

SELF DEFENSE OR DIVINE RESTRAINT?

by Avram Yehoshua

[The Seed of Abraham](#)

With Christians being murdered in church by deranged gunmen, there are many Christians who want to protect themselves and their families with either weapons, such as pistols and rifles and/or ‘Christian’ Martial Arts. It sounds both reasonable, rational and the right thing to do. Yeshua (the Hebrew name for Jesus) even spoke to His Apostles about getting swords:

“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.’” (Lk. 22:36)

“So they said, “Lord, look, here are two swords.”¹ And He said to them, “It is enough.”” (Luke 22:38 NKJV; cf. Mt.)

It seems that Yeshua was teaching that all of us should at least be armed, but how does that reconcile with what Yeshua said about turning the other cheek? Also, after Peter had taken out his sword to protect Yeshua from being taken by the Jewish contingent, by cutting off the ear of one of those who came to arrest Him, Yeshua said to Peter:

“Put your sword in its place! *For all who take the sword will perish by the sword!*” (Mt. 26:52)

Of course we know that Yeshua was arrested and crucified, fulfilling Scripture (Isaiah 53), and so one could make the point that His reigning Peter in at Gethsemane was an exception to the rule, but Yeshua’s words to Peter seem to be a general rule of thumb—all those who take up the sword will perish by it.

When Yeshua spoke to Pilate He said that His Kingdom *wasn’t of this world*, and that was the reason why *His followers didn’t fight* for Him:

“Yeshua answered Pilate and said, ‘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.’” (John 18:36)

And so the logical question arises: if Yeshua’s Kingdom isn’t of this world, and He doesn’t want us to perish by the sword, why should Christians arm themselves, and not just trust in Yeshua? Are we to use the world’s ways to defend ourselves or are we to follow Yeshua and His ways? We are in this world, but not of this world (cf. Jn. 8:23), but why then did Yeshua tell the Apostles to get swords? Christians who fight and/or are armed with pistols and/or who use martial arts, etc., find it very strengthening to possess those things, but is there an illusion of security here and does that desire to defend oneself and family come from God or self?

When people defend themselves it’s called self defense. Hopefully the mantra is that they won’t start a fight, but will protect themselves and their loved ones from harm, but where does Yeshua’s words, to turn the other cheek, come in? When do the words, ‘don’t resist evil,’ come into their lives? What is so spiritual about maiming or killing a robber or murderer before he robs or murders you? The world does that if

¹ The swords that Yeshua spoke of, and of the two the Apostles produced, were not long swords, but a relatively short sword or other sharp instrument, *sword, dagger* (μάχαιρα Walter Bauer, augmented by William F. Arndt, F. W. Gingrich and Frederick Danker, *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature* (third edition, 2001), p. 622; Accordance Bible Software). Thayer says it’s a small sword, which is akin to a knife, which could be used for slitting the throat of an animal (Joseph Thayer, *Thayer’s Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament*, paragraph 6221; Accordance Bible Software).

it has the chance. How is self defense different from the world and its carnal ways? Yeshua said, “You have heard it said, ‘An eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth,’ but I tell you *not to resist an evil person, but whoever strikes you on your right cheek, turn the other to him also.*” (Matthew 5:38-39). He also said,

“I say to you, *love your enemies*, bless those who curse you, do good to those who hate you, and pray for those who spitefully use you and persecute you.” (Matthew 5:44)

Loving one’s enemy is totally ‘another world or Kingdom’ concept. “Taking up the sword” and defending ourselves goes against those words of Yeshua. Peter, the swashbuckling swordsman, seems to have changed his view about self-defense when he writes and says:

“For to this you were called, because Messiah also suffered for us, *leaving us an example, that you should follow His steps*, ‘Who committed no sin, nor was deceit found in His mouth,’ who, when He was reviled, did not revile in return. When He *suffered, He did not threaten, but committed Himself to Him who judges righteously.*” (1st Peter 2:21-23)

Peter is speaking about *trusting* in God our Father when situations like these arise. What about the Apostle Paul? Not having been one of the original 12 Apostles, Yeshua literally stopped him ‘dead in his tracks’ on the Road to Damascus and brought him into the Kingdom and revealed the Gospel to him (Acts 9:1ff.; Gal. 1:1, 8-9, 11f.). *Paul was lashed on five different occasions 39 times each for a total of 195 lashes, by Jews who hated him and his Lord.* If anyone had justification to use the sword it was Paul. He wrote:

“Are they Hebrews? So am I! Are they Israelis? So am I! Are they the Seed of Abraham? So am I! Are they ministers of Messiah?—I speak as a fool—I am more so! In labors more abundant, *in stripes above counting*, in prisons more frequently, in deaths often. From the Jews five times I received *forty stripes minus one. Three times I was beaten with rods; once I was stoned.*” (2nd Corinthians 11:22–25)

