

## War and Peace

Seeking peace but being prepared for war is historically documented. To Israel, “Now these are the nations which Jehovah left, to prove Israel by them, even as many of Israel as had not known all the wars of Canaan; only that the generations of the children of Israel might know, to teach them war, at the least such as beforetime knew nothing thereof” (Judges 3:1-2): martial discipline is essential for a nation to survive. Solomon said, “For everything there is a season, and a time for every purpose under heaven.” Therefore, in its season, there is “a time to love, and a time to hate; a time for war, and a time for peace” (Eccl. 3:1, 8). David affirmed, saying:

“Blessed be Jehovah my rock,  
Who teacheth my hands to war,  
And my fingers to fight”  
(Psalms 144:1).

War is imminent when nations turn away from serving the Lord. “They chose new gods; Then was war in the gates” (Judges 5:8).

British anthropologist John D. Unwin conducted an in-depth study of eighty civilizations that have come and gone over a period of some four thousand years. He discovered that a common thread ran through all of them. In each instance, they started out with a conservative mind-set with strong moral values and a heavy emphasis on family. Over a period of time, the conservative mind-set became more and more liberal, moral values declined, and the family suffered. In each instance, as the family deteriorated, the civilization itself started to come apart; and in all eighty cases the fall of the Nation was related to the fall of the family. In most cases, that civilization fell within one generation of the fall of the family unit.

The fact is, there are evil men in the world: Solomon said, “Evil men understand not justice; But they that seek Jehovah understand all things” (Prov. 28:5). There are also those who, due to practice and habit, fail to learn from their evil: The Lord said, concerning Judah, “Can the Ethiopian change his skin, or the leopard his spots? then may ye also do good, that are accustomed to do evil.” (Jer. 13:23).

Spiritually speaking, the apostle Paul’s request from the Thessalonians was, “Finally, brethren, pray for us, that the word of the Lord may run and be glorified, even as also it is with you; and that we may be delivered from unreasonable and evil men; for all have not faith” (2 Thess. 3:1-2). These “unreasonable and evil men” were not only so in debate and argument, but were also in deed: “Jews thither from Antioch and Iconium: and having persuaded the multitudes, they stoned Paul, and dragged him out of the city, supposing that he was dead” (Acts 14:19); also when “he spake and disputed against the Grecian Jews; but they were seeking to kill him” (Acts 9:29); or of the “the chief priests and the principal men of the Jews (who laid) a plot to kill him” (Acts 25:2-3).

Paul informed Timothy, saying, “evil men and impostors shall wax worse and worse, deceiving and being deceived” (2 Tim. 3:13). War and peace is a fact of life, regardless of the arena. The Lord said, “Blessed are the peacemakers: for they shall be called sons of God.” (Matt. 5:9).

The apostle Paul instructed Timothy, saying, “This charge I commit unto thee, my child Timothy, according to the prophecies which led the way to thee, that by them thou mayest war the good warfare; holding faith and a good conscience; which some having thrust from them made shipwreck concerning the faith” (1 Tim. 1:18-19).

Solomon said, “And moreover I saw under the sun, in the place of justice, that wickedness was there; and in the place of righteousness, that wickedness was there. I said in my heart, God will judge the righteous and the wicked; for there is a time there for every purpose and for every work” (Eccl. 3:16-17). Such being the case, what is the child of God to do? The words of the Lord, to the apostles, are applicable to all, i.e., “Behold, I send you forth as sheep in the midst of wolves: be ye therefore wise as serpents, and harmless as doves” (Matt. 10:16).

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