

The Practice of Resistance

1 Samuel 23:1-13

By Phillip G. Kayser at DCC on 8-14-2011

Introduction

Last week I gave a theology of resistance with about 11 pages of extra information that you could take home with you. We also looked at the limits to that resistance that the Scripture sets out. But in this passage we have the actual *practice* of Christian resistance outlined on various levels. And I would be derelict in my duty as a teacher to skip over this simply because it has become controversial in America.

I. State appeal for David's militia (v. 1). Four implications of this verse:

Verse 1 says, **“Then they told David, saying, ‘Look, the Philistines are fighting against Keilah, and they are robbing the threshing floors.’”** Here was a city appealing to David to use his militia to protect them from Philistine marauders. And there are five implications of this verse that I want you to notice.

A. Involvement in the military was always voluntary

First, the city of Keilah did not give David a *command* to come because David's militia was not under Keilah's authority. It was simply an appeal. Later we will see that when it looked like a fruitless resistance, David still commanded his militia and he was able to withdraw his militia from this governmental unit without permission. This means that involvement in the military was always voluntary. When America first started the draft, in both south and north, there were riots. One author said that the riots in New York over the military draft were “the largest civil insurrection in American history apart from the Civil War itself.” Involvement in the military used to be considered voluntary. And the draft was shocking, even in the North.

B. The militia was not owned by the state, and maintained its coherence even when fighting in an army

A second thing that is implied here (but which the law of God makes explicit) is that the militia was not owned by the state, and it kept its coherence even when fighting in an army. We should not think of militias as portions of the state. They are the citizens, armed. In ancient Israel, militias

were simply voluntary groupings of men, who voluntarily trained together regularly, to voluntarily fight against enemies as needed, under a local leader that they knew and respected. They had nothing to do with the government, though the government often called upon them to “please” serve as regulars or irregulars in the army. And if it was a just cause, militias had a moral duty to join the conflict, though often in Judges you find militias who refused to. But even that shows the independent character of a militia. This is why David and his whole militia can leave the city of Keilah later on in this passage even though that militia had been fighting under a magistrate. You see, a voluntary association with Keilah did not change this principle. It did not make them slaves of the state until Keilah chose to disband the army. No.

And the same was true in early America. There were many examples of this, but let me start with the definition of a militia. 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...” It’s not a select group of people like it is today. It was all able-bodied males at least 17 years of age. That was written in 1791 by the same people who wrote the 2nd Amendment. The militia is not a subdivision of the government. It was the people, armed. And when people say, “but the constitution says, ‘well regulated.’ Doesn’t that mean the government regulates the militia?” And the answer is, “No.” Read Chief Justice Story’s commentary on the Constitution. Read the Federalist Papers. Read the Ant Federalist Papers. Read just about any of the comments on what “well regulated” meant to our founding fathers and you will see that it meant a well-disciplined citizenry who knew how to form rank, and who knew how to fight. David’s militia was a well-regulated militia even though they were not under the control of civil government whatsoever. So don’t confuse the militia of today with what it has been through most of America’s history.

The militia is the people, armed. 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.”¹ That is as explicit as you can get. Even the horrible 1939 Supreme Court case of *US v Miller* supports this. The court said that it was the intention of the second amendment to empower the *average citizen* to own arms, not to empower the government. The court said, “These show plainly enough that the Militia comprised all males physically capable of acting in concert for the common

¹J. Elliott, *Debates in Several State Conventions*, (1836); pp. 425-426.

defense. 'A body of citizens enrolled for military discipline.' And further, that ordinarily when called for service these men were expected to appear bearing arms supplied by themselves and of the kind in common use at the time.

Never think of militias as state tools. They are the citizens, armed. This is why it was perfectly legitimate for David to have these 600 men in a militia. They didn't have to ask for permission. And keep in mind last week's sermon – that David respected the *limits* of his right to resist. We are not talking anarchy or revolution. David refused to raise his sword against the magistrate except into two situations – when he was a civil magistrate interposing himself between tyranny and his citizens, and when he was serving another civil magistrate who was willing to do so. So don't take this sermon out of context of everything I said last week. There are militias in America who do not follow these biblical principles, and I don't want to be lumped in with them.

Of course, tyrants like Saul didn't like the fact that David had a militia, whether David operated it within the law or not. And as far back as 1995 there have been attempts to keep two or more people from meeting together for the purpose of military training (which is exactly what a militia is). That bill, H.R. 1544, would have ruled out plinking with some friends in a farmer's field. It was crazy. Its name got changed to the Domestic Insurgency Act, but thankfully has not made any headway. And I say thankfully because the right of citizens to practice marksmanship on a farm field together so that they will be prepared to defend their community is a God-given right, a second amendment right, and was considered by all of our American founding fathers to be a moral duty.