Five times Paul was lashed 39 times. God put a limit of 40 on how many times a Hebrew could be lashed (Dt. 25:3). The Jewish leadership, not wanting to unintentionally go over that limit (and sin), would not go past 39, in case there had been a miscount.² Three times, Paul says, he was beaten with rods and once he was stoned:

“Then Jews from Antioch and Iconium came there, and having persuaded the multitudes, they stoned Paul and dragged him out of the city, supposing him to be dead.” (Acts 14:19 NKJV)

It doesn’t seem that Paul knew Karate, or had a sword to defend himself. Strange, though, that he didn’t put up a fight or buy a sword after any one of these incidents. The lashings of the Jews didn’t have the authority of the Romans, meaning that Paul could have fought his way out of it, both physically, especially if he was armed and wanted to protect himself, and legally, as he could have called on Roman officials to stop the lashings, for he had done nothing wrong in Roman eyes. The stoning incident is the same, causing me to wonder why Paul didn’t resist them and at the very least, throw the stones back at them who were throwing stones at him. There is one account listed, of him being beaten with rods, and that by Gentile authorities and a Gentile mob in Philippi, who later regretted it when they found out that Paul was a bona-fide Roman citizen (Acts 16:22-23), but why didn’t he tell them that when they were abusing him, and why didn’t he fight back those other times?³ Certainly he could have afforded to buy a sword for himself since he was a tent maker.⁴

² Of course the Romans didn’t follow Torah, and so Yeshua was most likely whipped until the men whipping Him were tired. The Jews only used the lash, but the Romans put razor sharp bones and lead weights on their lashes to rip the back open and pound the very life-breath out of the victim.

³ Acts 21:27-32; where is Paul’s sword? Why didn’t he physically defend himself?

The answers to those questions give us the answer to our dilemma of what our biblical response is to violence, robbery and potential death, against us and our loved ones. There was no physical self defense in Paul's Gospel because he *trusted* in Yeshua and wanted *everyone* to know his Savior, even his enemies. Peter did the same thing and that's why we see a different Peter writing to us than the one we in the Garden of Gethsemane, in order to try and protect Yeshua.⁵

Those who have pistols, rifles and/or know Martial Arts *trust in those things*, not in Yeshua, but they can be overcome by another pistol or shotgun, or someone who is better at Martial Arts, etc. Those who trust in Yeshua learn to be at peace with themselves in whatever situation they find themselves in, trusting in Yeshua for protection from violence, and if it occurs, they call upon Him.

Proverb 3:5-6 tells us to *trust* in the Lord with all our heart and *lean not to our own understanding*. It's because of our 'understanding' of this world that we want to be ready to protect ourselves from all harm, and hence, why "*Christian Martial Arts*," etc., are a booming businesses:

"Trust in Yahveh *with all your heart*, and *lean not on your own understanding*. In *all your ways* acknowledge Him (that Yeshua is there with you), and He will make all your rocky paths smooth." (Proverbs 3:5-6 my translation)

No one wants to get hurt or die. Self-preservation is a natural instinct. Millions of Americans are being trained to defend themselves in the Martial Arts,⁶ many of whom are Christians. Also, there are many people who train in boxing, and of course, there are tens of millions of Americans who own firearms.⁷ Does Yeshua condone and encourage these forms of self defense? Isn't 'Christian Karate' an oxymoron?⁸ Also, how much time and effort go into self defense, or learning to use firearms that could be better used to read the Word and pray and minister to others? And what is the mental attitude of those people who are ready to defend themselves? "No one is going to hurt me! I can fight!" Or, "I'll shot them!"

So then, why did Yeshua tell the Apostles to get swords? Yeshua intentionally told them to have a sword *that night so He could graphically illustrate to them*, in the Garden with His life on the line, *that the Apostles weren't to use the sword!* Hence, His strong words to Peter about putting it away, for he who picks up the sword will die by the sword. Self defense is not the Way of Yeshua. It's the Way of the World.

A Younger Brother and Restraint

For 16 years Israel refused to give my wife, Ruti, and me Israeli citizenship because of our belief in Messiah Yeshua. One day we were picked up by the Israeli authorities and put in prison for ten days. Then they deported us. In April 2013 they flew us to New York City and we stayed with my youngest brother Joseph and his family for about a week. During that time another younger brother, Matthew, came up from New Jersey. I hadn't seen Matthew in 30 years. I was glad to see him, but he wasn't glad to see me.

⁴ There are some who teach that Paul made tallits (Jewish prayer shawls), not tents. To find out why Paul made tents ask for the PDF, *Paul the Tallit Maker?*

⁵ Mt. 26:51; Mk. 14:47; Lk. 22:50; John 18:10, 26.

⁶ In 2007 there were almost seven million Americans taking Martial Arts. That number dwindled to about half by 2016. (<https://www.statista.com/statistics/191917/participants-in-martial-arts-in-the-us-since-2006/>).

