

I Hate War

By Christopher J. Patton

I hate war. I really do. As America mobilizes for military action in the Middle East, the questions of its "rightness" arise once again. Is it really our rightful business to send young troops "over there"?

Am I a pacifist? I guess the honest answer is, "Yes, no, and I don't know."

"Yes," because Jesus' teaching of "Love your enemy" resonates deeply within me. "No," because I've studied a great deal of history, and I know of countless cases of unjust oppression brought on by tyrants, who have only been overthrown by arms. "I don't know," because I have never been in the armed forces or in a situation where I have needed to make the decision to kill or be killed. However, if I actually found myself under attack, I am convinced that I might waver in my pacifism and use weapons to defend my family, self included. My father, a West Point graduate and nationally ranked marksman, taught me how to use a rifle responsibly, and I once had some NRA certificates to prove it.

But nearly every day I read about the strife that wracks this world, and these reports of severe suffering engage my soul deeply. We live in a world torn apart by ideology, oppressed by poverty, and increasingly poisoned by ecological abuse. In other words, we are living in the latter days prophesied by Jesus in the gospels and the book of His revelation to John. The Bible reveals that the today's most vital battle is a spiritual one against a merciless and fearful Adversary that is also very real – destructively real.

It is also a war to the death against the human nature universally found in people. Each of us is fatally twisted and flawed with innately bound evil – despite some demonstrated flashes of decency. This spiritual conflict is not some poetic myth that takes place in an ethereal dimension. Rather, its conduct manifests itself here and now in the loss of economic prosperity and public confidence, as well as in the raining of bombs, the burning of homes, and the bloody agony of wounds and violent deaths suffered on all sides of all armed conflicts brought to us by worldwide video reports.

Although some will undoubtedly use it to that purpose, politicians seeking personal power over the masses have not contrived an enemy to justify or invent America's declared war against terror. The United States is indeed under military attack, and in response, some of us will soon depart to fight in one engagement or another. The evils of radical Islam are real. They will not go away by wishful thinking, but then, neither will human nature. We can't change ourselves by educated mottos or psychologically scientific mantras. These evils external and internal are only eliminated by the faith miracle of true repentance and spiritual rebirth, and they only come from honestly engaging the real, politically incorrect, Jesus Christ of the Bible. Death to self is a bitter struggle. It is one we first need to face personally, followed by humble, prayerful encouragement to others wrestling with the cutting truth and loving mercy of Messiah.

The results of the recent elections across America may have been ordained to give us additional opportunities to win victories for Christ. But the hour is short. Our time is now. Those who stand lost between the God of Israel and Satan will be mortally crushed by the continuing man-made wars and miseries that have already begun. The Bible predicts plainly that these sorrows and tribulations will only intensify, despite the appearances of relative respite that will occasionally arise from seeming victories, both moral and military.

Meanwhile, our resources need to be generously devoted to extending the biblical good news of Jesus' immediately liberating salvation to Arabs and Jews, Muslims and Infidels, Christians and humanists, located both at home and abroad. Our mission is just and humane. Our success is certain, for "He is coming soon" to re-establish His throne of righteousness and peace over Jerusalem, Israel, and the world. In that day the Devil's death-filled deceit will also come to an end, and with it all military wars, political oppression, and crushing poverty. Indeed, let us sing hallelujah and pray for the peace of Jerusalem, which is to say – for the peace of all peoples.

March 2002