

Self-Control Under Tyranny
The Reformed Doctrine of Resistance
1 Samuel 23:1-13

By Phillip G. Kayser at DCC on 8-7-2011

Introduction

The title for today's sermon is "Self-Control Under Tyranny: the Reformed Doctrine of Resistance." It sounds a little heavy doesn't it? But I think it is an important doctrine to think about as tyranny escalates all over the world. Too many people make huge mistakes because they have not thought through the theology of resistance. They think, "Ahh!!! That's controversial! I don't want to think about it." But if you don't think about it, you will automatically make mistakes – mistakes of omission and mistakes of commission.

If you study the reactions to tyranny that are developing in America you realize that freedom loving people are all over the map. Some people look to local government as the answers. Others look to the national government as the answer to all problems. Some ignore tyrants and do their own thing. Others get involved in government to stop problems, but sometimes add to the problems by overstepping their own jurisdiction. Others, like Paul Hill, are taking governmental responsibilities into their own hands and are completely overstepping their jurisdiction as citizens. On the other extreme there are some people who are so passive that they won't vote. Others let Child Protection Services and other agencies into their homes simply because some public bureaucrat has asked (or insisted) that they come in. They have not realized that they have constitutional rights, just like the apostle Paul had Roman rights that he insisted on. And as a result they suffer. So there are many ways in which ignorance of this subject can do us damage.

In the Colonial days most Americans knew the Biblical doctrine of resistance inside and out. Our second president, John Adams, said that the most influential book during the debates for secession was Junius Brutus' book, *A Defense of Liberty Against Tyrants*. It is a masterful exposition of the Reformed doctrine of resistance, written in France in the 1500's. And you can download that book for free from Biblical Blueprints. Another book that had a huge influence upon early Americans was *Lex Rex*, by the Puritan writer, Samuel Rutherford. But I just want to give you an introduction to this

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Reformed Theology of Resistance, and then next week we will dig deeper into these verses.

What do you do when you are on a border town in Texas and Mexican drug gangs ravage the countryside? That's basically what was going on in verse 1. The Philistine raiders were coming into Israel and were killing and looting. If you were in that situation would you just wait for the central government to save you? Apparently, the central government (composed of Saul and his cohorts) weren't too interested in helping Keilah. Keilah was too far away and too insignificant. Even later when they *did* come down, it was to try to arrest the patriots, not to fight against the Philistines. Keilah was not getting any help from some central source. They knew that if they couldn't defend themselves, they were history.

What do you do when Americans are more afraid of the central government than they are of drug gangs? That was the situation in verse 3.

What do you do if a local Sherriff, a local mayor, or the governor of a state invites you to join them in resisting tyranny? Do you just ignore this appeal from a civil magistrate, or do you consider it seriously like David did? David went to arms against huge odds simply because of an appeal from a civil magistrate. But if he had not been gathering friends together who knew how to fight, they would have been useless to Keilah.

And what *are* we to think of David's private militia? Is that legitimate? And under what circumstances can it be used? Why was David willing to use his militia against Saul while in Keilah, but not willing to use that same militia against Saul only days later? This passage introduces these questions and many more.

Should Christians just be passive sheeple who allow themselves to be herded into slaughter houses in Cambodia and destroyed? I think the answer to that is a resounding "No." Jesus commanded His disciples to flee when they were persecuted, and to not turn themselves in to the tyrannical authorities. Matthew 10:23 commands his disciples to flee from Jewish authorities and Mark 13:14 commands them to flee from Roman authorities. That is not being passive. That is one of the active forms of resistance. So what David and Abiathar and all of these other men did when they fled from Saul is a very legitimate form of resistance to tyranny. They bailed out of the system completely and formed an underground resistance.

But it is not the only approach that God calls for. God called Jonathan to resist within the system. There are times when God calls people to confront the evils of tyrants verbally even if it means that they will die. This

is what happened to John the Baptist. And there are many other forms of resistance.

I'm only going to deal with the first four points of your outline today, even though I will touch on some of the other points. And then next week we will leave this outline and look in more detail at the text of verses 1-13.

I. Private citizen David was utterly unwilling to raise his sword against the Lord's anointed (1Sam. 24:6,10; 26:9,11,16,23; 2Sam. 1:14,16) though he was willing to flee (1Sam 21-31), to disobey him (1Sam. 21:8-9), to harbor refugees (1Sam. 22:1-5,23), to plan a future government (1Sam. 23:16-18), to form an underground economy (1Sam. 25:5-9,14-19; 27:8-12; 30:26-31), and to pray imprecatory Psalms against him (Psalms 52, 54, 57, 59, 63, 109, etc.)

My first point is that as long as David was not a magistrate or was not authorized by a magistrate to resist with the sword, he was utterly unwilling to raise his sword against Saul. This speaks of the limits of our resistance.

He *was* willing to resist in other ways. In your outlines I mention six ways that David resisted Saul's tyranny. He was certainly willing to flee, and unwilling to turn himself in. He was willing to disobey Saul's commands with respect to weapon ownership. He was willing to harbor refugees from Saul's tyranny. In this chapter the ranks of these refugees had swollen to 600 men. He was willing to plan a future government in verses 16-18 when he met with Jonathan. Jonathan tells David, "I want to be second in command when I help you to become king." Saul would have considered what they did to be treason, yet it was not. In chapters 25-30 we see David engaging in a black market underground economy in resistance to Saul's orders that no one help him. That order for no one to help David means that any help was de facto an involvement in a Black Market economy. And of course, several of the Psalms were David's public speech against Saul and the calling down of God's curses upon Saul. We will sing one of those Psalms that he wrote at this period of his life after the service. Those were all very appropriate methods of resistance.

But I want you to turn to chapter 24, and we will begin to look at some Scriptures where David considered raising the sword against Saul to be wicked. And it wasn't because David didn't have opportunity. In 1 Samuel

24 Saul relieves himself in the cave where David is, and when his men suggest that he kill Saul, David's response is given in verse 6:

1Samuel 24:6 And he said to his men, “The LORD forbid that I should do this thing to my master, the LORD’S anointed, to stretch out my hand against him, seeing he *is* the anointed of the LORD.”

And people say, “Wait a shake. God had already rejected Saul from being king, so how could David call him the Lord’s anointed? Isn’t David the Lord’s anointed? And the answer is that there is both an inward call and an outward call. David was inwardly called to be king, but until Israel elected him as king, his call was not confirmed. He was not a king. And the reverse is true of Saul. Inwardly God had removed His Spirit, His blessing, and His call from Saul, but until the people kicked him out of office (which they should have done), he continued to function as the Lord’s anointed. The Lord’s anointed is the office; the position.

Look at what David said to Saul in chapter 24, verse 10:

1Samuel 24:10 Look, this day your eyes have seen that the LORD delivered you today into my hand in the cave, and *someone* urged *me* to kill you. But *my eye* spared you, and I said, “I will not stretch out my hand against my lord, for he *is* the LORD’s anointed.”