⁷ <https://www.google.com/search?q=how+may+Americans+own+firearms%3F&ie=utf-8&oe=utf-8&client=firefox-b-1-ab>. There are about 300 million firearms in the USA.

⁸ An oxymoron is "a figure of speech in which apparently contradictory terms appear in conjunction," from Greek, meaning, "'pointedly foolish,' from *oxus* 'sharp' and *mōros* 'foolish.'"

He was sitting in a chair with his back to me as I came into the room and greeted him. He turned around and stared at me with a hate that I have rarely seen. I was standing by his right side and my first impulse after shock was to throw a left hook into his jaw and break it. I was so close to acting on that impulse, but I didn't. Instead I restrained myself, withdrew from the room for a moment, 'recovered' from the shock, and then I went back to him and put my left hand on his right shoulder and said, 'Hi, Matt. It's good to see you.' He didn't look up nor say anything. I kept my hand on his shoulder for a moment, for now I was ready for whatever might happen. After a moment I took it off his shoulder.

I am so glad that I didn't act on that natural impulse to hit him that day, nor to be upset with him. I'm not on this planet to hurt others nor seek revenge, but to be an ambassador for Messiah Yeshua's Life and Light (2nd Cor. 5:20), which at a very basic level means that I *restrain* myself, by the power of the Holy Spirit, so the Lord can take over. Later, in a letter, I was able to share the Gospel with him. We're called to be ambassadors for Messiah:

“Now, then, we are ambassadors for Messiah Yeshua, as though God the Father were *pleading* through us—we implore you on Messiah's behalf! *Be reconciled* to God!” (2nd Corinthians 5:20)

I want to tell everyone I meet what God has done for them in sending His Son to die for them so that they can have true life today, know God's love and live with Him forever in the New Jerusalem (John 10:10; Rev. 21:1f.). I don't do that out of a sense of duty or something that I should be doing, both of which are right, but it falls under my internal reality of truly knowing God's love and wanting everyone else to also know Him. God's love is the most incredible and humbling thing I have ever experienced, and that, on more than one occasion. *This* is why I love Papa God, the Holy Spirit, and my Savior, Yeshua. They first loved me: “We love Him,” the Apostle John writes, “because He first loved us” (1st John 4:19).

My carnality, though, wants to strike back, but Yeshua said to love our enemy (Matthew 5:44) and God said that vengeance was His (Dt. 32:35; cf. Lev. 19:18). Trust. My carnality, though, doesn't want to be *restrained*, in this nor anything else, whether it's adultery, murder, robbery, mocking others, gluttony or alcoholism, etc. God, though, calls me to restrain myself, not only morally, but also physically. *I am not my own to do as I, my carnal self, pleases*. I must restrain myself with God's help, in many areas, not just fighting someone who offends or hits me. For instance, God demands that I keep one day a week holy, and not just any day, but His 7th day Sabbath. My carnality says that I can do anything I want—I can have my neighbor's wife, I can murder anyone who offends me, I can rob a bank and have more money than I know what to do with, and I don't have to keep the 7th day Sabbath holy, so why should I obey God?⁹

Aside from the legal punishment for murder, etc., that would ensue if I got caught for murdering someone or robbing a bank, I am constrained from doing those things because I've always wanted God and His Way of Holiness, even when I didn't know the Lord, whom I met when I was 24 years old.¹⁰ When I obey Yeshua I enjoy His life, love and hope, and walk with Him. Those things are not the same as carnal or human life, love and hope. They are as different from them as summer is from winter, and day is from night. Unless one know's the difference he will think there is nothing different between carnal love and God's love.

Torah (Mosaic Law) says, eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth (Ex. 21:24; Lev. 24:20; Dt. 19:21).¹¹ Many Christians today look at it aghast, but God designed it to keep carnal Israel *restrained*. It was His

⁹ The 7th day Sabbath, which falls under Mosaic Law, is still in effect for Christians. See [Law 102](#), [Have You Ever Wondered?](#), [The Feasts of Israel and the Church](#) and [Grace, Holiness and the Pharisaic Church](#).

¹⁰ Read my story at [Sam the Rock Thrower](#).

¹¹ See [An Eye for an Eye](#) to understand that God gave it to Israel as a form of restraint on their carnality.

way of restraining their carnal impulses because in those days if someone knocked the tooth out of a person, the other person would probably murder him. In the ancient world, and in our day, carnal vengeance demands doing more to the other than he did to you (cf. Gen. 4:23-24).

