theater the night before. The Chaplain's performance led Senator Willard Saulsbury of Delaware to offer a resolution requesting the Chaplain "to pray to and supplicate Almighty God in our behalf, and not

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to lecture Him." When the President was trying with all his might to bring the war to an end, he did not appreciate the cruel attacks of a few preachers who supposed they understood the situation better than he did. Even the famous Henry Ward Beecher said, in reference to Lincoln, "Not a spark of genius has he; not an element of leadership. Not one particle of heroic enthusiasm."17 We know now, of course, that this cruelly judgmental stance hurt Beecher more in the long run than it hurt the man against whom it was directed, but at the time it was not easy to bear.

The entire article can be found (<http://www.sermonindex.net/modules/articles/index.php?viewarticle&aid10824>) here

Re: , on: 2009/10/10 18:10

The Chaplain of the Senate, the Reverend Byron Sunderland, clearly irked the President by his tendency to turn his prayers into lectures, informing the Almighty on subjects of all kinds. In one prayer, for instance, he alluded.....

Yea turning prayers into lectures. Very important that when praying in public to not preach in the prayer.

Re: - posted by Leo_Grace, on: 2009/10/10 18:14

Dear ChrisJD,

I want you to know that I very much appreciate your posts about Lincoln and the "spiritual leaders" of his day. It appears that problems arise when sinners redeemed by grace reach a point in their spiritual walk where they feel that they have attained something that others have not, and begin to look upon themselves as one of God's gifts to mankind.

The bloodiest and longest spiritual battle we will ever face will be always be the one against ourselves, for though we may subdue the beast today, it wakes up refreshed with us each and every morning.

These short anecdotes of Lincoln you posted are precious for they reveal the inner man and how he truly towered spiritu

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ally over the "spiritual giants" of his day. I also recall you posted a heart-warming Christian story of sacrifice and deliverance that I quoted early in this thread.

Thank you for your contributions.

Re: , on: 2009/10/10 18:32

Chris writes.....

"or that this modern understanding of it was the indisputable, prevailing view of the early Church"

I never said that, and, as most of us know, there is nothing indisputable :)Especially on sermonindex :) It is commonly held that the early church was a pacifist, persecuted church, unless you have something to prove otherwise Chris? So lets agree to disagree on that point.

"I'm not certain that this discussion can merely broken into two categories"

Well I am glad that your not certain :) In the historical context there has been two groups in the last 1700 years. First group is the established church,whether the Catholic church or the established church that came out of the reformation, which came up with the just war theory and sanctioned wars and were the majority. The second group were certainly the minority and were severely persecuted by the first group. The second group would consist of groups like the Waldenses, Bogomils, Cathari, Paulicians, and Donatists, Anabaptists, Quakers, Moravians, Mennonites and Pentecostals and so on. These groups were persecuted by the first group, and the first group seemed to always believe that they were doing their work prayerfully and thoughtfully and that it was the work of God.

And so, broadly speaking, we still have two groups today I would say. The established church which still believes in just wars and sanctions said wars and the second group, a minority, who do not. Is there a hundred sub-groups? Yes, undoubtedly. Is their total consistency in both of these groups? No. Yet they are here and nothing much has changed in the last 1700 years in how the visible church is split. Still the same broad distinctions.....Frank

Re: - posted by ccchhrrriiiss (), on: 2009/10/10 19:56

Hi Frank,

Quote:

"or that this modern understanding of it was the indisputable, prevailing view of the early Church"

I never said that, and, as most of us know, there is nothing indisputable :)Especially on sermonindex :) It is commonly held that the early church was a pacifist, persecuted church, unless you have something to prove otherwise Chris? So lets agree to disagree on that point.

Actually, you said that the Church prior to Constantine was a "pacifist church."

Quote:
-----"If a child was to read what Jesus taught about our enemies, I wonder what conclusion he would come to? **We look to the early church, prior to Constantine, and we see a pacifist church.**"

You can say that this is a "commonly held" view, but I question just how "common" the view might be. I have not seen any evidence to persuade me toward that end or that such "pacifism" was any sort of absolute mandate from Scripture extended toward things like defending a child from an attacker.

