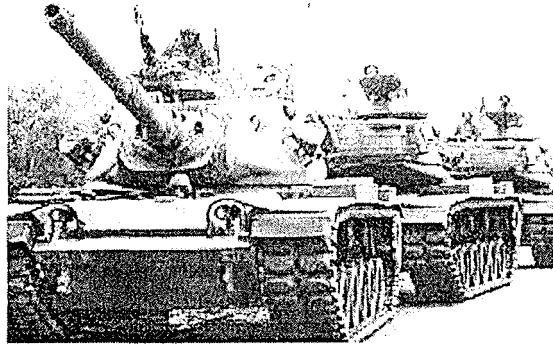


CHAPTER 8

Wars and Rumors of Wars



The Scarcity Of Peace

The history of mankind has been characterized by a continual succession of wars and military battles. Even the United States has averaged a war about every 25 years. Man's tendency toward war is illustrated in a study done by Dr. Harry Hager. He wrote:

In 3,358 years from 1496 B. C. to 1862 A. D. there were 227 years of peace and 3,130 years of war. Within the last three centuries there have been 286 major and minor wars in Europe. From the year 1500 B.C. to 1860 A.D. more than 8,000 treaties of peace, meant to remain in force forever, were negotiated. The average time they remained in force was two years. The statistics of the Society of International Law at London, corroborating those of Novikow, declare that during the last 4,000 years there have been but 286 years of peace despite more than 8,000 peace treaties.

Only 286 years of peace in 4,000 years! How tragic! Yet today in our modern world, are not men much more civilized and peace-loving? Will not men seek to establish lasting peace in the world? Will not the United Nations bring an end to all wars? No, this is wishful and unrealistic thinking. The 20th century, for example, was the occasion for the greatest battles and the most bloodshed that the world has ever known, including two World Wars.

According to the Lord Jesus Christ in Matthew 24:6, what should we expect to find on this earth prior to the time when Christ returns at "the end" of the age?

_____ The daily news continually brings reports of wars and threats of wars taking place somewhere on this planet, whether far or near. In Luke 21:9 Jesus predicted that there would be wars and _____ (disturbances, revolutions, insurrections, people rising up to overthrow the existing government). Should the news of such things frighten and terrify the believer (Matthew 24:6)? _____ Why not? (Consider Matthew 24:25; John 16:4.)

[Note: When do we get upset and troubled by the weather? Is it when the weatherman predicts a rainy day and it rains or is it when he predicts a sunny day and we are unprepared when it turns out to be rainy?] The Lord clearly said that these things, including wars (circle the correct answer):

Matthew 24:6

- a) will never come to pass
- b) will not come to pass
- c) might come to pass
- d) must come to pass

The Lord told us ahead of time what to expect. His predictions, unlike the weather man's, are always correct. It is encouraging to know what the future holds. God is in control of all things and He is not surprised by any battle or conflict anywhere in the world.

World Peace, But Not Yet

Someday true peace will come to this war-torn planet, but peace will never come until Someone else comes first (Isaiah 9:6—"the P _____ of P _____"). Only then will all military warfare be abolished.

Who will cause wars to cease (Psalm 46:8-9)? _____ What will be done to the weapons and various instruments of war (Psalm 46:9 and Hosea 2:18)?

Before the Prince of Peace returns to earth, what will nations do to each other (Matthew 24:7)? _____ When the Lord Jesus Christ is ruling as King over all the earth (Micah 4:2), what will the nations no longer do to each other (Micah 4:3)? _____

Is the King going to teach the people who are living in the Kingdom (Micah 4:2)? _____ What is one thing that they will not learn (Micah 4:3)? _____ In the Kingdom Age, will there be a need for military schools and training centers for the army, navy and air force? _____

How long will this peace last (Isaiah 9:6-7)? _____ True or False _____: Even though men will stop fighting, the animals will continue to fight and kill during the Kingdom Age (Isaiah 11:6-9).



Is it possible to use weapons of war for helpful and peaceful purposes (Isaiah 2:4)? _____ How can the power of the atom be harnessed for destructive purposes? How can the power of

the atom be used for constructive purposes? How can fuel be used for purposes of war? How can oil be used for peaceful purposes?

Before the great prophecies of Isaiah 2:4 and Micah 4:3 can be fulfilled, what must happen (Joel 3:9-11)? _____ A great battle must precede the great peace! There will be "peace on earth" but not yet!

