

Self-Defense, the *Second Amendment*, and the *Bible*.

What about the area of self-defense? According to the Fifth Commandment, would we not have a duty to protect our own persons and that of our families against those tyrants, political, social, or domestic, who would threaten our lives with deadly and imminent intent? For deadly and imminent threats in the home (domestic) or on the street (social) you may use deadly force to protect yourself and your family when no one in authority is around. Aside from the fact that such self-defense is implied in the Fifth Commandment, the singular biblical example found in Exodus 22:2-3 was simply part of the old civil code binding only on Israel, and only for its Old Testament period. In that example it was lawful to kill a burglar who was interrupted at night in the act, but it was unlawful to do so after sunrise.

In the rare case of deadly threats coming from the government, assuming that a person has not violated any common laws of the land, while there is no biblical command that clearly addresses this situation, there are multiple biblical examples on what to do. Moreover, all of these actions were identical: Flee! Go to some other locale or country! For instance, after King Saul wanted David's life, David fled (1st Samuel 20:1; 27:1). So did Elijah (1st Kings 19:2-3), Joseph, Mary, and Jesus (Matthew 2:13-14), the early-persecuted Christians (Acts 8:1 & 4), and Paul numerous times (2nd Corinthians

11:32-33; Acts 14:6; Acts 17:10). Just the same, when God allowed the government to arrest Peter for the purpose of putting him to death, God also saved his life by a miracle (Acts 12:5-11).

The most important matter in life is not how to safeguard your rights by force or by politics, but whether or not your soul will be going to heaven, or will be damned in hell by your unbelief in Christ's saving gospel.

Yet if any patriot American would object, saying, "But the current government in America is sponsoring the greatest injustice, cruelty, and oppression. This behavior simply demands retribution," the response could and should be: "Since your greatest concern is the punishment of injustice, then, realize that you are doing a far greater injustice to God by rebelling against him, by rejecting his gospel promise of salvation, and by living a life of lawlessness which demonstrates your unbelief. Moreover, God will not be mocked (Galatians 6:7). That is, God will not be slapped in his face. He will punish you."

In another display of this same spirit which calls upon God solely for political ends, and contradicts that of a genuine gospel believer, some patriot Americans have wanted "to deliver justice to a tyrant through imprecatory psalms, namely, to say prayers for the demise of one's enemies. God knows his evil deeds."

However, genuine Christians, obeying the spirit of the biblical commands and promises with a true heart,

such as, "Love your enemies! Bless them that would curse you! Do good to them that would hate you; and pray for them which despitefully would use you and persecute you, in order that you may be the children of your Father who is in heaven!" (Matthew 5:44-45), will pray simply and solely for God's protection from their religious, political, social, and domestic enemies by whatever means God would see fit, including their conversion. There will be an absence of malice, revenge, and retribution in such prayers. To be sure, Christ scolded his disciples after they wanted their enemies to be put to death (Luke 9:53-56).

The imprecatory psalms are Psalm 109, Psalm 69:22-28, Psalm 40:14-16, Psalm 35:4 & 26, and Psalm 70:2-3. Similar statements will be found in the New Testament in Galatians 1:8-9 and Galatians 5:12. These appeals are future prophecies in the form of a prayer, foretelling the future punishment of all those who would hate and persecute gospel believers. Since the Bible is divinely inspired, it was God who wanted these words to be written down by his writers (1) to assure his believers of his intent of their defense; and (2) as a most severe warning to non-Christians. These expressions are not sinful personal prayers desiring revenge and retribution. For example, David, who wrote most of these psalms, twice spared the life of his enemy, Saul, and also the life of Shimei (1st Samuel 24; 25; 2nd Samuel 16:9-10). The inspired writer of Galatians, the apostle Paul, wished he could trade his place in heaven so that his unbelieving

countrymen could be there instead (Romans 9:3; see Exodus 32:32). The same apostolic writer was also inspired to write: "Bless those who persecute you! Bless, and do not curse!" (Romans 12:14.)