David considered killing Saul to be a direct rebellion against God’s authority. Now that ought to seem a little strange to you because David has already been disobeying this king. Why not go one step further and overthrow him? But even though God allowed David to form a militia, God did not allow David to kill Saul and to have a violent overthrow of government – as long as he was not a magistrate.

Flip over to chapter 26. God had put Saul and all his troops into a deep sleep, and David and Abishai crept up to Saul. Abishai wanted to kill Saul, and really, from a pragmatic perspective, it makes sense. But David is not about pragmatism. David wants to live under God’s law, under God’s authority, and under God’s blessing. And he knows that he can’t if he kills Saul. What does David know that Paul Hill did not? And if you don’t know who Paul Hill is, he was a PCA pastor who shot an abortionist and the abortionist’s security guard. All of the Reformed books such as *Lex Rex*, and *A Defense of Liberty Against Tyrants*, would have considered that to be an act of murder. And they would have agreed that David should not kill king Saul in chapter 26, but that it would have been perfectly lawful for him to kill king Saul in chapter 23 - if the government of Keilah would have stood behind him.

Look at David's response in verse 9. Chapter 26, verse 9.

1Samuel 26:9 But David said to Abishai, “Do not destroy him; for who can stretch out his hand against the LORD’s anointed, and be guiltless?”

1Samuel 26:10 David said furthermore, “As the LORD lives, the LORD shall strike him, or his day shall come to die, or he shall go out to battle and perish.

1Samuel 26:11 The LORD forbid that I should stretch out my hand against the LORD’S anointed. But please, take now the spear and the jug of water that *are* by his head, and let us go.”

I don't think you could get stronger words to indicate that a non-magistrate may not lift his hand against a magistrate to kill him. I'll be quoting Jesus to that effect in a little bit. But for David this amounted to an overthrow of God's order. And you might think, “Wait a minute! Saul is overthrowing God's order!” And that is true, but Scripture indicates that you can't fight wrong with wrong.

Revolutionary methods always lead to disrespect for civil order and lead to perpetual assassinations and revolutions. Once Northern Israel began to assassinate tyrants in 1&2Kings, it just seemed like there was one assassination after another, and the kings who followed became even more tyrannical. The Reformed church has always believed that revolution would lead to anarchy, like it did in France, and that tyranny is preferable to anarchy, because anarchy leads to worse forms of depraved tyranny – such as what happened in Rwanda. They were saying that you would have more freedom living under the tyranny of king George than you would living under the revolutionary times of France under Robespierre. There are other ways of overthrowing tyrants. You can do it through secession, through civil war, through voting them out of office, and in a number of other ways, such as Jonathan was hoping for, but revolution overthrows God's civil order and leads to disrespect of authority, anarchy, and chaos. So until the people unelected him, Saul was still functioning as God's anointed.

The second thing that David says is that he would be guilty of murder. And the reason is that only God's law can authorize any exceptions to the sixth commandment. If we take human life where God has not authorized us to do so, we are guilty of murder. And revolution by definition is a murderous form of warfare. The American Revolution was not a revolution. It was a lawful secession of American colonies from England. They fought under God-authorized magistrates when they fought against England. So it was lawful war, not a revolution. These are critical distinctions to keep in our minds.

Take a look at chapter 26, verse 16. This is David speaking to the commander of Saul's armies, who had fallen asleep on the job – and for a guard to fall asleep was a crime worthy of punishment – sometimes even unto death. David tells the commander:

1Samuel 26:16 *This thing that you have done is not good. As the LORD lives, you deserve to die, because you have not guarded your master, the LORD'S anointed. And now see where the king's spear is, and the jug of water that was by his head.*"

Saul repents when he hears what David has done. And part of David's response is given in verse 23:

1Samuel 26:23 *May the LORD repay every man for his righteousness and his faithfulness; for the LORD delivered you into my hand today, but I would not stretch out my hand against the LORD'S anointed.*

I think you are getting the point that unauthorized fighting against magistrates was considered to be a horrible thing by David. In fact, it is so horrible, that when a non-combatant claimed to have killed Saul when Saul was a wounded non-combatant, David gave him the death penalty in 2Samuel 1.

And you might think, "Well, that's inconsistent! How come David had the right to give him the death penalty?" And the reason is that David was at that point the mayor of a city, and he had called his men to battle against Saul. Once he became a magistrate, he not only was allowed to resist Saul, he had a moral obligation to fight against Saul's tyranny and to avenge murder.

And you might think, "OK – if David was a magistrate in 2Samuel 1, and if he is now obligated to fight against Saul, why would he get upset with this Amalekite killing Saul? Because the Amalekite wasn't part of the army, hadn't heard any authorization to fight, and had killed a wounded soldier who was no longer fighting. The Bible didn't allow you to do that with captives. It was cold-blooded murder. In any case, in between this chapter and chapter 30 David couldn't raise the sword against Saul and he wouldn't do it.

And you might respond, "Well, David is fighting against the Philistines here. What authorizes him to do that? He's not a magistrate here." That's true. But he was operating under a magistrate - the mayor of the city of Keilah. He was deputized as it were to take vengeance. In fact, Lord willing, next week I will go through this passage verse by verse and show how this was going to be David's base of operations to fight against Saul's tyranny as well – until he discovers by divine revelation that the mayor wasn't willing to fight against Saul. So David really was consistent

with all of the Reformed principles. In this chapter he was operating under lawful governmental oversight. But under point II I want to show how strongly this first point of no revolution carries.

II. **Neither God’s dissatisfaction nor our dissatisfaction with a government is reason enough to raise the sword of justice**

A. God disapproved of the tyranny and even rejected Saul’s right to be king (1 Sam. 15:26-29,35; 16:1,14; 28:15; etc.)

Point II says that you can’t be a revolutionary simply because you are dissatisfied with the government or even if God is dissatisfied with the government. And God certainly was dissatisfied. In chapter 15 Samuel said to Saul, “**the LORD has rejected you from being king over Israel.... The LORD has torn the kingdom of Israel from you today, and has given it to a neighbor of yours, who is better than you.**” (15:26-29) If there was any good reason to raise the sword against Saul, I would think this would be it. But David was not a magistrate. Later it says that the LORD “**regretted that He had made Saul king over Israel**” (15:35). In chapter 16 God told Samuel to quit mourning over Saul and to anoint David. Yet, until the people were willing to follow God’s lead and to remove Saul from being king by lawful means, David could not privately raise the sword against him.

