

Registration, Draft, and Participation in War

The stance of the early Church toward the Roman Empire resulted in the frequent persecution and martyrdom of Christians. Popularized versions of hymn singing Christians thrown to the lions may have distorted for us the situation of those first believers. Their persecution was not simply a result of a mad tyranny; the Roman Empire was praised for being so “civilized.” Rather, the plight of these Christians and the severity of their persecution was due in large measure to their uncompromising obedience to Messiah and His government (kingdom), which made them an upsetting thorn in the side of the political establishment. Their full commitment to the Way of their Lord threatened the security and power of the mighty Roman Empire.

It wasn’t so much a case of some frenzied Caesar who really wanted to “kill those Christians.” But it was just that the believers could not participate in what they clearly saw as an unjust system. When they refused to give ultimate allegiance to the Roman Empire, declined to participate on court juries or serve in the political structures of that day, or be inducted into the Roman Army, they threw a cog into the wheels of the Roman system.

The believers did not go out of their way to boast of their non-allegiance to the Emperor. Rather, they tended to live at peace with the State until the State forced them to make a commitment in opposition to their faith. Also, the acts of allegiance required by Roman law were not created primarily to antagonize Christians and to bring conflict to a head; rather, it was simply a matter of something occasionally required by the State to assure loyalty among all its citizens, not an uncommon requirement for any worldly state.

The situation today is even worse. Although the separation of Church and State guaranteed in the Constitution insures us the freedom of “religion”, it is clear that our “secular” state continues to make religious claims on its citizens. We have freedom of religion, yet we do not have the freedom to decide if we should kill another for the protection of the State.

WAR

Mt 26:52 — “Put up the sword.” The disciples of Yahshua have put away their swords. They see the inevitable destruction that comes upon those that practice murder (Gen 9:5 6). **Jn 18:36 — “My servants do not fight.”** The servants of Messiah are part of no other earthly government; therefore they do not fight for or against them. **Mt 5:21 22 —** We not only do not kill, we are not even to yield to anger in our heart toward others. **Mt 5:38 41 —** Our enemies may commit outrageous acts against Yah’s people but our response must be that of forgiving love. No more exact law of retribution (“An eye for an eye”). **Mt 5:43 45 —** Whatever enemies we may have are not to be killed, but loved and prayed for, that we can be true sons of our Father and not just pretenders.

In the Old Covenant, the people could not fathom the Spirit and love of Yah in the heart, but we who are in the New Covenant, who are in Him and He in us, “One spirit with the Lord”, can. We have the mind of Messiah. The Old Covenant saints had to be “taken by the hand” (Heb 8), but we have the Spirit in our hearts. We know the nature of things that they could not know. We know the true *enemy*; they merely looked on things outwardly. We see things as they are, who our enemy really is. What they did relates to us now in a *new and living way*, not in the old letter. What they did in the natural is typical to us in the spiritual warfare.

The only justifiable wars in human history have been undertaken immediately and directly in obedience to the definitely expressed command from Yah. In such cases Elohim chose to make man, instead of plague or famine, the agent of His act of judgment. The history of “our nation” Israel, the nation of our forefathers, our progenitors, proves that when wars were undertaken only under these conditions, the loss of life was almost entirely upon the side of those against whom Yah sent His Hosts. When Elohim’s people entered into war upon their own initiative or without *faith*, without trust and confidence or a good conscience, without first hearing from the Elohim of heaven and thereby obeying Him, they were slaughtered. And even in the case of Achan in Jos 7, it was because of the sin of one person that the whole nation suffered defeat in that one battle. Even in the leaders, they misheard the Lord in sending only a few to battle, they were

confident in the flesh not in the pure hearing of the Lord. Yah was with them but not fighting for them. He disciplined them as a Father.