C. While centralized armies are more useful for invading other countries, militias are more useful for protecting every local community

But there is a third implication of this first verse. It is that Keilah preferred to call David rather than to call Saul. Now, it may have been that they tried to call Saul, and Saul had ignored their plea. But it still makes the same point. Standing armies need to be highly centralized and highly controlled if they are to be an invading army. But this is why all of our founding fathers hated a centralized, standing army, in any time except for defensive war with a foreign nation, and even then it wasn't centralized. In fact, I was reading Chief Justice Story's Commentary on the Constitution this past Wednesday, and he said,

The importance of this article [the Second Amendment] will scarcely be doubted by any persons, who have duly reflected upon the subject. The militia is the natural defence of a free country against sudden foreign invasions, domestic insurrections, and domestic usurpations of power by rulers. It is against sound policy for a free people to keep up large military establishments and standing armies in time of peace, both from the enormous expenses, with which they are attended, and the facile means, which they afford to ambitious and unprincipled rulers, to subvert the government, or trample upon the rights of the people. The right of the citizens to keep, and bear arms has justly been considered, as the palladium of the liberties of a republic since it offers a strong moral check against the usurpation and arbitrary power of rulers; and will generally, even if these are successful in the first instance, enable the people to resist, and triumph over them.

But then he went on to complain that Americans were growing soft, and rather than being their own defense, were lazy and waiting for the government to be their defense. He was advocating that local leaders act like David and start well-disciplined militias to defend local communities against the attacks of tyrants, whether those attacks came from outside the country (as we see in this verse) or from within the country (as we see in verses 7 and following).

Historians credit local militias with saving Washington's bacon over and over again. Their very decentralization was an asset in many ways. They knew the local country better than anyone else, and were able to outmaneuver the British and give good advice to Washington. Because of their smaller numbers and their nimbleness, the local militias were able to harass the enemy continually, and then suddenly disappear. In fact, in some parts of the country, the unaffiliated militias did more battle than Washington's army did. Leiby described their efforts in Bergen County, New Jersey, saying, "how seldom any continentals ventured down into the really dangerous part of the neutral ground when the British were near; ... [W]hile the Bergen County militia daily risked brushes with Sir Henry's raiders from New York, all too many Continentals did not hear a gun fired in battle from one year to the next." (p. 139) In other words he is saying that these militias are not given enough credit. They did far more in some battles than the army did. William F. Marina said, "the militia, as one would expect, chose to follow their elected leaders, whom they knew and in whom they had confidence, rather than simply any officer sent by the Continental army."² We've lost this history. We put all of our trust in the police and the Federal government. But what do you do when they aren't present and your homes are being attacked during riots? What do you do when you have a

² <http://www.independent.org/publications/article.asp?id=1489>

Hurricane Katrina? The neighborhoods depend on each other. That's what they do. But the Federal government apparently didn't want New Orleans residents defending themselves from criminals and looters, because they rounded up guns from honest citizens. In early America, local communities were expected to defend themselves and not have to depend upon the army, which simply couldn't be everywhere. I know one county in Florida where the Sherriff believes this and encourages all local males to be well trained in defending their neighborhoods from the vicious gangs that have been attacking their neighborhoods. At some point America needs to return to this.

D. David was able to respond more quickly than some central army

Point D is another reason why Keilah asked for David rather than Saul. Because he was able to respond in a more timely manner. Why were militias so highly respected in early America? Because they responded to needs much more quickly than the Continental Army could. Just as one example, Washington ordered several regular army units to capture Fort Lee, which had been taken by the Loyalists. Marina notes, "Before the army could make such preparations, the word arrived that the militia had taken the fort." (p. 262) In the book of Judges we find examples where all the militias of Israel are summoned to one place within a day. Since they were already prepared and trained, it was just a matter of notifying them and they were instantly ready. And because they were scattered throughout the nation, the militias of a particular region could be mobilized faster than an army could travel there.