In Torah-keeping Israel, every man knew before hand that if he got into a fight and knocked the tooth out of his opponent, his own tooth would be knocked out. He would be taken to court, tried, and found guilty, and the court would order his tooth knocked out. This was God's way of restraining Israel until the Holy Spirit could be given to them (Acts Two), and then the restraint commanded by God soared through the roof to the impossible level that Yeshua speaks of turning the other cheek (Mt. 5:39); love your neighbor *and* your enemy, and pray and forgive, from the heart, those who spitefully use you (Mt. 18:35). This is impossible for carnal man (and most Christians who don't take Yeshua's words to heart). Only with His Spirit and Blood can we make any progress in this area, but that means that we, like John the Baptist, must decrease so Yeshua (within us) can increase (John 3:30) and provide true Grace to accomplish His impossible will. We have to die to self—the ultimate restraint! And not just for my enemy, but for everyone, including my wife, that she might see the living Messiah in me and be encouraged and blessed in her walk with Yeshua, and that I might pray for her when she fails me. Of course, these things are impossible for us because the *last* thing our carnality wants to do is die—but with God all things are possible:

“Yeshua looked at them and said, *‘With men this is impossible, but with God all things are possible.’*” (Matthew 19:26)

Yeshua didn't die for our sins so that we could remain the same carnal creatures we were before our New Birth. He wants us to become *like* Him:

“For whom God foreknew (would come to believe in Messiah Yeshua), He also predestined *to be conformed to the Image of His Son*, that He might be the Firstborn among many brethren.” (Romans 8:29)

“And as we have borne the Image of the Man of Dust (Adam), we shall also bear the Image of the Heavenly Man (Yeshua).” (1st Corinthians 15:49)

“But we all, with unveiled face, beholding as in a mirror the Glory of the Lord (Yeshua), are being transformed *into the same Image*, from glory to glory, by the Spirit of the Lord.” (2nd Corinthians 3:18)

I will struggle with my carnality until the day I die because it, like the many layers of an onion, are ever present. I may die to self one day, but that isn't the end of my carnality, which has a life of its own. I must continually struggle against it, with the Holy Spirit who dwells within and who applies the sacrificial, life-transforming blood of Messiah Yeshua to me, so I can obey God in these impossible areas. In our faith that we have toward Yeshua making us like Himself we will overcome ourselves and have shalom (God's peace), even when our carnality trips us up, and so we will stand before our Savior on Judgment Day, because He is faithful as our High Priest, interceding for us. Then we will hear sweet words. Our King will say to all who have walked with Him in this life,

“Come! You blessed of My Father! Inherit the Kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world!” (Matthew 25:34)

Yeshua is the Good Shepherd. We fail many times, but He will never fail us, and in Him we put our trust, and of course, our Father, who loves us and is also faithful to us. It's the Lord who sustains us during this time in the Wilderness of this World. One day we will be completely transformed into Messiah's Image. There's no need for us to fight and defend ourselves or our loved ones. Our God is our shield and defense. Yeshua is our Example. Do we ever see Yeshua (or any Apostle) physically fighting anyone or saying that we should? Look at Stephen, the first Jewish martyr for our Lord (Acts 7:54-60). The word martyr actually comes from the word 'to witness.' Stephen witnessed of Yeshua with his life, saying,

“Then he knelt down and cried out with a loud voice, “Lord, do not charge them with this sin!” And when he had said this he fell asleep.” (Acts 7:60)

It’s because of my love for my Lord Yeshua and my brother Matthew that I didn’t strike him that day in April 2013. I wanted him to know, and I told him so, that ‘there’s another way’ to live, and God’s gracious restraint of me that day was the first step in opening that up to him (and my other brother, Joseph, who witnessed it). I continue to pray for them.

As for physical violence (e.g. fighting), it grieves God’s heart to see Man hating, murdering and doing violence to his fellow Man in words and actions (cf. Gen. 6:11-13). Self defense? There is nothing in the New Testament to warrant it. Yeshua *fully trusted* in His Father, in the most unjust case the world has ever seen—God the Son was tortured and crucified because he loved people, healed them, and gave them hope in an afterlife. Yeshua could have saved Himself, as He said to Peter:

“Put your sword in its place! For all who take the sword will perish by the sword! *Or do you think that I cannot now pray to My Father and He will provide Me with more than 12 legions of angels?* How then, though, could the Scriptures be fulfilled, that it must happen like this?” (Matthew 26:52-54)

Yeshua shows us godly restraint. *He had the power to stop it.* He didn’t, though. He did just the opposite. *He laid down His life, and that’s what He wants us to do, too.* All who take up the sword will perish by it, and that obviously extends to all who fight to defend themselves or their loved ones, etc.

It’s not Yeshua’s Way and He *didn’t want Peter to die defending Him.* Peter (and the rest) had to learn, in a real life situation, that defending their Lord or themselves *wasn’t* trusting God the Father. Yeshua trusted His Father to ultimately provide justice for the great wrong done to Him, and isn’t that, years later (about 33 years later or 63 AD), what Peter writes?

