

Shall We Take up The Sword?

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A dear brother in the Lord has posted an article in a blog to prove that God's children ought to take up the sword against an evil government. He mainly cited the use of the sword by Israel and the Patriarchs. The question is, "Are we to do as Israel and the Patriarchs in this New Testament time concerning the sword?" Especially, we ask this with respect to use of the sword against government? We believe it is right to protect self and others against being killed or injured from evil persons, but we cannot find God's word which commands us or allows us to rebel against government:

Proverbs 24:11-12 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?

- **First use of a sword in the New Testament:**

Matthew 26:51-53 And, behold, one of them which were with Jesus stretched out his hand, and drew his sword, and struck a servant of the high priest's, and smote off his ear. 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. Thinkest thou that I cannot now pray to my Father, and he shall presently give me more than twelve legions of angels?

Our Lord spoke these words to Peter and others who heard. How, then could we think that he commended the use of a sword in these other passages? Was he commending the use of the sword in direct opposition to his previous words or did he speak ironically concerning the sword?

Luke 22:35-36 *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, 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.*

Luke 22:37-38 *For I say unto you, that this that is written must yet be accomplished in me, And he was reckoned among the transgressors: for the things concerning me have an end. And they said, Lord, behold, here are two swords. And he said unto them, It is enough.*

- **“All they that take the sword shall perish with the sword” is a principle especially for God’s children.**

Revelation 13:1-10 And I stood upon the sand of the sea, and saw a beast rise up out of the sea, having seven heads and ten horns, and upon his horns ten crowns, and upon his heads the name of blasphemy. And the beast which I saw was like unto a leopard, and his feet were as the feet of a bear, and his mouth as the mouth of a lion: and the dragon gave him his power, and his seat, and great authority. And I saw one of his heads as it were wounded to death; and his deadly wound was healed: and all the world wondered after the beast. And they worshipped the dragon which gave power unto the beast: and they worshipped the beast, saying, Who is like unto the beast? who is able to make war with him? And there was given unto him a mouth speaking great things and blasphemies; and power was given unto him to continue forty and two months. And he opened his mouth in blasphemy against God, to blaspheme his name, and his tabernacle, and them that dwell in heaven. And it was given unto him to make war with the saints, and to overcome them: and power was given him over all kindreds, and tongues, and nations. And all that dwell upon the earth shall worship him,

whose names are not written in the book of life of the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world. If any man have an ear, let him hear. He that leadeth into captivity shall go into captivity: he that killeth with the sword must be killed with the sword. Here is the patience and the faith of the saints.

This is a time when the governing power on earth shall persecute and kill the saints. Shall they not obey the Lord and not take up the sword?

- **The Patriarchs and Israel were involved in warfare and often used the sword. Does that mean we are to do as they did? Is our battle with flesh and blood to conquer and subdue?**

Matthew 5:38-48 *Ye have heard that it hath been said, An eye for an eye, and a tooth for a tooth: 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. And if any man will sue thee at the law, and take away thy coat, let him have thy cloke also. And whosoever shall compel thee to go a mile, go with him twain. Give to him that asketh thee, and from him that would borrow of thee turn not thou away. Ye have heard that it hath been said, Thou shalt love thy neighbour, and hate thine enemy. 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; That ye may be the children of your Father which is in heaven: for he maketh his sun to rise on the evil and on the good, and sendeth rain on the just and on the unjust. For if ye love them which love you, what reward have ye? do not even the publicans the same? And if ye salute your brethren only, what do ye more than others? do not even the publicans so? Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect.*

Matthew Henry on Matthew 5:38-41:

Three things our Saviour specifies, to show that Christians must patiently yield to those who bear hard upon them, rather than contend; and these include others.

(1.) A blow on the cheek, which is an injury to me in my body; "Whosoever shall smite thee on thy right cheek," which is not only a hurt, but an affront and indignity (2Co 11:20), if a man in anger or scorn thus abuse thee, "turn to him the other cheek;" that is, "instead of avenging that injury, prepare for another, and bear it patiently: give not the rude man as good as he brings; do not challenge him, nor enter an action against him; if it be necessary to the public peace that he be bound to his good behaviour, leave that to the magistrate; but for thine own part, it will ordinarily be the wisest course to pass it by, and take no further notice of it: there are no bones broken, no great harm done, forgive it and forget it; and if proud fools think the worse of thee, and laugh at thee for it, all wise men will value and honour thee for it, as a follower of the blessed Jesus, who, though he was the Judge of Israel, did not smite those who smote him on the cheek," Mic 5:1. Though this may perhaps, with some base spirits, expose us to the like affront another time, and so it is, in effect, to turn the other cheek, yet let not that disturb us, but let us trust God and his providence to protect us in the way of our duty. Perhaps, the forgiving of one injury may prevent another, when the avenging of it would but draw on another; some will be overcome by submission, who by resistance would but be the more exasperated, Pr 25:22. However, our recompence is in Christ's hands, who will reward us with eternal glory for the shame we thus patiently endure; and though it be not directly inflicted, it if be quietly borne for