E. Militias are extremely helpful in preventing gangs from other countries taking over

But the last implication of verse 1 is that militias are extremely helpful in preventing gangs from other countries taking over. The Philistines knew that Saul's army was to the far north, so they assumed that Keilah was easy pickings. Bad assumption. There were at least some like David who were freedom loving Patriots who were quite willing to fight. And if everyone had David's views on self-defense, it would be a little bit harder for gangs to totally take over towns, as has been happening in some places in the Southwest and in Florida. In fact, there are some places where the police just don't like to go, and I don't blame them. Unless the citizens take their own neighborhoods back, they won't get them back. And ideally, the neighborhoods should do it in cooperation with a Sherriff like David was doing in cooperation with Keilah. Unfortunately, there aren't too many

Sheriffs who think that way nowadays. Just encourage them to read the history of America's use of arms.

II. God's authorization of David's militia (v. 2)

We are going to move a little bit faster now. Verse 2 says,

1Samuel 23:2 Therefore David inquired of the LORD, saying, "Shall I go and attack these Philistines?" And the LORD said to David, "Go and attack the Philistines, and save Keilah."

Two things that I want to highlight from this verse. The first is that God authorized everything we have just been talking about. I'm not teaching this because I am fond of American history. I am teaching this because God teaches it. If all God was interested in was evangelism, and Sunday morning church, then we could conveniently throw out four fifths of the Bible. But God is interested in every area of life and the Bible addresses every area of life, including civics. God has kept 1 Samuel 23 and many other passages in the Bible because there continues to be a need for militias today. Paul said that the Old Testament was written for our admonition upon whom the ends of the ages has come.

If Christian neighborhoods in Rwanda, Africa had neighborhood watches that were armed (and that's all a militia is in many situations) hundreds of thousands of lives would not have had to have been lost. If Cambodian lovers of liberty had organized as militias, the Khmer Rouge would not have been able to massacre an estimated 3 million citizens. And though America is still one of the safest countries to live in, it is very possible that things could fall apart after a terrorist attack. It's possible that there could be riots in the city. Of one of the gangs from El Salvador could take up residence here and overwhelm the available police. Police cannot be everywhere, and Scripture expected people to be able to defend their own castles; their own homes. So my first application from verse 2 is that God Himself authorized David's militia.

The second thing that I wanted to point out is that David was not a crazy man looking for a battle. He only fought when it was absolutely necessary. He was not bloodthirsty. He longed for peace. He was a peace-loving man. And here we see the first of two times that he asks God, "Should I really do this?" David took the policy of speaking softly, but carrying a big stick. He didn't deliberately stir up strife or look for a fight. But at the same time, it grieved him when the liberties of others were being threatened, and he loved the peace of others enough that he was willing to consider signing up under the city of Keilah to fight.

III. Good questions related to whether to use them (vv. 3-4)

A. *Will we have success? (v. 3)*

But next we see two good questions that we should ask when we seek to resist tyranny. The first question may seem somewhat pragmatic. Verse 3:

1 Samuel 23:3 But David's men said to him, "Look, we are afraid here in Judah. How much more then if we go to Keilah against the armies of the Philistines?"

They are in effect asking the question, "Will we have success, or is this a crazy move?" It is a question worth asking. In Luke 14 Jesus said,

Luke 14:28 For which of you, intending to build a tower, does not sit down first and count the cost, whether he has *enough* to finish it— [That's the same question – will we be successful?" Jesus authorizes us to ask that question. He goes on...]

Luke 14:29 lest, after he has laid the foundation, and is not able to finish, all who see *it* begin to mock him,

Luke 14:30 saying, "This man began to build and was not able to finish."

Luke 14:31 Or what king, going to make war against another king, does not sit down first and consider whether he is able with ten thousand to meet him who comes against him with twenty thousand?

Luke 14:32 Or else, while the other is still a great way off, he sends a delegation and asks conditions of peace.

So what these guys were asking is not a bad question. Would this be a foolish move? Some moves that people make in the name of freedom are foolish. They are suicidal. You know they won't bring freedom even before they start.

B. *Did God really lead? (v. 4)*

The second question is even more important. It is, "Did God really lead me in this?" Verse 4: "**Then David inquired of the LORD once again.** [So he double checks once again. "This does seem really risky. Lord, are you really guiding me in this?" And it shows that David was willing to listen to counsel from his men. He double checks.] **And the LORD answered him and said, 'Arise, go down to Keilah. For I will deliver the Philistines into your hand.'**" A man who is walking close to God has a great advantage. And his men trusted his leadership, so they followed. But both of these questions show that we need to approach this whole subject with a degree of caution.

IV. How a private militia saved the day (v. 5)

But David is convinced that God wants him to do this patriotic thing and fight for the freedoms of his countrymen. Verse 5:

1Samuel 23:5 And David and his men went to Keilah and fought with the Philistines, struck them with a mighty blow, and took away their livestock. So David saved the inhabitants of Keilah.

