

Thoughts On The Current Conflict

Parents are grieved when their loving admonitions fail and they find it necessary to discipline a stubborn or rebellious child. We take no joy in seeing our neighbor's son who resisted the help of social workers sentenced to prison for his misdeeds. Only a sick-minded person would take pleasure in the horrors of warfare in preference to diplomacy. So why do we take such undesirable and drastic disciplinary measures? Can't we just talk things out in love? Why are conflicts not settled by negotiation?

A frontiersman wanted a bear-skin coat for the winter, so he went bear-hunting. Suddenly, he came face-to-face with a huge bear. He raised his rifle to fire, but the bear cried out, "Wait! Wait! Let's negotiate this matter. Each of us can come out ahead by negotiation. What do you want?" "I want a bear-skin coat," the man explained. "All right," the bear soothed, "all I am wanting is a meal. So, let's sit on this log and negotiate, and both of us can have what we want."

They sat together to negotiate, and within an hour each had what he wanted. The man was inside a warm bear-skin and the bear had enjoyed a good meal. The moral: Without good faith on the part of both parties, negotiations play into the hands of the more greedy and ruthless. Withholding disciplinary action only empowers the rebellious and the unscrupulous persons. "Tough love" is often necessary. It hurts! It costs!

Negotiations for peace never stopped a Stalin, Hitler, Castro, or Hussein, men who have without mercy slaughtered others who stood in their way. I can remember the efforts to appease Hitler. On television, I remember seeing Castro's men line political opponents before a pit and then execute them. Tyrants, like the bear, can speak softly and deceitfully to conceal and manipulate their murderous intent.

If others are robbing and abusing the widow down the street, you have a moral obligation to make her case your own. That is not meddling or bullying. A strong nation like ours has a moral obligation to help the weak ones. If we had not interfered with Saddam Hussein in the Gulf War, who knows how many other weaker countries Iraq would have swallowed up by now like Germany did under Hitler? And by seizing and controlling a greater part of the world's oil supply this ruthless and greedy tyrant would have had a strangle hold on the world's economy by which to build his empire. An idealistic sense of love toward Hussein would only have demonstrated no love for those tyrannized by him. Paul's exhortation that the strong bear the infirmities of the weak can apply to nations as well as individuals.

Surely, war is not the answer for all the world's problems, but power is the only thing a tyrant fears. God used warfare in history both to protect Israel and to discipline Israel. I am not implying that any nation today is God's protected nation like Israel was, but God still works in the lives of individuals and nations. The protests against war both here and abroad have undoubtedly strengthened Saddam Hussein's despotic intentions. If just people cannot confront and combat evil men, then they are given free reign.

When “peace demonstrations” become ugly, rebellious, or violent, they are hypocritical and their protests become mockery. (I wonder how many of those protesters are involved in protesting the killing of 40-million babies by abortion.) In Romans 13, Paul informs that we should be subject to the government because it is of God, and the one who resists it resists what God has appointed and will incur judgment.

Yes, Jesus taught us to love everyone, even our enemies, and to turn the other cheek when we are slapped. So that means if someone steals your SUV, you should also offer him the keys to your BMW! Right? I don’t think so!

In Romans 12:14-21, Paul urges, “*If possible, as far as it depends upon you, live peaceably with all.*” A disciple must not bear blame for initiating conflict, and he must try to live in peace, even cutting slack for others. But evil people may not let him live in peace. When violated, the disciple is not given permission to “render evil for evil,” thus taking personal vengeance for offenses against him. “*Beloved, never avenge yourselves, but leave it to the wrath of God; for it is written, ‘Vengeance is mine, I will repay, says the Lord.’*”

What does this mean? It means that if someone steals your car, you are not to repay him by burning his house down or shooting him. Does that leave the victim without recourse? No, you can call the police, file charges, and witness in court against the thief. That leaves it to the “wrath of God” who will avenge. Will you have to wait for the judgment for God’s avenging? No, God have provided civil government for his avenging agent against offenses, both individual and national.

Concerning civil rulers, even in the Roman Empire, Paul declares, “*.. he is God’s servant for your good. But if you do wrong, be afraid, for he does not bear the sword (instrument of capital punishment! -ch) in vain; he is the servant of God to execute his wrath on the wrongdoer.*” That is God’s plan for the welfare of a society and its citizens. Because it is executed by men, we must not expect perfection in all its operations. But neither are our individual judgments of governmental action without flaw.

Further, if an attacker is inflicting injury and endangering your family and you cannot wait for the police to arrive, the “powers that be” give you the right of self-protection so that you may use whatever force is necessary to remedy the situation. That would be remedial action motivated by love for the victims rather than taking personal vengeance.

No, Jesus did not use force in advancing his spiritual kingdom. But even as God used armies to defend or punish Israel, Jesus foretold the destruction of Jerusalem and the nation of Israel which was fulfilled by the Roman army with his permission in the circumstances of his coming in AD 70.

Many of my peers served in WWII. Many of them gave their lives. I stand in profound awe of what they did for me, my country, and other nations as well. Some have already paid the ultimate price in this conflict. In my youthful simplistic interpretation of God’s

will, I was conscientiously opposed to serving in the military. I can understand and respect others today who have reached that conclusion. But in more mature study of the will of God, I learned that all military action does not come under his disapproval. I want you to learn that also. I wrote a much more detailed study of the things expressed so briefly in this essay. It is Chapter 21 of *Free To Speak*, titled, "The Right of Self-Protection." I encourage you to read it. You may access it at my web site.

(Cecil Hook; March 2003) []

HELLO, WAYNE. AGAIN, I WILL INSERT SOME COMMENTS IN CAPTIALS.
CECIL HOOK

ACTS 2:38 The discussion of whether salvation is received prior to baptism centers on the English translation of the Greek word "eis" to English in Acts 2:38. As seen in the American Heritage Dictionary a single word can have several meanings.

