

How Christians Behave In Times Like These

February 7, 2021

1 Chronicles 12:22 ESV

22 For from day to day men came to David to help him, until there was a great army, like an army of God.

23 These are the numbers of the divisions of the armed troops who came to David in Hebron to turn the kingdom of Saul over to him, according to the word of the LORD.

1 Chronicles 12:29-33 ESV

29 Of the Benjaminites, the kinsmen of Saul, 3,000, of whom the majority had to that point kept their allegiance to the house of Saul.

30 Of the Ephraimites 20,800, mighty men of valor, famous men in their fathers' houses.

31 Of the half-tribe of Manasseh 18,000, who were expressly named to come and make David king.

32 Of Issachar, men who had understanding of the times, to know what Israel ought to do, 200 chiefs, and all their kinsmen under their command.

John 16:12-13 ESV

12 I still have many things to say to you, but you cannot bear them now.

13 When the Spirit of truth comes, he will guide you into all the truth, for he will not speak on his own authority, but whatever he hears he will speak, and he will declare to you the things that are to come.

“It's Time to Talk About Violent Christian Extremism”, Politico

"For two decades, the U.S. government has been engaging with faith leaders in Muslim communities at home and around the world in an attempt to stamp out extremism and prevent believers vulnerable to radicalization from going down a path that leads to violence.

Now, after the dangerous QAnon conspiracy theory helped to motivate the insurrection at the U.S. Capitol, with many participants touting their Christian faith - and as evangelical pastors throughout the country ache over the spread of the conspiracy theory among their flocks, and its very real human toll - it's worth asking whether the time has come for a new wave of outreach to religious communities, this time aimed at evangelical Christians."

"Christian nationalism is 'a huge theme throughout evangelical Christendom,' Neumann says, referring to teachings that posit America as God's chosen nation. Christians who subscribe to those teachings believe the United States has a covenant with God, and that if it is broken, the nation risks literal destruction — analogous to the siege of Jerusalem in the Hebrew Bible. In the eyes of these believers, that covenant is threatened by cultural changes like taking prayer out of public schools and legalizing abortion and gay marriage,' Neumann says.

'Christian nationalists see it in cataclysmic terms: This is the moment, and God's going to judge us,' she says. 'When you paint it in existential terms like that, a lot of people feel justified to carry out acts of violence in the name of their faith.'"

—Zack Stanton, POLITICO, *It's Time to Talk About Violent Christian Extremism*, February 4, 2021

Christians Never Resort to Force, Oppression, Revenge Or Violence

Romans 12:17-21 ESV

17 Repay no one evil for evil, but give thought to do what is honorable in the sight of all.

18 If possible, so far as it depends on you, live peaceably with all.

19 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."

20 To the contrary, "if your enemy is hungry, feed him; if he is thirsty, give him something to drink; for by so doing you will heap burning coals on his head."

21 Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good.

- **What about the violence, battles and killing in the Old Testament?**

Violence and taking life was never God's desire or intent, but it was the only option for stopping evil from spreading. The option of a regenerated, transformed heart was not available until after Jesus died, resurrected and ascended.

Numbers 25:1-8 ESV

1 While Israel lived in Shittim, the people began to whore with the daughters of Moab.

2 These invited the people to the sacrifices of their gods, and the people ate and bowed down to their gods.

3 So Israel yoked himself to Baal of Peor. And the anger of the LORD was kindled against Israel.

4 And the LORD said to Moses, "Take all the chiefs of the people and hang them in the sun before the LORD, that the fierce anger of the LORD may turn away from Israel."

5 And Moses said to the judges of Israel, "Each of you kill those of his men who have yoked themselves to Baal of Peor."

6 And behold, one of the people of Israel came and brought a Midianite woman to his family, in the sight of Moses and in the sight of the whole congregation of the people of Israel, while they were weeping in the entrance of the tent of meeting.

7 When Phinehas the son of Eleazar, son of Aaron the priest, saw it, he rose and left the congregation and took a spear in his hand

8 and went after the man of Israel into the chamber and pierced both of them, the man of Israel and the woman through her belly. Thus the plague on the people of Israel was stopped.