The whole history of Israel was recorded and written down for our instruction, to prove that the Sixth Commandment was of absolute importance. Ex 20:13 — You shall not murder. This now extends to any taking of human life. We are able to fulfill what was only glimpsed in the Old Covenant. Lk 9:52-56 — There is no bringing wrath down on those that mistreat us. We are not of that spirit. Human life is precious. This sacred basic human law is for all time and for this very hour we live in, in this age the law becomes absolute, since Messiah has come. But since the Old Covenant days of Israel, NO transfer has been made to the nations and governments of this world, except in the church through the prayer initiated by the Holy Spirit. The right of “Handing over,” loosing and binding, locking and unlocking, forgiving and not forgiving. 2 Cor 10:3-6 — We do have a warfare and an enemy but it is of an entirely different sort than that of Old Covenant Israel. We do not war as natural men, enlisting in armies to fight politicians’ unjust wars. Our weapons are not the swords and guns of the physical realm, but mighty spiritual weapons of the true church that allow true healing to come to the most hardened sinner who desires salvation. We tear down the strongholds in men’s consciences that keep them from seeing the true Elohim. Eph 6:11 12 — Our war preparations are spiritual, allowing us to destroy the unseen government of Satan that is behind all wars.

Now all killing is murder, except that which is purely accidental. No “killing” today is justifiable for purposes of revenge. The destruction of life for revenge or for “righteousness” the Lord rebuked in His own disciples and we are to teach the nations these things. When they wanted to call fire down from heaven upon those that refused to hear Him. *All WAR* was condemned absolutely by the teaching and action of Messiah, when in the garden He rebuked Peter for using the sword (Mt 26:52-53; Jn 18:36).

POLITICAL WARS

The government may soothe one’s conscience in making war and killing justifiable, but the Lord will hold the one who takes up the sword accountable regardless of the politicians. They will not be able to defend you at the judgment of Yah. They have cleverly deceived and cajoled you. The church will fight in war only if someone can justify war in light of the Word of Yah’s Son in the New Testament. It is often argued that in defense of the weak and oppressed, war may be justifiable — which is a good argument in the flesh. But it is not for us who are of His kingdom. If His kingdom were of this world then HIS SERVANTS would fight. We do not take our standard of conduct from the most refined and cultured paganism but from Yahshua Himself, who speaks to this age. Yahshua denounces war. *It is of the highest importance for us to know this, for this will be our downfall if we do not have convictions here, as in the school issue.*

CONVICTION: The state of being convinced or convicted by conscience, in one’s heart and mind, where Yah has put His laws in this age. So we must put our sword in its place, regarding this issue. It must be a conviction of the heart (Acts 2:37). Mt 26:52 — Put your sword in its “place”, for all those who take up the sword shall perish by the sword. Armageddon will prove this ultimately, but the heavenly Father will save His Servants. No nation under heaven has Yah’s sanctions upon their wars. No earthly nation is to assume they are Yah’s holy nation and that they are “one nation under God” and “in God they trust.” This is, of course, anti Christ, to justify the conscience of man to fight the politicians’ wars — under a false patriotism, which was put into them from birth to murder without remorse in conscience. “A conscience branded as with a hot iron.” Rom 2:14-15 — The Word of Yah and the righteous requirements of the gospel of Messiah must reach their stony consciences to free them from the politicians’ gospel of murder for freedoms’ sake. War is murder and is the breaking of Yah’s law, which results in death. So they must hear the good news and repent.

Yahshua denounced war (Mt 26:52-53; Jn 18:36) when it was suggested for His defense against the malice and wickedness of the most unholy coalition that the world has ever seen. Nothing greater than this could possibly justify war. But nothing, not even this, justified war. How much less are we justified by what men do to us (Jn 15:19-20)? Anyone who attempts to justify war under any circumstances must do so at the cost of calling in question the wisdom of Yahshua’s actions.