Indeed, whenever patriot Americans would argue, "It is so dangerous to live in America today. I need the powerful defense of a firearm," they need to be reminded that their rejection of the gospel of heavenly-bestowed peace has brought on this deterioration of safety into lawlessness where now citizens in all walks of life commonly act like tyrants. Thus they are accomplices in this. On the other hand, genuine Lutherans, for instance, have prayed and worked to keep America from deteriorating into lawlessness and tyranny by trying to keep it Christian. They have a set prayer for their government appointed for every Sunday, and they do mission work among their fellow citizens. What have patriot Americans done positively and constructively, as opposed to training how to assassinate governmental authorities in 4th generational warfare, or to shake their firearms in a tyrant's face?

Just the same, some patriot Americans believe that, "endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable rights," they hold that their Creator has given them not merely the inalienable right of self-defense, but the inalienable right as well to the ownership of property in the form of firearm.

However, the slaves of Thomas Jefferson, who was the author of the *Declaration's* creed of "unalienable

Rights," were denied the ownership of firearms by an enactment of positive law, although the right of self-defense by "the Laws of Nature" was not denied to them. Likewise during the Revolutionary War the Whigs in every colony made a political decision through an enactment of positive law to deny the Tories, not the right of self-defense, but the right to possess firearms as property. Thus there have been occasions in American history for purposes of protection, that were endorsed by the Founding Fathers themselves, when certain residents did not enjoy an inalienable right to possess property in the form of firearms because of a political decision enacted into positive law, although the right of self-defense itself and the personal possession of other means for self-defense were not denied to them. While this may not be pleasant news to hear, while this may not have been fair, it is still the truth.

Again, at the beginning of the Revolutionary War, one of the first acts of the Whig party in every colony was to disarm the Tories of their firearms, and of their right to bear firearms. This was a political decision made for the express purpose of self-defense. Yet, as a result, the Tories in the New York area, for example, were at the mercy of Whig bandits, of Tory bandits, and even, according to General Washington, of troops from his own army which, "by rapine and plunder [were] spreading ruin and terror wherever they go." If the Tories ever had appealed to the Founding Fathers that their disarmament was, to use Jefferson's words in the

Declaration of Independence, against that which "the Laws of Nature and of Nature's God entitle them" "to reduce them under absolute Despotism" against the "consent of the governed," they would have argued in vain.

Indeed, in a future civil war would the patriot Americans, for the sake of principle, allow those citizens to keep and bear firearms that would stay loyal to that government which would be fighting against the patriot Americans? On the other hand, if in a state of civil war, the principle of the disarmament of opponents would be justified under the rules of war; and since some patriot Americans already have gone on record as maintaining that a state of war (cold or undeclared) already exists between the government and firearm owners, would not either side then have a duty to disarm the other according to the principle of self-preservation?

According to the *Second Amendment* of the *Constitution*, the right of the citizens to bear arms shall not be infringed. Yet if, in the future, the *Constitution* were to be amended properly by enough states to drop the *Second Amendment*, with the notation: "Citizens may still defend themselves with weapons according to natural law, just not with the technology known as firearms," patriot Americans would have neither constitutional nor natural law grounds to argue differently. The right to own property in the form of a firearm, or in the form of anthrax is, after all, a political decision, whether good or bad. To be sure, the responsible ownership of such property by a moral and a

religious people will not present a problem. However, the ownership by an immoral, lawless, and irreligious people (in courtrooms or in jails, for instance) always will present society with problems, for whose protection the government is responsible.

Nevertheless, patriot Americans would turn a political matter into a moral matter by asserting that firearms are a must for a proper self-defense because citizens must be entitled to weapons of their preference in order to have a fair chance, or entitled even to superior weapons that would give them an advantage over the aggressor, according to the natural law of self-defense (the Fifth Commandment).

Yet neither of these assertions would be vital to the definition of what weapon (not to mention means, precautions, behavior, or training) would supply an adequate self-defense, because the question could never be answered definitively: What weapon must be used at minimum or at maximum, under ordinary or under all circumstances, in order to have an adequate self-defense?

Just the same, it could be objected by patriot Americans that for all practical purposes, the possession of a firearm is so crucial to a proper self-defense that a sufficient defense could not be made without one, indeed, that any "meaningful self-defense would imply the ownership of military-grade firearms" at the very least. However, millions of citizens in Central America, for example, cannot own firearms legally, though they retain the right of self-defense. Still civil matters in these

places have not commonly nor generally become so dangerous, as a result, that self-defense could not be maintained adequately with other weapons.