- **See and understand the stark contrast between God's people in the Old Testament and New Testament.**

The example of Jesus not resisting or fighting back when arrested in the garden was a profound and monumental example of how differently God's people conducted themselves from the Old Testament to the New Testament.

Matthew 26:50-52 ESV

50 Then they came up and laid hands on Jesus and seized him.

51 And behold, one of those who were with Jesus stretched out his hand and drew his sword and struck the servant of the high priest and cut off his ear.

52 Then Jesus said to him, "Put your sword back into its place. For all who take the sword will perish by the sword."

John 18:36 ESV

36 Jesus answered, "My kingdom is not of this world. If my kingdom were of this world, my servants would have been fighting, that I might not be delivered over to the Jews. But my kingdom is not from the world."

Christians Obey Civil Authorities, Even When Those Authorities Persecute and Martyr Them

Like the Emperor Nero blaming the Christians for the fire that destroyed Rome in 64 A.D., Christians have been the scapegoats for the world's calamities.

1 Peter 2:13-17 ESV

13 Be subject for the Lord's sake to every human institution, whether it be to the emperor as supreme, 14 or to governors as sent by him to punish those who do evil and to praise those who do good.

15 For this is the will of God, that by doing good you should put to silence the ignorance of foolish people.

16 Live as people who are free, not using your freedom as a cover-up for evil, but living as servants of God.

17 Honor everyone. Love the brotherhood. Fear God. Honor the emperor.

- **Christians hold to the conviction that authorities are placed by God.**

Romans 13:1-2 ESV

1 Let every person be subject to the governing authorities. For there is no authority except from God, and those that exist have been instituted by God.

2 Therefore whoever resists the authorities resists what God has appointed, and those who resist will incur judgment.

- **Christians can and should challenge injustice, as Jesus did, but submissively, not defiantly.**

Luke 22:52-53 ESV

52 Then Jesus said to the chief priests and officers of the temple and elders, who had come out against him, "Have you come out as against a robber, with swords and clubs?"

53 When I was with you day after day in the temple, you did not lay hands on me. But this is your hour, and the power of darkness."

Luke 22:66-69 ESV

66 When day came, the assembly of the elders of the people gathered together, both chief priests and scribes. And they led him away to their council, and they said,

67 "If you are the Christ, tell us." But he said to them, "If I tell you, you will not believe,
68 and if I ask you, you will not answer.
69 But from now on the Son of Man shall be seated at the right hand of the power of God."

John 18:19-24 ESV

19 The high priest then questioned Jesus about his disciples and his teaching.
20 Jesus answered him, "I have spoken openly to the world. I have always taught in synagogues and in the temple, where all Jews come together. I have said nothing in secret.
21 Why do you ask me? Ask those who have heard me what I said to them; they know what I said."
22 When he had said these things, one of the officers standing by struck Jesus with his hand, saying, "Is that how you answer the high priest?"
23 Jesus answered him, "If what I said is wrong, bear witness about the wrong; but if what I said is right, why do you strike me?"
24 Annas then sent him bound to Caiaphas the high priest.

- **Submit or flee.**

Matthew 10:21-23 ESV

21 Brother will deliver brother over to death, and the father his child, and children will rise against parents and have them put to death,
22 and you will be hated by all for my name's sake. But the one who endures to the end will be saved.
23 When they persecute you in one town, flee to the next, for truly, I say to you, you will not have gone through all the towns of Israel before the Son of Man comes.

Christians Are Compassionate, Kind and Give Sacrificially to Others in Times of Crisis

Matthew 5:43-48 ESV

43 "You have heard that it was said, 'You shall love your neighbor and hate your enemy.'
44 But I say to you, Love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you,
45 so that you may be sons of your Father who is in heaven. For he makes his sun rise on the evil and on the good, and sends rain on the just and on the unjust.
46 For if you love those who love you, what reward do you have? Do not even the tax collectors do the same?
47 And if you greet only your brothers, what more are you doing than others? Do not even the Gentiles do the same?
48 You therefore must be perfect, as your heavenly Father is perfect.