And we can't forget that this was *not* a government army that saved a city. This was a private militia that saved a city by God's authorization.

Now let me answer a question that somebody asked me last week. That question was whether it would have been OK for David to fight the Philistines if the executive magistrate of Keilah had not invited him to do so. And the answer is yes. Though it would take a magistrate to authorize David to fight against his own government, the Philistines were not in the same category for two reasons:

First, the whole country was at war with Philistia, so whether his own government liked him or not, when a country is at war, every citizen is authorized to fight against hostile invaders. Even a woman like Jael can do it. God Himself praised citizen Jael for pounding a stake through the temple of Sisera. So if the Philistines are at war with America, and they have invaded my doorstep, they are fair game.

But secondly, these Philistines were akin to the drug gangs that have been coming across the border illegally, raping and murdering Americans. The outline I gave last week gives plenty of Scriptures that allow you to defend yourself against such thugs. So if America was on the border of Philistia, and I happened to be near the border when Philistines were coming in, shooting people in the streets and going from house to house robbing the citizens of my town, I don't have to ask permission of the government to shoot to protect myself, my neighbors, or my property.

V. The presence of pastors in David's militia (v. 6)

Point V indicates that pastors weren't averse to being part of a militia. Verse 6 says,

1Samuel 23:6 Now it happened, when Abiathar the son of Ahimelech fled to David at Keilah, that he went down with an ephod in his hand.

So here is a priest with the guidance of God (that's what the ephod was) going everywhere that David did, and fighting alongside of him. And this too shows that we live in a different age. The times of the first war for American Independence was an age that had many men like Abiathar. In fact, there were so many pastors who fought in that war against Britain that

these “Abiathars” took on the name of “the Black Regiment.” It was a Black Regiment because they wore black robes.

Some of you may know the story of Peter Muhlenberg. There is a statue of him in the United States Capitol Building. On his last day to preach in the pulpit of his church in 1775 he preached a powerful sermon on the duties of citizens, ending it with the reading of Ecclesiastes 3, which speaks of there being a time for every purpose under heaven –

**A time to be born, and a time to die
A time to plant, and a time to pluck what is planted;
A time to kill, and a time to heal;**

I won't read the whole section, but the final verse reads,

A time of war, and a time of peace.

He then said, “There is a time to fight, and that time is now.” He then laid aside his preacher's robe and stood in the full uniform of a Virginia colonel. He ordered the drums beaten at the church door for recruits, and almost the entire male audience joined his standard and fought under his leadership. Nearly three hundred men enlisted under his standard that day. He became one of Washington's primary Brigadier Generals in the Continental Army. But there were other pastors who fought outside the army in militias. Those pastors have been criticized by modern pastors who lack his testosterone, but he was honored in his day. Abiathar stands as a testimony that what Muhlenberg did was right.

VI. One disadvantage of centralized resistance (vv. 7-8)

Verse 7:

1Samuel 23:7 And Saul was told that David had gone to Keilah. So Saul said, “God has delivered him into my hand, for he has shut himself in by entering a town that has gates and bars.”

There are a couple of things that I want to point out before I comment on point VI. The first is the amazing audacity of Saul to say, “God has delivered him into my hands.” He is claiming that God is on his side. Many Christians are confused with the God-talk of politicians. They vote for a Republican just because he calls himself a Christian. That is nonsense. The question we should be asking is, “Does he stand for Biblical principles?” We need to realize that God-haters frequently talk as if they were God-lovers. People who break the commandments of God will use God's name in vain by claiming that a vote for them is a vote for God. It is not just modern politicians that hypocritically *use* God and *use* religion as a propaganda tool. Beware. That's exactly what Saul was doing here.

But the second thing that I want to point out is Saul's *lack* of zeal to protect Keilah from the true enemy (the Philistines), and his eagerness to kill David, whom he considered to be a threat to his position. It makes you wonder if the BATFE took their cues in Hurricane Katrina from king Saul. So we see an apathy with regard to good issues and a zeal to promote bad issues. It is such a stark contrast on paper that it is shocking, and yet it is a constant reality in politics. Try to get the government interested in dealing with illegals along the border and you will get a yawn. Try to get them to support patriotic militias, Minutemen on the border, and to get every citizen armed, and they will be alarmed and will get upset. Everything is backwards today.

A. It can be surrounded (v. 7)

So that is my insert into your outline – my rabbit trail. Let's take a look at point A, which I guess is point C now. I want you to notice first that a centralized resistance can be quickly overwhelmed, and Saul knew it. He saw David as a bird in a cage. Now David was willing to stay there if Keilah had been behind him, but there is a maxim here that highlights one of the benefits of a mobile resistance. A walled town, while giving some protection, can become a trap. Saul knew that.

