

## The Sixth Commandment

War, Suicide, and Murder

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We will begin this sermon by turning to Isaiah 59:1-3.

**Isaiah 59:1-3** Behold, the LORD's hand is not shortened, that it cannot save; neither his ear heavy, that it cannot hear: But your iniquities have separated between you and your God, and your sins have hid his face from you, that he will not hear. For your hands are defiled with blood, and your fingers with iniquity; your lips have spoken lies, your tongue has muttered perverseness.

There is no commandment that shows the effect of sin any more immediately than the breaking of the Sixth Commandment. In other sins one may have a delay between the act and the result, but breaking the sixth commandment to separation in loss of life makes a division and produces fruit of sin which is very apparent.

Romans 3:23 makes it exceedingly clear that "all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God." Romans 6:23 adds an exclamation point to that by strongly declaring that "the wages of sin is death." Death is the ultimate in separation. Sin leaves no alternative in its wake even though the penalty is not always exacted immediately following the act.

This is one of two sins that allows us an opportunity to compile some statistics that give us some measure of an understanding of how often sins are committed. You might be interested to know that the United States of America went to war in Iraq sometime in 2003. I believe it was somewhere in the March/April period. During that time, from then to now, just over 4,000 men and women have been killed during combat operations in a variety of ways. Compare this with the number of murders between 2003 and 2006 in the United States of America alone: 4,000 compared to 66,460. Who is in the most dangerous place? That is a question to consider. In 2005 alone there were 16,692; 2005 was the last year for which complete statistics are available.

The taking of human life is a worldwide problem not confined to the United States. I have no idea of what the figure is worldwide. Mankind has a problem, does it not?

The comparison to what I just gave you is exaggerated, because we are comparing some 300 million Americans free to commit murder against the relatively small number of troops actually being used to fight in Iraq.

Abortion is murder too, and it is surely the foulest of all murders, taking, as it does, the lives of the most innocent and helpless of human beings—the unborn. The statistics on this form of murder are overwhelming to the emotions. According to the Alan Gutmaker Institute, approximately 1,370,000 babies are murdered each year in the United States of America. Compare that to the number of murders *outside* the womb. Each and every year now a population the size of Mecklenburg County never lives to see the light of day. The same source tells us that worldwide, approximately 126,000 abortions take place every day—a total of approximately 46 million per year. That is one abortion-murder every one and one-half seconds worldwide. Worldwide, each year this legalized murder is wiping out a population roughly the same size as the actual city population (not metropolitan-area populations) of New York, Los Angeles, San Francisco, Dallas, Chicago, Philadelphia, Detroit, Saint Louis, and Atlanta **combined**. And we are not done yet.

What about suicides, which is self-murder? According to the United States Department of Justice, in 2005 (the last year statistics are available) 32,637 people killed themselves in the United States of America. That is 89.4 each and every day, at the rate of one every 15 minutes.

You might remember the earlier murder total for 2005 was 16,692. Twice as many successfully committed suicides—managed to murder themselves as were murdered by another person.

Even more incredible is that same source—the U. S. Department of Justice—reported that in the year 2005 that 815,925 others *attempted* to take their own life. That is one every 39 seconds, and for whatever reason they did not succeed. Are we a hopeless people? Are people taking their own lives because they are hopeless, discouraged, completely frustrated, thinking that nobody loves them and that nobody cares? Most of those who succeeded in taking their own lives were white males.

Suicide is the 11<sup>th</sup> most common cause of deaths in the United States of America, and we have not even touched on war yet. But war is by far the most effective and most rapid means of killing yet devised. There is a web site devoted to this grisly subject, and according to this site, the total killed in the 20 most-devastating wars has killed 500 million people. The Second World War alone killed between ten and fifteen percent of that figure. Do you know that civilians were by far and away the largest number of people killed? There is hardly a comparison between the two.

**Matthew 15:19** For out of the heart proceed evil thoughts, murders, ... .

Like all sins, murder is generated in the inner being of a person. I think it is interesting that the first thing Jesus mentioned as coming from the heart is *evil thoughts*, followed by murder as the evil thoughts germinate in the mind. It grows and begets a process that generates murder.

Judging from the statistics, one can easily conclude that many human beings perceive that life cannot possibly be of great value. But biblically, it is just the opposite. The Bible perceives life as being among the most valuable of most possessions because it is the basis of human existence and because man is made in the image of God. I want you to turn in the Bible to see where it says this.