The same may be applied to capital punishment. No government on earth, unless they are in communion with

the Son (Heb 1:2), has a right to take a human life through any legislation, and if they did hear from Yah, a sword would never be lifted to take action in this age. This gospel of the kingdom must be proclaimed as a witness to this age before the next age can begin, as the foretaste of it. We, His Servants, bring a little bit of the Kingdom age into the present age by the obedience of the gospel (Rom 1:5). Gal 1:4 — That delivers us from this present evil age and brings us into the next age. While yet we are in the world, we are not of it. We re present the future age before it arrives. For we know His mind. We are called to this banquet today for a taste (Heb 6:4 5) in the church. Many cannot come for various reasons.

Jms 4:1 5; 1 Jn 5:19 — The only reason a believer would fall into wars would be by being deceived into an unrighteous friendship with the world. He is caught up in the conflicting lusts of unregenerate men. He is then led to kill and support killing by the society based on such lusts. All wars, however righteously appearing, are based on this underlying principle of selfish ambition, which we are not to be a part of. When we see injustice, our responsibility is to pray. As king Hezekiah said about an Assyrian king who was attacking Jerusalem, “Do not be afraid or discouraged because of the enemy and the vast army with him, for there is greater power with us than with him. With him is only the arm of the flesh, but with us is Yahweh our Elohim to help us and to fight our battles” (2 Chr 32:7 8). He had confidence to say this because he and Isaiah had prayed to Yahweh.

Rev 19:17 21; 16:14 16 — in the book of Revelation, wars are obviously the judgment of Yah on the men of this age who have persisted in unbelief. It is not the activity of the saved. These wars will culminate in a great war involving all of the kings of the earth under the sway of the Satanic Antichrist. They will gather with all of these armies to do battle against the Son of Yah and they will all be slain. We do not want to be found among those who have taken a stand against Yahshua by being a part of the armies of the earth.

DRAFT REGISTRY

The question is not, “Does the government have the right to draft (involuntary conscription)?” but, rather, “Does the government have the right to wage war?” Clearly, it does not, so we cannot be a part of its training for war or even registering for the draft. We believe that the heavenly government or Kingdom is present now amongst the disciples of Yahshua. We are seeking to obey Him as the King in our heart. We desire to obey the Word of Yahweh. We no longer seek to get justice or advance our cause by personal force or violence. We have gotten rid of our weapons (even those of the heart). We do not subject ourselves to this training for war. We are seeking to learn how to forgive and submit and love. We have left the ways of death behind and are expecting the Messiah’s coming reign of peace, which is now beginning in our own hearts. We want to follow the Prince of Peace and that is all we will ever want to do.

We do not agree with the practice and training of the arts of war. Men do not have the right to kill or use force to hurt others for any reason whatsoever. Even the draft registration form itself represents an unjustified intrusion into our personal lives. It takes information and distributes it to innumerable government agencies and computer centers, making it readily available to a great number of people. Caesar (the government) claims that all the young men 18 years and older belong to him. But he has claimed what is not his, but Yahweh’s alone. Mt 22:15 22 — We are in the image of Elohim and are not subject to a government’s authority when it goes beyond its bounds in this way.

Rev 12:11 17; 14:9 11 — We believe that at the end of this age, the world will be united by one man who is utterly insensitive to the requirements of Yahweh on the human heart. He will attempt to unite all men in rebellion against Elohim and in opposition to His church. The fact that information given in answer to the Selective Service Registration would be so widely shared within the government and involves the use of Social Security numbers (which we don’t participate in) as identification makes us feel like we are being led into the system of this Antichrist. We have no desire to submit to the order and system of this system, even at the cost of our own personal welfare. The greater and greater influence of the government in areas of our lives is but the first form this system will take. We therefore resist it now. We must obey the Father as He has spoken to our consciences. We realize that even those working for the Selective Service or the government in general may not realize the evil result of their efforts. They are just going along, ignoring their conscience by saying, “I’m just doing my job,” regardless of how it hurts others. But we must recognize the plain testimony of the Word of Yah. We warn all men to repent and come out of this doomed system before it is too late.