Now, since I wasn't responsible for the original statement that was made without any evidence, I don't see a need to refute the original claim any further. The original claim has not been proven or substantiated by evidence yet; thus, there is no need for a rebuttal that contradicts a claim that has not even been substantiated yet. Moreover, the Church had already been splintered by division before the end of the first century. The epistles of Paul, Peter and John are filled with correction. But yes, we can certainly "agree to disagree." We can disagree on whether or not those comments regarding th

views of the Early Church are correct or whether or not those views were universal or even correct in terms of Scripture.

Quote:

Well I am glad that you are not certain :) In the historical context there has been two groups in the last 1700 years. First group is the established church, whether the Catholic church or the established church that came out of the reformation, which came up with the just war theory and sanctioned wars and were the majority. The second group were certainly the minority and were severely persecuted by the first group. The second group would consist of groups like the Waldenses, Bogomils, Cathari, Paulicians, and Donatists, Anabaptists, Quakers, Moravians, Mennonites and Pentecostals and so on. These groups were persecuted by the first group, and the first group seemed to always believe that they were doing their work prayerfully and thoughtfully and that it was the work of God.

And this "historical context" is based upon what set of firsthand accounts? While there may have been doctrinal factions, I can't find any evidence that a supposed "second group" were severely persecuted by other supposed Christians or that they were persecuted based solely upon their embrace of some sort of "non-resistant" ideology.

More importantly, I think that you misunderstood what I am saying. Within those who claim to adhere to strict "Biblical non-resistance," there are still variances of opinion in regard to the extent of application. I know plenty of believers with different opinions in regard to this issue who don't base their own views on a "just war" argument that has been handed down...or even upon past claims of persecution for their non-resistant views.

In fact, I know people who believe in what they think to be complete and utter non-involvement (like Mennonites and Amish brethren). I know some who embrace a limited view of involvement (such as Quakers). I know some who shun any form of physical resistance. I know some who would choose to abstain from military service and personal defense, but who still feel the liberty to vote. I know some who feel the liberty to serve in the military, police and would physically defend someone else -- as long as there is no attempt to kill. I also know people who believe in military or police service as well as physical resistance on behalf of the weak or their families.

Do you see the variance of perception within the broad-stroked grouping of "non-resistance?" Thus, I think that it is difficult to broadly divide believers into two groups when many believers might consider themselves as holding to "Biblical non-resistance," even if it is not considered as "non-resistant" by others. In fact, I believe that I embrace a Biblical form of "non-resistance." I certainly wouldn't place myself in that dreadful "first" grouping, and would be strongly disappointed if someone else would attempt to categorize me as such. Does this make sense?

Besides, I think that we can agree that anyone who would persecute someone else for their sincere, prayerful views about this matter is obviously in need of a revelation of the love of God. Consequently, this is why I would caution believers from dismissing the faith of those who disagree with them on this matter. I think that some people might not realize that persecution is not reserved to the sword. It can come from a judgmental tongue of well-meaning believers too.

Re: - posted by ChrisJD (), on: 2009/10/10 23:11

Leo,

Can I say that I have also appreciated the way you have conducted yourself since you have been participating on the forums and have appreciated some of the things (of which I have read) that you have posted also. If either of us have offered something good, something lovely, or thankworthy, may God be thanked and get all the glory, always, as is fitting. I'm sure you agree :) Amen.

If I could, I might be able to share a few thoughts that will tie together something that Frank and Chris are discussing, with something that you mentioned here at the first, that is, of Christians being led of God and not of the law.

It may be that one reason why believers have acted differently in regards to participation in civil governments and armed conflicts over the centuries, is that they have found themselves in different situations, in differing lands, among different cultures, and different governments.

Yes, without a doubt, there are hard and fast principles that can be universally applied without checking the time on your watch or the date on the calendar, and yet there are principles that may also be neutral in their application, without

knowing the context to which they are being applied.