And when I vigorously oppose revolutionary means, people often ask me what lawful means there are to resist. I’ve already listed some. Let me list a few more. In chapter 15 Samuel delivered the message to Saul that God had removed him from office. If Samuel had given that message to all the public officials gathered at that time, Saul would have been deposed at that moment. But Saul begged Samuel to endorse him and worship with him as if everything was OK. Samuel felt sorry for him and did so. He prayed for him in front of the other magistrates despite what God had said. That was a lost opportunity with horrific results, because Saul began consolidating power to make sure that people couldn’t depose him. That’s what he was scared of in chapter 15. In chapter 16 the elders had a great opportunity of putting David into power, but they were too fearful. In chapter 17 there was a beautiful opportunity for at least a few states to secede from Israel, but they didn’t take that opportunity. In chapter 18 Jonathan publically declared his acceptance of David over his father, and made it visible by exchanging clothes. He was declaring his vote for David to be the next king. Since Jonathan was a crown prince, this would have been an ideal opportunity for the leaders to agree with Jonathan and say, “Long live king David; long live

prince Jonathan.” But they did not. And because of their cowardice and lack of resolve, God allowed them to continue to suffer under tyranny. In chapter 22, when Saul ordered the killing of all the priests of Nob the military refused to go along with it, but rather than using their power to unseat Saul, they kept silent. Now they were already in trouble because Saul didn’t like their refusal to obey, but they didn’t go all the way. They weren’t going to kill the priests themselves, but they didn’t stop Doeg. That would have been an opportunity to resist the horrible bloodshed of the innocent. After all, if magistrates are not willing to stand against tyranny to protect the killing off of an entire town of priests and other men, women, and children, then they have lost their reason for existence. Any magistrate who does not do all in his power (including the use of his sword) to stop abortion is not worthy of the office. And of course, in this chapter, the city of Keilah had a perfect opportunity to begin a national resistance to Saul’s tyranny. David hoped that they would take that opportunity, but out of fear they refused.

Look at chapter 23, verses 10-12.

1Samuel 23:10 Then David said, “O LORD God of Israel, Your servant has certainly heard that Saul seeks to come to Keilah to destroy the city for my sake.

1Samuel 23:11 Will the men of Keilah deliver me into his hand? [Why does he ask that? He asks it because if they were *not* going to deliver him over to Saul, he was willing to stay and fight. Even against all odds he is willing to stay there and fight. But if the civil magistrates there were not willing to fight, he had no authorization to fight Saul himself. And so David asks, “Will the men of Keilah deliver me into his hand?”] **Will Saul come down, as Your servant has heard? O LORD God of Israel, I pray, tell Your servant.” And the LORD said, “He will come down.”**

1Samuel 23:12 Then David said, “Will the men of Keilah deliver me and my men into the hand of Saul?” And the LORD said, “They will deliver *you*.”

So based on the principle we have already looked at, David didn’t have any choice but to flee. His preference would have been to fight tyranny with other civil magistrates. And if he had been a civil magistrate, he would have had no choice. This is why Jesus said, “**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**” (John 18:36). If Jesus had come as a magistrate instead of as a Savior, He would have been required to use the full weight of His office to fight tyranny – even the tyranny of a Pilate. That is a pretty significant statement. Jesus would have been willing to take on both the Jews and Rome if he was a civil magistrate. “**If My kingdom were of this world, My servants would fight, so that I should**

not be delivered to the Jews.” So that was a huge rebuke to Pilate for failing in his duty of office because Pilate’s kingdom was of this world. Jesus’ statement means that if Jesus were the mayor or king of Keilah, he would have fought to make sure that David was not delivered to Saul.

So it is not as if David is passive when he says that he will not lift his hand against God’s anointed. When he was in Keilah, he was willing to. When he would later be mayor of Ziklag, he was willing to. When he became king of the southern tribes, he was not only willing to, he actually did fight against the tyranny of the north. But when magistrates were not willing to do their duty, God made Israel suffer for their cowardice by giving them seven more years of tyranny. Are you beginning to get a feel for how this principle falls into place in different situations?

B. The people grew to dislike Saul, and disapprove of his actions even in his ranks (1 Sam. 14:45; 20; 22:1-5,17; see the numerous militias defecting to David while he was a fugitive: 1 Chron. 12:1-22)

And it really didn’t matter that the people hated Saul. In point B I give several verses that show the increasing dislike that the people had for Saul. But because they weren’t willing to vote against him, and because they weren’t willing to hold local magistrate’s feet to the fire to oppose him, God let them suffer. Without a magistrate’s authorization, they did not have the right to kill Saul. Nor did David.

C. Yet until the people accepted David as a magistrate (23:1-13; 27:6ff), he refused to raise his hand against God’s anointed (1 Sam. 24-26)

III. The call of God to resist tyranny is not reason enough to raise the sword of justice. The people must first appoint a magistrate under whom resistance can be achieved.

A. God had clearly rejected Saul as king (15:26-29)

Point III-VI are really just stronger reiterations of what I have just said, so I will just very briefly summarize them. Working backwards, point VI says that the fact that Saul’s government had murdered every pastor in Nob, as well as every man, woman, child, and animal in Nob, still did not give David the right to engage in revolution. That means we cannot engage in revolution simply because our government has sanctioned the murder of babies.

Point V gives some Scriptures proving that the right to be involved in and to organize a militia does not give that militia the right to overthrow government unless it is led by a magistrate. Point IV gives verses proving that despite the fact that God allows private citizens to have the right to bear and use arms does not give unlimited rights to use those arms. Those arms should be ready should a magistrate call us to resist, but a private citizen against the government – No.

B. God had clearly anointed David to be king (16:1,13)

C. Yet because David was not yet a magistrate, he served Saul rather than resisting him (16:14-18:30; 1 Sam. 24:6,10; 26:9,11,16,23; 2 Sam. 1:14,16; cf. Matt. 26:52).

Why do I bring this up, and why did I give such a long outline? That may seem like a no-brainer. “*Of course we are not going to raise the sword against the civil government!*” But I bring it up because not everybody in America thinks that way. There are people in America who advocate bombing abortion clinics, killing abortionists, and killing any public official who supports abortion. They are a tiny minority, but it is critical that their theological positions be answered. The abortionists point to their theology and make it out to be what all Christians think.

I mentioned earlier the name, Paul Hill. I just watched a video yesterday of a group of proliferators who have vowed to continue what Paul Hill began. They believe in taking justice into their own hands. You may not have realized that he was a PCA pastor, or that he was excommunicated from the PCA church before he killed the abortionist. He was excommunicated because he was teaching that when magistrates refuse to bring the death penalty against murderers, that God raises up people to do what magistrates should have done. And he believed God had called him to avenge the deaths of the innocent babies. And in his book he taught that this was the consistent biblical viewpoint. Nothing could be further from the truth, and we need to be prepared to stop such slander.

Gary North wrote a booklet called *Lone Gunners For Jesus* showing how the Reformed church has never taken Paul Hill’s position, and that Paul Hill is guilty of murder. Unfortunately, North doesn’t provide much exegetical or Biblical basis for what he says there. That is what I am doing in this outline. Don’t think that Paul Hill has not had a wide influence. He has written a book that has been widely distributed. And this group of people continues to push these views. I counseled a Christian pastor who was in the Sarpy County jail because he believed that stuff. And I actually

succeeded in talking him out of those beliefs. There is enough of the truth in Paul Hill's arguments to make him extremely dangerous with Christians.