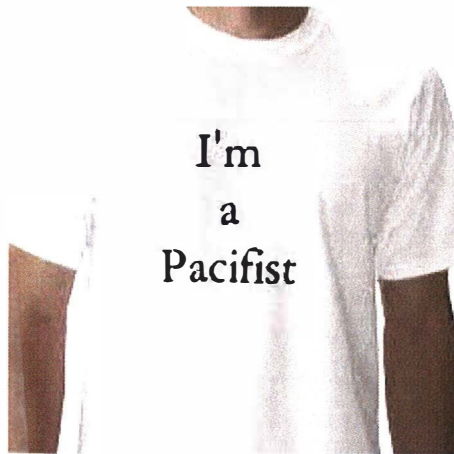
Why in the World Are There Wars?

Why is it absolutely necessary (see Matthew 24:6—"must") for wars to continue until the end of the age? James teaches us that wars find their source in man's sinful lusts and desires (James 4:1). In a sinless world, there would be no wars! In James 4:2 we see that lustful men "D_____ to H_____." What are some of the things that men "desire to have" which may result in a fight or in a full-scale war?

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____

Suppose there were only three men on a small, tropical island, and only one banana tree. Do you think they would lovingly share with each other or would there be war? Speaking of sinful men, the Bible says, "the way of _____ have they not known" (Romans 3:17). In a sinful world, warfare is often inevitable.

To Fight or Not to Fight



There are people today who are pacifists. This means that they are opposed to war and they would refuse to bear arms or fight for their country if called to do so. Should a Christian be a pacifist? Is it sinful for a believer to fight in a war? Is it wrong in God's sight to be a soldier?

Please answer the following questions:

1. Consider some of the godly men of the Old Testament, such as Abraham (Genesis 14), Joshua, David, Jehoshaphat (2 Chronicles 20). Were these men pacifists? Did these men ever go into battle?

2. When David killed Goliath (1 Samuel 17), was the Lord pleased or angry?
3. What did God teach David to do (Psalm 18:34 and 144:1)?
4. Does Hebrews 11:34 refer to some of the great war heroes of the past? Are they condemned for their bloodthirstiness or are they praised for their faith?
5. Did God ever command the children of Israel to go to war and to fight and kill (Deuteronomy 7:1-2; 1 Samuel 15:1-3)?
6. Has the Lord Himself ever killed people (Genesis 38:7,10; Exodus 12:29; Leviticus 10:1-2; Acts 5:1-10)?
7. When soldiers asked John the Baptist what they should do, did he tell them to quit their jobs and find some honest kind of work (Luke 3:14)?
8. Did Jesus tell the centurion not to continue in his wicked profession, or did He praise him for his faith (Matthew 8:9-10)?
9. In Luke 14:31-32 Jesus spoke about a king counting the cost and making sure he had enough soldiers to face the enemy. In 1 Corinthians 14:8 Paul speaks of using a trumpet to prepare the soldiers for battle. In 1 Corinthians 9:7 Paul mentions the fact that soldiers get paid for the services which they render. Do these passages even hint that it is wrong and sinful and immoral for a person to be a soldier and go to war if necessary?
10. In the last great battle at the end of the age, who will be the *Commander in Chief* (the One who holds the supreme command of the armed forces)? See Revelation 19:11-16.

Is Killing Always Sin?



The sixth commandment says, "THOU SHALT NOT _____" (Exodus 20:13). Does this mean that it is always wrong and sinful to kill? Actually, a better translation of this verse would be, "Thou shalt not MURDER." (See Matthew 19:18 where this same commandment is translated, "THOU SHALT DO NO _____".)

Is there a difference between murder and killing? Murder involves the unlawful and wicked killing of a human being which is planned beforehand (not done accidentally). Killing is a more general word which simply means "to put to death." All murder is killing but not all killing is murder.

The Ten Commandments are given in Exodus chapter 20. In the very next chapter, the Bible says (Exodus 21:12): "He that smiteth a man, so that he die, shall be surely _____." In this case, God says that a murderer must be put to death (killed). Today we would call this CAPITAL PUNISHMENT. The same punishment is found in Exodus 21:15-17 for other crimes. Those guilty of terrible crimes must be put to death. (See Luke 23:40-41 where the crucified criminal realized that he was getting just what he deserved!)

