

# **IS IT RIGHT FOR A CHRISTIAN TO OWN A GUN AND DEFEND HIMSELF AND HIS FAMILY?**

## **INTRODUCTION**

For a number of years now there has been much controversy about outlawing guns. It seems with every violent crime involving a gun the proponents of gun legislation gain a sizable piece of ground toward their goal. Some also subscribe to the idea that Christians should support the disarming of law-abiding citizens.

Consider, on the other hand, a hypothetical situation posed by one author:

It's 3 a.m. You wake from a deep sleep to hear noises downstairs. Someone is breaking into your house! What do you do? You reach for the phone, but it is dead. You go out into the hallway. There in your living room is a man you don't know! He turns to you and you see a large knife in his hand! He says, "go get your wife!" What do you do? (Dan Peters).

Is a Christian suppose to be passive in situations like this and offer no defense for his family? Is it in line or out of line with the Bible for a Christian to have a lethal weapon for protection?

TO ANSWER THIS QUESTION...

## **I. WE NEED TO CONSIDER A PRECEDENT WHICH WAS SET IN THE OLD TESTAMENT**

The Scriptures have much to say about weapons. The word "sword" is mentioned in some 400 verses in the Bible. And some of these verses do indeed apply to Christians and the right to bear arms for the defense of one's family.

It is specifically stated in Exodus 22:2-4 that a home-owner has the right to bear arms and to exercise deadly force in defense of his family. In this passage we see if a thief was killed during the night the home-owner was not liable for his death. But if he was killed during the day, it was murder.

From this O.T. law it can be seen that the Bible gives support to use deadly force by individuals to protect their family. But it does not give support to use deadly force by individuals to protect their property. The right to keep and bear arms is something assumed in the O.T. to be a God-given right.

## **II. WE NEED TO CONSIDER CERTAIN PRINCIPLES WHICH APPLY TO CHRISTIANS TODAY**

It is evident from Luke 11:21-22 that the Lord Jesus assumed that a man had a right to defend his family. The peace spoken of here in a man's palace or home is the result of being armed, not disarmed.

From this passage we need to grasp an important principle which is operative in this old sinful world - An armed home is a safe home.

Surveying the N.T. for principles which apply to Christians we find in Luke 22:36 the Lord Jesus actually instructed His disciples to buy a sword or weapon for defense. When two swords were found among the twelve He said it would be enough.

From this incident we may conclude that Jesus did not prohibit His disciples from having a lethal weapon for defense.. We may see also another principle concerning bearing arms - sometimes a weapon may be more valuable than other things.

Some will cite Matt. 26:47-52 as an argument for Christians not to bear arms but the Lord Jesus didn't say His servants have no right to fight. He said rather His kingdom was not to be brought in by physical weapons. In other words the gospel is not to be spread by the sword.

Oftentimes Isa. 2:4 is used to teach pacifism and disarmament for the Christian but this passage refers to the situation which will characterize the millennial kingdom when Christ Himself will rule with a rod of iron.

But what about Matt. 5:39 didn't the Lord Jesus teach that Christians should turn the other cheek in response to violence? It must be seen that this refers to less than lethal force. Christians should allow themselves to be defrauded and even abased to further the cause of Christ (Rom. 12:17-21; I Pet. 4:14-16), but this in no way contradicts a Christian's right to defend his loved ones from violent criminals

Some will argue that the sixth commandments prohibits the use of arms, as well as, any kind of killing. But this commandment prohibits deliberate and premeditated murder. Such an act is condemned also in the N.T. (I Pet. 4:15).

## **III. WE NEED TO CONSIDER THE PREDICAMENTS WHICH COULD COME OUT OF THE DISARMAMENT OF LAW-ABIDING CITIZENS**

According to I Sam. 13:19-22 weapons confiscation was a method used by the Philistines to make slaves out of the people they ruled. And this was the predicament the Israelites were in just prior to Saul's exploits in war.

Notice while there are many arguments waged today in favor of gun-control they fail to see the predicament law-abiding citizens would face if that were the case.

History has shown when people are disarmed and have no means of protecting themselves tyrants rule.

And who would be so naive as to think that disarming law-abiding citizens would make society safe. The truth is, criminals would find ways of acquiring and using weapons of deadly force and law-abiding citizens would be left completely defenseless.

In conclusion several things should be kept in mind. First of all, the second amendment to the Constitution gives a citizen the right to "keep and bear arms" and this right should be upheld by Bible-believing Christians realizing that an armed home is a deterrent to violent crime.

Secondly, Christians should be opposed to any legislation which would lead to the disarming of law-abiding citizens realizing the dangers this could pose, not only of tyranny under political leaders, but also loss of security in one's home.

Finally, while there is no Biblical basis for a Christian to take personal revenge or to spread Christianity by the means of arms, there is a basis for self-defense and to protect one's family from violent criminal assault.