Let me respond to one point made by Paul Hill. He believed that God called him to do the duty of a civil magistrate. That may be, but let me point out that David didn't become a civil magistrate when God called him to that office. He became a magistrate only when the people called him and recognized him. You cannot appoint yourself. You can't appoint yourself to be a judge and jury, and another patriot movement is doing. David was patient in waiting for God's timing. Unfortunately, some like Paul Hill do not have the self-control and patience to be able to effect a godly change of government. What they do is to push civil government to even more tyranny. It's counterproductive. And when frustrations with government escalate it becomes ever so tempting for each man to do what is right in his own eyes; to pitch government and opt for the lone gunner mentality. Let me tell you something – when Judges speaks of every man doing that which was right in his own eyes, it was not endorsing anarchy. It speaks of that as a sad state of affairs. As much as I like Murray Rothbard's economics, Scripture disapproves his political anarchism. And it is not Rothbard's logic that is a problem. His logic is impeccable. It is a few of his starting axioms or assumptions that are the problem. And we can later discuss those presuppositions that led him astray.

D. When David did try to take vengeance into his own hands, he was rightly convinced by Abigail that to do so would be murder (1Sam. 25). See also Joab being treated as a murderer when he killed Abner (2Sam. 3:28-30; 1Kings 2:26-35)

Anyway, back to the lone gunner mentality, even David, who was so careful on this policy, was tempted to take justice into his own hands one time. Why don't you turn with me to 1 Samuel 25? This was a time when David was tempted to do exactly what Paul Hill did and was rescued from that murder by Abigail. If David could be tempted, anyone can be tempted. You know the story, or at least you should, so I'm just going to read you the relevant verses. David was extremely upset with the evil man Nabal and went to kill him and his men. Abigail, Nabal's wife, had been appealing to David not to sin against God. She was successful. I want to start with verse 39, which occurs ten days later. God struck down Nabal in His own timing. And I believe it was in part due to David's imprecatory prayers. But this verse says, **“So when David heard that Nabal was dead, he said, ‘Blessed be the LORD, who has pleaded the cause of my reproach from the hand of Nabal, and has kept His servant from evil!’”** What is the evil David

was kept from? He told Abigail ten days earlier in verse 33: “**And blessed is your advice and blessed are you, because you have kept me this day from coming to bloodshed and from *avenging myself with my own hand.***” That’s the evil. It is great evil to avenge yourself or avenge anyone else with your own hand. That was Christ’s point in Matthew chapter 5. You can’t take vengeance. You can defend yourself, sure. If someone is pointing a gun at you, you shoot in self-defense if it is not a civil magistrate. That was Paul’s point in Romans chapter 12. In chapter 12 Paul said that vengeance never belongs to the private citizen. Vengeance is mine, says the Lord. But in chapter 13 Paul said that God appointed the civil magistrate to execute vengeance. So how does God take vengeance? Through a civil magistrate. That means that if someone robs you, you don’t rob him back. If someone runs over your yard with his truck and makes a mess, you don’t run over his yard and make a mess in retaliation. If someone picks a fight with you, certainly you can fight back. But if he wins and knocks out your tooth and steals your radio, you don’t go with a bunch of your friends the next day and get even – and knock out his teeth and steal his radio. That vengeance is the function of a magistrate. So many of these modern movies that make the hero take vengeance into his own hands, are idolizing murder.

Perhaps I can wind this all down by looking at two passages from Christ, and one from Hebrews. Please turn to Luke 22:35-38. And I thought I would begin with this one since I quoted it earlier as authorizing the ownership of swords. But it is not an unlimited use of swords. Beginning at verse 35.

LUK 22:35 “**And He said to them, ‘When I sent you without money bag, knapsack, and sandals, did you lack anything?’ So they said, ‘Nothing.’**”

He had been teaching them a principle of faith - in any situation they can trust God to provide - even when they don’t have money, and they don’t have shoes and they don’t have a sword. Yes we need to prepare by having those, but should they be confiscated, you can still trust God to provide for you. But in the next verse Christ shows what is to be the abiding principle after He leaves them. Verse 36.

LUK 22:36 “**Then He said to them, ‘But now, he who has a money bag, let him take *it*, and likewise a knapsack; and he who has no sword, let him sell his garment and buy one.’**” At this time of night the disciples didn’t have time to sell a garment and buy a sword. But they come up with two. Look at verse 38: “**Then they said, ‘Lord, look, here are two**

swords.’ **And He said to them, ‘It is enough.’**” So Christ reaffirms the Old Testament right to keep and bear arms.

But several verses later Christ makes clear that they cannot use the sword against the civil magistrate. Peter slices off the ear of one man, and in Matthew Christ says, **“Put your sword in its place, for all who take the sword will perish by the sword.”** That’s a very interesting phrase. That is a phrase taken from the Old Testament, which says that those who use the sword against a government agent must receive capital punishment (Job 36:7-12 with Gen. 27:40; Judges 9:56-57). Revelation 13 says the same is true of those who resist the beast, Rome: **“he who kills with the sword must be killed with the sword. Here is the patience and the faith of the saints.”** Yes, it takes patience and faith to not go after an ungodly magistrate like Nero. What a sick person! And yet this doctrine that you don’t raise the sword against the civil magistrate applied even to him. Now, other magistrates should have resisted him. But Revelation 13 says that not a one of them would. There is a place to use the sword – and anyone who lives along the Texas border, will be encouraged by next week’s sermon. But many people do not have the kind of patience with God’s timing for government to keep the sword in its place when it needs to be and to use the sword when it needs to be. Jesus didn’t tell Peter to throw away his sword. That wouldn’t take any self-control. He told Peter to sheath it. There would be a place for it later, but now was not the time. It takes clear thinking theology to have that kind of balance.

Let me give you another example in Christ’s life that is not in your outline. Turn to John 18:36. And actually, I read this earlier. **“Jesus answered, ‘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.’”** Christ makes no bones about it; He *would* fight if His position at that time were that of a civil magistrate. And all of his servants would fight. I’ve already commented on that verse, and it stands as a rebuke to most modern magistrates in America.

But let’s look at the reverse lesson of John 18:38. Because Christ did not have a political kingdom of this world - His kingdom was from heaven, the only option He had when in their custody was verbal resistance, using the court system, and passive resistance. And it is this wonderful ability to suffer under tyranny that probably takes the most self-control. It takes self-control to resist with the sword properly, but it takes even more self-control to suffer persecution without letting God down. And I want to end by reading from a passage in Hebrews that looks at both sides of that coin of self-control.

Look at Hebrews 11:32-38. We have first a description of how faith ought to be expressed by magistrates who oppose tyranny and persecution, and all who bear the sword under those magistrates.

HEB 11:32 And what more shall I say? For the time would fail me to tell of Gideon and Barak and Samson and Jephthah, also of David and Samuel and the prophets:

HEB 11:33 who through faith subdued kingdoms, worked righteousness, obtained promises, stopped the mouths of lions,

HEB 11:34 quenched the violence of fire, escaped the edge of the sword, out of weakness were made strong, became valiant in battle, turned to flight the armies of the aliens.

Hebrews is telling magistrates how to live by faith, and how to oppose tyranny by faith. But now comes a listing of non-magistrates who had to show equal self-control by not resorting to the sword. Beginning at verse 35:

HEB 11:35 Women received their dead raised to life again. And others were tortured, not accepting deliverance,

This implies that they could have accepted deliverance. But they didn't take the easy way out. Listen to their testimonies of faith. It says,

“And others were tortured, not accepting deliverance that they might obtain a better resurrection.

