Should You Carry a Gun?

Dear Culture Contrarians,

Should believers in Jesus carry a gun for personal protection? My father, who loved the Lord, never owned a gun; my sons, who also love the Lord, have more guns than I can count.

Is it a lack of faith or a mark of wisdom? The Bible is surprisingly quiet on this matter. Israel, of course, had an armed military, and Nehemiah’s crew worked with a trowel in one hand and a sword in the other. Most of Israel’s history was either a theocracy, an independent nation, or under a foreign jurisdiction. The church history is exclusively under Gentile governmental rule. Roman Catholicism, from time to time, has been an exception. When Herod killed James and imprisoned Peter (Acts 12), the church did not arm themselves and attack Roman; they prayed.

Is there a difference between attacking Rome and defending oneself from a Roman criminal? Paul tells us to submit to the government (Romans 13 and elsewhere) and Jesus tells us to turn the other cheek, but His instructions in Matthew 5:38 include persecution for one’s faith, not defending ourselves from criminals.

If you are not armed, you cannot protect yourself from random evildoers. If defending oneself against an evil government—one determined to destroy Christianity—is a possibility, history has shown that armed resistance may be the wisest choice.

The Duke of Savoy (part of the Auvergne-Rhone-Alpes in the south of France) massacred Waldensians beginning on April of 1655. According to J. A. Wyle, *History of the Waldenses,* (first published in 1860: this edition 2016, p. 106)“…little children were torn from the arms of their mothers, clasped by their tiny feet, and their heads dashed against the rocks.” Some Waldensians fled via an “underground railroad” into Switzerland, but those who stayed behind fled up into the mountains and formed an armed guerilla resistance movement led by Monsieur Joshua Janavel. Today one only finds numerous Protestant churches in the south of France.

Our world is an evil one and we await the Prince of Peace, but until He is the king of the whole earth (Zechariah 14:9), it seems reasonable to me that He would have us protect ourselves. While Jesus was offering His kingdom to the Jews, He sent out His disciples with inadequate provisions; those who believed the message would care for them. As He faced the crucifixion and the disciples faced another disbursement, He told them to take money and weapons. Two swords were enough (Luke 22:25-38)! As the foundation of the church, the Apostles shouldn’t resemble an armed militia, but they should be able to defend themselves.