

## Non-Resistance

What is non-resistance? Non-resistance is simply a doctrine taken from Scripture supporting the idea of abstention from violence and retaliation toward evil (Mat 5:39). It also encourages Believers to exercise non-participation in military or civil justice (policing), which require the use of lethal force and violence. This teaching, now largely unpopular with evangelicals, was once the predominant practice of the early Church and became the creed of many from the Reformation era such as the Anabaptists, Waldenses, and Huguenots.

Ironically, while most Christians believe the Mosaic Law no longer applies in the New Testament, they still favor an Old Testament model in respect to this issue. They justify the use of violence and fighting based on the example of how God required the Israelites to conquer their enemies and take over their land. Because of this error many Believers have taken a similar position in regards to war and political action. Yet we need only look at the institution of the Roman Catholic Church to see the tragic effects of such a belief system. The bloody conquests carried out by the Holy Crusaders, till presently, continue to mar the church in the eyes of society. This alone is reason to doubt the tenants of “just war theology” and to bring into question its principles and claims. Furthermore, we may want to investigate whether the Bible gives any credence to non-resistance, and if so, can it be proven? These are the issues we will pursue in the following study.

### EVIDENCE FOR NON-RESISTANCE

*But I say unto you, That **ye resist not evil**: but whosoever shall smite thee on thy right cheek, turn to him the other also (Mat 5:39).*

*And unto him that smiteth thee on the one cheek offer also the other; and him that taketh away thy cloke forbid not to take thy coat also (Luk 6:29).*

*But I say unto you, **Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them which despitefully use you, and persecute you** (Mat 5:44).*

*Behold, I send you forth as **sheep in the midst of wolves**: be ye therefore wise as serpents, **and harmless as doves** (Mat 10:16).*

*Ye have condemned and killed the just; **and he doth not resist you** (Jas 5:6).*

*For though we walk in the flesh, **we do not war after the flesh** (2Co 10:3).*

***For the weapons of our warfare are not carnal**, but mighty through God to the pulling down of strong holds (2Co 10:4).*

*But he turned, and rebuked them, and said, Ye know not what manner of spirit ye are of. **For the Son of man is not come to destroy men's lives, but to save them** (Luk 9:55-56).*

*Then said Jesus unto him, **Put up again thy sword into his place: for all they that take the sword shall perish with the sword** (Mat 26:52).*

*Jesus answered, My kingdom is not of this world: **if my kingdom were of this world, then would my servants fight**, that I should not be delivered to the Jews: **but now is my kingdom not from hence** (Joh 18:36).*

### **A Slap on the Face**

In Matthew 5 and Luke 6, Christians are instructed to accept **insult and injury** without retaliation. No reasonable individual can argue against the simple meaning of these texts. A slap on the face is both **insulting and injurious**, yet we are commanded not to fight back, but to endure it. But Jesus goes even further by requiring His followers not to retaliate when sued at law either. Instead, we are called to suffer the loss of our possessions and relinquish even more, if necessary, in order to trouble the conscience of our offender and put them to shame (Luke 6:29). This teaching can also be found in the book of Proverbs, and is often repeated throughout the New Testament. Notice:

***If thine enemy be hungry, give him bread to eat; and if he be thirsty, give him water to drink: For thou shalt heap coals of fire upon his head, and the LORD shall reward thee** (Pro 25:21-22).*

*Now therefore there is utterly a fault among you, **because ye go to law one with another. Why do ye not rather take wrong? why do ye not rather suffer yourselves to be defrauded?** (1Co 6:7)*

... Nevertheless we have not used this power; **but suffer all things**, lest we should hinder the gospel of Christ (1Co 9:12).

### **Defenseless Sheep & Harmless Doves**

In Matthew 10, we find the same principle of non-violence reiterated. Here Christians are depicted as defenseless sheep sent out among wolves. Sheep are not known for their great fighting ability. But they have the benefit of an altogether powerful “Shepherd”. Clearly, we are being primed for a vulnerable lifestyle. Jesus is attempting to train His followers to embrace the virtues of a new and better “Way”. Yet because He knows that His teachings will deeply conflict with our natural human tendencies and challenge our ability to fully trust Him, Christ issues the following warning: “be **harmless** as doves” (v. 16). If Jesus had any intention of endorsing the use of physical force in self-defense or encouraging His followers to fight back if attacked, here’s His opportunity. He would have said something like this: “I’m sending you out like scouts in enemy territory, be crafty as serpents and swift with the sword. Don’t give your enemy any advantages!”