Moreover, it will not violate the law of self-defense if the government would possess weapons which the citizens would not.

Another objection could be the following: "If the government would not give me the capability to fight off a mob of armed attackers, then it indeed would be true that such laws, which deny me the use of firearms, will deny me an adequate self-defense." However, being attacked by a mob would be like getting struck by lightning: It is possible, but not probable. Nevertheless, if you would be concerned, will you be willing to go to the trouble of carrying adequate lightning diversion gear on you everywhere you went, just in case? Likewise, would you be willing to carry on you, every time that you went out on foot, enough weaponry to ward off a sizeable mob, or, even for that matter, to survive an ambush or a crossfire? The self-defensive capability that is being proposed here is beyond the realm of a typical and common self-defense. It is the contention to be able to take on an army single-handedly.

"A firearm would be merely one tool that will allow you to apply self-defense knowledge."

While the defense of the lives and the livelihood of one's family, and, to an extent, that of one's neighbors broadening out even to one's own country, as well, is a duty imposed by God on mankind, especially on the

heads of households, the defense of one's own person is not commanded. Rather what is biblically emphasized and commanded, because sinful mankind is ever prone to return evil with evil - *lex talionis* - (1st Thessalonians 5:15); since, according to his sinful flesh over the slightest offense, man is obsessed with seeking revenge, reprisal, and retaliation, is that he must "turn the other cheek" (Matthew 5:38-41) in spirit. Just the same, self-defense is both implied in and permitted in the Bible (John 18:23; Acts 22:25) when no one in authority is around to do it, when the law of love must be fulfilled, and as long as the spirit of retaliation is absent.

Perhaps the clearest command in regards to an example of self-defense in the Bible is found in the civil and criminal code for the Old Testament nation of Israel, which was meant only for Israel and only for its Old Testament times. It was not intended to be a universal moral command. According to the instructions in Exodus 22:2-3, it would be lawful to kill a burglar who was caught at night in the act on your property.

Nevertheless, it also could be objected: "The framers of the *Bill of Rights* explicitly and purposely in the *Second Amendment* used the term "arms" meaning "firearms," and specifically left out any mention of other weapons. This would argue not simply for the common customary possession of firearms by the American people, but for legal recognition of that possession as well, especially with the pointed guarantee of that possession: 'Shall not be infringed'." Compare the

constitutions of other countries which do not include this guarantee! As then it was a legal or political matter when the *Bill of Rights* was adopted, so also now it is a legal or political matter, that is to say, a matter that could be changed by the legal or political process, as the *Constitution* itself allows, if the American voters and their duly elected representatives would wish to do so. The *Second Amendment* is not and never has been a moral matter.

If a person would not recognize clearly that the *Second Amendment* is a legal and political matter solely, not a moral one, neither will he think clearly or accurately when he would need to consider his biblical response should the government amend or even suspend the *Second Amendment*.

In regards to legal and political enactments put into positive law, God wants his believers to be patient with the matter, and to obey the law until it would be changed. If God would be using a foolish law to punish foolish citizens, he will keep it in place until he would be finished.

Moral matters, to be sure, could not be amended or suspended. The Bible has put bounds on governmental authority regarding God's will. That is, God will not allow the government to overrule God himself. If the government ever would pass a law which would amend or suspend Christian morality, then Christians will have to obey the clear biblical maxim of Acts 5:29, and obey God's law and not the government's law which would

contradict it. That is to say, Christians merely would ignore such a law. They would not comply with it. They might even flee the locale or the country, but they will not actively work to overthrow the government.

Yet patriot Americans believe that they have the right to use deadly force in self-defense against those in government who would confiscate their firearms, because the confiscators will be using deadly force.

The conclusion that should a government ever outlaw or confiscate all firearms, it will turn around then and execute every citizen who ever had possessed a firearm will be a false and an emotional deduction. While such a policy could be possible, it will not be probable. Evil leaders of governments have targeted political enemies for the purpose of killing them, to be sure, but not for the sole reason that they had possessed property in the form of a firearm. For instance, the government did not all subsequently execute the German citizens, who had possessed firearms prior to the German gun control laws of the 1920's and the 1930's. Indeed, those who joined the party in power could possess firearms.