Suppose you were the person who had the responsibility of pulling the switch on the electric chair as a guilty criminal was being executed. Would you be guilty of committing an act of murder by doing this? According to Romans 13:4 you would be serving God and carrying out His will by performing such a duty. ("The sword" was commonly used as a method of capital punishment—see Acts 12:1-2.) Has God given man the right to put murderers to death (Genesis 9:6)? _____

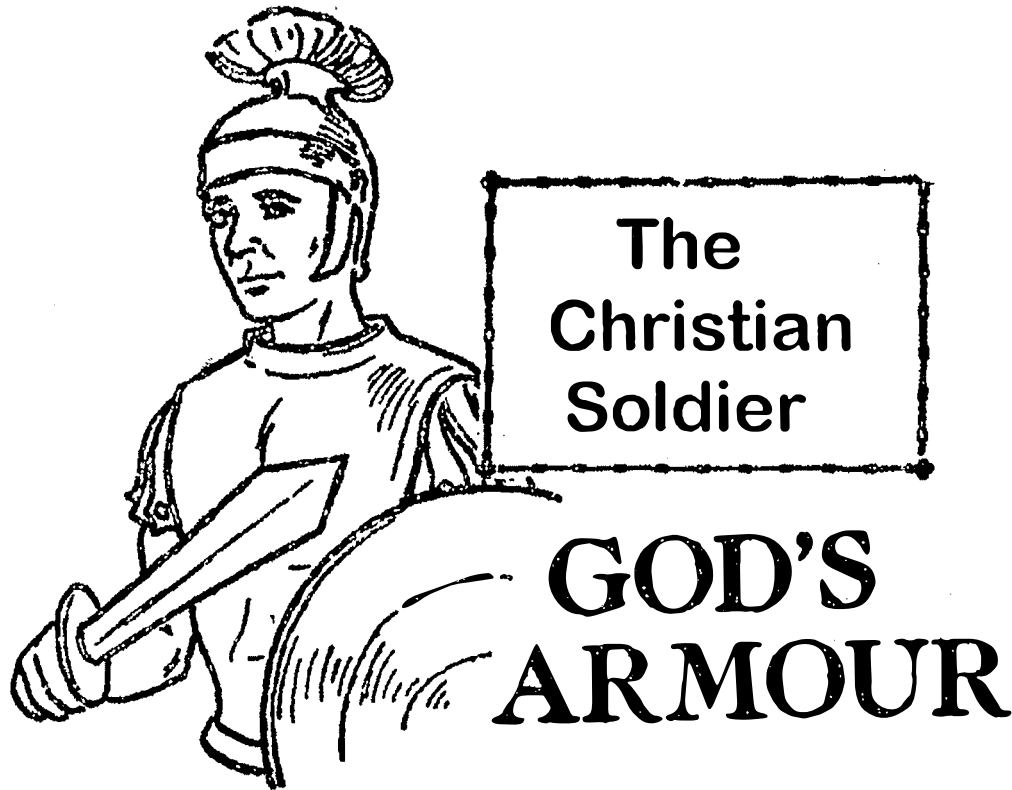
According to Exodus 22:2, does a man have the right to protect his family and property? _____ Does this verse describe an act of killing or an act of murder?

_____ If a policeman found it necessary to use his gun to shoot a criminal to protect himself and others, would this be murder? Would a father have the right to protect his family from a violent criminal who is seeking to harm his loved ones? If an individual has the right to defend himself, do you suppose that a nation also has the right of self-defense?

Killing is never pleasant or enjoyable, but in a sinful world, it is sometimes necessary. The job of a policeman or soldier is often very difficult, and at times it may cost his very life. Men have died so that we might live in freedom and in peace.

The Greatest Battle of All

Life's greatest battle takes place not on the outside, but on the inside. James speaks of the lusts and sinful pleasures that _____ in our members (James 4:1). All warfare can trace its beginning to this basic problem of the sinfulness and lustfulness of men. Peter commands believers to abstain from fleshly _____ which _____ against the soul (1 Peter 2:11). It is far easier to get an army and conquer a city than it is to conquer and control the sinful desires and lusts of our own heart. (Proverbs 16:32: "He that _____ his _____ is better than he that _____ a _____.") Only CHRIST can grant this kind of victory (Romans 7:24-25)!



Does God want Christians to fight (1 Timothy 6:12)? _____ Does God want Christians to go to war (1 Timothy 1:18)? _____ What kind of soldiers does Christ want us to be (2 Timothy 2:3-4)? _____ What kind of a soldier was the Apostle Paul (2 Timothy 4:7)? _____

Thought Questions:

1. When does a person become a soldier of Christ?
2. Who is our General and Commander in Chief?
3. Are women allowed to be soldiers in this army?
4. Who are the enemies?
5. What armor and weapons has God provided for His soldiers?
6. What are some things that should be true both about an earthly soldier and a Christian soldier? (For example, a soldier should always submit to and obey his commanding officers.)
7. Who is going to win the spiritual war?

Can you find verses from the Bible which help you in answering these questions?