The well respected Church father, Augustine, once said that the blood of martyrs was the seed of the Church. It was because the Church was willing to suffer death when faced with persecution that so many converts were made. Notice how the writer James qualifies the non-resistant attitude of true Saints: *Ye have condemned and killed the just; **and he doth not resist you*** (Jas 5:6). Now why were so many converts made on account of dead Christians—ever wonder? I believe it is because many people are naturally predisposed to align themselves with the weak, helpless, and vulnerable in society—the underdogs. **And such provoke their sympathies far more than a dying warrior.**

### **Spiritual Warfare**

It’s important that we also address the aspect of spiritual warfare as mentioned in Paul’s writings (2 Cor 10). If our world view is one in which we acknowledge the influence of darkness behind the facade of human expression, then we will not get defensive when confronted with human violence. **We will understand it to be a spiritual manifestation provoked by demonic agents.** So how in the world do we disarm such forces? Can we use a gun on Satan? Can we stab the demon of violence? We are told that, “our fight is not against flesh and blood”. So what are the rules that apply? The best way I can answer this question is by recounting the following story. You see, while

still living in Israel during my early childhood, we became aware of a missionary family who felt called to serve the Jewish people in order to win them to Christ. When their son was leaving school one day, he came to be surrounded by a group of Jewish Orthodox boys who were aware of his Christian faith. One of them was brandishing a crude weapon and was ready to deliver a blow to his head. The missionary boy was outnumbered and all he could do was resort to a **unique principle** he had learned from his parents. He was taught that the most powerful remedy for all physical or spiritual problems was to name the name of Jesus and the blood of the cross. And so raising his voice and pointing his finger, as I imagine it, he took authority over the satanic agent of violence manifesting through the boy with the weapon, and immediately the boy dropped to his knees right there before him and slumped into a crying heap. He was effectively disarmed and the demon left him. **The power of the blood and the name of Jesus are well recognized in hell, and even Satan cannot resist the authority of a child when faith and spiritual warfare are pitted against his powers.**

This true story illustrates a very important point. One may or may not be effective against an open display of violence when resorting to physical force. Many variables are at work which can lower or raise our efficacy with a weapon or our physical ability to combat an attacker seeking to harm us. How come the boy didn't simply rely on a good karate chop to disarm the other boy? Why didn't he just employ a well placed "kick to the groin" to do the job? Couldn't he have done these and taught those young thugs a good lesson? Friends, what for impression would this have left on the Jews that this family was called to evangelize if their son was practicing karate or meeting brutality with even more brutality? Do you see my point? Do you remember Christ's attitude with His disciples when called upon to display His might and wipe out the villagers who were opposing His message? Did He not say, ***For the Son of man is not come to destroy men's lives, but to save them*** (Luk 9:55-56)? Christ's attitude was loving. He did not desire any type of physical harm to befall the rebel villagers. Yet Christians today have forgotten about this and are quick to resort to physical force and retaliation when confronted with violence.

I wonder how we can take the words of Jesus literally in respect to loving and blessing our enemies, if we have no compunction with shooting them in the face when they turn on us. Is this truly a display of love??? If a Christian's entire soul is aflame with a passion to save the lost and see them transformed into beautiful people of faith, how can

he muster the self-will to harm a single one of God's created "potentials". Don't we believe in the redemptive power of the Gospel? Don't we see people as potential children of God—even those who are evil?? *For scarcely for a righteous man will one die: yet peradventure for a good man some would even dare to die. **But God commendeth his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us*** (Rom 5:7-8).