So for instance, if the great majority of the early Christians refused any service in the Roman Armies, is it also true that Roman Military service involved pagan idolatries and emperor worship as well?

Was it also true, that those of Jewish descent were not even permitted to serve?

I've read that this was the case. If it was, does that give a somewhat fuller expression as to the reasons why early believers would not have had any part with Roman military service?

And isn't that a very different army than say, that of the Revolutionary armies of George Washington, who, I've read or heard said, censured his soldiers that they not blaspheme or curse?

Today, from what I've read, and also hearing a first hand account of a missionary, I would not be surprised if believers in North Korea are living much the same way as those in the first century did also.

And yet, I hope that, at least for the sake of this discussion, we might all agree that there are still vast differences between the governments of North Korea, and of the United States, for instance.

But we need not even go that far. Even though they were both Communist, I would say there was even a difference between the government of North Korea, and that of say, Romania, of the 1940s.

In the quote that Leo had mentioned before from the book *Tortured for Christ*, in the same section, Pastor Wurmbrand makes the bold statement that the Underground Church had members within even the Communist Government and secret police.

I won't pretend that that statement may be difficult for us to understand, but I think it can also be accepted that the challenges that Roman idolatry presented to the early Christians were not the same as say those of Atheistic Communism of the 20th century and its governments that would openly give pretense to religious freedom and tolerance, and that it is not unreasonable that they were and are being met differently?

I understand if some will object to these things for various reasons. But too, it may also give us reason, as has been much pleaded, to be careful in our open pronouncements about the verity of the faith of others with whom we disagree on this subject.

Wish you all well.

EDIT I remember reading that religious tolerance was also a part of the Roman Empire. The difference I was thinking of is the persecution under the Communists that I've read about has had more of an element of subterfuge, rather than feeding people to lions in an arena because they would not offer a pinch of incense to Caesar.

Re: , on: 2009/10/10 23:20

Agreeing to disagree is a sign of maturity :)

My post stands for consideration, lest we get lost in the minutia. Now no one has to agree with it, no one has to prove themselves correct.

Down through the centuries, the established church, the majority, have persecuted the minority groups that I mentioned. In almost every case, the majority walked in lock step with the civil authorities, starting from Jesus and on through. It will be that way in the last days as well I believe. I would be interested to hear other thoughts on this matter.....Frank

Scriptures and Doctrine :: Does the new covenant teach non-resistance and non-participation in government?

Re: - posted by ccchhrrriiiss (), on: 2009/10/10 23:46

Hi Frank,

Quote:

-----Agreeing to disagree is a sign of maturity :)

My post stands for consideration, lest we get lost in the minutia. Now no one has to agree with it, no one has to prove themselves correct.

I don't think that anyone has tried to prove themselves correct here. In fact, many of us have used for years that old mantra "agree to disagree" many times here on SermonIndex in regard to divisive issues or even mere disagreements.

Quote:

-----Down through the centuries, the established church, the majority, have persecuted the minority groups that I mentioned. In almost every case, the majority walked in lock step with the civil authorities, starting from Jesus and on through.

Still, I am interested in the evidence that you base this notion upon. I realize that many within the Church have been persecuted for the faith. However, this isn't limited to people who are of a particular "Christian non-resistance" persuasion. Besides, it has seemed quite the opposite in regard to this discussion on this website. It is rare that I have seen someone persecuted for a particular ideological view; however, there has been some unbecoming allegations and insinuations directed at those of us who do not believe every tenant of "non-resistance." That was one of the reasons I initially joined some of the previous discussions -- to caution those from using divisive, judgmental rhetoric at people who merely disagree.

However, I think that it is good to discuss these things. We should not be surprised or alarmed if people disagree with us...and base that disagreement upon prayerful consideration and study. After all, we are all at different stages in our walk with the Lord and, like you said, at different levels of maturity in Christ.

