

FOLLOWING THE LAMB

Understanding the Peace Teaching of Jesus and the History Surrounding the Constantinian Shift

“For we no longer take up sword against nation, nor do we learn war any more, having become children of peace, for the sake of Jesus, who is our leader.”

- Origen of Alexandria (185-254 AD) ;
Against Celsus

“And shall the son of peace take part in the battle when it does not become him even to sue at law? And shall he apply the chain, and the prison, and the torture, and the punishment, who is not the avenger even of his own wrongs?”

- Tertullian (160-225 AD) ; The Chaplet

“It makes no difference whether you put a man to death by word, or rather by the sword, since it is the act of putting to death itself which is prohibited. Therefore, with regard to this precept of God, there ought to be no exception at all; but that it is always unlawful to put to death a man, whom God willed to be a sacred animal.”

- Lactantius of Bithynia (aprox 240-317 AD) ; Divine Institutes

“And to those who inquire of us whence we come, or who is our founder we reply that we are come, agreeably to the counsels of Jesus, to cut down our hostile and insolent wordy swords into ploughshares, and to convert into pruning-hooks the spears formerly employed in war. For we no longer take up sword against nation, nor do we learn war any more, having become children of peace, for the sake of Jesus, who is our leader.”

- Origen of Alexandria (185-254 AD) ;
Against Celsus

“It is better to suffer wrong than to inflict it.”

- Arnobius ; Adversus Gentes

“It makes no difference whether you

Matthew 5.38-44—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 anyone slaps you on the right cheek, turn to them the other cheek also. And if anyone wants to sue you and take your shirt, hand over your coat as well. If anyone forces you to go one mile, go with them two miles . . . You have heard that it was said, ‘Love your neighbor and hate your enemy.’ But I tell you, love your enemies . . .

Exodus 22.25-27— . . . If you take your neighbor’s cloak as a pledge, return it by sunset, because that cloak is the only covering your neighbor has. What else can your neighbor sleep in?

Deuteronomy 24.10-13.17— . . . Do not deprive the foreigner or the fatherless of justice, or take the cloak of the widow as a pledge.

John 18.36—Jesus said, “My kingdom is not of this world. If it were, my servants would fight to prevent my arrest by the Jewish leaders. But now my kingdom is from another place.”

Luke 9.20 -24—“But what about you?” he asked. “Who do you say I am?” Peter answered, “God’s Messiah.” Jesus strictly warned them not to tell this to anyone. And he said, “The Son of Man must suffer many things and be rejected by the elders, the chief priests and the teachers of the law, and he must be killed and on the third day be raised to life.” Then he said to them all: “Whoever wants to be my disciple must deny themselves and take up their cross daily and follow me. For whoever wants to save their life will lose it, but whoever loses their life for me will save it.”

Luke 22.49-53—When Jesus’ followers saw what was going to happen, they said, “Lord, should we strike with our swords?” And one of them [Peter - John 18.10] struck the servant of the high priest, cutting off his right ear. But Jesus answered, “No more of this!” And he touched the man’s ear and healed him. Then Jesus said to the chief priests, the officers of the temple guard, and the elders, who had come for him, “Am I leading a rebellion, that you have come with swords and clubs? Every day I was with you in the temple courts, and you did not lay a hand on me. But this is your hour—when darkness reigns.”

Matthew 26.53—Do you think I cannot call on my Father, and he will at once put at my disposal more than twelve legions of angels?

Matthew 26.52—“Put your sword back in its place,” Jesus said to him, “for all who draw the sword will die by the sword.

Luke 22.35.36—Then Jesus asked them, “When I sent you without purse, bag or sandals, did you lack anything?” “Nothing,” they answered. He said to them,

“They follow the Lamb wherever he goes . . .” Revelation 14.4

*All texts quoted from the TNIV unless otherwise noted.

put a man to death by word, or rather by sword, since it is the act of putting to death itself which is prohibited.”

- Arnobius ; Against the Heathen

“God, in prohibiting killing, discountenances not only brigandage, which is contrary to human law, but also that which men regard as legal. Thus participation in war will not be legitimate to a just man; his “military service” is justice itself. ... What are the interests of our country, but the inconveniences of another state or nation? that is, to extend the boundaries which are violently taken from others, to increase the power of the state, to improve the revenues all which things are not virtues, but the overthrowing of virtues: for, in the first place, the union of human society is taken away, innocence is taken away, the abstaining from the property of another is taken away; lastly, justice itself is taken away, which is unable to bear the tearing asunder of the human race, and wherever arms have glittered, must be banished and exterminated from thence. ... How can a man be just who injures, hates, despoils and puts to death? Yet they who strive to be serviceable to their country do all these things.”

- Lactantius ; [tutor of Crispus, the son of St. Constantine the Great]

“Does anyone doubt that it is preferable for people to be drawn to worship God by teaching rather than forced by fear of punishment or by pain? But because the one type of people is better, it does not mean that the others, who are not of that type, ought to be ignored.”— Augustine

Foreign Threat

Personal

National

“But now if you have a purse, take it, and also a bag; and if you don’t have a sword, sell your cloak and buy one.”

Luke 22.37-38— It is written: ‘And he was numbered with the transgressors’ ; and I tell you that this must be fulfilled in me. Yes, what is written about me is reaching its fulfillment.” The disciples said, “See, Lord, here are two swords.” “That is enough,” he replied.

Matthew 10.34—Do not suppose that I have come to bring peace to the earth. I did not come to bring peace, but a sword.

Matthew 10.35-38— For I have come to turn “a man against his father, a daughter against her mother, a daughter-in-law against her mother-in-law—your enemies will be the members of your own household.’ Anyone who loves their father or mother more than me is not worthy of me; anyone who loves a son or daughter more than me is not worthy of me. Whoever does not take up their cross and follow me is not worthy of me.”

Luke 14.23—Then the master told his servant, ‘Go out to the roads and country lanes and compel them to come in, so that my house will be full.’

Romans 13.4—For the one in authority is God’s servant for your good. But if you do wrong, be afraid, for rulers do not bear the sword for no reason. They are God’s servants, agents of wrath to bring punishment on the wrongdoer.

Romans 12.17-13.7—Do not repay anyone evil for evil. Be careful to do what is right in the eyes of everyone. If it is possible, as far as it depends on you, live at peace with everyone. Do not take revenge, my dear friends, but leave room for God’s wrath, for it is written: “It is mine to avenge; I will repay,” says the Lord. On the contrary: “If your enemy is hungry, feed him; if he is thirsty, give him something to drink. In doing this, you will heap burning coals on his head.” Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good. Let everyone be subject to the governing authorities . . . The authorities that exist have been established by God . . . For rulers hold no terror for those who do right, but for those who do wrong . . . They are God’s servants, agents of wrath to bring punishment on the wrongdoer. Therefore, it is necessary to submit to the authorities . . . This is also why you pay taxes, for the authorities are God’s servants, who give their full time to governing. Give to everyone what you owe: If you owe taxes, pay taxes; if revenue, then revenue; if respect, then respect; if honor, then honor.

Matthew 13.31,32—He told them another parable: “The kingdom of heaven is like a mustard seed, which a man took and planted in his field. Though it is the smallest of all seeds, yet when it grows, it is the largest of garden plants and becomes a tree, so that the birds come and perch in its branches.” He told them still another parable: “The kingdom of heaven is like yeast that a woman took and mixed into about sixty pounds of flour until it worked all through the dough.”

1 Corinthians 15.24—Then the end will come, when he hands over the kingdom to God the Father after he has destroyed all dominion, authority and power.