### **Those Who Take the Sword Shall Perish Thereby**

Another passage I find to be pertinent to this issue is located in Matthew 26. What did Jesus mean when admonishing Peter to put up his sword, ***for all those that take the sword, shall die by the sword***. Peter was only trying to defend Jesus from an unwarranted death. His action was altogether justified according to the Mosaic Law. He was doing the right thing! Nonetheless, Jesus recognized that Peter's problem was that he tended to rely upon physical means to accomplish his objective. And Christ was strong enough not only to protect Himself in this situation, but also all who were with Him. Peter didn't see that Christ wasn't in need of a squadron of soldiers to protect His Kingdom (Joh 18:36). Christ's Kingdom could easily exist on its own without any human aid or intervention. This was already guaranteed. So Jesus was at peace, resolved to commit His protection to the ONE who is altogether powerful. Yes, Jesus truly believed that everything was under God's control. However, there are those today who would rather take matters into their own hands. They wouldn't dare trust anyone else with their security and protection, and therefore they "live by the sword". In their own eyes, they believe themselves capable against the potential attacker or random shooter. But sadly, all those who have more confidence in their own weapons rather than the divine protection of God may be unable to resist the power of a deployed weapon on such a day as they are unprepared, ***for all those who live by the sword, shall die by the sword***. If you live thinking the sword will protect you, one day it may be turned against you to your own detriment. Jesus made it clear that whoever tries to protect his life would ultimately lose it (Mat 16:25). May we take this warning seriously.

***Some trust in chariots, and some in horses: but we will remember the name of the LORD our God*** (Psa 20:7).

## EVIDENCE AGAINST NON-RESISTANCE

While it's impossible to locate Scriptures directly denouncing non resistance, there are some, however, that appear to justify the use of lethal force or violence. Some of these are as follows which we will examine more closely:

*Then said he unto them, But now, he that hath a purse, let him take it, and likewise his scrip: **and he that hath no sword, let him sell his garment, and buy one.** And they said, Lord, behold, **here are two swords.** And he said unto them, **It is enough** (Luk 22:36-38).*

*And **the soldiers** likewise demanded of him, saying, **And what shall we do?** And he said unto them, **Do violence to no man**, neither accuse any falsely; and be content with your wages (Luk 3:14).*

*And when Jesus was entered into Capernaum, there came unto him **a centurion**, beseeching him (Mat 8:5).*

*There was a certain man in Caesarea called Cornelius, **a centurion of the band called the Italian band** (Act 10:1).*

### **Sell Your Garment & Buy a Sword**

Luke 22:36 is probably the most popular scripture with those who try to disprove non-resistance. It is also highly misunderstood. What exactly did Jesus mean when instructing His disciples to sell their garment and go buy a sword? To solve this, **we must examine the context** of this verse. Notice the surrounding passages and the subject being discussed:

*And he said unto them, **When I sent you without purse, and scrip, and shoes, lacked ye any thing? And they said, Nothing.** Then said he unto them, **But now (v.36)...** For I say unto you, that this that is written must yet be **accomplished in me** (Luk 22:35-37).*

By studying the preceding passages, specifically verse 36 and following, we begin to realize that Jesus is speaking in symbolic terms. Two other such examples exist in which the word “sword” is used figuratively, not literally—Mat 10:34 and Luk 2:35. Christ does this quiet often and always seems to catch His disciples off guard. Like the time He

warned them to avoid the “leaven” of the Pharisees but really meant hypocrisy (Mat 16:6). So this is another one of those examples where Christ is using symbolic language to convey an important message. He reminds them that the last time they were sent on an assignment they were instructed **not to take anything extra along—neither “purse, scrip, nor shoes”**. And even so, *lacked they anything* (v.35)? No. This was to demonstrate that Jesus Christ, being physically present, was backing their endeavors. They had His full support behind them. He was still on earth. He could be counted on at anytime to troubleshoot them in the event they ran a muck or found themselves in a snag. So they could afford to go “light” and not hassle with too much “baggage”. **BUT NOW**, things were about to change. They were at the point of needing to graduate from boot camp and learn how to get on independently. **Jesus was leaving the scene**, and in His absence they would have to fend for themselves like *real soldiers*. **Christ would no longer be around (physically) to rescue them as He did in the past**. So they would have to practice their own spiritual strategies and learn to use the real sword--the “sword of the Spirit” (Eph 6:17; Heb 4:12). Why? **For (because) I say unto you, that this that is written must yet be accomplished in me**. Now while this interpretation may seem simple enough, many Christians simply don’t get it. And just like Peter, they try to use the sword in a violent gesture, forgetting Christ’s piercing rebuke: **all they that live by the sword, shall die by the sword!**