Re: - posted by Leo_Grace, on: 2009/10/11 0:04

Quote:

appolus wrote:

Agreeing to disagree is a sign of maturity :)

My post stands for consideration, lest we get lost in the minutia. Now no one has to agree with it, no one has to prove themselves correct.

Down through the centuries, the established church, the majority, have persecuted the minority groups that I mentioned. **In almost every case, the majority walked in lock step with the civil authorities, starting from Jesus and on through.** It will be that way in the last days as well I believe. I would be interested to hear other thoughts on this matter.....Frank

Maybe so, Frank, but is there a present day Christian group standing shoulder-to-shoulder with government and raising the battle cry for a just war? And if they exist, are they hunting down those who disagree with them? I think not. My experience in the previous thread is that the few who politely begged to disagree with the "non-resistance" majority were the ones insulted and battered verbally without mercy. Individuals who see no scriptural basis for promoting the "turn the other cheek" admonition into a doctrine of the faith that should be followed dogmatically in all situations are not war-mongers. Neither are they heretics or anti-Christ.

In my opening post, I have cited Scripture that lead me to believe that this "turn the other cheek" teaching does not qualify as an essential doctrine of the faith, and that the true teaching, which is central to our faith, is to "Love your neighbor as yourself". I welcome anyone to show me, using Scripture, that I have made a mistake. For my only stake in this is my desire to follow the Lord Jesus without error.

Re: , on: 2009/10/11 0:05

Hi ChrisJD

I sense the genuineness of your question. As for the Roman question, I would say that obviously Christianity was not an all Jewish faith. In fact in Rome, for several years, it was an all "Gentile," faith as the Jewish people had been expelled in 49. The question for Jewish converts around the time of 70AD would have been fighting for their own country as it faced destruction by Rome, rather than joining the Roman army of occupation. We have no record of any of the Apostles fighting either with the Romans against their countrymen, or fighting with their countrymen as they were destroyed. I would argue, and some would disagree, that if any Christian was ever going to fight, it would be when your country faced complete destruction. Here is the Roman oath that every soldier would have to take prior to Constantine.....

in nomine iovis optimi maximi martisque et per maiestatem principis caesaris Avgvsti pontificis maximi

(In the name of Juppiter Optimus Maximus and Mars and by the majesty of Emperor Caesar Augustus Pontifex Maximus)

hoc sacramentvm dico

(I say this oath)

non recedere aut transfugere a militia anteqvam completvm stipendivm et semper aquilis parere

(Not to retreat or desert from the army before the completion of my service and each and everyone, obey orders and follow the standards)

Â...Or the man could say:

IVRO

(I swear)

Then each man repeats after the first soldier to take the oath:

IDEM IN ME

(the same in my case)

"To perform their transformation from Roman citizens into Roman soldiers, the selected men would then have to swear a n oath of allegiance.

This swearing of the sacramentum, changed the status of the man entirely. He was now utterly subject to his general's authority, and had thereby laid down any restraints of his former civilian life. His actions would be by the will of the general. He would bear no responsibility for the actions he would commit for the general. If he was ordered to do so, he would kill anything in sight, be it an animal, a barbarian, or even a Roman.

There was more than mere practicality behind the change from the white toga of the citizen to the blood red tunic of the legionary. The symbolism was such that the blood of the vanquished would not stain him. He was now no longer a citizen whose conscience would not allow for murder. Now he was a soldier. The legionary could only be released from the sacramentum by two things; death or demobilization. Without the sacramentum, however, the Roman could not be a soldier. It was unthinkable."

The sacramentum acted as a type of indulgence. Whatever the soldier was ordered to do, it would not be held against him personally.

