

GLAD TIDINGS

“And we bring you good tidings of the promise made unto the fathers...” (Acts 13:32)

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The Christian's War

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Daily car bombings, and executions in the streets and corridors of Iraq vividly remind us that we are a nation at war with a terrorizing enemy. But who is this enemy? Some would say the enemy is “*extreme Muslim fundamentalism*”. They view the people reeking the present havoc as those who take the Muslim faith to irrational extremes. How? They take the words of Mohammed “literally” of course.

The “fundamentalist” reads where Mohammed directs his followers to bring suffering upon those who oppose God and his apostle and “*strike off their heads and strike off all the ends of their fingers*” (Koran 8:12). So, he carries out his directives against Jews and Christians. Mainstream Muslims either ignore this passage, or interpret it metaphorically as they desire a more non-threatening profile in the twenty-first century. So, if you take Islam’s holy book literally, then you in your fundamentalist approach will be viewed as an extremist.

Some see this fundamentalist—extremist connection being

carried out in all Religions. Boaz Gonar, an author and terrorism expert, recently gave a speech at Georgetown University on how to successfully counter terrorism. He argued that he can find in all “Holy Books”, including the New Testament, where we are to kill those of other religions. Therefore, it is all about how you interpret your holy book, and what you decide to emphasize that determines if you will be an extremist, or more moderately mainstream in the practice of your religion.

Does the literal interpretation of the New Testament cause you to be an extremist, willing to kill and exterminate all other religions? Dr. Gonar might present *Revelation 11:5* where those who desire to hurt God’s two witnesses “*must be killed*”. But a closer look at this passage clearly shows that the two witnesses are equipped with “*fire proceeding out of their mouth*” with power to kill during the time they are authorized to prophesy. Then the witnesses are killed and raised again as God brings forth His judgment. War scenes in Revelation describe the Lord’s judgment on those persecuting His saints, but nowhere in Revelation do we see a call for a

Jihad where followers of Christ kill off people of other religions. The Lord and his angels engage in war on behalf of the persecuted saints, but they are not leading the saints in killing others.

I deny a literal interpretation of the New Testament leads one to believe that it teaches believers to kill off unbelievers as encouraged in the Koran. The Christian will not deny that he has been enrolled as a “*soldier*” to “*fight the good fight of the faith*” (2 Tim. 2:4, 1 Tim. 6:12). But Jesus literally tell us “*My Kingdom is not of this world*”. Being a spiritual kingdom, with no earthly headquarters, there is no need for carnal warfare to protect or enlarge its borders (*John 18:36*). But the Christian is at war. His goal is “*the casting down of strongholds, casting down imaginations, and every high thing that is exalted against the knowledge of God, and bringing every thought into captivity to the obedience of Christ*” (2 Cor. 10:4-5). This is accomplished through preaching the persuasive gospel, not wielding a beheading sword.