### **John the Baptist, the Roman Centurion, & Cornelius**

The next text we come to is located in Luke 3 and involves the instruction given by John the Baptist to the Jewish soldiers. I would agree with those who argue that he wasn’t advocating non-violence when commanding them to “do violence to no man”. It’s commonly understood that this instruction was in connection to the extortion practiced by the military at the expense of their subjects. A frequent habit of many underpaid soldiers was to use brutality in order to rob civilians and levy unnecessary fines against them. This is what John was referring to when telling them to cease being violent with others. And while I agree with the common interpretation of this passage, I still don’t believe this verse in any way invalidates non-resistance. Nor do the others given above in reference to the Roman centurion and Cornelius. Just because we find John giving the soldiers special instructions regarding how to behave, but we don’t see him telling them to step down from soldiering doesn’t constitute a valid argument. Or just because Jesus meets up with the Roman centurion and Peter with Cornelius, but neither require these individuals to abandon their posts, isn’t substantial enough proof to make any

definitive claims pro or against anything. This is nothing more than an argument from silence.

But let me point out several reasons why I believe John, Christ, and Peter *didn't* compel soldiers to leave their posts of duty as a pre-qualifier. First, it should be noted that God doesn't expect you to understand every doctrine of Scripture prior to communion and baptism. There are some issues of faith that we learn as we mature in our walk with the Lord. This is God's gracious way of keeping us from becoming overwhelmed—"His yoke is easy, His burden light" (Mat 11:30). Second, the New Testament period didn't officially begin until Pentecost. It would have been counterintuitive for Jesus and John to ask men to abandon the military if the Old Testament dispensation had not yet concluded. The Law was still in function and continued to remain relevant until the day of Pentecost.

Regarding Cornelius, Peter and the other Apostles were not fully aware of doctrine yet. How would they have possibly known to instruct him against military service if they hadn't hammered out their own issues of doctrine as of this period, let alone a matter like non-resistance? The book of Acts is simply a chronicle of the birth and growth of the first century Church. Not until Peter was directed to evangelize Cornelius and his family was he even aware that the Gospel was just as valid for a Gentile as for the Jew. And not until the first council of Jerusalem did any of them even grasp that circumcision was not a salvific prerequisite for Gentile converts. Once again, the book of Acts simply chronicles the early Church's process of maturity. While it's possible to maintain and support certain doctrines by it, we should be careful how we read into the accounts provided therein. Otherwise, we could end up deciding to make a Nazarene vow and offer up sacrifices at the temple like the Apostle Paul in Acts 18:18 and 21:26. Sadly, there are some un-discerning Christians who use this book inappropriately in this manner.

## **ETHICAL QUALMS WITH NON-RESISTANCE**

### **Theoretical Situations**

It's amazing just how many "theoretical" situations can be averted by the mere act of **preemptive prayer**. Oh, what a powerful weapon this is!! I hear Christians submitting all kinds of possible scenarios in the event of "this or that"—usually involving your wife getting raped and your children shot at, etc. However, I don't find myself easily shaken by these foolish "theories" loaded with potential "what ifs". Friends, I don't know of a

single Christian family that has had to endure such things. **Any family who is living in the perfect will of God and completely submissive to God's Word will not have to avail themselves with the carnal "sword"**. God's angels of protection will follow them wherever they go. Let me quote to you this promise as found in the Scriptures:

*But there shall not an hair of your head perish (Luk 21:18).*

*Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, **I will fear no evil**: for thou art with me; thy rod and thy staff they comfort me (Psa 23:4).*

*He that dwelleth in the secret place of the most High shall abide under the shadow of the Almighty (Psa 91:1).*

Unfortunately, the Christians who are proposing such theories are motivated by fear and struggle to acquire the faith necessary to entrust God with their security. They are not abiding in the peace that "surpasseth" all understanding (Php 4:7). Jesus taught us to pray asking God to keep us from temptation and deliver us out of evil (Mat 6:13). If Christians don't heed this advice and fail to erect a "spiritual hedge of protection" around their families and households *every day*, just like Job, then there is much to fear. If they haven't studied the principles of spiritual warfare, as mentioned earlier, then yes, they should begin insulating themselves against every imaginable risk and liability. They should arm themselves to the teeth and construct a well fortified castle in order to conceal themselves from all forms of danger. But it's far better to trust God with our future and let Him defend and protect us.