Mars was the most important god to the Romans which is why it was included in their oath. Now, some may think that a Christian could swear allegiance to Mars and fight, kill and die under this oath, I disagree, in fact this is exactly why many Christians were killed because they disturbed the pax deorum(peace of the gods)

The Christians were persecuted for a variety of reasons. First, they denied the basis for the Roman imperium (command, rule, empire, supreme power) by advocating that their God was the only real God. This denied the existence of the pagan Roman gods. These same Roman gods, in a sense, founded Rome, because according to legend and popular belief, Romulus, the offspring of the Roman god of war, Mars, founded the city of Rome in 753 B.C. This gave the Romans a divine basis for their temporal power. When the Christians denied the existence of Mars, they attacked the foundation of Roman power. Since they were attacking Roman authority and power, the Romans came to view Christians as a threat to the state. This was a view further exacerbated by Roman emperors, such as Nero, blaming fires and plagues on Christians. The Roman persecution of Christians was legal, but immoral. One reason it was legal was that the Christians attacked the pax deorum. The pax deorum (peace of the gods'), according to popular opinion, protected th

e Empire from troubles. This peace was preserved "by means of the appropriate ceremonies," such as the correct ritual sacrifices and worship (Ste Croix, p.246). In fact, many Roman histories relate stories of kings dethroned and cities destroyed for not sacrificing correctly. Also, these histories, which most Romans were familiar with, relate stories of people and cities, even Rome, saved for sacrificing and worshiping correctly. Because of these stories, Roman commoners, along with the Roman nobility, believed that this peace was essential to the continued security of Roman power. Since they believed that the keeping of this peace was essential, it was especially offensive to them when Christians refused to sacrifice to those gods. St. Justin the Martyr makes the Christian view of the Roman gods clear when he says, "Hence are we called atheists. And we confess that we are atheists, so far as gods of this sort are concerned, but not with respect to the most true God" (Justin Martyr). Believing this denial of the gods to be an attack upon Rome, many Romans despised Christians. During the reign of Decius, around 250 A.D., persecution for this reason reached its climax. Cary and Scullard, two Roman historians, write:

But in 250 the precarious safeguards of the Christians were swept away by the emperor Decius. In a wild attempt to crush the general insubordination and anarchy of his time and to create a greater unity within the Empire under its ruler, Decius expressly commanded all Christians to abjure their faith and to take part in the pagan worship of the Empire; in order to secure the pax deorum the Empire's loyalty to the old gods of Rome must be demonstrated (Cary and Scullard, p. 546).

Frank

Re: , on: 2009/10/11 0:18

Hi Leo,

I have no desire to go down the same path as the other thread. I appreciate your opinion and it seems we differ :) I am reasonably sure that is not going to change any time soon. Let us all earnestly contend for what the Holy Spirit has illuminated in our hearts in regard to the Scriptures, give our opinions based on that and then let that stand. IN that we we can have a frank discussion :) and an airing of our views. Here is something I know everyone will agree on, there is no infallibility here on the forum :)Frank

Re: - posted by ChrisJD (), on: 2009/10/11 0:22

Frank, that was very informative. Thank you!

About the Apostles and Jerusalem, I know that we have discussed this in the other thread and I think that it is worth remembering again that they were warned by God that God was going to destroy the nation(Mat 22:7, Luke 21:24).

That said, I don't think **the Apostles** would have had anything to do with any armed conflict, no matter where it was, for various reasons.

Thanks again.

Re: - posted by Leo_Grace, on: 2009/10/11 0:28

Dear Frank,

Quote:

-----Here is something I know everyone will agree on, there is no infallibility here on the forum :)

Agreed. Thank you, Frank.

Re: - posted by Leo_Grace, on: 2009/11/26 22:05

As I mentioned earlier, I find no basis in Scripture for concluding that all Christians should practice nonresistance or non-participation in government. There is only the supreme command by God: To love God completely, and to love others as ourselves. In most situations, this means a true believer must exercise patience, perseverance, forgiveness, and hope. This is not nonresistance, it is love.

Jesus himself practiced and preached resistance against falsehood, hypocrisy, faithlessness, idolatry, and all forms of evil. We are to resist evil with good, or to be more specific, our resistance must be motivated by love for others.