Yet what if the government would not act according to this plan? For instance, what if an employee of the county, a polite young man in his 20's dressed in casual clothes, would show up at your front door after parking his white van that says "Community Service" on the side of it, and would inform you, "I am here not to notify you that you are sprinkling your lawn on the wrong day, but

to notify you that according to a law recently passed, your property has been condemned, though you will be compensated for it under eminent domain. Here is your check. See that you move out, for I am the one to take charge of your property!"

What would the patriot Americans do then? This young man would not be posing a deadly threat to them or to their property. What he would be doing may seem unfair to them, but it would be legal constitutionally (see the *Fifth Amendment*). This law would not be touching their right to self-defense. Thus the use of deadly force on the basis of self-defense would be out of the question not only legally and constitutionally, but also morally, if you will.

Moreover, in this same connection, what if a law would be passed under eminent domain, for which patriot Americans would be compensated, in which not the whole of their real estate would be condemned, but only a small portion of their property, namely, their firearms? Furthermore, what if the same young man would show up at your door with your check and a shopping cart for your firearms, remarking, "A law has been passed with the consent of the governed," or even "enough states properly and constitutionally voted to drop the *Second Amendment*." Patriot Americans could not argue that this new law was not legal, constitutional, or even moral. They could not argue that the law took away their right or their ability to defend themselves. So what would they do? Bury their firearms, or refuse to

hand them over? On what legal, constitutional, or moral basis could they do so? This brings us back to the matter of idolatry for firearms.

To be sure, in an act of self-defense we may resort to means to preserve our lives as long as those means are moral and legal, not immoral, that is, not against God's biblical commandments; and not illegal, that is, not against the government which God himself has installed over us.

For instance, self-defense also would cover the matter of providing food for ourselves. There will be exceptions to the rule. Just the same, these exceptions will promote mercy, justice, or Christian faith (Matthew 23:23). Yet in an emergency, where our lives would be at stake, the Fifth Commandment will not give us the right to steal in order to provide food for our families, or to provide such things as fuel to heat our homes, etc. In other words, we will not be entitled to break laws and commandments of God for the purpose of self-defense either in or outside of emergencies.

Though it is not stated specifically, the matter of self-defense is implied in the Fifth Commandment, just as the command to eat food, to seek medical help, or to struggle to keep from drowning are implied also. Not to do these things would be a sin because we would not be showing reasonable care as a steward in preserving the life of the bodies which God has given us. Yet God in his higher plans and power may override any of our efforts so that, for example, any medical help will not work, any

food will not be available, or any effort to keep ourselves from drowning will not work, so that he may take us to heaven.

If God would desire, and obviously he does on account of their gospel unbelief, to take away every freedom which he, the Creator, has given to his creatures, including the right to bear firearms, what will patriot Americans do to prevent him? Will they shoot the messenger, that is, shoot the government? Will they be so shortsighted to believe that by shooting the messenger they would solve their freedom problem?

Yet patriot Americans would display the presupposition that legislation regarding the possession of firearms is not a political matter, but a moral matter, thus dragging God and his Fifth Commandment (regarding self-defense) into their argument in order to justify their rebellion against government; expecting God to approve of their rebelling with deadly force, as a matter of self-defense, against bad government, on account of its restriction of or confiscation of property in the form of firearms.

Yet the laws of our government have not denied a citizen the right of self-defense. That right still stands. Neither have our laws forbidden the use of weapons by a citizen in self-defense. That right still exists.

Moreover, it would not follow logically that when a government would deny a citizen access to a firearm, it thereby will deny him access to a sufficient and reasonable self-defense; that is to say, that a citizen could

not defend himself properly without a firearm. That is not true.

What is more, an ex-felon, for instance, who would behave as an upright citizen after having served his sentence, who still would be forbidden by law to possess a firearm, also could make the argument that he could not perform a proper self-defense without a firearm. Yet neither the government nor any firearms rights group of whom I know, has ever expressed any horror over the lack of capability of an ex-felon to defend himself, or of being stripped of his right properly to defend himself.