HEB 11:36 Still others had trial of mockings and scourgings, yes, and of chains and imprisonment.

HEB 11:37 They were stoned, they were sawn in two, were tempted, were slain with the sword. They wandered about in sheepskins and goatskins, being destitute, afflicted, tormented--

HEB 11:38 of whom the world was not worthy. They wandered in deserts and mountains, *in* dens and caves of the earth.

And I love that phrase, “of whom the world was not worthy.” It indicates that this is not the only world that we should be thinking about when we think of self-control under tyranny. We want our lives to count not just for time, but for all of eternity. That's what David was doing. That's why he constantly prayed and sought God's guidance. And as a result he had a wonderful testimony. Let's make sure that the testimony we leave is the clear testimony of Scripture, not some humanistic substitute. Amen.

Self-Control Under Tyranny

The Reformed Doctrine of Resistance

1Samuel 23:1-13

By Phillip G. Kayser at DCC on 8-7-2011

Introduction

- I. Private citizen David was utterly unwilling to raise his sword against the Lord's anointed (1Sam. 24:6,10; 26:9,11,16,23; 2Sam. 1:14,16) though he was willing to flee (1Sam 21-31), to disobey him (1Sam. 21:8-9), to harbor refugees (1Sam. 22:1-5,23), to plan a future government (1Sam. 23:16-18), to form an underground economy (1Sam. 25:5-9,14-19; 27:8-12; 30:26-31), and to pray imprecatory Psalms against him (Psalms 52, 54, 57, 59, 63, 109, etc.)
- II. Neither God's dissatisfaction nor our dissatisfaction with a government is reason enough to raise the sword of justice
 - A. God disapproved of the tyranny and even rejected Saul's right to be king (1 Sam. 15:26-29,35; 16:1,14; 28:15; etc.)
 - B. The people grew to dislike Saul, and disapprove of his actions even in his ranks (1 Sam. 14:45; 20; 22:1-5,17; see the numerous militias defecting to David while he was a fugitive: 1 Chron. 12:1-22)
 - C. Yet until the people accepted David as a magistrate (23:1-13; 27:6ff), he refused to raise his hand against God's anointed (1 Sam. 24-26)
- III. The call of God to resist tyranny is not reason enough to raise the sword of justice. The people must first appoint a magistrate under whom resistance can be achieved.
 - A. God had clearly rejected Saul as king (15:26-29)
 - B. God had clearly anointed David to be king (16:1,13)
 - C. Yet because David was not yet a magistrate, he served Saul rather than resisting him (16:14-18:30).
 - D. When David did try to take vengeance into his own hands, he was rightly convinced by Abigail that to do so would be murder (1Sam. 25). See also Joab being treated as a murderer when he killed Abner (2Sam. 3:28-30; 1Kings 2:26-35)
- IV. The right to bear arms is not reason enough to raise the sword of justice
 - A. Scripture clearly gives us the right to bear arms in self defense against common enemies (Luke 22:35-38; Ex. 22:2; Neh. 4:16,17,18,23; Esther 8:11; etc.) and David exercised that right (1 Sam. 16:18; 18:4; 21:8-10,13; 25:13) even in a time when the government sought to disarm the citizens (pagan government - 1 Sam. 13:19,22; Saul's government - 1 Sam. 22:13; 25:13)
 - B. Yet prior to becoming a magistrate, David did not raise the sword against his government (1 Sam. 24:6,10; 26:9,11,16,23; 2 Sam. 1:14,16; cf. Matt. 26:52)
- V. The right to be involved in and organize a militia is not reason enough to raise the sword of justice
 - A. Scripture clearly considers every male over eighteen years of age to be part of a militia

1. God wanted a *small* standing army (Deut. 17) but a *large* militia consisting of every male 20 years of age and older (Numb. 1:3,18,20,22,24,26,28,30,32,36,38,40,42,45; 26:2; 2 Chron. 25:5; cf. 1 Chron. 5:17-18; 12:23-40).
 2. The militia always had the option of refusing to fight for a king (Deut. 20:5-9; cf. a sinful use of this option in Judges 5:14-17,23), and always had the option of following a lower magistrate in resistance to a king (2 Sam. 20:1; 1 Kings 12:16; 2 Chron. 10:16; cf. the calls of God in Judges). This was true even of a city that desired to secede (2 Kings 8:22).
 3. Every male had the responsibility to be trained, armed and ready for war at a moment's notice should a civil magistrate need them for a just cause (Judges 3:27; 4:10; 5:13-18,23; 7:1-8:1; etc.)
 4. Because of this, tyrants sought to disarm the people and relied heavily on a standing army that was paid (Judges 5:8; 1 Sam. 13:19-23)
 - B. David raised a portion of the militia to preparedness while fleeing from Saul
 1. His militia was used to defend against common criminals (1 Sam. 22:1-5; 23:14-29; 25:7-8) and roving bands of thugs (1 Chron. 12:21).
 2. His militia was also used (upon invitation) to defend the city of Keilah that had come under attack from foreigners (1 Sam. 23:1-13).
 3. Because he had a trained militia, when he became a magistrate he was able to instantly use them against ungodly government, and did not have to wait to develop an army (1 Sam. 27ff.).
 4. From the time that 600 men left with him until the time that he became king, numerous militias left Israel for David, and later left the Northern tribes to support the Southern Confederacy of Judah and Simeon (1 Chronicles 12).
 - C. However, it was not until David became the magistrate over Ziklag that he used his ever growing militia to fight against magistrates (See point VII)
- VI. The fact that Saul's government had been involved in the murder of the priests and other righteous men (1 Sam. 22:6-22) was still not seen as sufficient reason for David as a private citizen to raise his sword of justice against Saul (1 Sam. 24,26)
- VII. However, prior to being a magistrate, David (as part of God's ordained militia) was willing to lend his militia to a civil magistrate being attacked (1 Sam. 23:1-13)
- A. David was invited to help Keilah and dwelt in the town as a base of operations (1 Sam. 23:1,7-8)
 - B. He faced great risk and danger to do so (1 Sam. 23:3)
 - C. He was willing to fight against Saul & his army under this civil magistrate so long as Keilah supported him (1 Sam. 23:8-13)
 - D. However, when he lost the support of the government of Keilah (v. 12) his only recourse was to flee (v. 13)
 - E. While David believed in secession, he never believed in revolution. He never believed that the sword of justice could be wielded independently of government. Thus when Keilah would not secede with him, he had no choice but flee.
- VIII. Likewise, the moment David became a magistrate of a small town in Philistia (1 Sam. 27:5-7; 28:2; 30:1-26), he immediately used the sword to aggressively promote justice