*Jas 4:7 Submit yourselves, then, to God. **Resist the devil**, and he will flee from you*

*Ro 12:21 Do not be overcome by evil, but **overcome evil with good**.*

Paul, who was called by the Lord Jesus himself to be an apostle, who was filled with the Holy Spirit to preach the word correctly, whose very words are forever preserved as part of Holy Scripture, taught the gospel of grace and the requirements of the new covenant in Jesus to men.

Paul courageously and soundly rebuked those who still preached the practice of circumcision, avoiding unclean food, and seeking righteousness through the law, since these had all been recast by Christ under the new covenant. Would he not have preached against physical resistance or government involvement if these were likewise proscribed under the new covenant?

Instead, Paul preaches this to the Hebrews:

*Heb 11:32-34 "And what more shall I say? I do not have time to tell about Gideon, Barak, Samson, Jephthah, David, Samson and the prophets, **who through faith conquered kingdoms, administered justice, and gained what was promised; who shut the mouths of lions, quenched the fury of the flames, and escaped the edge of the sword; whose weakness was turned to strength; and who became powerful in battle and routed foreign armies.**"*

He commends these men, as a preacher of the the new covenant, not just for resisting but for conquering and governing in faith and obedience to God. Why would he commend their actions if these were already forbidden as some think?

Though I sincerely appreciate the loving hearts of those who promote the concept of non-resistance, the truth is resistance or nonresistance means nothing under both the old and new covenants. Either course may be correct, depending up on the circumstance. What matters only, in a universal sense, is acting out of love in obedience to God through our faith in Jesus Christ.

Re: - posted by ChrisJD (), on: 2009/11/27 18:24

Quote:

-----We are to resist evil with good, or to be more specific, our resistance must be motivated by love for others.

Leo, I had left the passage from the book that I quoted(that you pasted from earlier on in this thread), it was the section about the Doctor that joined the secret police, I had left this open in e-sword since that time.

I just happened to notice this quote following from the beginning of that section, and I thought of what you wrote here:

"The secret police greatly persecuted the Underground Church, because they recognized in it the only effective resistance left. It was just the kind of resistance (a spiritual resistance) that, if left unhindered, would undermine their atheistic power."

edited to correct spelling

Re: - posted by Leo_Grace, on: 2009/11/28 14:43

Quote:
-----"The secret police greatly persecuted the Underground Church, because they recognized in it the only effective resistance left. It was just the kind of resistance (a spiritual resistance) that, if left unhindered, would undermine their atheistic power."

Thank you for the above quote, Chris. It shows how the rulers of this world fear the power of godly spiritual resistance. What I have been trying to convey in this thread is that we are called to be conquerors for Christ, not weak-kneed men who fall away and flee at the threat of the enemy. As ginnyrose said in another thread, our most powerful weapons are spiritual, and if wielded faithfully, they will smite the enemy more than conventional weapons.

Eph 6:10-20 Finally, be strong in the Lord and in his mighty power. Put on the full armor of God so that you can take your stand against the devil's schemes. For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the powers of this dark world and against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly realms.

Therefore put on the full armor of God, so that when the day of evil comes, you may be able to stand your ground, and after you have done everything, to stand. Stand firm then, with the belt of truth buckled around your waist, with the breastplate of righteousness in place, and with your feet fitted with the readiness that comes from the gospel of peace. In addition to all this, take up the shield of faith, with which you can extinguish all the flaming arrows of the evil one. Take the helmet of salvation and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God.

And pray in the Spirit on all occasions with all kinds of prayers and requests. With this in mind, be alert and always keep on praying for all the saints. Pray also for me, that whenever I open my mouth, words may be given me so that I will fearlessly make known the mystery of the gospel, for which I am an ambassador in chains. Pray that I may declare it fearlessly, as I should.

2Ti 1:7 For God did not give us a spirit of timidity, but a spirit of power, of love and of self-discipline.

Ro 8:37 No, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him who loved us.

Rev 17:14 They will make war against the Lamb, but the Lamb will overcome them because he is Lord of lords and King of kings—and with him will be his called, chosen and faithful followers.