### **A Damsel in Distress**

Now many raise a practical objection to the thought of leaving another human being defenseless to criminal attack, and rightly so. They quote Proverbs 24 and the instruction given about rescuing someone in grave danger in order to validate their concern:

*If thou forbear to deliver them that are drawn unto death, and those that are ready to be slain; If thou sayest, Behold, we knew it not; doth not he that pondereth the heart consider it? and he that keepeth thy soul, doth not he know it? and shall not he render to every man according to his works? (Prov. 24:11-12).*

I'm one who completely agrees with the notion of rescuing a damsel in distress from a sexual assault. I believe the instruction in Proverbs 24 is clear enough and doesn't require any special decoding. By God's grace, if I should ever witness anyone in a situation as described in the above passage, I hope to be brave enough to risk my life on their behalf. To throw myself in between them and their attacker. Or even employ the use of **physical and non-lethal force** in the event I had to pry the weapon, if possible, out of the attacker's grasp. But before using physical force (**non-lethal**), I would silently pray and exercise spiritual warfare by taking authority over the demonic entity present. I would then rely on the guidance of the Holy Spirit to show me how to proceed. I may decide the situation is best left to an officer of the law and avail myself of the justice described in Romans 13.

Likewise if a woman is attacked by a man seeking to rape her, she should first pray and take spiritual authority over the demonic presence at work. As a secondary measure, and if the attacker is too close to make an escape, she should cry for help and use physical force to repel him, otherwise her integrity would likely be questioned. But I say this doubtful that such a lady has been walking close to God and acting preemptively for such a situation to materialize. It could very well be that she had ignored all the warning signs like Dina, Jacob's daughter, and placed herself in a vulnerable situation (Gen 34:7). Had she gone out unaccompanied? Dressed provocatively or immodestly, as many women today? Had she ventured into dangerous territory, at the wrong hour, etc? As mentioned before, I've yet to find a godly and upright woman who's been walking close to the Lord testify of being raped. We must conclude, then, that **the best self-defense a Christian can practice is preemptive action. And the best preemptive action we can take is to entrust ourselves fully into God's care.**

### **Taking Jesus Literally**

An opponent of non-resistance has this to share about taking all of Christ's words literally:

*If we were to take Jesus' teachings "literal" in the way you speak of, I would only pray in my closet, I would never plan the next day, I would not work for my food, I would sell my shirt and buy a sword, I might cut off my hand or pluck out my eye, I would never own two coats, I would only wear sandals, I would go the second mile with any cause where I was asked to help (good or bad), I would never resist any evil –*

*meaning I would never discipline myself or my children, I would yield to temptation, and would never fight against the devil, false doctrine, etc. And I would take Christ's instruction to mean that, "if a man take my daughter, give him my wife also."*

This writer is spot on. Taking Jesus' words to an unwarranted extreme is dangerous. We should be careful not to capitulate to everyone's demands or lie down and roll over at people's whim. This is not what Jesus commanded. Nor did He advocate a philosophy of absolute pacifism. I think that any logical and well-discerning student of Scripture will readily read between the lines of what Christ is saying in order to decipher His message intelligibly. Jesus often employed metaphorical language to express a profound truth. Up until now we have not been using reckless hermeneutics to interpret Scripture. We have accumulated pertinent passages relevant to our subject from every spectrum of Scripture, allowing God's Word to interpret itself. **Any who wish to use this petty argument to demonize the doctrine of non-resistance should align themselves with the humanists and moralists of our times, who commonly employ such rhetoric in their own writings.**

## **PROBLEMS WITH SELF-DEFENSE**

### **Criminal Violence Vs. Christian Persecution**

Some Christians like to separate the use of self-defense into two categories. They claim self defense is appropriate when confronted by "criminal violence", but not in the context of Christian persecution. But upon what grounds can they make this distinction? If Scripture is supreme, we should be able to point people to a particular text in support of this argument, but the problem is that none exist. Instead, the Scriptures instruct us to value men's lives and to endeavor to bring them to salvation. Any who are willing to harm others in order to save themselves are not influenced by the right spirit: ...***Ye know not what manner of spirit ye are of, for the Son of Man is not come to destroy men's lives, but to save them*** (Luk 9:56).

Furthermore, I find it amusing when Christians suggest there's a difference in the way they are called to die, whether through martyrdom or "thuggery". Such a fine line is hardly distinguishable and can be easily exploited. This is best demonstrated in the following story:

An eloquent preacher spent Sunday morning encouraging his church to uphold the Fifth Amendment and to support the “right to bear arms”. They had a duty to society. And in the event they had to protect themselves or others, they should be well armed, was his logic.