conscience' sake, and in conformity to Christ's example, it shall be put upon the score of suffering for Christ.

(2.) The loss of a coat, which is a wrong to me in my estate (Mt 5:40); If any man will sue thee at the law, and take away thy coat. It is a

hard case. Note, It is common for legal processes to be made use of for the doing of greatest injuries. Though judges be just and circumspect, yet it is possible for bad men who make no conscience of oaths and forgeries, by course of law to force off the coat from a man's back. Marvel not at the matter (Ec 5:8), but, in such a case, rather than go to the law by way of revenge, rather than exhibit a cross bill, or stand out to the utmost, in defence of that which is thy undoubted right, let him even take thy cloak also. If the matter be small, which we may lose without an considerable damage to our families, it is good to submit to it for peace' sake. "It will not cost thee so much to buy another cloak, as it will cost thee by course of law to recover that; and therefore unless thou canst get it again by fair means, it is better to let him take it."

(3.) The going a mile by constraint, which is a wrong to me in my liberty (Mt 5:41); "Whosoever shall compel thee to go a mile, to run an errand for him, or to wait upon him, grudge not at it, but go with him two miles rather than fall out with him:" say not, "I would do it, if I were not compelled to it, but I hate to be forced;" rather say, "Therefore I will do it, for otherwise there will be a quarrel;" and it is better to serve him, than to serve thy own lusts of pride and revenge. Some give this sense of it: The Jews taught that the disciples of the wise, and the students of the law, were not to be pressed, as others might, by the king's officers, to travel upon the public service; but Christ will not have his disciples to insist upon this privilege, but to comply rather than offend the government. The sum of all is, that Christians must not be litigious; small injuries must be submitted to, and no notice taken of them; and if the injury be such as requires us to seek reparation, it must be for a good end, and without thought of revenge: though we must not invite injuries, yet we must meet them cheerfully in the way of duty, and make the best of them. If any say,

Flesh and blood cannot pass by such an affront, let them remember, that flesh and blood shall not inherit the kingdom of God.

John Gill on Matthew 5:39-41:

But I say unto you, that ye resist not evil,- This is not to be understood of any sort of evil, not of the evil of sin, of bad actions, and false doctrines, which are to be opposed; nor of the evil one, Satan, who is to be resisted; but of an evil man, an injurious one, who has done us an injury. We must not render evil for evil, or repay him in the same way; see Jas 5:6. Not but that a man may lawfully defend himself, and endeavour to secure himself from injuries; and may appear to the civil magistrate for redress of grievances; but he is not to make use of private revenge. As if a man should pluck out one of his eyes, he must not in revenge pluck out one of his; or should he strike out one of his teeth, he must not use him in the same manner; but patiently bear the affront, or seek for satisfaction in another way.

But whosoever shall smite thee on thy right cheek, turn to him the other also: -- which is to be understood comparatively, rather than seek revenge, and is directly contrary to the Jewish canons, which require, in such a case, a pecuniary fine¹.

And if any man will sue thee at the law,-- Or "will contend with thee", or as the Syriac renders it, דנדון עמך, "will strive", or "litigate with thee"; not contest the matter, or try the cause in an open court of judicature, a sense our version inclines to; but will wrangle and quarrel in a private way, in order to

take away thy coat, -- by force and violence,

let him have thy cloak also;-- do not forbid, or hinder him from taking it; see Lu 6:29. The "coat", is the same with טלית, "the upper garment": and what we render a "cloak", answers to חלוק, "the inward garment"; by which words Sangari expresses the passage in the place before cited: and the sense is, if a wrangling, quarrelsome man, insists

upon having thy coat, or upper garment, let him take the next; and rather suffer thyself to be stripped naked than engage in a litigious broil with him.