Re: , on: 2013/1/25 13:50

Dear Saints,

I decided to bump this thread because of the current news of an Anabaptist pastor (i.e., the Kenneth Miller case) who is possibly facing prison for his Christian faith, current U.S. government focus on gun control laws, Christians speaking against homosexual marriage, abortion, etc., as possibly being a hate crime, etc., etc.

I was going to start a thread titled: "Nonresistance False or True". However, since this thread was started I would like to continue on with it as I have been wanting to know the truth about this doctrine in relation to how we as believers are to respond to the possible coming persecution to the Western Church. Since my family nor I have never been threatened by our government or radical extremist groups to bear arms in anyway I have not been forced to come to the truth in regard to this doctrine. I could just say that when the threat against my life or family's life comes that the Holy Spirit would lead me; yes the Scriptures confirm this, however I am hard pressed to currently know the truth of this doctrine ASAP.

Many of my brothers and sisters are suffering for our Lord in Communist and Creative Access nations where the Gospel is restricted, so if I am to carry the burdens of my brothers and sisters then I believe it is my duty to know the truth.

Thank you for any thoughts and discussions concerning this important doctrine, which might soon become a major doctrine of concern in the Western church.

Seeking His fulness,

Kenneth Martin

Re: - posted by ginnyrose (), on: 2013/1/25 14:04

There is a long thread somewhere in the bowels of SI that deals with subject, titled "Let's Talk About Peace" by the late Pastorfrin. If you can find it you may find some answers there. He was ex-military who suffered from PTSD until the LORD delivered him. If you can find it, I think you would be blessed.

ginnyrose

Re: , on: 2013/1/25 14:18

Thanks ginnyrose. Please find the link below, is this it?

http://img.sermonindex.net/modules/newbb/viewtopic_pdf.php?topic_id=15338&forum=35

Re: - posted by ginnyrose (), on: 2013/1/25 14:26

Yes, this looks like it.

I see I had the title wrong, maybe that is why I could not find it.

I loved the way Pastorfrin handled the topic. He was not combative, explained it as he understood it and did not allow his distractors to derail the topic.

Re: - posted by SkepticGuy, on: 2013/1/25 14:58

no, the new testament does not teach non-resistance or not getting involved in the government. if it did there would be a commandment somewhere for those who get saved who are soldiers or politicians to stop being soldiers or politicians. there are none.

Re: SkepticGuy - posted by proudpapa, on: 2013/1/31 1:12

SkepticGuy wrote ///no, the new testament does not teach non-resistance or not getting involved in the government. if it did there would be a commandment somewhere for those who get saved who are soldiers or politicians to stop being soldiers or politicians. there are none.///

One thing we must realize is that the old testament was directed toward a nation, the new testament is directed toward individuals,

We are blessed to live in a nation that was founded much on the example of the old testament and some principles of the new, for what better of an example can a nation use.

having said that,

Luke 3:14

And the soldiers likewise demanded of him, (John the Baptist) 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.

It is difficult to be a combatant soldier if you are commanded to Do 'violence to no man'. But yet we also see that non combatant military participation is acceptable within the kingdom message, for he says 'be content with your wages'.

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Even though many will carnally argue, it comes down to this verse.

If this verse does not say (Do violence to no man) than Skeptic is logically correct, without argument.

Re: - posted by TMK (), on: 2013/1/31 7:39

Hey PP--

In practically every other translation than the KJV, the "do violence to no man" is in the context of extorting money by force, not fighting in battle. Apparently soldiers were known for intimidating people to rob them or get them to pay them something, like a schoolyard bully.

Re: - posted by Matthew2323 (), on: 2013/1/31 8:29

It's important to discern what the phrase "do violence" means. Does it mean to cease being a soldier because you cannot carry a sword or does it mean to stop terrorizing people for no reason. Since there is no command that the soldiers resign their posts we can conclude the latter.