B. It can be outnumbered (v. 8)

A second disadvantage of centralized resistance such as David was considering was that the enemy could come with a vastly greater army. Verse 8 says,

1Samuel 23:8 Then Saul called all the people together for war, to go down to Keilah to besiege David and his men.

Saul called out every regiment and every militia that he could muster to lay siege to the city. He wanted to so overwhelm David that there would be no way out. And that makes David's indecision on whether to stay or whether to leave all the more remarkable. It's true, it was a large city, very fortified, and had had a major role in many conflicts between empires in ancient history. So it was a strategic town for David to start his resistance from. But still, David is more concerned with God's guidance than he is with odds. He has already seen over and over again that minorities can win battles. Near the end of his life he fought with a very small regiment against the vast conscripted army of Absalom, yet won.

But the main reason I bring this up is that some people like to congregate in regions of the country where they can have a mass of Patriots.

While I respect that position, and you can appeal to a later period in David's life for the wisdom of doing it, there are still disadvantages that need to be considered.

VII. The possibility of using a militia against Saul when authorized by the civil government of Keilah (vv. 9-11)

But let's look at point VII. Beginning at verse 9

1Samuel 23:9 When David knew that Saul plotted evil against him, he said to Abiathar the priest, "Bring the ephod here."

One of the things you will see throughout David's life is that he is constantly seeking the will of God. Once again, this is an absolute foundation for keeping us out of trouble during troubled times. Verse 10:

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."

At this point Keilah is his city, and to destroy David, it would have to destroy Keilah, unless Keilah became treacherous and turned him over to king Saul to keep out of trouble. Verse 11:

1Samuel 23:11 Will the men of Keilah deliver me into his hand?

Why did he ask that question when it is certain that Saul is descending on the city? He asks it because he is willing to stay and fight if Keilah is willing to stand behind him. This shows courage. This also illustrates one of the exceptions we looked at to last week's principle. The sword can be raised against a magistrate if another magistrate interposes himself between you and tyranny and authorizes such resistance. So David is basically asking, "Will Keilah engage in civil interposition, or will Keilah turn me over?"

You may have never heard that term, "interposition," so let me define it. To interpose means simply to come in between two people or two bodies. This word is at the very heart of our concept of salvation. In theology it refers to what a mediator does. For example, the hymn writer Robert Robertson, in his hymn, "Come Thou Fount of Every Blessing," wrote: "Jesus sought me when a stranger, wandering from the fold of God; He, to rescue me from danger, interposed His precious blood." Liberal hymnbooks have taken out that idea of interposition because they don't like to think of wrath of God. But Jesus very literally came in between the wrath of God and us, and rescued us from certain punishment. So there is a Christocentric aspect to interposition that ought to be the foundation for this doctrine. We need to be looking to the interposition of Jesus as Savior as well as Jesus as Judge if we are to have long-term success. And I can't get into all that is

involved in the statement. But let me at least briefly introduce you to the subject of civil interposition.

Here's a definition from Black's Law Dictionary: “

Interposition. The doctrine that a state, in the exercise of its sovereignty, may reject a mandate of the federal government deemed to be unconstitutional or to exceed the powers delegated to the federal government.

The dictionary goes on to say,

The concept is based on the 10th Amendment of the Constitution of the United States reserving to the states powers not delegated to the United States. Historically, the doctrine emanated from *Chisholm v. Georgia*, 2 Dallas 419, wherein the state of Georgia, when sued in the Supreme Court by a private citizen of another state, entered a remonstrance and declined to recognize the court's jurisdiction.

Amendment 11 validated Georgia's position. Implementation of the doctrine may be peaceable, as by resolution, remonstrance or legislation, or may proceed ultimately to nullification with forcible resistance.

So it can be a peaceable resistance or an armed resistance. This is really the middle ground between submission to all tyranny (on the one hand) and total chaos (on the other). America's war for independence was not technically a revolution. It was an interposition of several lower magistrates resisting the tyranny of King George and of the Parliament.

Every judge in the book of judges engaged in an act of interposition against a higher magistrate. And they brought the sword to bear against a higher magistrate. When parliament executed king Charles in England at the time of Cromwell, they were engaged in an act of lawful interposition.

But there are many different ways of peacefully giving interposition. When the federal court recently struck down Obamacare as being unconstitutional, that was one kind of interposition. Another kind was the recent lawsuit by 26 states against Obamacare.