“However”, said he, “If you are challenged for your faith at the pain of death, suffer it like a noble martyr!”

Now what if upon hearing such a teaching one of the congregants present got wise and decided to rob him under the pretext of religious persecution? He could easily disarm the pastor while pretending to test his resolve to die for Christ. He could then proceed to loot his house quiet easily and the pastor would have to “suffer it like a noble martyr”, right?? Do you see the silliness of such thinking?

### **Crossfire Victims**

Another reason why I wouldn't dare use a gun to defend myself or anyone else is simply due to the prospect of a full blown shootout between me and the criminal party. Many civilians and innocents were unintentionally shot dead by police and military trying to disarm and control a mad shooter. The prospect of hazarding my loved ones by placing them in the crossfire of a shootout is too much for me to bear.

### **JUST WAR THEOLOGY**

Just war theology is commonly taught in many Churches today. Christians are encouraged to go off and fight foreign enemies in order to preserve their country's security. But what do you do when two “Christian nations” must go to war with each other? *Both* sides are fighting what they believe to be a “just war”. *Both* sides are serving their government militarily due to a wrong understanding of Romans 13. And *both* sides are Christian in their own right, but are killing each other in the name of God. This is exactly what happened between the Allied forces and the Axis powers during WWII. What a miserable situation!

Moreover, consider the fact that when Christians join the military they must learn to hate and kill, not love and forgive. This is best illustrated in the following story:

*One young man who had been in the army during World War II, tells how one of his buddies in training was kind of softhearted. When they were training, they were to*

*drive their bayonets into the stomachs of a dummy victim. This fellow was kind of slow and timid about the whole thing, and finally the officer lost his patience, swore at the young fellow, and ordered him to get up in front of that dummy and "cut out his guts." He reminded him that this was war, and not a Sunday School picnic, and that every man in the camp was there to learn how to kill Germans.*

The above example is the very reason why the Church is not commissioned to wage war with physical weapons (2 Cor. 10:4). Such deadly force will never accomplish anything good for God's Kingdom. But when Christians employ spiritual powers, much can be done to forward our cause. Take the weapon of prayer for example. When during the persecutions of the early church Peter was cast into prison, the Bible says, *prayer was made without ceasing, of the Church, unto God for him.* The people prayed. Here the power of prayer was pitted against the power of the armed might of the Roman Empire—and those who prayed won the battle! The iron gate opened and Peter was set free! More things are wrought through prayer than this world can imagine.

## **THE LEVITES**

The Levites of the Old Testament were one of the twelve tribes of Israel and were dedicated to God in the service of the priesthood. They were considered to be so devoted to the Lord that when Moses numbered the Israelites to determine how many were able to go to war (Num 1:3), the Levites were explicitly excluded (see verse 47). They were not to fight in battle or have any bloodshed on their hands, as this would disqualify them from service (Num 1:45-50; 31:19). Their full time occupation was to fulfill the "charge" of the Lord. But while they were forbidden from bearing the sword, they were permitted to take part in the battle procession by blowing the trumpets and carrying the holy relics into war.

What is so significant about this tribe is how they were taken by the Lord instead of the "firstborn" of all the tribes of Israel. Thus the tribe of Levi became the typical "Church of the first-born." Paul writes, ***to the general assembly and church of the firstborn, which are written in heaven*** (Hebrews 12:23). The first-born in typological Israel were the Levites because they were substituted for the *literal* first-borns. No scholar of Scripture will dispute the fact that the Levites typify the New testament Church. The parallels between them are too stunningly similar. Both the Levites and the Church have no physical inheritance in the land (Heb 11:13; 1 Pet 2:11). Both have been designated unto a priestly role (1 Pet 2:9; Rev 5:10). Both have been charged with offering sacrifices

unto God, the one in physical kind, the other of a spiritual (Heb 13:15). Like the Levites, we have access to come into the holy of holies to appear before God with confidence and boldness (Heb 4:16). And while the Levites had the duty of maintaining a continual fire before God's altar, the Church is tasked with keeping the flame of God's love from dying out (2 Tim 1:6; Rev 2:4; 3:19). **Yet just like the Levites were prohibited from engaging in any type of violence and bloodshed, the same prohibition now applies to the "Church of the Firstborn".**