There is a big difference between assaulting someone and protecting yourself from an attack. It is a similar concept where God says, "You shall not commit murder," but also commands Israel to execute His judgment on wicked nations. God sees a difference between murder and capital punishment.

Also, consider what Jesus said to His disciple in the garden:

35 And He said to them, "When I sent you out without money belt and bag and sandals, you did not lack anything, did you?" They said, "No, nothing." 36 And He said to them, "But now, whoever has a money belt is to take it along, likewise also a bag, and whoever has no sword is to sell his coat and buy one. 37"For I tell you that this which is written must be fulfilled in Me, 'AND HE WAS NUMBERED WITH TRANSGRESSORS'; for that which refers to Me has its fulfillment." 38 They said, "Lord, look, here are two swords." And He said to them, "It is enough." (Luke 22)

Grace and peace,
Matthew

Re: - posted by ginnyrose (), on: 2013/1/31 8:45

QUOTE:

"38 They said, "Lord, look, here are two swords." And He said to them, "It is enough." (Luke 22)"

And then what happened?

Re: TMK - posted by proudpapa, on: 2013/1/31 10:47

Hi TMK

TMK wrote ///Hey PP--

In practically every other translation than the KJV, the "do violence to no man" is in the context of extorting money by force, not fighting in battle. Apparently soldiers were known for intimidating people to rob them or get them to pay them something, like a schoolyard bully.///

I am well aware that to "do violence to no man" is almost in no other version than the King James version. that is the exact point that I have been making in several of these threads.

And I am well aware of why protestants and catholics would decide to translate (diaseivw)(Diaseio) as 'to extort from one by intimidation money or other property'

But what I would like for those whom believe that the new testament kingdom message is a radical call and one that is c

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allowing men to be totally nonresistant and one that disproves of Military combatant status.

For those whom believe this meditate on the fact that the King James Version is almost the only bible to translate (Diasio) as "do violence to no man" has God inspired this truth in the KJV ? or is the position of military nonresistant's without biblical foundation?

I have searched the Scripture for years up and down for the truth on this subject, being very indoctrinated in the protestant exemption doctrine. even though many will argue with me it comes down to this verse and as a Believer in Gods sovereign ability to inspire His Words in my own Language down to the jot and tittle despite the supposed contradictions and all of the educated nay sayers, I have to Lay down my exemption doctrine and believe that John was giving the soldiers a radical call to "do violence to no man"

One cannot logically make a case for nonresistance ,If John was just telling the soldiers "Do not take money from anyone by force, or accuse anyone falsely, and be content with your wages." Because if this is all he was telling them, when they asked him what they should do, than John was endorsing combatant status by not explicitly speaking against it.

Re: - posted by therick2018 (), on: 2013/2/2 10:29

To me this little portion by Charles Leiter on this subject was quite helpful.

http://illbehonest.com/pacifism-and-capital-punishment-charles-leiter?utm_source=feedburner&utm_medium=feed&utm_campaign=Feed%3A+illbehonest-global-site-updates+%28I%27I+Be+Honest+-+Global+Site+Updates%29

Re: - posted by Matthew2323 (), on: 2013/2/2 11:49

Ginnyrose wrote: "And then what happened?"

They fell asleep...

But more to the point after Malchus' ear was severed, ".. Jesus said to Peter, 'Put the sword into the sheath; the cup which the Father has given Me, shall I not drink it?'" (John 18:11)

Notice that Peter was instructed to sheath his sword, not get rid of it entirely. There is a time for war and a time for peace (Eccl 3:8). At this particular moment in time, taking up arms could have distracted from God's plan.

If Jesus had wanted to state empathically that passive non-resistance was for all men at all times, this would have been a perfect opportunity to say as much. The context for why Peter was to sheath his sword is the key to the interpretation.

Grace and peace,
Matthew

Re: - posted by twayneb (), on: 2013/2/2 20:22

When Peter went to Cornelius, he did not tell Cornelius to forsake his role as a Roman Centurion. Cornelius, it is said, was a righteous man. This is one example that comes to my mind right away.