But interposition can actually be upward, downwards, sideways, and engaged in a variety of ways. Let me list some Biblical examples: When Jonathan warned David to flee from his father who was seeking to kill David, Jonathan was engaging in interposition. He was protecting David from his dad, and was blessed by God for doing so.

In 1 Kings 12, when Jeroboam led the northern ten tribes in secession from the south's grossly tyrannical taxation, God said that he approved of the interposition. And when the south tried to fight against the north and stop them from interposing themselves, God sent a prophet to warn Rehoboam in these words: **“Thus says the LORD, ‘You shall not go up nor fight against your brethren the children of Israel. Let every man return to his house, for this thing is from Me.’”** It was one of the rare times when the North was right. The North seceded in that case. God enshrined the right of secession in that passage - and interestingly, it was over taxation – the same reason why the South seceded. And by the way, that War Between the States was really the second American War for Independence. It followed exactly the same principles as the first war. It was the lawful secession of the southern states from the northern states. And if you say they can't secede, then we shouldn't have seceded from Britain. But the moment you make a nation's existence eternal, you are deifying it. What the southern states did was exactly the same thing that God had authorized in 1 Kings 12.

In 1 Kings 18 when Jezebel was killing all the true prophets, Obadiah hid 100 in two caves and fed them with food and water. He happened to be a lower magistrate, but that is the kind of interposition that any citizen could do - hide godly citizens who are being persecuted and chased down. The church has to constantly do this behind the bamboo curtain in order to survive. So there are many kinds of interposition.

We have an example of an attempted interposition by Joab when David sought to number Israel. Joab was disgusted by it. I can't imagine what Joab would think of our census which is much more intrusive of privacy! But he thought that it was wicked for David to try to number Israel the way he was doing it. So Joab tried to convince David not to do it, but the text says that David's word prevailed. Joab did part of the job, but he didn't finish it because he found it so disgusting to him. That is a lower level of interposition that many magistrates have engaged in in America. They refused to implement what was mandated. That's interposition.

2 Chronicles 21:10 records the successful revolt and secession of the city of Libnah from Judah. The interesting thing about that is that it was a Levitical city of refuge, and they couldn't bear the apostasy of King Jehoram. So the city officials interposed themselves against the tyranny and became their own city-state. And it *really* became a city of refuge for people who hated the tyranny of King Jehoram themselves.

2Chronicles 26:20 records 80 valiant priests throwing King Uzziah out of the temple when he tried to do what only priests could do. They were lawfully resisting a magistrate's incursions onto their jurisdiction. If churches would excommunicate magistrates who engage in unconstitutional tyranny, we might see some changes in America. But at least those churches would be pleasing to God.

Let me give you two examples of private citizens engaging in interposition. When Rahab hid the spies, she was interposing herself between soldiers and the spies. And God praised her. You may remember from last week the case of David going to kill Nabal and his household. When Abigail graciously interceded before David to spare their family, David relented. And David praised her for interposing herself, saying that if she had not done so, he would have had murder on his hands. So even good men can overstep their boundaries on occasion.

So what David is asking here is not strange at all. If Keilah had more men of David's character, they would have interposed themselves and resisted the tyranny of Saul. Down through history lower magistrates have done this over and over again. The Protestant Reformation would never have been successful if it wasn't for the interposition of lower magistrates. And Protestants who don't like to talk about this subject, have their freedoms to disagree with me only because of the interposition of the magistrates of the Colonies against King George, and the interposition of the German Princes against the Emperor, and numerous other interpositions in Holland, Switzerland, and other countries. The only reason they can hold to their pacifist versions of Christianity and argue against interposition is because there were magistrates in history who disagreed with them and practiced interposition. This is not a strange doctrine. This is an essential doctrine for survival.

David continues praying:

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."

VIII. The limits to the use of a militia (v. 12-13)

And that brings us to point VIII – that there are limits to our use of a militia. Militias can be used to fight on behalf of magistrates against the tyranny of a king George. They can lawfully be used to fight on behalf of the South when it tried to secede. But when no magistrate is willing to stand up for right, David and his militia needed to flee. Verse 13:

1 Samuel 23:13 So [Or you could translate that, “Therefore” – based on God’s revelation] **David and his men, about six hundred, arose and departed from Keilah and went wherever they could go. Then it was told Saul that David had escaped from Keilah; so he halted the expedition.**

From this verse we have an illustration of the fact that militias do not have the right to declare war themselves or to overturn the government unless a lawfully ordained civil magistrate authorizes the war. The fact that he was the head of a militia was not enough. There is division of powers and function between militias and government. Militias can serve government, and they can be under the government, but they are not a government within a government. Militias can train and be prepared for war. David shows that militias can even flee from government. But they may not resist government without some government approval. Because we dealt extensively with the limits of such resistance last week, I won’t say any more on point VIII.