One of the most significant facts, clearly corresponding to the Church, are the cities of refuge which were under the stewardship of the Levites. Six of the Levitical cities had a special function: *And among the cities which ye shall give unto the Levites there **shall be six cities for refuge*** (Num 35:6). By selecting these cities God arranged that those who were pursued by the "avenger of blood" because of accidental homicide would be kept safe as long as they abode in one of these refuge places. But where might a sinner obtain refuge? The Bible tells us that God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble (Psalm 46:1). From the moment we recognize that we are sinners, we realize that the avenger, Justice (the Law), is upon our trail, and that we will be overtaken and destroyed unless we reach some place of refuge. Therefore we have fled for refuge from sin's consequences to lay hold of the hope set before us (Hebrews 6:18). But Christ is our only refuge, and only to Him may we flee. **The Church, therefore, is to extend the same ministry to the sinner seeking refuge.** We have become the "**aroma of salvation to them that are perishing**" (2 Cor 2:15-16), not "death, unto death" (2 Cor 2:16), as justice and law demand.

**It makes sense now why the work of Temple building and the duty of service was withheld from David and passed onto his son, Solomon.** Notice what God says about this: *But God said unto me, Thou shalt not build an house for my name, because thou hast been **a man of war, and hast shed blood*** (1 Chronicles 28:3). The fact that David was a man of war and had bloodshed on his hands didn't sit well with God. He couldn't abide any form of human bloodshed in connection to the work of His temple. All these types and antitypes exist so that we could better understand the supreme role of the New Testament Church.

Lastly, we will look at Numbers 31. For while it is an important chapter for understanding the basic requirements of the Levites, it also gives us the full account of the war between Israel and Midian. After soundly defeating the Midianites, **Moses**

**instructed the men of war to slay all the non-virgin women and “every man child” (boys).** The only ones excluded from performing this gruesome task were the Levites who were dedicated to God’s service. After this horrific bloodbath, these men were instructed to purify themselves for seven days while abiding outside the camp: *And do ye abide without the camp seven days: whosoever hath killed any person, and whosoever hath touched any slain...* (Num 31:19). It’s amazing that while God spared the Levites from having to perform these killings, there are Christians today who would still rather go to war and participate in all of these atrocities. How shameful!!!

## **PRACTICAL NON-RESISTANCE**

So what are some practical steps we could take in relation to non-resistance and avoiding the use of violence? What are the actions that best fit with God’s Word? The following list may greatly benefit those endeavoring to live a non-resistant lifestyle:

Note: Some of the portions below were copied from an online source (in blue).

### 1. Flee

This would apply to Christians during times of persecution. Matthew 10:23 says, ...when they persecute you in this city, flee ye into another... Paul did this once when the city of Damascus was kept with a garrison. The brethren let him down over the wall in a basket with ropes, and he escaped. God broke Peter and others out of jail. To flee from one city to another or one government to another is the first and best mode of response when the government is behind the persecution or unable to stop it. Even Jesus used this on a number of occasions.

### 2. Appeal to Authority

This is what Paul did in Acts 25:11. He appealed to the Roman Supreme Court for protection against his persecutors. This includes calling the police, alerting proper authorities, etc. The Christian is not allowed to avenge himself by means of a lawsuit, but, just as Paul, he is allowed to defend himself through legal channels. Paul made use of his Roman citizenship to avoid injustice on a number of occasions. He appealed to Caesar; his Roman citizenship; and reported the Jew’s evil plans to the authorities for protection.

### 3. Suffer

This is what we have already given sufficient Scripture for. We must commit our case to God and cry out for deliverance. We are not allowed to deny Christ or his doctrine in the

face of death or torture. If we are faithful unto death, we will receive the crown of eternal life. In every instance love, not hate; Spirit, not flesh; and God's will, not our own, must be the motivating factor. The man who has been habitually studying and following the principles of Scripture will receive the Spiritual guidance he needs at the crucial time.

## **CONCLUSION**

Today, we have a bit of a dilemma. While Believers enjoy the idea of tithing, which belonged solely to the Levites, they refuse to have their rights revoked and are unwilling to do without a physical inheritance. Furthermore, they prefer to maintain the same practice of warfare that belonged to national Israel, but from which the Levites were excluded--*killing*. It seems we would rather customize our priestly designation to our own specifications rather than allow God to stipulate how we ought to serve Him. I hope we may recognize this failure on our part and repent of it.

In Christ,  
John A.