NEW COVENANT

So, in light of the New Covenant days, there is no justification for war, and capital punishment has no place. 1 Jn 3:11 15 — “You know that no murderer has eternal life in him.” Only in Old Israel could there be any justification for physical punishment (death penalty) by the hand of men, provided only if the Lord had spoken to them by the prophets, or the rulers had judged according to the law broken to justify death. No earthly government today has this justification from the law of Yah. All else is the law of man, borrowing from the Bible certain laws and fitting them into their economy, justifying murder and the breaking of the Sixth Commandment from Sinai. The law still stands since the sky and the earth are still here (Mt 5:18).

Modern day murder is more and more subtle. Breaking of the Sixth Commandment by the wealthy, who rent out the slum houses. The death of a little child in the over crowded hell holes of the slums is murder by the man who gathers his wealth from the rat infested houses without a care for those who perish, that he may gain. “Am I my brother’s keeper?” The words of the first murderer ring out still as the same guilty excuses are made about the man’s contempt in his heart for his fellow man.

Yah has not for the last 2000 years delegated to a nation “His own right” over human life, for among the records there is none proving that He has ordained war, since His Son declined the use of the sword for the winning of His victories. In what sense is the Sixth Commandment binding upon those who are actually within the Kingdom, Messiah being the absolute Monarch in their lives?

In the law of the Kingdom enunciated upon the Mount (Mt 5 7), He said (Heb 1:2), “You have heard it said to them in old times, thou shalt not (do murder) or kill, and whoever kills shall be guilty before the court or judgment, and whoever shall say to his brother ‘Raca’ (worthless, of no account, low life, dog) shall be guilty before the supreme court, and whoever shall say, ‘You fool!’ shall be in danger or guilty enough to go to Hell (Gehenna) of fire.” Here murder is tracked to its root: anger, and if anger be in the life of one of the king’s subjects, such subjects are in danger of judgment. That if anger finds an expression in contempt (saying “Raca”), such subjects shall be in danger of the supreme court (of discipline), and if such subjects shall say, “You fool!” or, “You dumb idiot!” (these are expressions of the contempt he had in his heart already, seething and boiling inside), he shall be guilty of such contempt in his heart toward another that he would be turned over to the torturers in the hell of fire (Mt 5:22).

There is no question about it: no one can even have anger in his heart for another without being in jeopardy of judgment of hell as its final outcome. There is no cause which justifies a man to have contempt and anger in his heart for a person for whom Messiah dies. Anger itself in the heart against a man is contrary to the speech of Yahshua and His mind and His word. Anger there will be (“Be angry but do not sin”), but as in the case of the Lord Himself, anger against sin is not anger against the sinner. All the aggressive force of the Kingdom of Messiah is to be directed against sin, and none of it against the men who are in the grip and clutches of it. The history of the “church” has always been renegade from His Speech and Mind when it has carried on its warfare with physical (carnal) weapons and when in the name of the Prince of Peace and Life, life has been destroyed. He has been insulted and the Sixth Commandment has been broken. Under the Kingship of Yahshua, if the possibility of murder lurks within the heart of man, it is counted as murder (1 Jn 3:11 15, Mt 5). But whenever He triumphs in our lives, when He is pre eminent in us, He creates in us the new man who counts as sacred all human life.

Whenever human life is slain upon the field of battle in glorified wars, and those who died and those who killed are considered heroic and patriotic and given puny medals in exchange for their conscience and soul, and those lives taken in the name of society, murdered in the interests of the rich man, the ambitious politician, the Lord’s wounding is repeated and His teaching *trampled* under foot. We are commanded to “Teach the nations whatsoever Yahshua has taught us.” This is what we are to teach (Mt 28:20). Whoever has heard His teaching has been commanded by Him.