“Servants, be *submissive* to your masters with all fear, not only to the good and gentle, *but also to the harsh. For this is commendable*, if because of conscience toward God *one endures grief, suffering wrongfully.* For what credit is it if, when you are beaten for your faults, you take it patiently? But *when you do good and suffer, if you take it patiently, this is commendable before God.* For to this you were called, because *Messiah also suffered for us, leaving us an example, that you should follow His steps:* ‘Who committed no sin, nor was deceit found in His mouth,’ who, *when He was reviled did not revile in return. When He suffered, He did not threaten, but committed Himself to Him who judges righteously;* who Himself bore our sins in His own body on the tree, that we, having died to sins, *might live for righteousness*—by whose stripes you were healed. For you were like sheep going astray, but have now returned to the Shepherd and Overseer of your souls.” (1st Peter 2:18-25)

Granted, Peter is speaking about slaves and masters, but aren’t we all servants or slaves of Yeshua?¹² Yeshua Himself said that He came to serve and not to be served (Mt. 20:28; Mark 10:45). Messiah is our Example and He laid down His life that we might have His life and be an example to all around us—both the righteous *and the wicked*, by not demanding our rights or fighting for our life, but of showing His love and forgiveness to all, especially the wicked. Yeshua said:

“You have heard it said, ‘An eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth,’ but I tell you *not to resist an evil person, but whoever slaps you on your right cheek, turn the other to him*

¹² Romans 1:1; Phil. 1:1; cf. 1st Cor. 4:16-17; 11:1. The Greek word that Paul uses of himself, that is translated into English is bondservant; it was the lowest slave of the two classes of Greek and Roman slaves. In Hebrew there’s no distinction between a slave and a servant. It’s the same Hebrew word, עֶבֶד (*eh’ved*), slave. When God tells Joshua of Moses being His servant (Josh. 1:1), the better translation is Moses My slave...

also. If anyone wants to sue you and take away your tunic, let him have your cloak also.”
(Matthew 5:38-40)

“You have heard it said, ‘You shall love your neighbor and hate your enemy,’ but I say to you, *love your enemies, bless those who curse you, do good to those who hate you, and pray for those who spitefully use you and persecute you*, that you may be sons of your Father in Heaven, for He makes His sun rise on the evil and on the good, and sends rain on the just and on the unjust. For if you love those who love you, what reward have you? Do not even the tax collectors do the same? And if you greet your brethren only, what do you do more than others? Do not even the tax collectors do so? Therefore, you shall be perfect, *just as your Father in Heaven is perfect.*” (Matthew 5:43-48)

“For *whoever* desires to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for My sake will find it.” (Matthew 16:25)

Do we ever see any Apostle or Christian in the New Testament using a sword or even force against their oppressors? No. There is not a single example in New Testament Scripture of that, and when John and James, the Sons of Thunder (Mark 3:17), wanted to call down Fire from Heaven to destroy a Samaritan village that didn’t want Yeshua to come into it, Yeshua told them they didn’t know what Spirit they were of:

“Now it came to pass, when the time had come for Him to be received up, that He steadfastly set His face to go to Jerusalem and sent messengers before Him. As they went they entered a village of the Samaritans, to prepare for Him, but they did not receive Him because His face was set for the journey to Jerusalem. And when His disciples, James and John, saw this, they said, ‘Lord! Do You want us to command Fire to come down from Heaven and consume them, just as Elijah did?!’ *But He turned and rebuked them*, and said, ‘You do not know what manner of Spirit you are of! For the Son of Man did not come to destroy men’s lives, but to save them.’ And they went to another village.” (Luke 9:51-56)

Can you imagine defending yourself with Karate and silencing the person who came to hit or rob you, and then trying to tell him about the love of Jesus *and turning the other cheek*? Not that you would have been the one to start the violence, but God destroyed the Earth and most men in it in the days of Noah because Man was *violent*:

“And God said to Noah, “The end of all flesh has come before Me, for the Earth is filled with violence through them. Behold! I will destroy them with the Earth.” (Genesis 6:13)

What if you, in defending yourself, kill the other person? How ‘Christ-like’ is that? The violence of Man is also seen in Jonah who was sent by God to Nineveh to turn her from her violent ways. When the king heard that he proclaimed to all his subjects:

“But let man and beast be covered with sackcloth, and cry mightily to God. Yes! Let every one turn from his evil way and from the violence that is in his hands.” (Jonah 3:8)

Violence is part of man’s carnality. Moses, though, fell down and prayed when Korah came against him (Num. 14), and Yeshua walked through the midst of the mob intent on murdering Him because it wasn’t His time to die. God truly holds the day and way of our death in His hands:

“So all those in the synagogue, when they heard these things, were filled with wrath, and rose up and thrust Him out of the city, and they led Him to the brow of the hill on which their city was built, that they might throw Him down over the cliff. Then passing through the midst of them, He went His way.” (Luke 4:28-30)

Moses and Yeshua didn’t rise up and physically defend themselves, but rather, trusted in Papa God. On

the other hand, we have Joshua and King David, great and mighty warriors whom the Holy Spirit empowered to kill their enemies, but they lived before Yeshua came with His words to love our enemies. It's not into *their* ancient Kingdom of Israel that Yeshua calls us, but into His Kingdom of Israel (cf. Gal. 6:16);

“You have heard that it was said, ‘You shall love your neighbor and hate your enemy.’ But I say to you, love your enemies, bless those who curse you, do good to those who hate you, and pray for those who spitefully use you and persecute you, that you may be sons of your Father in Heaven. For He makes His sun rise on the evil and on the good, and sends rain on the just and on the unjust.” (Matthew 5:43-45)

In other words, when we find ourselves in the midst of evil we're not to shut our Light off, in fear or fight. We're to allow His Light to shine *greater* through us because God allows the sun to shine upon both the good and the evil, and so we should, too. The wicked certainly need *to see* and the Good News in action.

