
BIBLE TALK

This week the question is: **Is Christianity a violent religion?**

FIRST: Let me say that the purpose of this message is not to inspire any hatred for any group of people. It is merely an effort to answer some legitimate questions and concerns people have expressed.

It is admitted that people who call themselves “Christians” have practiced violence:

- In the Crusades
- In the Inquisition
- In the Salem Witch trials, and so on

The question we wish to explore is this: Was Christianity originally established by violent means and was violence taught by the founder of Christianity? When people calling themselves “Christians” use violence, are they acting in accordance with the teachings of Christ, or are they disobeying what He taught and exemplified?

To ask this question is to practically answer it. It is a well-known fact that Christ practiced and preached non-violence.

Matthew 5:43-48

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, bless those who curse you, do good to those who hate you, and pray for those who spitefully use you and persecute you,

⁴⁵ "that you may be sons of your Father 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 have you? Do not even the tax collectors do the same?

⁴⁷ "And if you greet your brethren only, what do you do more than others? Do not even the tax collectors do so?

⁴⁸ "Therefore you shall be perfect, just as your Father in heaven is perfect.

Passages like this can be multiplied. Over and over again Jesus taught His disciples to “love their enemies.” When Jesus was on trial before the Roman Governor, He said this:

John 18:36

³⁶ ... "My kingdom is not of this world. If My kingdom were of this world, My servants would fight, so that I should not be delivered to the Jews; but now My kingdom is not from here."

When Peter pulled out a sword and stuck a servant of the high priest, listen to what happened:

John 18:10-11

¹⁰ Then Simon Peter, having a sword, drew it and struck the high priest's servant, and cut off his right ear. The servant's name was Malchus.

¹¹ So Jesus said to Peter, "Put your sword into the sheath. Shall I not drink the cup which My Father has given Me?"

Luke 22:50-51

⁵⁰ And one of them struck the servant of the high priest and cut off his right ear.

⁵¹ But Jesus answered and said, "Permit even this." And **He touched his ear and healed him.**

Think about this: Jesus healed the one who was arresting Him. As He was dying on the cross, Jesus prayed:

Luke 23:34

³⁴ ... "Father, forgive them, for they do not know what they do." ...

When the disciples were sent out Jesus told them:

Matthew 10:16

¹⁶ "Behold, I send you out as sheep in the midst of wolves. Therefore be wise as serpents and **harmless as doves.**

THE APOSTLES TEACHINGS

After Jesus had resurrected from the dead and had ascended back into heaven, the twelve apostles carried on the work which He had begun. What did they teach people as they “went out into all the world”? Listen to them:

Romans 12:18-21

¹⁸ If it is possible, as much as depends on you, live peaceably with all men.

¹⁹ Beloved, do not avenge yourselves, but rather give place to wrath; for it is written, "Vengeance is Mine, I will repay," says the Lord.

²⁰ Therefore "If your enemy is hungry, feed him; If he is thirsty, give him a drink; For in so doing you will heap coals of fire on his head."

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

1 Peter 3:10-11

¹⁰ For "He who would love life And see good days, Let him refrain his tongue from evil, And his lips from speaking deceit.

¹¹ Let him turn away from evil and do good; Let him seek peace and pursue it.

Hebrews 12:14

¹⁴ Pursue peace with all people, and holiness, without which no one will see the Lord:

SUMMARY

The point of this study is this: Jesus and His apostles taught men in order to convert them (Mk 16:15-16). They did not use force of arms to coerce anyone into becoming a Christian. Instead, they used persuasion and reasoning (Acts 17:2). After people were converted, they were taught to “love their enemies” (Mt 5:44; Mt 28:19-20).

When people calling themselves “Christians” use violence and hatred and intimidation on others, they are acting contrary to the Lord who founded Christianity.

Next we will ask this question: When Muslims use violence, hatred, and intimidation on others, are they acting contrary to the founder of their religion, or are they merely following in the teachings and footsteps of their founder. Call back next week as we explore that question.

In the mean time, how should Christians act toward Muslims? They should love them as we have already noted. Christians should try to reason with others and persuade them if possible. But never should Christians use violence or hatred against those who are opposed to Christianity.

Some of our callers to this program have expressed hatred toward us because we have explored questions about the Islamic faith – in light of the terrorism which struck our nation on September 11, 2001. For those who disagree with us, we are open for discussion, but we will not return “insult for insult.” We pray for those who use profanity, hatred and violence – hoping we might have profitable, civilized discussions in the future with them.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Well ... thanks for listening to our message this week. We invite you to visit our website www.WillOfTheLord.com. There you may download the notes and the audio file of the message you just listened to.

Call again next week when we consider a new subject on ***Bible Talk***.