**Genesis 9:6** Whoso sheds man's blood, by man shall his blood be shed: for **in the image of God made he man.**

The Hebrew of this sixth commandment is about as terse as one will ever see. It consists of two words that are the equivalent in English of "no killing," or a little bit more specifically, "no murder." However, there are enough scriptures to let us know that what the commandment means is that no violent and premeditated killing of one perceived as an enemy is permitted.

**Exodus 21:12-14** He that smites a man, so that he die, shall be surely put to death. And if a man lie not in wait, but God deliver him into his hand; then I will appoint you a place where he shall flee. But if a man come presumptuously upon his neighbor, to slay him with guile; you shall take him from my altar, that he may die.

The statement in these three verses clearly separates a premeditated murder from an accidental killing. You can also discern from verse 14, that under this circumstance, a constituted biblical authority is permitted by God to use the death penalty. You can see right in the commandment in these verses that the commandment more literally says "no murder." There are some cases in which killing is justified, and this is one of them.

Verses 12 and 13 show that no amount of money or property settlement can atone for the destruction of the image of God in the murdered person. If the death was truly accidental, the person who did the killing still had to flee to a city of refuge. There was no sanctuary whatever—not even the altar of God—under any circumstance for a murderer to flee to.

Let us go to Numbers 35, and we are going to read a considerable portion of this chapter.

**Numbers 35:9-28** And the LORD spoke unto Moses, saying, Speak unto the children of Israel, and say unto them, When you be come over Jordan into the land of Canaan; then you shall appoint you cities to be cities of refuge for you; that the slayer may flee thither, which kills any person at unawares. And they shall be unto you cities for refuge from the avenger; that the manslayer die not, until he stand before the congregation in judgment. And of these cities which you shall give six cities shall you have for refuge. You shall give three cities on this side Jordan, and three cities shall you give in the land of Canaan, which shall be cities of refuge. These six cities shall be a refuge, both for the children of Israel, and for the stranger, and for the sojourner among them: that every one that kills any person unawares may flee thither. And if he smite him with an instrument of iron, so that he die, he is a murderer: the murderer shall surely be put to death. And if he smite him with throwing a stone, wherewith he may die, and he die, he is a murderer: the murderer shall surely be put to death. [The instrument does not matter. The intent does.] Or if he smite him with an hand weapon of wood, wherewith he may die, and he die, he is a murderer: the murderer shall surely be put to death. The revenger of blood himself shall slay the murderer: when he meets him, he shall slay him. But if he thrust him of hatred, or hurl at him by laying of wait, that he die; Or in enmity smite him with his hand, that he die: he that smote him shall surely be put to death; for he is a murderer: the revenger of blood shall slay the murderer, when he meets him. But if he thrust him suddenly without enmity, or have cast upon him any thing without laying of wait, or with any stone, wherewith a man may die, seeing him not, and cast it upon him, that he die, and was not his enemy, neither sought his harm: Then the congregation shall judge between the slayer and the revenger of blood according to these judgments: And the congregation shall deliver the slayer out of the hand of the revenger of blood, and the congregation shall restore him to the city of his refuge, whither he was fled: and he shall abide in it unto the death of the high priest, which was anointed with the holy oil. But if the slayer shall at any time come without the border of the city of his refuge, whither he was fled; And the revenger of blood find him without the borders of the city of his refuge, and the revenger of blood kill the slayer; he shall not be guilty of blood: Because he should have remained in the city of his refuge until the death of the high priest: but after the death of the high priest the slayer shall return into the land of his possession.

The cities of refuge were sanctuaries to which those who had *accidentally* killed another could flee. There were six cities of refuge throughout Israel—three on each side of the Jordan River. Now, even if the killer made it to the city of refuge, he still had to undergo a trial. If found guilty, he had to remain in the city until the death of the high priest; thus the city served as his jail. However, he was otherwise free to move about the city, find employment, have his family move with him there and support them. But if he for any reason left the city under any circumstance whatsoever, the avenger of blood could lawfully take his life.