Our Conduct

We are called to restraint—to restrain from attacking others out of a love for them so the Gospel (i.e. the Great News about what God has done for them through Messiah Yeshua) can be taught by word and deed. Only ‘in Yeshua’ can we do this. It's a life-long learning process, especially if we want to follow Him to this extent and be Light in this world of darkness. Restraining ourselves from violence and self defense, and offering His love and forgiveness in return, is why we're here—to point to Yeshua, even if it means our death.

At the core of restraint is God's love for us and our love for the other person. Whatever he's doing that's wrong he's doing it in his pride and ignorance, and if it were us, we'd want someone to show us the Right Way—Yeshua's Way. Peter says to us:

“Therefore, gird up the loins of your mind, be sober, and rest your hope fully upon the grace that is to be brought to you at the revelation of Yeshua the Messiah, as obedient children, *not conforming yourselves to the former lusts*, as in your ignorance, but as He who called you is holy, *you also be holy in all your conduct*, because it is written, ‘Be holy! For I am holy!’” (1st Peter 1:13-16; cf. Lev. 19:1-2)

Our Father is with us whenever bad things happen to us. It's at this point when, ‘Grace to endure’ persecution and suffering can come into play if we are trusting our Messiah. The following is an excerpt from my book, in which the Grace of our Lord¹³ was manifest so that The Great News could be seen and heard in the Land of Israel in the midst of a life-threatening situation:¹⁴

Proclaiming Good News To Zion

After having lived in Jerusalem for more than a year and a half, we (my wife Ruti and I) were now living in Mevaseret Zion, a small town just outside of Jerusalem. On Wednesday, April 2nd, 1997 at about 11:00 AM, after having walked to the grocery store with a small upright cart, which now had some bananas, avocados and oranges, etc. in it, I was on my way back home when I saw a man working on his car in the

¹³ I speak of ‘true Grace’ because most see grace as unmerited favor, which it certainly is, but it's also the ability given to us by the Holy Spirit to walk like Yeshua, in His love and restraint for another, when our carnality would fight and protect ourselves. This is true Grace: the ability to act like Yeshua when carnal temptation would lead us another way into sin.

¹⁴ You can read about some of my many times of witnessing in Israel in [Sam the Rock Thrower](#).

driveway. Two weeks earlier the man had been driving by when he saw some of his friends talking with me. He stopped and got out of his car to see what it was all about. I was speaking with eight Jewish men about Yeshua being the Messiah. When he found that out he cursed Yeshua, spit on the ground toward me, got back into his car and took off!

As I walked by his driveway that day he was working on his car and I said, ‘*Shalom yedidi!*’ (The peace of God to you, my friend!) He came out to me cursing Yeshua and me and telling me to get out of Israel! ‘You have no right to be here! Go back where you belong!’ he shouted.

I told him the Lord had given the Land of Israel to Fathers Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, and their Seed, and that I had every right to be here. He was about two feet (two-thirds of a meter) in front of me now, about five years older than me (making him about fifty at the time), medium build and a little taller. He continued in Hebrew, ‘Yeshua was an illegitimate son born out of wedlock!’ (That’s the gist of what he said without getting profane.)¹⁵ I said that it wasn’t true. He spit in my face! I said that I loved him and that Yeshua wanted to give him a new heart. He grabbed one of my four *tzit’ziot* (tassels; Num. 15:37-41) and ripped it out from the left side of my pants where I had it attached with a safety pin and threw it on the road. I stood there and told him again that Yeshua loved him and wanted to give him a new heart, one that Ezekiel the Prophet had spoken of (Ezk. 36:24-27).

He went back to the sidewalk, to the steps that led up to his house, and picked up a rock. It fit nicely into his hand. It was about four inches (10 centimeters) through the center and weighed about two pounds (one kilo). Cursing Yeshua and me, he threw it at me with all his might! He was about ten feet (3 meters) from me and I saw it coming, but I didn’t try to dodge it. The Lord of Glory hadn’t brought me to Israel to dodge rocks, but to proclaim His holy Name to my Jewish people.

The rock hit me on the inside of my left forearm, just below my elbow. Immediately my left knee gave way and I stumbled back a few feet. The force of it surprised me. I hadn’t expected the impact to be that strong. After I regained my balance I told him that Yeshua was really our Messiah and that He loved him.