And whosoever shall compel thee to go a mile, -- The word ἀγγαρεύσει, rendered "compel", is generally said to be of Persic original; the "Angari", among the Persians, were the king's messengers, or those who rode post, and were maintained at the king's expenses; and had power to take horses, and other carriages, and even men, into their service, by force, when they had occasion for them: hence the word is used to force, or compel persons to do this or the other thing; the word אנגריא is often to be met with in the Jewish writings, and is in them expounded to be¹, the taking of anything for the service of the king. David de Pomis renders it by עול, "a yoke"²; meaning, any servile work, which such, who were pressed into the king's service, were obliged unto. And³ עשה אנגריא is used to compel persons to go along with others, to do any service; in which sense it is here used: and Christ advises, rather than to contend and quarrel with such a person, that obliges to go with him a mile, to

go with him twain: -- his meaning is, not to dispute such a matter, though it may be somewhat laborious and disagreeable, but comply, for the sake of peace.

Albert Barnes on Matthew 5:39-41:

An eye for an eye, etc. This command is found in Ex 21:24; Le 24:20; De 19:21. In these places it was given as a rule to regulate the decisions of judges. They were to take eye for eye, and tooth for tooth, and to inflict burning for a burning. As a judicial rule it is not unjust. Christ finds no fault with the rule as applied to magistrates, and does not take upon himself to repeal it. But, instead of confining it to magistrates, the Jews had extended it to private conduct, and made it the rule by which to take revenge. They considered themselves

justified, by this rule, to inflict the same injury on others that they had received. Against this our Saviour remonstrates. He declares that the law had no reference to private revenge; that it was given only to regulate the magistrate; and that their private conduct was to be regulated by different principles. The general principle which he laid down was, that we are not to resist evil; that is, as it is in the Greek, not to set ourselves against an evil person who is injuring us. But even this general direction is not to be pressed too strictly. Christ did not intend to teach that we are to see our families murdered, or to be murdered ourselves, rather than to make resistance. The law of nature, and all laws, human and Divine, have justified self-defence, when life is in danger. It cannot surely be the intention to teach that a father should sit by coolly, and see his family butchered by savages, and not be allowed to defend them. Neither natural nor revealed religion ever did, or ever can, teach this doctrine. Our Saviour immediately explains what he means by it. Had he intended to refer it to a case where life is in danger, he would most surely have mentioned it. Such a case was far more worthy of statement than those which he did mention. A doctrine so unusual, so unlike all that the world had believed, and that the best men had acted on, deserved to be formally stated. Instead of doing this, however, he confines himself to smaller matters, to things of comparatively trivial interest, and says, that in these we had better take wrong than to enter into strife and lawsuits. The first case is, where we are smitten on the cheek. Rather than contend and fight, we should take it patiently, and turn the other cheek. This does not, however, prevent our remonstrating firmly, yet mildly, on the injustice of the thing, and insisting that justice should be done us, as is evident from the example of the Saviour himself. See Joh 18:23. The second evil mentioned is, where a man is litigious, and determined to take all the advantage the law can give him; following us with vexatious and expensive lawsuits. Our Saviour directs us, rather than to imitate him-

-rather than to contend with a revengeful spirit in courts of justice, and to perpetual broils--so take a trifling injury, and yield to him. This is merely a question about property, and not about conscience and life.

Coat. The Jews wore two principal garments, an interior and an exterior. The interior, here called the "coat," or the tunic, was made commonly of linen, and encircled the whole body, extending down to the knees. Sometimes beneath this garment, as in the case of the priests, there was another garment, corresponding to pantaloons. The coat, or tunic, was extended to the neck, and had long or short sleeves. Over this was commonly worn an upper garment, here called "cloak," or mantle. It was made commonly nearly square, of different sizes, five or six cubits long, and as many broad, and wrapped around the body, and thrown off when labour was performed. This was the garment which is said to have been without seam, woven throughout, Joh 19:23. If, said Christ, an adversary wished to obtain, at law, one of these garments, rather than contend with him, let him have the other also. A reference to various articles of apparel occurs frequently in the New Testament, and it is desirable to have a correct view of the ancient mode of dress, in order to a correct understanding of the Bible. The Asiatic modes of dress are nearly the same from age to age; and hence it is not difficult to illustrate the passages where such a reference occurs. The ordinary dress consisted of the inner garment, the outer garment, the girdle, and the sandals. In regard to the sandals, Cmt. on Mt 3:11. The preceding cut will give a sufficiently accurate representation of the more simple and usual modes in which the garments were worn.