The avenger of blood (verses 12 and 19) was usually a blood-relative of the person accidentally killed. His assignment from the family was to protect the family right, to avenge the family's loss. Now the vengeance was not always to take the killer's life. Sometimes that occurred, but there is an interesting tie here to something else. If the avenger actually did take the killer's life before the killer managed to reach the city of refuge, then he truly was an avenger of blood. However, the Hebrew term translated "avenger" is *goel* (*gawel*). This word has an interesting ramification when appearing in a different context. It is often also translated "redeemed" or "redeemer." In the book of Ruth it is translated seven times as "redeemed." Boaz was Ruth's redeemer. Boaz was Ruth's *goel*. Boaz was Ruth's avenger. The redeemer—Boaz—was the one who stood for one's family in order to protect his right. This is why there was this by-play between Boaz and the other man who actually had a higher right to be avenger. Boaz defended Ruth's husband Elimelech.

**Deuteronomy 17:6-7** At the mouth of two witnesses, or three witnesses, shall he that is worthy of death be put to death; but at the mouth of one witness he shall not be put to death. The hands of the witnesses shall be first upon him to put him to death, and afterward the hands of all the people. So you shall put the evil away from among you.

**Deuteronomy 19:15-19** One witness shall not rise up against a man for any iniquity, or for any sin, in any sin that he sins: at the mouth of two witnesses, or at the mouth of three witnesses shall the matter be established. If a false witness rise up against any man to testify against him that which is wrong; Then both the men between whom the controversy is shall stand before the LORD, before the priests and the judges, which shall be in those days; And the judges shall make diligent inquisition: and, behold, if the witness be a false witness, and has testified falsely against his brother; Then shall you do unto him as he had thought to have done unto his brother: so shall you put the evil away from among you

Regardless of which way one turns (anywhere in the book of the law) like we have been doing here in these verses, there are legal safeguards designed to protect **life**, and even though the death penalty existed, it was not easily obtained. Carefulness was the order of the day in the court.

Now a special note of the warnings against perjury, which we just read in Deuteronomy 19. It was the responsibility of the witnesses to be the first in executing the death penalty.

**Deuteronomy 17:8-12** If there arise a matter too hard for you in judgment between blood and blood, between plea and plea, and between stroke and stroke, being matters of controversy within your gates: then shall you arise, and get you up into the place which the **LOORD** you God shall choose [that is, to the Tabernacle]; And you shall come unto the priests the Levites, and unto the judge that shall be in those days, and enquire; and they shall show you the sentence of judgment: And you shall do according to the sentence which they of that place which the **LOORD** shall choose shall show you; and you shall observe to do according to all that they inform you: According to the sentence of the law which they shall teach you, and according to the judgment which they shall tell you, you shall do: you shall not decline from the sentence which they shall show you, to the right hand, nor to the left. And the man that will do presumptuously, and will not hearken unto the priest that stands to minister there before the **LOORD** your God, or unto the judge, even that man shall die: and you shall put away the evil from Israel.

Do you know what that series of verses is telling you? It is telling you that Israel had a Supreme Court. That Supreme Court was the high priest, and those counseling him. Apparently this kind of case was carried out right in front of the door of the Tabernacle—right in God's presence, as it were—right before God. Remember the sermons on Eden at the last Feast of Tabernacles ["Eden, the Garden, and the Two Trees"].

**Exodus 21:18-19** And if men strive together, and one smite another with a stone, or with his fist, and he die not, but keeps his bed: If he rise again, and walk abroad upon his staff, then shall he that smote him be acquitted: only he shall pay for the loss of his time, and shall cause him to be thoroughly healed.

In this first illustration, a dispute between two men resulted in one being injured to the extent that he was bed-ridden. Then he recovered enough to be able to walk about out-of-doors with the help of crutches or a cane. In this case, the one causing the injury must pay the injured person for his care and loss of income; a damage award; a liability charge against him.

**Exodus 21:20-21** And if a man smite his servant, or his maid, with a rod, and he die under his hand; he shall be surely punished. Notwithstanding, if he [the slave] continue a day or two, he shall not be punished: for he is his money [or property].

This case involves a master (an employer) striking and injuring a slave (or an employee). Since the slave did not die immediately, the use of the rod is not considered as lethal. Since the slave's life lingered, the master is given the benefit of the doubt that the striking was disciplinary rather than homicidal. This may seem strict to you, but compared to other nations regarding the treatment of slaves or employees, this law is very liberal. Because in other nations, doing whatever the master felt was necessary was his absolute right, because the slave was considered *totally* his property. This was not so in Israel, as we will see in just a few moments.

