

San Juan Church of Christ

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What Does God's Word Say About... Religion and War

God told Moses He was “the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob.” The Lord said, “I have surely seen the affliction of My people who are in Egypt,” (Ex. 3:6-7). When God released the “sons of Israel” from oppression and slavery by the Egyptians, He established a “physical” nation called Israel (Ex. 3:9-10). God told Israel “Be sure to observe what I am commanding you this day: behold, I am going to drive out (all the nations in Canaan Land)...Watch yourself that you make no covenant with the inhabitants of the land into which you are going, or it will become a snare in your midst. But rather you are to tear down their altars and smash their sacred pillars (idols)” (Ex. 34:11-13). The Lord was to deliver Israel from seven nations in Canaan and He told the Israelites “You shall utterly destroy them,” (Deut. 7:1-8). This would mean physical warfare with these nations and God promised the nation of Israel that if they did not listen to Him, such as “intermarrying” with these nations and serving their gods (idols), that “I will testify against you today that you [Israel] shall surely perish. Like the nations that the Lord makes to perish before you, so you shall perish; because you would not listen to the voice of the Lord your God (Deut. 8:19-20, 20:1-4). Because of Israel’s disobedience to God, other nations plundered them (Judges 2:7, 11-15).

In the Old Testament the physical nation of Israel needed to learn war. “Now these are the nations which the Lord left, to TEST Israel all who had not known any of the wars of Canaan; in order that the generations of the sons of Israel might be TAUGHT WAR, those who had not known it formerly,” (Judges 3:1-2).

Now this brings us to the teachings of Christ in the New Testament. The church is now considered “spiritual” Israel (Gal. 6:16). Jesus said, “It is the Spirit who gives life; the flesh [the things of the Old Covenant] profits nothing; the words that I have spoken to you are spirit and are life,” (John 6:63). There can be no doubt Biblically, that Christ ushered in a change in how nations are to be seen today. Christians, who are the special nation of God, spiritually speaking, are not bound by the lines of national boundaries. For they exist in all nations. There is no New Testament mandate to destroy and go to war with other nations physically. Christians in the Crusades were responsible for much blood shed, but this does not mean that they were following the principles in the New Testament, which indicates that our warfare is spiritual (Eph. 6:12). True Christianity should never be responsible for any physical wars in this world. Nations are not crushed by Christians bearing physical swords (Matt. 26:52; John 18:36), but by the spreading of the gospel of God’s spiritual kingdom [the church]. Christians are to promote peace both physically and spiritually by preaching Christ and His salvation (Rom. 12:14-18).

Are religions responsible for war? Some are, but true Christianity will never be responsible for it.

Please send any comments, questions, or requests for a Bible study to:
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