McLaren on Matthew 5:38-41:

The old law directed judges to inflict penalties precisely equivalent to offences—'an eye for an eye, and a tooth for a tooth' (Ex 21:24), but that direction was not for the guidance of individuals. It was suited for the stage of civilisation in which it was given, and probably was then a

restriction, rather than a sanction, of the wild law of retaliation. Jesus sweeps it away entirely, and goes much further than even its abrogation. For He forbids not only retaliation but even resistance. It is unfortunate that in this, as in so many instances, controversy as to the range of Christ's words has so largely hustled obedience to them out of the field, that the first thought suggested to a modern reader by the command 'Resist not evil' (or, an evil man) is apt to be, Is the Quaker doctrine of uniform non-resistance right or wrong, instead of, Do I obey this precept? If we first try to understand its meaning, we shall be in a position to consider whether it has limits, springing from its own deepest significance, or not. What, then, is it not to resist? Our Lord gives three concrete illustrations of what He enjoins, the first of which refers to insults such as contumelious blows on the cheek, which are perhaps the hardest not to meet with a flash of anger and a returning stroke; the second of which refers to assaults on property, such as an attempt at legal robbery of a man's undergarment; the third of which refers to forced labour, such as impressing a peasant to carry military or official baggage or documents—a form of oppression only too well known under Roman rule in Christ's days. In regard to all three cases, He bids His disciples submit to the indignity, yield the coat, and go the mile. But such yielding without resistance is not to be all. The other cheek is to be given to the smiter; the more costly and ample outer garment is to be yielded up; the load is to be carried for two miles. The disciple is to meet evil with a manifestation, not of anger, hatred, or intent to inflict retribution, but of readiness to submit to more. It is a hard lesson, but clearly here, as always, the chief stress is to be laid, not on the outward action, but on the disposition, and on the action mainly as the outcome and exhibition of that. If the cheek is turned, or the cloak yielded, or the second mile trudged with a lowering brow, and hate or anger boiling in the heart, the commandment is broken. If the inner man rises in hot indignation against the evil and its doer, he is resisting evil more harmfully to

himself than is many a man who makes his adversary's cheeks tingle before his own have ceased to be reddened. We have to get down into the depths of the soul, before we understand the meaning of non-resistance. It would have been better if the eager controversy about the breadth of this commandment had oftener become a study of its depth, and if, instead of asking, 'Are we ever warranted in resisting?' men had asked, 'What in its full meaning is non-resistance?' The truest answer is that it is a form of Love, — love in the face of insults, wrongs, and domineering tyranny, such as are illustrated in Christ's examples. This article of Christ's New Law comes last but one in the series of instances in which His transfiguring touch is laid on the Old Law, and the last of the series is that to which He has been steadily advancing from the first—namely, the great Commandment of Love. This precept stands immediately before that, and prepares for it. It is, as suffused with the light of the sun that is all but risen, 'Resist not evil,' for 'Love beareth all things.'

It is but a shallow stream that is worried into foam and made angry and noisy by the stones in its bed; a deep river flows smooth and silent above them. Nothing will enable us to meet 'evil' with a patient yielding love which does not bring the faintest tinge of anger even into the cheek reddened by a rude hand, but the 'love of God shed abroad in the heart,' and when that love fills a man, 'out of him will flow a river of living water,' which will bury evil below its clear, gentle abundance, and, perchance, wash it of its foulness. The 'quality of' this non-resistance 'is twice blessed,' 'it blesseth him that gives and him that takes.' For the disciple who submits in love, there is the gain of freedom from the perturbations of passion, and of steadfast abiding in the peace of a great charity, the deliverance from the temptation of descending to the level of the wrong-doer, and of losing hold of God and all high visions. The tempest-ruffled sea mirrors no stars by night, nor is blued by day. If we are to have real communion with God, we must not flush with indignation at evil, nor pant with desire to shoot

the arrow back to him that aimed it at us. And in regard to the evil-doer, the most effectual resistance is, in many cases, not to resist. There is something hid away somewhere in most men's hearts which makes them ashamed of smiting the offered left cheek, and then ashamed of having smitten the right one. 'It is a shame to hit him, since he does not defend himself,' comes into many a ruffian's mind. The safest way to travel in savage countries is to show oneself quite unarmed. He that meets evil with evil is 'overcome of evil'; he that meets it with patient love is likely in most cases to 'overcome evil with good.' And even if he fails, he has, at all events, used the only weapon that has any chance of beating down the evil, and it is better to be defeated when fighting hate with love than to be victorious when fighting it with itself, or demanding an eye for an eye.