Cursing Yeshua and me again, and telling me that I was crazy, he went to where the rock had fallen, picked it up and went back to his throwing position. From there he threw the rock at me again!

This time his aim was a little better and it hit me on my left shoulder. Again I staggered back. Again I told him that I loved him and that Yeshua loved him and wanted to give him a new heart. He went to where the rock had fallen, picked it up, and still cursing Yeshua and me, went back to his throwing position by the curb.

By this time people were gathering around—and encouraging him! This is Israel and the name of Yeshua is a curse word, not to all Israelis, but to many. There were two women in front of me to the right, and two men in the street; one to my left and one to my right, along with some people looking on from a distance. By now I was in the middle of the road.

With the rock held high over his head he began to take a few steps toward me. In that moment I knew that he wanted to come over and bash my skull in. I half closed my eyes, not relishing what looked like ‘a new

¹⁵ In order to make Yeshua as theologically repulsive to any Jew that might want to check out His claims of being the Messiah of Israel, some ancient Rabbis invented a number of slanderous stories about Yeshua. This places a theological brick wall in front of the Jewish people in order to stop them from proceeding any further. The story of Yeshua being illegitimate is one such lie. In *Sanhedrin* 106a Yeshua’s mother is said to have been a whore that had sex with many men and that’s how Yeshua came into existence. Another version of that says that Mary was raped by a Roman soldier and that’s how Yeshua came to be conceived. In Dt. 23:2 it speaks of an illegitimate child not being allowed to enter the Congregation of Yahveh, nor his descendants, even to the tenth generation. Of course, any Jew hearing this about Yeshua would turn away immediately in shock and disbelief. How could someone conceived like that be the Messiah of Israel?!

experience in the Lord' for me, and he stopped.

He must have sensed that I wouldn't move to try and avoid him, *or to defend myself*. He threw the rock again. This time it sailed past my left ear, missing it by about an inch. I had moved my head ever so slightly to the right. If I hadn't it would have hit me on the left side of my face.

Then the man to my right began to come toward me. I didn't turn to him, but I could see him out of my peripheral vision. He grabbed hold of my beard and yanked me down the road a few feet, telling me to 'Get out of here!' He didn't like the message, either. He let go of my beard and I stopped being dragged. I turned to him and said that Yeshua really was our Messiah and that He wanted to give him the new heart that God promises us in Ezekiel 36:26. As I spoke I looked directly into his eyes and he looked at me and listened. When I stopped speaking he slowly turned his head away from me. He didn't quite know what to do. I then turned to my right to see the rock thrower. He had picked up an iron pipe, maybe 12 inches long (third of a meter) and an inch (2.5 cm) through the center. He motioned to me with the pipe raised over his head, like he was going to beat my brains out. *Immediately* my arms shot up, with my palms up to the Heavens at '10:00 and 2:00 o'clock,' as if to say, 'Come! I'm ready. I will not run from you and I will not fight you.' I hadn't thought to do that. It was the Holy Spirit; the Grace of God.

Again he saw that I was ready to die. He didn't come any further. I lowered my arms. He threw the pipe to the ground and then he and his wife came over to me, stood about an arm's length away and shouted at me that my parents were dogs, that I was crazy and that Yeshua was illegitimate, etc.

I stood there and by the Grace of Yeshua looked directly into his eyes all the time and allowed Yeshua to love him through me. In a moment or two they were done venting their anger and rage. He was exhausted from the encounter. As they left to go up the steps to their house I quoted Isaiah 53:5 in Hebrew to them,

'But He was pierced-through for our open rebellion. He was crushed for our wicked, perverse hearts. On Him lies the punishment that brings us peace (with Papa God) and by His stripes we are healed.' (my translation)

I told him to read the rest of Isaiah 53. It's *the* chapter on the Suffering Servant of Yahveh¹⁶—the Messiah of Israel—Yeshua.

With him and his wife gone I asked Yeshua if there was anything else that He would have me to do. The people had started dispersing. I looked around and I sensed there was nothing else for me to do, so, seeing my *tzit'zit* on the ground, I picked it up and the safety pin that had held it to the inside of my trousers, put them in my pocket and began walking back home. The safety pin was all bent out of shape from being jerked off of my pants. The cart with my food in it hadn't been touched.

Home was only about 80 yards (74 meters) down the same road. I came into the house and said to my wife, 'Shalom, Ruti.' She greeted me, but was busy preparing lunch in the kitchen, cutting vegetables on the counter. She didn't notice what had happened to me. I put the oranges, etc., on the table and some things in the refrigerator, and then headed for the bathroom to wash the spit out of my beard, face and glasses. You won't believe the tune that came into my head as I splashed water on my face:

'When you least expect it, you're elected, it's your lucky day! *Smile!* You're on Candid Camera!'¹⁷

¹⁶ The name of *Yahveh*, the God of Israel, is used 6,823 times in the 'Old Testament.' In most English Bibles His name is usually translated by the title 'the LORD' or 'GOD.' Note the use of smaller capital letters for all the letters after the first. Behind these two words is the name of the God of the Hebrews—Yahveh (Ex. 3:15-16, etc.).