The point of all of this is to show that (1) American legislation (wisely or unwisely) regarding the possession of property in the form of firearms is not a moral but a political matter; and that (2) patriot Americans are wrong to drag God and his Fifth Commandment regarding self-defense into this matter, proposing that God would approve of their rebelling against the government with deadly force (which would violate the Fourth Commandment) as a form of self-defense against the confiscation of their firearms, because they believe that their possession of firearms for self-defense purposes would be squarely a moral matter on the basis of the natural law of self-defense (that is, on the Fifth Commandment). See this!

The following quote from *Black's Law Dictionary* also encompasses the subject at hand.

“Self-defense. The protection of one’s person or property against some injury attempted by another. The right of such protection. An excuse for the use of force in resisting an attack on the person, and especially for killing an assailant. The right of a man to repel force by force even to the taking of like in defense of his person, property or habitation, or of a member of his family, against any one who manifests, intends, attempts or endeavors by violence or surprise, to commit a forcible felony. Essential elements of ‘self-defense’ are that defendant does not provoke difficulty and that there must be impending peril without convenient or reasonable mode of escape. The law of ‘self-defense’ justifies an act done in the reasonable belief of immediate danger, and, if an injury was done by defendant in justifiable self-defense, he can never be punished criminally nor held responsible for damages in a civil action.

“A person is justified in the use of force against an aggressor when and to the extent it appears to him and he reasonably believes that such conduct is necessary to defend himself or another against such aggressor’s imminent use of unlawful force. One who is not the aggressor in an encounter is justified in using a reasonable amount of force against his adversary when he reasonably believes: (a) that he is in immediate danger of unlawful bodily harm from his adversary and (b) that the use of such force is necessary to avoid this danger. It may be reasonable to use nondeadly force

against the adversary's nondeadly attack (an attack threatening death or serious bodily harm), but it is never reasonable to use deadly force against his nondeadly attack" (Henry Campbell Black, *Black's Law Dictionary*, Fifth Edition [Saint Paul: West Publishing Company, 1979], page 1219B -1220A).

That this definition in *Black's Law Dictionary* would not include a defense against one's own government could be concluded from the following definitions found in this same law dictionary.

"Rebellion. Deliberate, organized resistance, by force and arms, to the laws or operations of the government, committed by a subject. It is a federal crime to incite, assist, or engage in any rebellion or insurrection against the authority of the United States or the laws thereof" (page 1139A).

"Insurrection. A rebellion, or rising of citizens or subjects in resistance to their government. Insurrection consists in any combined resistance to the lawful authority of the state, with intent to cause the denial thereof, when the same is manifested, or intended to be manifested, by acts of violence. It is a federal crime to incite, assist, or engage in a rebellion or insurrection against the United States" (page 726A).

"Revolt. A revolt goes beyond insurrection in aim, being an attempt actually to overthrow the government itself, whereas insurrection has as its objective some forcible change within the government. A large-scale

revolt is called a rebellion and if it is successful it becomes a revolution" (page 1188A).

"Revolution. A complete overthrow of the established government in any country or state by those who were previously subject to it" (page 1188A).

"Sedition. Communication or agreement which has as its objective the stirring up of treason or certain lesser commotions, or the defamation of the government. Sedition is advocating, or with knowledge of its contents knowingly publishing, selling or distributing any document which advocates, or, with knowledge of its purpose, knowingly becoming a member of any organization which advocates the overthrow or reformation of the existing form of government of this state by violence or unlawful means. An insurrectionary movement tending towards treason, but wanting an overt act; attempts made by meetings or speeches, or by publications, to disturb the tranquility of the state" (page 1218A).

"Police power. An authority conferred by the American constitutional system in the Tenth Amendment, U.S. Const., upon the individual states, and, in turn, delegated to local governments, through which they are enabled to establish a special department of police; adopt such laws and regulations as tend to prevent the commission of fraud and crime, and secure generally the comfort, safety, morals, health, and prosperity of its citizens by preserving the public order, preventing a conflict of rights in the common intercourse

of the citizens, and insuring to each an uninterrupted enjoyment of all the privileges conferred upon him or her by the general laws.

“The power of the State to place restraints on the personal freedom and property rights of persons for the protection of the public safety, health, and morals or the promotion of the public convenience and general prosperity.... Police power is the exercise of the sovereign right of a government to promote order, safety, health, morals and general welfare within constitutional limits and is an essential attribute of government” (page 1041B).