But, if we take the right view of this precept, its limitations are in itself. Since it is love confronting, and seeking to transform evil into its own likeness, it may sometimes be obliged by its own self not to yield. If turning the other cheek would but make the assaulter more angry, or if yielding the cloak would but make the legal robber more greedy, or if going the second mile would but make the press-gang more severe and exacting, resistance becomes a form of love and a duty for the sake of the wrong-doer. It may also become a duty for the sake of others, who are also objects of love, such as helpless persons who otherwise would be exposed to evil, or society as a whole. But while clearly that limit is prescribed by the very nature of the precept, the resistance which it permits must have love to the culprit or to others as its motive, and not be tainted by the least suspicion of passion or vengeance. Would that professing Christians would try more to purge their own hearts, and bring this solemn precept into their daily lives, instead of discussing whether there are cases in which it does not apply! There are great tracts in the lives of all of us to which it should apply and is not applied; and we had better seek to bring these under

its dominion first, and then it will be time enough to debate as to whether any circumstances are outside its dominion or not.

Submission to the higher powers – civil authority.

Romans 13:1-6 *Let every soul be subject unto the higher powers. For there is no power but of God: the powers that be are ordained of God. Whosoever therefore resisteth the power, resisteth the ordinance of God: and they that resist shall receive to themselves damnation. For rulers are not a terror to good works, but to the evil. Wilt thou then not be afraid of the power? do that which is good, and thou shalt have praise of the same: For he is the minister of God to thee for good. But if thou do that which is evil, be afraid; for he beareth not the sword in vain: for he is the minister of God, a revenger to execute wrath upon him that doeth evil. Wherefore ye must needs be subject, not only for wrath, but also for conscience sake. For for this cause pay ye tribute also: for they are God's ministers, attending continually upon this very thing.*

Titus 3:1 *Put them in mind to be subject to principalities and powers, to obey magistrates, to be ready to every good work,*

1 Peter 2:13-17 *Submit yourselves to every ordinance of man for the Lord's sake: whether it be to the king, as supreme; Or unto governors, as unto them that are sent by him for the punishment of evildoers, and for the praise of them that do well. For so is the will of God, that with well doing ye may put to silence the ignorance of foolish men: As free, and not using your liberty for a cloke of maliciousness, but as the servants of God. Honour all men. Love the brotherhood. Fear God. Honour the king.*

- **How did the Apostle Paul show himself submissive to Civil Government? The answer to this question will show us clearly the intent of Romans 13:1-6.**

Acts 23:1-5 *And Paul, earnestly beholding the council, said, Men and brethren, I have lived in all good conscience before God until this day. And the high priest Ananias commanded them that stood by him to smite him on the mouth. Then said Paul unto him, God shall smite thee, thou whited wall: for sittest thou to judge me after the law, and commandest me to be smitten contrary to the law? And they that stood by said, Revilest thou God's high priest? Then said Paul, I wist not, brethren, that he was the high priest: for it is written, Thou shalt not speak evil of the ruler of thy people.*

- o Paul saw his error – and would not have spoken evil of the High Priest had he know who he was.
- o Paul submitted to Claudius Lysias, Acts 23:10-24.
- o Paul submitted to Felix, Acts 24:1-27.
- o Paul submitted to Festus, Acts 25:1-9.
- o Paul submitted to King Agrippa, Acts 25:13-27; 26:1-32.
- o Paul appealed to and submitted to Caesar, Acts 25:10-12; Nero was Caesar and Emperor of Rome beginning in the year 54AD. Paul's journey to Rome occurred in 62AD. Nero was a ruthless ruler and was in power when Paul submitted himself to this man and was killed for his faith in Jesus Christ in the year 66AD. (2Ti. 4:6).

Nero (/ˈnɪərɒs/; Latin: Nero Claudius Caesar Augustus Germanicus;[1] 15 December 37 – 9 June 68)[2] was Roman Emperor from 54 to 68, and the last in the Julio-Claudian dynasty. Nero was adopted by his great-uncle Claudius to become his heir and successor, and succeeded to the throne in 54 following Claudius' death.