- A. While he was a magistrate within Philistia, David fought against the threat of the Geshurites, Girzites and Amalekites (1 Sam. 27:8-12)
 - B. While magistrate within Philistia, David was willing to fight against Saul And The Armies Of Israel (1 Samuel 29:1-11; cf. 1 Chronicles 12:19)
 - C. However, notice that David treats as murder any private attempt to kill a magistrate whether that magistrate was Saul (2 Sam. 1:15-16) or Ishbosheth (2 Sam. 4:11-12).
 - D. He also treats as murder any private attempt to avenge the blood of a citizen (2 Sam. 3:27-30,39; cf. 1 Kings 2:28-34 where Solomon follows through on what David should have done).
- IX. When David becomes magistrate over Judah, he fights when attacked by the household of Saul (Ishbosheth) (2 Sam. 2-3)
- A. Though David was already anointed by God (1 Sam. 16 - see point II), he does not become a magistrate over Judah until the people anoint him as king (2 Sam. 2:4,7).
 - B. He asks the rest of Israel to recognize him as king (2 Sam. 2:5-7), but when they refuse, he recognizes their right to secede (2 Sam. 2:8-11)
 - 1. David reigns from Hebron over Judah for seven years and six months (v. 11) and is not made king over all Israel until immediately after Ishbosheth's death (2 Sam. 5:1-5). (The tribe of Simeon resided within Judah and was included in David's initial kingdom - see Joshua 19:1; Judges 1:3.)
 - 2. Ishbosheth is not recognized as king of the ten tribes of Israel until the last two years of David's reign in Hebron (v. 10)
 - 3. It appears that Abner (the nephew of Saul) sought to gain the kingdom himself (2 Sam. 3:6-7), but used Ishbosheth as a pawn to accomplish this. If 2 Samuel 2:9 shows a progressive control over various parts of Israel, then the length of reign for both kings (given in verses 10-11) can be reconciled. Abner's energies are preoccupied with gaining control of the ten tribes, but it is not until the last two years of David's reign in Hebron that all ten tribes acknowledge Ishbosheth as king of Israel (v. 10). Once that is accomplished, Abner concentrates on taking over Judah and Simeon as well and there is a long, protracted, two year war (2 Sam. 2:10 with 3:1).
 - 4. Thus David illustrates the Reformed principle that a magistrate does not have jurisdiction over an area until the people of that region coronate him. (He left the ten tribes alone for five and a half years.) Likewise, the Israelites live by that principle in the northern 10 tribes and do not acknowledge any king for the first five and a half years (vv. 10-11) until Abner's pawn, Ishbosheth, is entrenched by military might.
 - 5. This story also illustrates the principle that a militia (the people) reserve to themselves the right to decide whether they will serve a central government or side with a seceding state. Many militias refused to respond to David's call in 2 Samuel 2:5-7, and David respected that right. However, when militias defected to David from the North over the next few years, David acknowledged their Biblical right to fight under a legitimate government against their former government (1 Chronicles 12:1-40). Before and during this "War Between The States" there were many Northern militias that joined

the Southern Confederates without Northern State approval (1 Chron. 12:3,4,8,14,16-18,19,20,22 and verses 23-37 with special attention to the implications of verse 29). (When tribes seceded, the phrase sometimes used was “to your tents O Israel” or “what have we to do with you?” cf. 2 Sam. 20:1; 1 Kings 12:16; 2 Chron. 10:16)

- C. Thus it is clear that this war between the states was a war of northern aggression against David
 - 1. We have seen that Judah and Simeon defected to David and David left the 10 northern tribes alone for five and a half years.
 - 2. We have seen that the Southern States are not the aggressors. They protect themselves from Abner’s attempts to take over the south (2 Sam. 2:12ff shows the trip from northern Mahanaim to Gibeon to be one of aggression and the battle is initiated by Abner)

X. Conclusion: David serves as an example of the Scriptural (and Reformed) position that anarchy is worse than tyranny and that armed resistance can only happen at the command of a lawfully ordained civil magistrate

A. Other Examples

1. Christ

- a) Christ affirmed the right of self-defense; indeed, He said that after His departure owning a weapon for self-defense would be so important that if a disciple did not own one, he must sell his garment and buy one (Luke 22:35-38).
- b) However, just hours later Christ did not allow the disciples to use the sword against the government agents even though it was in defense of innocent life (Luke 22:50-51 with Matt. 26:52)
- c) In John 18:36, Christ makes clear how He would resist tyranny if He were a civil magistrate.
 - (1) He says, “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.” (John 18:36) Christ makes no bones about it; He would fight if His position at that time was that of a civil magistrate. This clearly implies that godly civil magistrates in all ages have a duty to resist tyranny with force and to protect the citizens under their charge. If they do not do so, then they are failing to follow Christ.
 - (2) The reverse is also true. Those (like Christ while He was here on earth) who are in the kingdom of heaven but who do not also have a political power, must not use the sword against the Government even to protect innocent life.
 - (3) Since Christ was not a civil magistrate at that time, He and His disciples provide a model for private citizens of disobedience or resistance to unjust laws. At the time of Christ’s arrest the only resistance allowable was 1) protestation of His innocence (Matt. 26:55-56; Mark 14:48-49), 2) rebuke of their injustice (Matt. 26:55; Mark 14:48-49; Luke 22:52-53), 3) asking that the disciples not be detained (John 18:8-9) and 4) flight (Matt. 26:56; Mark 14:50 - see Christ’s instructions in Matt 10:23; 24:16 and His example in Matt 2:13)

- d) In another situation Christ was willing to disobey an unrighteous command from Herod (Luke 13:31-33), and in still another situation He was willing to use force to protect His home from thieves and robbers (John 2:13-16; Mark 11:15-17). However, Christ (as a private citizen) never raised the sword against the government or against government permitted crimes.
2. Christ's Followers
 - a) Resistance to government that was allowed
 - (1) They could disobey an unjust injunction (Luke 13:31-33; Acts 4:19-20; etc.)
 - (2) They could flee from or hide from the government (Matt. 2:13; 10:23; 24:16; Acts 14:6; etc.)
 - (3) They could use the law against the government (Acts 16:35-40; 22:25-26; 23:3; 25:11; etc.)
 - (4) When one magistrate persecuted them they could appeal to another magistrate (or faction within government) to use force to protect them (Acts 21:31-36; 22:24-29; 25:11; 27:42-43)
 - (5) They could defend themselves in court and appeal to higher courts (Acts 23:1-10; 24:1-26:32; 28:19; Titus 3:13)
 - (6) They could pray the imprecatory Psalms and prayers asking for God's judgment to come (Acts 4:25-31; Rev. 6:10; 8:1-7; 16:5-7; etc.)
 - b) When above types of resistance did not work, Christians were glad to submit to confiscation of goods rather than resist the government with the sword (Heb. 10:34). (See comments on Hebrews 11 in next point. Hebrews 10:34 should never be used to teach escapism or that magistrates ought to be passive. This verse is addressed to those who are not magistrates.)
3. Hebrews 11
 - a) This passage on faith shows that the use of force by a civil magistrate can be an expression of godly faith (vv. 32-34). Indeed, the Old Testament background for each character makes clear that those magistrates would have been faithless to God and to their calling if they had refused to raise the sword against the enemy. The mayors, governors, legislators, etc. of America will be held accountable by God if they fail to exercise faith in God by upholding His laws. God does not honor self-serving pragmatists who only protect their citizens if there is no danger to them from a higher magistrate. Many wars for independence and many political coups down through history have been the outflow of the faith of God's people serving in government.
 - b) But when describing non-magistrates under attack, Hebrews says that because of their faith they refused to resort to force *even when force might have saved them* ("not accepting deliverance" v. 35). The kind of resistance that non-magistrates engaged in was equally as challenging to faith as the resistance exhibited in the previous point. Where they might have been tempted to use the sword, faith in God's ways caused them to flee instead (vv. 27,34,37-38), or to refuse a compromise (v. 37), or to

pray for God's judgments (vv. 28-29), or to harbor spies (v. 31). When those options were not available, these faithful saints suffered or were martyred (vv. 35-38).