**Exodus 21:22-25** If men strive, and hurt a woman with child, so that her fruit depart from her, and yet no mischief follow: he shall be surely punished, according as the woman's husband will lay upon him; and he shall pay as the judges determine. And if any mischief follow, then you shall give life for life, Eye for eye, tooth for tooth, hand for hand, foot for foot, Burning for burning, wound for wound, stripe for stripe.

In this case verse 22 is quite clear. A damage award was given in this case. However, verses 23 through 25 present a different matter altogether. In this case, the *lex talionis* (the law of retaliation)—the "eye-for-an eye" principle—worked in this manner. Punishment must match, but not exceed the damage done. In other words, you do not have one-thousand dollars in damages and win one million dollars because of it.

Now if the injury brought about the death of either the child or the mother, the judges would determine whether it was accidental or premeditated, but sometimes the woman might have gotten into something she should not have gotten into and actually brought the problem on herself. In her desire to protect her husband she intervened where she

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should not have done, and so a judge has to decide. If that occurred and was not considered accidental, then the one causing the death must give his life, and still pay damages as set by the judges. This is further discussed in Numbers 35 and 31 which we did not read. If no death resulted, then damages must be paid by the injuring party according to the "eye-for-an-eye" principle.

**Exodus 21:26-27** And if a man smite the eye of his servant, or the eye of his maid, that it perish; he shall let him go free for his eye's sake. And if he smite out his manservant's tooth, or his maidservant's tooth; he shall let him go free for his tooth's sake.

This shows us that any slave who suffered permanent injury as a result of his owner's or employer's negligence or discipline beyond the bounds of correctness, the slave was immediately free. This law was given to make slave owners think twice before using abusive tactics lest he lose his financial investment in the slave. This set Israel's slavery laws above every other nation. The slave had rights. He was born in the image of God too.

**Exodus 21:28-32** If an ox gore a man or a woman, that they die: then the ox shall be surely stoned, and his flesh shall not be eaten; but the owner of the ox shall be acquitted. But if the ox were wont to push with his horn in time past, and it has been testified to his owner, and he has not kept him in, but that he has killed a man or a woman; the ox shall be stoned, and his owner also shall be put to death. If there be laid on him a sum of money, then he shall give for the ransom of his life whatsoever is laid upon him. Whether he have gored a son, or have gored a daughter, according to this judgment shall it be done unto him. If the ox shall push a manservant or a maidservant; he shall give unto their master thirty shekels of silver, and the ox shall be stoned.

The principle here covers injury not only when it might be determined as a "chance-occurrence" death, but also involved what may be termed "death by accompanying negligence." In other words, it reveals a different judgment when the temper of the killing animal or the defective equipment was known. Verse 28 covers an "out-of-the-blue" occurrence—truly an accident. In such a case, the animal was put to death, but the owner is free and clear. What is interesting here is that this clearly shows that an animal receives the death penalty following the same overall principle found in Genesis 9:6. However, if the animal was known to be dangerous, both the animal and his owner

were put to death.

You should be able to see that these instructions are quite complete, containing principles and illustrations by which accurate judgments can be attained; however, in the New Testament you see very clear indications of a change in the approach to crime. Recall again what Jesus said in Matthew 15:19—that sin comes forth from the heart.

**Matthew 5:21-22** You have heard that it was said of them of old time, You shall not kill; and whosoever shall kill shall be in danger of the judgment: But I say unto you, That whosoever is angry with his brother without a cause shall be in danger of the judgment: and whosoever shall say to his brother, Raca, shall be in danger of the council: but whosoever shall say, You fool, shall be in danger of hell fire.

Jesus' remedy for combating crime shifts from retaliation by civil authorities to stopping it at its source. It shifts from the fear of being caught by police and punished by the courts to each person being responsible for dealing with it internally so it never becomes an external act. The central thought expressed here is that these evil thoughts are tantamount to murder in God's eyes, and if a person never had an evil thought, no murder would ever happen. In I John 3:15, John says this:

**I John 3:15** Whosoever hates his brother is a murderer.

That could not be made any clearer. The thought itself is where murder has to be stopped. That is the remedy. The hostility expressed in the mind already contains the thought to get rid of someone one feels is standing in one's way. He is directly connected to the act because, as God sees it, they are one unbroken process.