What think ye? Do you think God's dear children ought to take the sword against those whom He has placed in power? Even if they are evil men? Do

you not believe the LORD gives the kingdoms of this earth to whom he will? Even to the basest men? Notice Daniels explanation of the vision concerning King Nebuchadnezzar:

Daniel 4:16-17 *Let his heart be changed from man's, and let a beast's heart be given unto him; and let seven times pass over him. This matter is by the decree of the watchers, and the demand by the word of the holy ones: to the intent that the living may know that the most High ruleth in the kingdom of men, and giveth it to whomsoever he will, and setteth up over it the basest of men.*

Daniel had previously interpreted the dream of Nebuchadnezzar in the 2nd chapter of his book and said this to the king:

Daniel 2:20-21 *Daniel answered and said, Blessed be the name of God for ever and ever: for wisdom and might are his: And he changeth the times and the seasons: he removeth kings, and setteth up kings: he giveth wisdom unto the wise, and knowledge to them that know understanding:*

This preacher cannot find scriptural reason to lift a sword against the government.

- When a government forces believers to NOT do a thing which the LORD has commanded, then they must not submit, but must obey the Lord in that which he has commanded.
- When a government forces believers to do a thing which the LORD has forbidden, then they must refuse.

Examples:

- **The Prophet Daniel.** The King Darius forbade anyone to ask anything of anybody except himself for a whole month. Daniel knew the law had been signed and knew that it would undoubtedly be enforced. He continued to do as he had done previously – he went to his room, opened the window toward Jerusalem and prayed to His God

three times every day. Daniel, then submitted himself to the punishment determined by the king. He was thrown in the den of lions, but the LORD intervened and saved him.

- **The Three Hebrew Children, Shadrach, Meshech, and Abednego.**

The King Nebuchadnezzar commanded everyone to bow to the idol of gold which he had built when the music was played. Shadrach, Meshech, and Abednego refused. The Jews who had been set over the province of Babylon accused them to the king. The three men were not careful to answer the king. They said, "O Nebuchadnezzar, we are not careful to answer thee in this matter. If it be so, our God whom we serve is able to deliver us from the burning fiery furnace, and he will deliver us out of thine hand, O king. But if not, be it known unto thee, O king, that we will not serve thy gods, nor worship the golden image which thou hast set up." (Daniel 3.16-18). They paid the price. They submitted to the punishment for disobeying the king's commandment. They were cast into the burning fiery furnace, but the LORD was there with them to deliver them.

- **Peter and John.** The Sanhedrin commanded Peter and John to never again speak nor teach in the name of Jesus. They answered by saying "Whether it be right in the sight of God to hearken unto you more than unto God, judge ye. For we cannot but speak the things which we have seen and heard." (Acts 4.19-20).

- **Peter and the other apostles.** The High Priest and those with him apprehended Peter and the apostles and put them in prison for preaching and healing the sick. When the LORD delivered Peter from the prison, he and the other apostles went to the temple to teach the people. The captain with the officers brought them again before the council. The council threatened them. Then Peter and the other apostles answered and said, We ought to obey God rather than men. . . After the intervention of Gamaliel, the council commanded them to be beaten again commanding them not to speak and teach about Jesus Christ. They were beaten and released – and returned to the

church – the company of the disciples rejoicing that they had been accounted worthy to suffer shame for Jesus' name.

- **Stephen, one of the Seven.** Stephen was brought before the council. They suborned witnesses against him. They accused him of blasphemy. He answered them with a long message recorded in Acts 7.1-53. They were cut to the heart and took up stones to stone him, which they did. He fell asleep calling on the Lord Jesus to receive his spirit and asking that the sin not be laid to the charge of his persecutors.
- **The Church at Jerusalem.** Saul of Tarsus had consented to the death of Stephen and the persecutors of Stephen had laid down their clothes at his feet. Saul conducted a great persecution against the Church at Jerusalem. He made havoc of the church haling men and women committing them to prison and forced them to blaspheme. He was part of the Jewish Government. There is no scripture which says they resisted his onslaught against them. (Acts 8).
- **James and Peter.** We are told that Herod the king killed the apostle James, the brother of John with the sword. Seeing it pleased the Jews, he intended to kill Peter also. Peter was apprehended and put in prison, but the angel of the LORD came down and delivered him. (Acts 12).
- **Paul.** When Paul had appealed to Caesar, he was taken to Rome and imprisoned. He refused not to die, but was taken to the highest authority in the Roman Empire. There, he lay down his neck and died. Paul treated his inquisitors (the government) with respect and dignity in his appeal.