4. Romans 12-13
 - a) Romans 12 is often misapplied by pacifists to government as if it ruled out all use of weapons and all seeking of justice. However, this passage is addressed to private citizens when it says, "Beloved, do not avenge yourselves, but rather give place to wrath; for it is written, 'Vengeance is Mine, I will repay,' says the Lord." (v. 19) (It should be remembered that there is a vast difference between self-protection and the kind of vengeance that Paul Hill executed unbiblically.) This passage simply shows that there is only one agency that is authorized by God to raise the sword of justice and vengeance: the government.
 - b) Romans 13 shows that civil magistrates not only have the right to use force against tyranny and injustice, but they also have the duty. The "wrath" and vengeance forbidden in 12:19 is commanded in 13:4. A civil magistrate must be "God's minister, an avenger to execute wrath on him who practices evil."
 - c) Thus Romans 12-13 affirms what we have been seeing. Anarchy is worse than tyranny, and the only agent that can use force against tyrannical government is another civil magistrate.
5. Jews In Exile Under A Pagan Government (The Book Of Esther)
 - a) The Jews were willing to bear arms for private defense (9:5 shows they already owned weapons)
 - b) However, Mordecai actively opposed rebellion and revolution (Esther 2:19-23). Though tyranny was terrible in Mordecai's eyes, and he chose to disobey the law rather than actively support such tyranny (3:2-6), anarchy was much worse than tyranny in his eyes. His hatred of anarchy caused him to uncover a plot to overthrow the very tyranny he also hated (Esther 2:19-23; 6:2-3)
 - c) Notice however that the Jews used other forms of resistance to unlawful government decree.
 - (1) Mordecai engaged in civil disobedience on an issue that would have involved him in sin to obey the government (Esther 3:2-5; compare 3:1 "Agagite" with 1 Sam. 15; Exodus 17:8-16; Deut. 25:17-19; Chron. 5:42-43. It was forbidden to ever honor an Agagite.).
 - (2) The power of fasting and prayer (4:1-5,16-17)
 - (3) Reproof (4:13-14)
 - (4) Requesting government to use the sword to protect them (4:8ff)
 - d) And the Jews were willing to go to arms *under a civil magistrate* (Esther) in order to resist another civil magistrate (Haman) within the same country (Esther 8:1-9:17)
 - e) However, prior to a civil magistrate authorizing armed resistance to a government decree, they show no inclination to use the weapons they already owned (Esther 4). Rather they use spiritual warfare (Esther 4:1-3,16) and non-violent political resistance (Esther 4-7). They were

prepared to die before raising the sword without government assistance, though Mordecai had faith that assistance would come to them from some source (4:14).

6. The “avenger of blood”
 - a) Justice was not to be taken into private hands (Deut. 32:35 with Rom. 12:19 in context of Rom 13:4) since personal vengeance was always considered murder (cf. 2 Sam. 1:15-16; 3:27-30,39; 4:11-12; 1 Kings 2:28-34; etc.). See Christ’s correction of the Pharisees misapplication to individual vengeance of a law relating to the government (Matt 5:38-42).
 - b) The Avenger of Blood was not a private citizen, but a “mighty man” chosen to represent a clan and who served as a magistrate (cf. 2 Sam. 14:11; Numb 35:12,24-25 with verses 30-31).
- B. Applications for today based on the principles given above
 1. Randy Weaver should not be idealized or used to justify armed resistance to Federal agents. Though the government was involved in tyranny and murder in that case (much as Saul had been), and though this should be added to the list of grievances citizens have against government, armed resistance is neither Biblical nor successful. It is possible that the Weavers might have been killed even if they had initially allowed themselves to be taken captive, but their case should not be used to justify armed resistance to government today.
 2. Waco should not be idealized. I believe it is an example of government tyranny and murder. However, the Waco residents should not have used force against these agents. While a person might be justified in firing upon intruders if he does not know they are from the government (cf. Exodus 22:2), those at Waco knew that the government was involved. This is a classic case of the government violating many Biblical laws. But the cult members violated Biblical law as well, and that must never be forgotten. Local government should have resisted the BATF with negotiation or force, not the cult members.
 3. The bomb in Oklahoma City cannot in any way be justified, even though our government has engaged in much tyranny and injustice. The frustrations in America with the federal government must not lead to anarchy. Instead, they should direct the people to raise up magistrates (Sheriffs, Mayors, governors, etc.) who will resist in a godly way. And if that option is not available, then we must be content to resist with avenues that are open to civilians. There was no magistrate involved. No war had been declared. The innocent were killed along with the guilty (if indeed there even were any guilty agents there). Vengeance is God’s, and He alone can tell us how vengeance should be executed. There are only two godly methods of vengeance: direct vengeance from God’s hand, and indirect vengeance through government. Private vengeance is always counterproductive and leads to even more tyranny.
 4. Paul Hill has written a book that defends his right to shoot abortionists. Scripture says that Paul Hill deserves the death penalty for unlawful killing. No one made him a civil magistrate (even though he believes God has authorized him to do this - but see point III.) Nor did he follow the

procedures binding a magistrate, such as trial by jury, two or three witnesses, cross examination, etc., etc. Scripture allows him to protect his own home from non-government murderers that attack his family, but He cannot execute murderers after the crime has occurred as an act of vengeance. That is the job of government, and the government alone. Numbers 35:29-34 indicates that God will judge civil magistrates who fail to execute all murderers, for the land is polluted. Likewise, the whole nation will come under judgment when blood is not cleansed from the land by capital punishment or by public, official repentance - Deut. 21:1-9. Paul Hill cannot cleanse the land from pollution. The magistrates alone can do that as they wash their hands of the sin (Deut. 21:6), or overthrow the guilty government. Paul Hill's actions (and the actions of those who follow him) will further pollute the land. Study the Biblical principles in points I-X