Let us add to this what Jesus said in Matthew 5:38-39.

**Matthew 5:38-39** You have heard that it has been said, An eye for an eye, and a tooth for a tooth: But I say unto you, That you resist not evil: but whosoever shall smite you on your right cheek, turn to him the other also.

Jesus is not ruling out a life-threatening self-defense here, as His illustration shows. The illustration is in the sense of a rather minor affair: getting hit on the cheek, getting hit on the jaw. Somebody is not coming at you with a gun. He is just ready to punch your lights

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out. The general thought here, though, is we must not set ourselves against the person doing the evil against us. The essential thought is to remove the bitterness in one's own heart by doing good rather than retaliating and doing evil. Doing this involves a great deal of humility and patience, but it works to change one's mind. Jesus' advice is not idiotic.

Let me give you a simple illustration. Have you ever felt like not working, but because you had to do it, you set your will, and you threw yourself into accomplishing the work, and before you knew it, you very likely were enjoying the accomplishment. What happened? The doing the right thing had changed your mind. That is what Jesus is talking about here. That is a simple illustration, but the process is the same in what Jesus is instructing here.

**Luke 23:34** Then said Jesus, Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do. And they parted his raiment, and cast lots.

I am reading this only because I want you to have an example of Jesus following His own teaching. He did not retaliate. This is the same man who earlier said to Peter, "Don't you know that I could call out to My Father and He would send twelve legions of angels?" Jesus was not defenseless. Retaliation was not on His mind. Fulfilling His Father's work, on behalf of His Father and mankind, overrode His personal feelings in this dilemma He was facing.

Let us go from here to Romans 12:17-20. Paul gives us instruction that is based on these principles.

**Romans 12:17-19** Recompense to no man evil for evil. Provide things honest in the sight of all men. If it be possible, as much as lies in you, live peaceably with all men. Dearly beloved, avenge not yourselves, but rather give place unto wrath: for it is written, Vengeance is mine; I will repay, say the Lord

**Romans 13:8-10** Owe no man any thing, but to love one another [not retaliation, not pain and injury]: for he that loves another has fulfilled the law. For this, You shall not commit adultery, You shall not kill, You shall not steal, You shall not bear false witness, You shall not covet; and if there be any other commandment, it is briefly comprehended in this saying, namely, You shall love your neighbor as yourself. Love works no ill to his neighbor: therefore love is the fulfilling of the law.

In these two places Paul counsels an entire congregation with advice that is clearly in line with what Jesus taught. He insists that we must never allow vindictiveness—the desire to get even with someone for a suffered wrong acted against us. Peter was right in line with this teaching.

**I Peter 3:9** Not rendering evil for evil, or railing for railing: but contrariwise blessing; knowing that you are thereunto called, that you should inherit a blessing.

We must not repay evil with evil, insult with insult, but rather bless the one who persecutes us. Now why? Because those things that Peter named are the spirit of murder. Do you understand? When we retaliate in kind, we are doing at least as bad as what was done to us, and maybe worse. We are not to take vengeance, because God has assigned Himself that responsibility within His family. Now is that not the way we should be?

Do you realize that Paul, in Romans 12, addressed this issue of revenge four times in this one chapter that begins with him appealing to us to be a living sacrifice? That is heavy stuff. Do you understand why, brethren? Because what Jesus did shows that if there is ever going to be peace, somebody has to sacrifice himself. That is what Jesus did. He set the example.

This non-retaliatory remedy of Jesus Christ is ultimately for everybody, but until He returns the standards that He set can be met only by those who, like Jesus, have the spirit of God, are living by faith, and are enabled to keep them. The followers of Jesus are to be different from both the nominal church and the secular world—different both on the religious and the irreligious.

In the 1960s and the 1970s we saw the rise of the Hippie and the Beatnik counter-culture, as it is called in America. But the true biblical Christianity is in reality a counter-culture unlike anything that has existed on Earth. In other words, these lofty commands are for Jesus' brothers and sisters who are in the church and are part of the Kingdom of God.