THE AMERICAN HERITAGE DICTIONARY

for (fôr; f...r when unstressed) prep. 1.a. Used to indicate the object, aim, or purpose of an action or activity. b. Used to indicate a destination. 2. Used to indicate the object of a desire, an intention, or a perception. 3.a. Used to indicate the recipient or beneficiary of an action. b. On behalf of. c. In favor of. d. In place of. 4.a. Used to indicate equivalence or equality. b. Used to indicate correlation or correspondence. 5.a. Used to indicate amount, extent, or duration. b. Used to indicate a specific time. 6.a. As being. b. Used to indicate an actual or implied listing or choosing. 7. As a result of; because of. 8. Used to indicate appropriateness or suitability. 9. Notwithstanding; despite. 10.a. As regards; concerning. b. Considering the nature or usual character of. c. In honor of. --for conj. Because; since. THIS IS A TOTALLY MISDIRECTED EFFORT. YOU SEARCHED LONG TO FIND A DICTIONARY THAT UPHELD WHAT YOU WANTED TO PROVE.

THIS DICTIONARY DEFINITION IS FOR THE USE OF 'FOR' AS A CONJUNCTION. IT DOES NOT EXPRESS PURPOSE. THE CONJUNCTION IS 'BECAUSE,' NOT 'BECAUSE OF.' SORRY ABOUT THAT!

MODERN ENGLISH DICTIONARIES GIVE CURRENT MEANINGS RATHER THAN THE ORIGINAL GREEK MEANINGS. LIKE DEFINING BAPTISM AS BEING SPRINKLING.

YOUNG'S ANALYTICAL CONCORDANCE TO THE BIBLE LISTS MANY BIBLICAL USAGES OF THE WORD 'FOR'. UNDER 'EIS', IT DEFINES 'EIS' AS 'WITH A VIEW TO' AND AMONG THE LISTINGS ARE MATTHEW 26:28, MARK 1:4, AND ACTS 2:38. THE DEFINITION MUST BE APPLIED THE SAME

WAY IN ALL THREE PASSAGES. CERTAINLY, THE MEANING WOULD BE DESTROYED IN MATTHEW 26:28 BY RENDERING IT 'BECAUSE OF.' UNDER 'FOR', YOUNG ALSO LISTS A DEFINITION AS 'BECAUSE OF, OR ON ACCOUNT OF'. BUT THAT IS FROM THE WORD 'HENEKA' RATHER THAN 'EIS'! THAT WORD AND MEANING ONLY APPLY TO ACTS 28:20 AND ROMANS 14:20. SO YOUR LABOR ON THE MEANING OF 'EIS' IS BOTH VAIN AND A MISUSE IN ORDER TO PROMOTE AN ERRONEOUS TEACHING.

Those who teach that baptism precedes salvation interpret For to mean "in order to". Those who teach that baptism is an act of obedience that follows receiving the free gift of salvatio interpret the word For as "because of". A GROSS MISINTERPRETATION!

Gramatical diagraming does not support the "in order to" interpretation. WHY NOT? YOU CANNOT DIAGRAM IT USING 'FOR' AS A CONJUNCTION.

The "in order to" interpretation is not consistent (harmonious) with several other scriptures such as the all familiar John 3:16. ONLY IF YO DEFINE 'BELIEVES' AS A MENTAL ASSENT AT A POINT IN TIME RATHER THAN A CONTINUOUS CONVICTION THAT RULES ONE'S LIFE. IT IS CONSISTENT WITH JOHN 3:5; MATTHEW 26:28; MARK 1:4; ACTS 22:16; ROMANS 6:3-4; TITUS 3:5, AND 1PETER 3:21

The "in order to" interpretation is not consistent with the theme of grace in the scriptures as a whole. IT IS ONLY INCONSISTENT TO THE UNIVERSALIST WHO DENIES THAT THERE IS ANY CONDITION OF ACCEPTANCE OF GRACE.

The "in order to" interpretation induces a works based relationship whereby a person has done something (baptism) "in order to" receive salvation. DO YOU DENY THAT ONE MUST DO SOMETHING IN ORER TO RECEIVE SALVATION?? This interpretation

forces a merit system whereby a perosn continually works to keep their salvation. The question arises, "Did that thought, that sin, that attitude cause me to loose my salvation?" SO WARNINGS AND EXHORTATIONS BY JESUS AND THE INSPIRED WRITERS MEAN NOTHING???

Paul said, "Oh retched YOU MIGHT WANT LOOK UP THAT WORD!! man that I am. Who will release me from this bondage?" as a result of the inner struggle of two natures. This inner struggle is compounded for the one who interprets For as "in order to". Not only does this person struggle with the conflict of two natures but also the salvation of his soul is at stake in his mind.

Those who interpret For as "in order to" accuse those who interpret For as "because of" as using grace as a license to sin. Paul said, "may it never be." The reality is that I do have a

license to sin. I sin all I want to. But, by the indwelling Holy Spirit my "want to" has been taken away. HOW NEAT!! YOU NO LONGER WANT TO SIN, SO YOU NEVER SIN!! JOHN WOULD LIKE TO TALK TO YOU -- 1 JOHN 1:5-10. AND PAUL WOULD WARN YOU, ' LET HIM WHO THINKS HE STANDS TAKE HEED LEST HE FALL.'

Salvation is a free gift apart from the works of baptism. AN ERROR NOT DERIVED FROM THE SCRIPTURES IF YOU MEAN WITHOUT SUBMISSION TO BAPTISM.

FACE THE FACTS, BROTHER. GOD BLESS, CECIL.