5. Militias have been painted as a threat to America by the media, and while it would be preferable if these modern militias had an understanding of theology like the Presbyterians of the militias and the Continental Army did, the presence of county militias is as American as motherhood and apple pie. Without county militias throughout America, Washington would have never won the war. Very few Americans served in the Continental Army, and for good reasons: 1) the army was poorly paid when it was paid at all, 2) the bureaucratically run army was not nearly as fast or flexible as the militias were, 3) the militias saw most of the significant action, 4) the militias were not interested in the imperialistic aims of some to free Canada since they were only interested in protecting America, 5) the militias were close to home and more accountable to the people, 6) the militias knew the area they lived in better than the army, 7) when the army came through, the militias were able to supplement the army where needed (as irregulars). We have already seen that Scripture pits the militia against standing armies as the check and balance to prevent tyranny. Consider the following quotes:
 - a) United States Code, Title X, article 311 stated, "The militia of the United States consists of all able bodied males at least 17 years of age, and except as provided in section 313 of Title 32 under 45 years of age...[etc.]" That was written in 1791 by the same people who wrote the 2nd Amendment.
 - b) At the first Congress under the Constitution, Representative Eldridge Gerry thundered, "What, sir, is the use of a militia? It is to prevent the establishment of a standing army, the bane of liberty."
 - c) Alexander Hamilton said, "The Constitution shall never be construed ... to prevent the people of the United States who are peaceable citizens from keeping their own arms."
 - d) George Mason of Virginia, who was one of the authors of the 2nd amendment said, "I ask, sir, what is the militia? It is the whole people, except for a few public officials."
 - e) In the 1939 case of *US versus Miller* the court said it was the intention of the Congress to empower the people to keep and bear arms, and that they were the true militia

- f) Numerous other court cases and historic documents show that America followed the pattern of free Israel rather than the pattern of European despots when they framed the second amendment. Tyrants rely on paid armies and hate an armed citizenry.
 - g) Read the theological book *A Defense of Liberty Against Tyrants*, by the Reformer Junius Brutus. Another excellent theological book that America's founding fathers often quoted was Samuel Rutherford's *Lex Rex*.
6. Gun control
- a) Gun control has always been an ungodly effort to impose tyranny upon a nation. Massacres followed the Gun Control Act of Hitler. The massacres of the Armenians followed Turkey's gun control. Every totalitarian state (Russia, China, Cuba, etc.) has gun control. In the Bible, only tyrants sought to disarm the people (e.g., Judges 5:8; 1 Samuel 13:19-23; etc., etc.), whereas those interested in liberty always insisted on an armed citizenry. Tyrants can control a paid military, but they cannot as easily control an unpaid militia. Scripture equates the right to bear arms as an essential freedom of a free state. It was only as Israel backslid that this freedom was taken away (and in many cases, willingly).
 - b) Gun control never disarms criminals. It only disarms law abiding citizens. USA Today said, "There are thousands of gun control laws on the books (20,000)...Have they reduced crime?" And the answer was no. Peter Jennings of ABC said, "There is no evidence that they've reduced the crime rate."
 - c) Why would we need arms?
 - (1) Consider the inability of government to protect its citizens in the Los Angeles riots, or during the police strikes in Montreal, or on the Island of Saint Croix after Hurricane Hugo hit. Many citizens without guns were brutalized or killed. Those who had guns fared much better. Consider what could happen in a time of calamity or national strike. Scripture indicates that government is not to be an all-present police state. We are responsible to protect ourselves from common criminals. Several court cases have said that police departments are not responsible to protect the lives of their citizens, only to preserve the security of the state. (And that is logical - police cannot be everywhere. Over and over the police have not shown up until it is too late.)
 - (2) But consider also the Biblical injunction that male citizens need to be prepared should a civil magistrate (like the unicameral of Nebraska) throw off the yoke of tyranny in the future and call its citizens to arms. This was the call of magistrates in the book of Judges over and over again. If we are not willing to fight for freedom (under a civil magistrate) then we do not deserve freedom. Patrick Henry said, "Give me liberty or give me death." You cannot idealize his statement and consistently support gun control. Failure to fight for the protection of God's people can be sin: "Shall your brethren go to war while you sit here?" (Numb. 32:6) In Numbers 32:20-23 Moses says, "But if you will not do so, then take note,

you have sinned against the LORD.” In Judges 5 there is praise for Israelites who quickly responded to the call to arms by a magistrate who was resisting centralized tyranny (v. 9). This call to arms was given by the recruiter (v. 14). Reuben, Gilead, Dan and Asher are criticized for not having the courage to be involved in the uprising (vs. 16-17). Even stronger language is given to the city Meroz: “‘Curse Meroz,’ said the angel of the LORD, curse its inhabitants bitterly, because they did not come to the help of the LORD, to the help of the LORD against the mighty.” If the church teaches its citizens to be disarmed and to avoid supporting a magistrate in a godly war, then the church too will be cursed. Without the widespread presence of weapons in the hands of godly citizens, and without a knowledge of how to use those weapons, there will not be a free state or a free country for much longer.

(3) Consider also your mandate to protect your family from bandits and murderers (or even rabid dogs in the country). Numerous tales can be told of how the presence of a gun has warded off crime without the need to fire a shot.

(4) Consider the possibility that we might face terrorists as South Africa and many other countries have. In the massacre of the church in South Africa, the only thing that made the criminals flee and stop shooting their machine guns was a member who pulled a gun and started firing back. If everyone carried a weapon, how many people do you think a machine gunner in a crowded store would be able to kill? He would be shot by a citizen before he got many rounds fired.

- d) Switzerland and Israel, both of which have automatic weapons in almost every home, have lower incidents of crime than Japan that has a total ban on firearms. Washington D.C. which has a ban on guns is extremely dangerous, and neighboring Maryland and Virginia have very low crime. Vermont has no gun control and has the lowest incidence of crime in the nation. Towns that have mandated fire arms in every home, and training on how to use them have found their crime rates plummet to almost 0%.
- e) The Posse Comitatus Act made the Sheriff the highest law of the land during a time of emergency and organized small militias of citizens who could respond when called to do so. It would be Biblically possible for a Sheriff or a group of Sheriffs to declare war and to secede county by county. Christians really need to understand why it is that the US added the second amendment. It says, “A well regulated militia being necessary to the security of a free State, the right of the people to keep and bear arms shall not be infringed.” Why was that added? It was because Americans had experienced the British systematically disarming all citizens. It was because they feared a centralized government in the united states of America. In the Federalist papers and in other early works it was clear that the early Americans feared a standing army. America had the largest military force in the world because every man over 16 was expected to be armed and taught how to use his weapon.

- C. This outline gives the Biblical balance that has been known as the Reformed position or the Calvinist position. We need to be aware of it. We need to disseminate it. We need to educate our people in the Bible and early American history. Otherwise we will be tossed to and fro by every wind of doctrine (or media opinion). When the media begins to paint militias as a bunch of crazies (and there may be some crazies out there), we need to be careful not to give up the biblical concept of local militias. When the media says that the NRA should never have called the BATF agents black-booted thugs, we need to be careful that we do not ignore the accurate descriptions that David gives of tyrants as vicious dogs (Ps. 22:16; cf. 59:6,14), “beasts” (Ps. 68:30), “fierce witnesses” (Ps. 35:11), “bloodthirsty men” (Psa. 139:19), etc. who are full of “oppression and deceit” (Ps. 55:11; cf. Ps. 10:7) or the strong language in the book of Revelation. On the other hand, when men start taking justice into their own hands, it is critical that we know how far the Bible lets us go and go no further. This subject will become more and more volatile in coming years, and we need to know exactly what the Bible says if we are not to be manipulated and pushed into false dilemmas or unbiblical positions.

Conclusion