I do not know whether you are aware, but these very high standards have created quite a disagreement among many in the theological world in regard to war and its vast and vicious killing. Now why? Because everybody, except for those who are truly of the faith of Jesus Christ, knows that these standards cannot be kept. History proves it. They

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therefore reason around them in order to give themselves and the so-called Christian nation justification for going to war. Christian nations feel that they should involve themselves only in a just war. Brethren, *is there any such thing?*

Finding the correct answer as to what constitutes a just war is to them a very complex issue leading to highly variable standards from one advocate of what constitutes a just war to another who advocates something with different standards. If they finally agree a war is necessary, do you know what they do? They attempt to fight that war with what they consider to be their rules. Is there any such thing, brethren, that you have rules by which you murder the other person?

That seems weird right on the face of it, but to these people, the issue is very complex. I agree with them to a limited extent, because ultimately, the answer to this riddle comes down to one issue. It is the issue that confronted man from the very beginning, from Adam and Eve to this very day, and understanding the complexity begins with the commandment itself, because it says, "You shall do no murder." The command is against homicide, but brethren, that is what war is. It is license-approved murder, just like abortion is now.

It is clear from the verses that the State is given general permission to execute for capital crime, but if the Christian permitted himself to participate in mass homicide (which is war) in behalf of the State, the answer comes down to whether one believes God. It comes down to the commandment itself: "You shall do no murder." Does God really mean it?

Let us turn to Hebrews 10 and let us see some standards here.

**Hebrews 10:36-38** For you have need of patience, that, after you have done the will of God, you might receive the promise. For yet a little while, and he that shall come will come, and will not tarry. Now **the just shall live by faith:** but if any man draw back, my soul shall have no pleasure in him.

Did Adam and Eve live by faith? They chose death. They did not believe God. In one sense they committed suicide. It comes down, in one sense, to the simple issue: Who is going to believe and trust God?

Let us add to this principle—"The just shall live by faith." Let us go to Deuteronomy 30:16-20.

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**Deuteronomy 30:15-20** See, I have set before you this day life and good, and death and evil; In that I command you this day to love the LOORD your God, to walk in his ways, and to keep his commandments and his statutes and his judgments, that you may live and multiply: and the LOORD your God shall bless you in the land whither you go to possess it. But if your heart turn away so that you will not hear, but shall be drawn away and worship other gods and serve them; I denounce unto you this day that you shall surely perish, and that you shall not prolong your days upon the land, whither you pass over Jordan to go to possess it. I call heaven and earth to record this day against you, that I have set before you life and death, blessing and cursing: therefore **choose life**, that both you and your seed may live: That you may love the LOORD your God, and that you may obey his voice, and that you may cleave unto him: for he is your life, and the length of your days: that you may dwell in the land which the LOORD swore unto your fathers, to Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob, to give them.

It is these two principles—"the just shall live by faith," and the very fact that we are commanded by God "to choose," that are at the foundation of this issue. To get the right answer, one must believe God, and one must choose to live by every word of God. Be aware of this, though—and this is exceedingly important—that these words which we just read are **not** written to the world in general. They are directed at those who have made a covenant with God and are directed at God's own children. That the Bible is written to the world is a critically wrong assumption, and answers why the world cannot keep these lofty standards given by Jesus.

Let us show in Deuteronomy 7:6-8 to whom those words in Deuteronomy 30 are directed.

**Deuteronomy 7:6-8** For you are an holy people unto the LOORD your God: the LOORD your God has chosen you to be a special people unto himself, above all people that are upon the face of the earth. The LOORD did not set his love upon you, nor choose you because you were more in number than any people; for you were the fewest of all people: But because the LOORD loved you, and because he would keep the oath which he had sworn unto your fathers, has the LOORD brought you out with a mighty hand, and redeemed you out of the house of bondmen, from the hand of Pharaoh king of Egypt.

**Amos 3:1-2** Hear this word that the LOORD has spoken against you, O children of Israel, against the whole family which I brought up from the land

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of Egypt, saying, **You only have I known** of all the families of the earth: therefore I will punish you for all your iniquities.

The Old Testament was at first directed only to Israel; no Canaanites, no Babylonians, no Persians, nobody in the whole world except Israel, and so what He commands applies to them.

Let us add to this John 6:44, and see it in a New Testament setting. You all know what John 6:44 says, but we will read it into the record.

**John 6:44** No man can come to me [that is, be His disciple], except the Father which has sent me draw him: and I will raise him up at the last day.