KILLING AND MURDER

The Sixth Commandment — it is possible to kill and not to murder. This command refers to murder not just to killing. Num 35:9 34 gives us light on the difference. All murder is killing but not all killing is

murder (Mt 5:22).

We, the Body of Messiah, participate in the very motives and impulses of its Head, and in coordination with the thoughts and desires of the Head. Throughout the history of Israel in the Old Covenant days, Yah delegated His Right to men for the maintenance of peace and righteousness with the social order of Israel. This social order's peace was based upon righteousness. They did not know "Satan or the Devil" as we know him in the New Covenant, as Yahshua defined our real enemy for these days of the restoration of all things and the putting under foot of His enemies (Ps 110; Dan 2:44-45).

The weapon of our warfare is prayer in these days — "Vengeance is Mine, says Yahweh." Even as old Israel was directed by the Lord to take vengeance, so are we. But it is His vengeance, not ours (Heb 12:3). So in the history of Israel, the Israelites, under their leadership, were delegated the Lord's Right to them for the maintenance of a social order based upon righteousness. Since the death penalty was issued at His expressed command upon specific and certain forms of sin and wherever the hand of man took the life of his fellowman under the clearly marked conditions of Yah's order and Will and Desire, killing was not murder — but it was the carrying out of His will through human instruments. For the maintenance of peace and social order destroys Yah's enemies, which typifies spiritual opponents in these days for we can see how to fight in the Spirit, not in the physical (2 Cor 10:3-6). 1 Jn 3:8 — Our unity in the Spirit in love destroys the enemy. That is our social order and peace.

Achan was stoned to death (Jos 7), but he did not lose his life by the volition of his fellow men. His life was forfeited by the will of Yah, at the hands of His people. Even the Levites turned their own swords against their brothers and sisters, parents and wives and children at the command of Moses in order to establish the priesthood. Also against their own possessions, farms, homes, etc., as the Lord Yahshua brings out to us in the gospels very clearly for the child of Israel (Mt 14; Lk 14:9). The executioners were merely carrying out the expressed order of heaven. In order to be the priesthood of Mal 3 and 1 Pet 2:5-9, we must do no less than the sons of Levi were expected to do, if we are that fulfillment of scripture and prophecy. Ex 32:27 — The Levite executed his own legitimate rights, privileges, family, friends, neighbors, and inheritance. His only possession was Yah Himself.

No one in the Old Covenant had the right to take human life, judge, ruler, king or prophet, at his own will, even in the interests of the nation. God must make man the agent of His act. The death sentence was never passed at the discretion of human will but as a consequence of breaking the laws of Yah as minutely described in the Law. Even king David would not take the life of King Saul, or the life of Shimei (who was cursing and abusing David) because he did not receive a command from Yah to do so.

HOLY WAR

There is but one war we are to be engaged in. It is an all-out war which affects the whole world. Far more important is this war than any other ever fought, for this war that we fight will end all war, all hate, all envy, all malice; all bitterness, all anger against a brother, all lying, all lust, and *all death*. The *last enemy* is conquered by the war we are engaged in today, under the flag of the slain lamb of the New Covenant. The one in us is more powerful than he that is in the world (1 Jn 4:4). Winning this war will cause, "In the last days, the mountain of Yahweh's temple to be established as chief among the mountains; it will be raised above the hills, and all nations will stream to it. Many people will come and say, 'Come, let us go up to the mountain of Yahweh, to the house of the Elohim of Jacob. He will teach us His ways, so that we may walk in His paths.' The law will go out from Zion, the word of Yahweh from Jerusalem. He will judge between the nations and will settle disputes for many peoples. They will beat their swords into plowshares and their spears into pruning hooks. Nation will not take up sword against nation, nor will they train for war anymore" (Isa 2:2-4). We do not want to train for any other war than this war; we do not want to participate in any other army other than Yahweh's army; we do not want to be under any other Commander other than Yahshua.