IX. Why David’s militia could frustrate Saul (v. 13)

But this same verse shows that David’s militia could frustrate the mighty army of Saul. They only had 600 men, but despite the fact that Saul had an overwhelmingly superior force, he gave up his expedition. He knew that it was pretty useless to continue to pursue David.

This shows the power of an armed citizenry. It shows the power of a mobile militia. One of David’s strategies later in this book would be to align his militia with various magistrates in Judah and gradually to form a sufficient momentum in the resistance that Judah and Simeon could secede and give liberty to his kinsmen and to his tribe. Another strategy that he had was to model to other militias throughout the country, self-control under tyranny. And in the coming chapters there is militia after militia that joins with David when he is king of Ziklag, until he has quite an army. But maintaining his militia rather than disbanding was key to that success.

So even within the limits that the Scripture gives to the use of a militia, it can be a very strategic tool when national unity crumbles. This was the only thing that kept the Reformed Protestants in France from being completely wiped out by the Roman Catholic opposition. They networked with militias throughout France and aligned themselves with Protestant magistrates who authorized them to defend themselves against the King. And they were incredibly successful in protecting themselves. That’s why the king sought a peace treaty. Had it not been for the Huguenots trusting the king’s promises, France could very well have become a Protestant country. In fact, the rightful heir to the throne supported the Huguenots. Anyway, the

Huguenots were overly confident in the king's promise, and they laid down their arms when they entered the city. It was a big mistake. Between August 23 and September 17, of 1572, more than 25,000 Huguenot men, women, and children were butchered in Paris alone. The king ordered every man, woman, and child of the Huguenots to be killed throughout the country. There may have been over 100,000 Protestants killed because of the treachery of king Charles and the Queen Mother, Catherine. And what was so ghastly about it was that the Pope made a special celebration, a special mass to celebrate the slaughter, and minted a coin celebrating the slaughter. 300,000 Huguenots fled to other countries, including America. Paul Revere was a descendent of those Huguenots, and he understood this theology of militias. He understood this practice of resistance. Most early Americans did. This is as American as motherhood and apple pie. But within France, there were militias who stayed and magistrates who stayed, and through their continued resistance, they were able to force a peace. If it hadn't been for those militias, every Huguenot would have been killed. It would have been just like the three million killed by the Khmer Rouge in Cambodia, or like the millions of Armenian Christians killed in Turkey. And there have been many other slaughters in other countries because the church has not taught these principles. The Reformers all understood these principles and taught them. And I could have used stories from many other Protestant countries to the same effect.

X. Other everyday uses for David's militia (25:4-9,14-17; etc)

Of course, resisting a tyrannical government is not the only use for a neighborhood militia. Its main use was to protect the neighborhood from *criminals*. Sure tyrants fear them, but criminals fear them even more. And we will be seeing in later chapters that the main use for David's militia within Judah was to help the locals to fight off thieves, bandits, and Philistine marauders.

Let me tell you the story of Kennesaw, Georgia. In 2007 the *Family Circle* magazine picked that town as one of the nations, "10 best towns for families."³ Keep that fact in mind as I tell this story. It is now one of the ten best towns for families. But it wasn't always that way. There was crime. In fact, in 1982 things were so serious that the city passed an ordinance, Section 34-21 that stated this:

³ *Family Circle*, August 2007

(a) In order to provide for the emergency management of the city [ooh! You would expect big government language to follow those words. But no, it said, “In order to provide for the emergency management of the city”], and further in order to provide for and protect the safety, security and general welfare of the city and its inhabitants, every head of household residing in the city limits is required to maintain a firearm, together with ammunition therefore.

(b) Exempt from the effect of this section are those heads of households who suffer a physical or mental disability which would prohibit them from using such a firearm. Further exempt from the effect of this section are those heads of households who are paupers or who conscientiously oppose maintaining firearms as a result of beliefs or religious doctrine, or persons convicted of a felony.

Wow! That opened up a firestorm from liberals who wailed about the poor kids who would get killed from accidents, and the rise in crime, etc., etc., ad infinitum. Next year will be the thirtieth anniversary of that great decision to arm its citizens and in effect to reestablish the old doctrine that the citizens are the militia. What happened? Despite the population growing from 5,000 to just under 30,000 over the past thirty years, crime dropped. That doesn't tend to happen in other towns. Crime tends to increase with the population increasing. The first year after that ordinance was passed crimes against persons dropped 74%, the next year they dropped another 45%. I've looked at the statistics in the years since then, and when you combine the growth in population with the drop in crime, it shows that criminals don't like to pick on Kennesaw citizens. Case closed.