We are seeing statements comparable to what we just saw in Deuteronomy 7, only instead of applying to the nation of Israel, it now applies to the family of God.

**Matthew 13:10-13** And the disciples came, and said unto him, Why speak you unto them in parables? He answered and said unto them, Because it is given unto **you** to know the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven, but to them **it is not given**. For whosoever has, to him shall be given, and he shall have more abundance: but whosoever has not, from him shall be taken away even that he had. Therefore speak I to them in parables: because they seeing see not; and hearing they hear not, neither do they understand.

Let us get the apostle Paul into this act.

**I Corinthians 4:6-7** And these things, brethren, I have in a figure transferred to myself and to Apollos for your sakes; that you might learn in us not to think of men above that which is written, that no one of you be puffed up for one against another. For who makes you to differ from another? and what have you that you did not receive? now if you did receive it, why do you glory, as if you had not received it?

Brethren, God has personally, individually chosen you to understand, therefore His words apply to you—Old Testament and New Testament. It is only these people who can grasp and can do it. He is working in and through only a small group He is

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preparing for the day when He has a nucleus of a family that will then carry forth His projects to all of mankind. The vast majority of mankind is not going to be introduced to God's purpose until Christ returns. So regarding the issue of war, it is very helpful to understand that even in His calling and choosing of ancient Israel, He was not working with them in terms of conversion. Their purpose was entirely different, but there is a major difference between Israel under the Old Covenant, and the Israel of God under the New Covenant.

We are going to go back again to the book of Deuteronomy. What a book Deuteronomy is! Notice this statement beginning in verse 1.

**Deuteronomy 29:1-4** These are the words of the covenant which the LORD commanded Moses to make with the children of Israel in the land of Moab, beside the covenant which he made with them in Horeb. And Moses called unto all Israel, and said unto them, You have seen all that the LORD did before your eyes in the land of Egypt unto Pharaoh, and unto all his servants, and unto all his land; The great temptations which your eyes have seen, the signs, and those great miracles: Yet the LORD has **not** given you a heart to perceive, and eyes to see, and ears to hear, unto this day.

Israel lived it and did not understand it! Notice that the heart from which our actions originate is something God must give. It is not present in man by nature. You can search until you are blue in the face, and you will find no promise from God for His Holy Spirit to be given to those under the Old Covenant. Now God did give it to some, like Moses, Joshua, Caleb, David, the judges, the prophets, a high priest, but you will find it was not generally offered to the Israelite citizenry. God offered them no access to Him, and even the promise of forgiveness of sin was not generally given. When God did give His spirit to some, it was for external purposes only to do a work. It was not given to change their heart.

The Israelites' inheritance was a portion of this earth, but not eternal life. In contrast to the church, they were an unconverted people that were a nation of this world, and thus they entered into the world's politics and the world's wars. Not so with the church. It is *not* of the world. It is called *out* of the world. Its members are forgiven and justified. They are sanctified and given His Holy Spirit which enables them to have a heart that He never gave to Israel. They had access to Him, and the promise of eternal life and inheritance of the Earth as co-heirs with Christ eternally, everlastingly.

You can look in Acts 1, verses 7 and 8 and see that no promise, like He gives to His

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disciples there just before He arose, was ever given to ancient Israel.

**Acts 1:7-8** And he [Jesus] said unto them, It is not for you to know the times or the seasons which the Father has put in his own power. But you shall receive power after that the Holy Spirit is come upon you: and you shall be witnesses unto me both in Jerusalem, and in all Judea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth.

We want to turn though to Romans 8:8-11. These are very important scriptures in regard to our standing before God.

**Romans 8:8-10** So then they that are in the flesh cannot please God. [Israel was *always* in the flesh. They could not please God. Their purpose was entirely different in God's purpose.] But you [who are in the church] are not in the flesh, but in the Spirit, if so be that the Spirit of God dwell in you. Now if any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his. And if Christ be in you, the body is dead because of sin; but the Spirit is life because of righteousness.

You can add to this II Peter 1, verse 4, where it says that we have been partakers of the divine nature.

**II Peter 1:4** Whereby are given unto us exceeding great and precious promises: that by these you might be partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust.

We have been made partakers of the divine nature, and this opens the mind to spiritual knowledge. That is a tremendous gift from God.

