

Defense of self and defense of others

By Leon King

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IMPORTANT NOTICE: I wrote this article on November 13th of this year while contemplating all the nuances of self-defense. I failed to make a distinction between self-defense and avenging one's self. I was wrong. Brother Craig Thurman, my co-pastor did an in-depth study and preached a message making the differences clear. Therefore, I post his article with this one under the title of Self-Defense on this date – December 1, 2017. Thank you.

On Sunday, November 5, 2017, a gunman entered the First Baptist Church in Sutherland Springs, Texas. He fired into the congregation leaving at least 26 persons dead and several others injured. Thanks to God, a neighbor heard the shots and finally killed the man who murdered all these adults and children. Was he right? What if someone in the congregation had been armed and had shot the gunman? Would that person have been justified in doing so? I want to consider these questions

Much has been said and written about this in the past weeks. This writer can imagine that churches across the land are considering how they could protect themselves if such an incident occurred in their own house of worship. In our own church here in the woods of Alaska, we have been praying and considering this matter.

Our concern is to have a "thus saith the LORD" for any action that we take. We want to know that the LORD has given us a commandment concerning self-defense before taking arms against an intruder, even if he intends to kill someone or all.

SELF-DEFENSE. What passages do we have concerning self-defense? This preacher's mind goes to the Sermon on the Mount. What did Jesus Christ teach his disciples about self-defense? He said this:

Matthew 5:38-42 *Ye have heard that it hath been said, An eye for an eye, and a tooth for a tooth: 39 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. 40 And if any man will sue thee at the law, and take away thy coat, let him have thy cloke also. 41 And whosoever shall compel thee to go a mile, go with him twain. 42 Give to him that asketh thee, and from him that would borrow of thee turn not thou away.*

And again,

Luke 6:27-31 *But I say unto you which hear, Love your enemies, do good to them which hate you, 28 Bless them that curse you, and pray for them which despitefully use you. 29 And unto him that smiteth thee on the one cheek offer also the other; and him that taketh away thy cloke forbid not to take thy coat also. 30 Give to every man that asketh of thee; and of him that taketh away thy goods ask them not again. 31 And as ye would that men should do to you, do ye also to them likewise.*

This is plain enough for any of us! When a person attacks us personally, we are commanded of the LORD to “offer the other cheek also.” Jesus has commanded us to passively accept the evil treatment of another. As sheep in the midst of wolves, we dare not strike back. Our Lord commands us to “overcome evil with good.”

Romans 12:17-21 *Recompense to no man evil for evil. Provide things honest in the sight of all men. 18 If it be possible, as much as lieth in you, live peaceably with all men. 19 Dearly beloved, avenge not yourselves, but rather give place unto wrath: for it is written, Vengeance is mine; I will repay, saith the Lord. 20 Therefore if thine enemy hunger, feed him; if he thirst, give him drink: for in so doing thou shalt heap coals of fire on his head. 21 Be not overcome of evil, but overcome evil with good.*

CHARACTER OF GOD'S PEOPLE GENERALLY. Allow me to quote some passages from the Holy Scriptures to show the peaceful character of God's children both historically, presently, and in the future.

Job 31:29-31 *If I rejoiced at the destruction of him that hated me, or lifted up myself when evil found him: Neither have I suffered my mouth to sin by wishing a curse to his soul. If the men of my tabernacle said not, Oh that we had of his flesh! we cannot be satisfied.*

Luke 6:29 *And unto him that smiteth thee on the one cheek offer also the other; and him that taketh away thy cloke forbid not to take thy coat also.*

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 lieth 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, saith the Lord.*

1 Corinthians 6:7 *Now therefore there is utterly a fault among you, because ye go to law one with another. Why do ye not rather take wrong? why do ye not rather suffer yourselves to be defrauded?*

1 Thessalonians 5:15 *See that none render evil for evil unto any man; but ever follow that which is good, both among yourselves, and to all men.*

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

Mat 26:52 *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.*

Rev 14:11-12 *And the smoke of their torment ascendeth up for ever and ever: and they have no rest day nor night, who worship the beast and his image, and whosoever receiveth the mark of his name. Here is*

the patience of the saints: here are they that keep the commandments of God, and the faith of Jesus.

Rev 13:10 *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.*

We can see that overall, the children of God, have been and shall be passive when others do evil to them. Most certainly, that shall be the case when the man of sin is given dominion over the saints for a very long three and one-half years. He shall overcome them and kill them.

Daniel 7:21-22 *I beheld, and the same horn made war with the saints, and prevailed against them; Until the Ancient of days came, and judgment was given to the saints of the most High; and the time came that the saints possessed the kingdom.*

Revelation 13:4-7 *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.*

Revelation 14:10-13 *The same shall drink of the wine of the wrath of God, which is poured out without mixture into the cup of his indignation; and he shall be tormented with fire and brimstone in the presence of the holy angels, and in the presence of the Lamb: And the smoke of their torment ascendeth up for ever and ever: and they have no rest day nor night, who worship the beast and his image, and whosoever receiveth the mark of his name. Here is the patience of the saints: here are they that keep the commandments of God, and the faith of Jesus. And I*

heard a voice from heaven saying unto me, Write, Blessed are the dead which die in the Lord from henceforth: Yea, saith the Spirit, that they may rest from their labours; and their works do follow them.

WHAT ABOUT DEFENDING OTHERS? What is to be our action when we see a gunman intending to kill others? Are we to stand passively and merely watch? This preacher says, No, absolutely not! God demands that we take affirmative action against a person whose intent is to bring death to others. Consider these two verses from the Proverbs:

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?*

Clearly, this is the mind of the LORD about defense of others. This preacher has discussed this on a social media and at least one Baptist preacher said, "This is in contradiction to what Jesus taught." Not true! Jesus spoke mainly of assaults against our own person. This speaks of them who are drawn unto death – ready to be slain. We see this happening. If we do not take action, it is sure that our God who ponders the heart considers it. He knows it. And he shall render to us according to our works. This strikes fear in my own heart. I have a duty to protect the lives of others. By the grace of God, this preacher will do so!