Conclusion

But let me end by saying that militias are a good magistrate's best friend. They are men who are trained and prepared to do whatever a magistrate commands in the interests of liberty and God's law. They are a magistrate's best friend. Magistrates should not be afraid to do what Kennesaw, Georgia did. There are other towns with similar success stories. And if these citizens would be encouraged to train to defend liberties, they would be a magistrate's best friend. And I want you to turn to Judges 5 to see this. The whole book of Judges shows the critical role that militias have played in the fight for liberty.

Each time a judge came along, he called for the militias to support him. Sometimes all came together, sometimes certain militias decide not to. Look at Judges 5:14-17 as one example. Deborah praises some militias and rebukes others for failing to send units. **“From Ephraim were those whose roots were in Amalek. After you, Benjamin, with your peoples [notice**

the plural of peoples - there is a break down of units within this tribal state] **From Machir rulers came down, and from Zebulun those who bear the recruiter's staff** [Because militias were always organized, we find in the book of Judges that a recruiter could raise every militia in Israel in a matter of a days with his recruiter's staff. That's the brilliance of the Biblical system. It didn't take a month to deploy a huge army. That would be too late. It goes on...] **And the princes of Issachar** [notice the plural commanders within this tribal state - "the princes of Issachar"] **were with Deborah; as Issachar, so was Barak sent into the valley under his command;** [But now comes a listing of some militias and even entire states that did not offer their services. This was a right they reserved, even though it is here used in a sinful and selfish exercise of that right. Verse 16b] **The divisions of Reuben have great searchings of heart.** [In other words, they feel guilty not supporting Barak, but they didn't join the army. He goes on.] **Gilead stayed beyond the Jordan, and why did Dan remain on ships? Asher continued at the seashore, and stayed by his inlets.** In verse 23 we have an example of a city militia; just one example that militias were not always organized by clans. They didn't have to be. It was any grouping of men, just like David's. Anyway, this says: **'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.'** I want you to notice that we can come under God's curse when we are unwilling to serve in a militia to throw off tyranny when a magistrate calls us to do so. If we are not willing to fight for freedom under a civil magistrate then we do not deserve freedom. Patrick Henry's words, "Give me liberty or give me death" are still recited, but they are hypocritically recited by people who oppose weapons in the hands of citizens, and who oppose the militias that Patrick Henry promoted. It's schizophrenic.

We cannot be more righteous than God, and when God calls for militias, we are resisting God if we resist the right of neighborhoods to defend themselves. We cannot be more righteous than the Bible. Too many Christians back down on this subject simply because they are thinking like the world. In my neighborhood you would probably not be able to get a militia started. They don't have the mentality of Kennesaw, Georgia. But across this nation there are towns and counties that are returning to the old paths of liberty. Pray that that would grow. And it is my prayer that America would eventually return to its roots entirely by being one nation under God and embracing God's law fully. May it be so King Jesus. Amen.

The Practice of Resistance

1Samuel 23:1-13

By Phillip G. Kayser at DCC on 8-14-2011

Introduction

- I. State appeal for David's militia (v. 1). Four implications of this verse:
 - A. Involvement in the military was always voluntary
 - B. The militia was not owned by the state, and maintained its coherence even when fighting in an army
 - C. While centralized armies are more useful for invading other countries, militias are more useful for protecting every local community
 - D. David was able to respond more quickly than some central army
 - E. Militias are extremely helpful in preventing gangs from other countries taking over
- II. God's authorization of David's militia (v. 2)
- III. Good questions related to whether to use them (vv. 3-4)
 - A. Will we have success? (v. 3)
 - B. Did God really lead? (v. 4)
- IV. How a private militia saved the day (v. 5)
- V. The presence of pastors in David's militia (v. 6)
- VI. One disadvantage of centralized resistance (vv. 7-8)
 - A. It can be surrounded (v. 7)
 - B. It can be outnumbered (v. 8)
- VII. The possibility of using a militia against Saul when authorized by the civil government of Keilah (vv. 9-11)
- VIII. The limits to the use of a militia (v. 12-13)
- IX. Why David's militia could frustrate Saul (v. 13)
- X. Other everyday uses for David's militia (25:4-9,14-17; etc)

Conclusion