**I Corinthians 2:7-11** But we speak the wisdom of God in a mystery, even the hidden wisdom which God ordained before the world unto **our** glory: Which none of the princes of this world knew: for had they known it they would not have crucified the Lord of glory. But as it is written, Eye has not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man the things which God has prepared for them that love him. But God has revealed them unto us by his Spirit: for the Spirit searches all things, yes, the deep things of God. For what man knows the things of a man, save the spirit of man which

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is in him? even so the things of God knows no man, but the Spirit of God.

**I Corinthians 2:14-16** But the natural man [as the Israelites were] receives not the things of the Spirit of God: for they are foolishness unto him: neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned. But he that is spiritual judges all things, yet he himself is judged of no man. For who has known the mind of the Lord, that he may instruct him? but we [church members—those who have the spirit] have the mind of Christ.

We have the spirit in varying degrees, but brethren, it is there, and because it is there we can keep those lofty standards Jesus gave about murder and its spirit. This has important legal ramifications as well.

**Colossians 1:12-13** Giving thanks unto the Father, which has made us meet [made us fit] to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light: Who has delivered us from the power of darkness, and has translated us into the kingdom of his dear Son:

We have been translated [or transferred] into the Kingdom of God. That kingdom is both a family and a nation at one and the same time, growing as God adds to it.

This is speaking to the church.

**I Peter 2:9-10** But you are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, a *holy* nation [The Kingdom of God—the church—is a nation.], a peculiar people; that you should show forth the praises of him who has called you out of darkness into his marvelous light; [We are to be different.] Which in time past were not a people, but are now the people of God: which had not obtained mercy, but now *have* obtained mercy.

We are beginning to see a legal basis for something here.

**Philippians 3:20** For our conversation is in heaven;

That word "conversation" in verse 20 is derived from the Greek word *politeuma*—the Greek word for politics. In modern Bibles that word is translated "citizenship," which is a

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correct translation.

**Philippians 3:20-21** For our citizenship *is in heaven*; from whence also we look for the Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ: Who shall change our vile body, that it may be fashioned like unto his glorious body, according to the working whereby he is able even to subdue all things unto himself.

The Kingdom of God possesses its own citizenship which is conferred upon those who are part of the Church of God, which is "the Israel of God" (Galatians 6:16). There are two Israels. Only one belongs to God. That is the church. That is what the word "of" shows. It is the Church **of** God. To those people who live by faith, this citizenship is very real—every bit as real as the citizenship conferred by other nations, and as such, it brings on one both privileges and responsibility.

As we begin to draw this to a close, let us look at a key verse in the book of John. Jesus is on trial here:

**John 18:35-37** Pilate answered, Am I a Jew? Your own nation and the chief priests have delivered you unto me: what have you done? 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. Pilate therefore said unto him, Are you a king then? Jesus answered, You say that I am a king. To this end was I born, and for this cause came I into the world, that I should bear witness unto the truth. Every one that is of the truth hears my voice.

Let me put this in an order that I think will help you. In verse 37, Jesus' response should read: "You say rightly that I am a king." He is the King of the Kingdom of God, and thus that is where *His* citizenship is too. Now with His response in verse 36, He clearly states that His fellow citizens **do not fight**. In other words, they will not go to war even in His defense at this time. Now why? There is a legal reason why.

**II Corinthians 5:20** Now then we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God did beseech you by us: we pray you in Christ's stead, be you reconciled to God.

Because our citizenship is in heaven, we are ambassadors of that kingdom; that

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citizenship is foreign to this world in which we live. This citizenship will not permit a citizen of the Kingdom of God to interfere in the operation of this world's governments, including this world's war operation. The time will come when we will fight in Jesus' behalf and for the Kingdom of God, but not yet.

Let us close on I Peter 2, because here are our marching orders.

**I Peter 2:21-23** For even hereunto were you called: because Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an example, that you should follow his steps: [We are to imitate Him and do as He did.] Who did no sin, neither was guile found in his mouth: Who, when he was reviled, reviled not again; when he suffered, he threatened not; but committed himself to him that judges righteously.

For now we are to follow in the footsteps of our Lord and Master. He did not go to war with any human beings whatever under any circumstance. He committed His safety to God and His judgments to God as well. Because God is on His throne, and we believe Him, there is no reason for us to go to war, because He will fight our battle for us.

That is all for today. I hope you have a good remainder of this day.