¹⁷ Candid Camera is an American hidden camera/practical joke reality TV series, which came to television in 1948 and continued into the 1970s, was revived in the 90s and continues to this day. When the practical joke has had its effect someone comes to the person and says, 'Smile! You're on Candid Camera!'

I thought, ‘Did one of those rocks hit my head and I didn’t realize it? What am I doing humming that tune at a time like this?!’ Then the Holy Spirit showed me how appropriate it was. The whole Jewish community would hear about what had happened on Palmach Street—how one Jewish man hated another Jewish man with everything he had inside him—he spit on him, he cursed him, he cursed his parents, he threw rocks at him and threatened to murder him, but the other Jewish man didn’t resist him. He only loved him and told him that Yeshua was the Messiah of Israel and that He wanted to give him a new heart.

I went to sit on the bed and began to pray for him and the other people. I asked the Lord to draw him to Himself and to use the incident to win him and other Jews to Him. While praying I realized that I had offered him no resistance. I thanked the Lord Yeshua for that. Tears began to well up in my eyes. Not because I was hurt physically. I was only sore. Not because I was hurt emotionally. My soul was very much intact. I wept because the Lord had brought me to the place of being able to lay down my life for him, as Yeshua had done for me. I was so thankful that Yeshua had given me His ability to do that.

Ruti came over and asked if I was alright. I said that I was. I shared with her what had happened and she began to weep because I was hurt, and also, because she felt the Holy Spirit coming upon her for intercession for the man and the rest of the Jewish community. She wasn’t angry with the man, but she could see that I was badly bruised. I was grateful that she hadn’t been with me.¹⁸

I felt physically drained. It was as though I had been in a battle. I thought of Stephen, and how he was actually stoned to death (Acts 7:54-60), and of Paul, stoned and left for dead (Acts 14:19), and then of Yeshua. How our Lord had been mocked, spit upon, punched, His back lashed open, His beard ripped out, the crown of thorns forcefully placed upon His head and then He was pierced to a wooden pole. How horrible that was for Him! Yeshua really loves us to have gone through all that for us. I also realized that it was ‘only the Lord’ that I hadn’t died—my head was not crushed-in by the pipe, and the last rock had missed my head. Yeshua had stood between death and me that day. Thank You, Lord.

The bruise on my forearm broke the surface of the skin, but there was no blood, only tenderness to the touch, soreness and puffiness. I had been wearing a short sleeve dress shirt, so the first rock had hit the skin. The bruise on my upper left arm by the shoulder wasn’t noticeable, except for some puffiness because the shirt and my t-shirt had taken the edge off the rock, but it was also sore and tender to the touch. Both spots became ‘black and blue’ as they say, and then yellow and green as they slowly began to heal over the next five weeks before the discoloration and tenderness left.

I thanked the Lord that I didn’t have any bitterness in my heart toward the man. I didn’t hate or despise him, or hold him in contempt. I struggled for a day though, with seeing him again. In confronting the anticipated fear of another episode with the rock thrower, one that might be physically worse for me, I began singing to the Lord. As I sang the Lord caused me to remember that those who give their lives for Him will be the first to rise from the dead.¹⁹ This comforted me and my fear began to subside.

As I continued to sing and lift Him up I realized that Yeshua would take care of the man. Yeshua would either allow him to throw more rocks or not. My fear was coming from a scenario that he would do it

¹⁸ This was one of the few times that Ruti wasn’t with me. We usually go everywhere together. There were other times where rocks and bottles were thrown at us by our Jewish people, but this was the most dramatic time.

¹⁹ ‘Then I saw thrones and they sat on them and judgment was given to them and I saw the souls of those who had been beheaded *because of their testimony of Yeshua* and because of the Word of God and those who had not worshipped the beast or his image and had not received the mark on their forehead or on their hand. They came to life and reigned with Messiah for a thousand years. The rest of the dead didn’t come to life until the thousand years were completed. This is the first Resurrection (for humanity). Blessed and holy is the one who has a part in the first Resurrection—over these the second death has no power and they will be priests of God and of Messiah and will reign with Him for a thousand years.’ (Revelation 20:4-6) The idea of one losing one’s life for the Name of Messiah means *eternal Life* (Luke 9:24).

again and the physical pain would be much worse for me—and I was still tender and sore from the day before, but Yeshua comforted me and I was able to say, ‘I’m not afraid of the (possible) pain to come.’ Yeshua was again strengthening me. Now I believed I was ready for my next confrontation with Shmu’el or anyone else. What a mighty God we serve!

Out of all the people that we have shared the Lord with here in Israel, the rock thrower, whom I named *Shmu’el* (Samuel or Sam for short) was the one the Holy Spirit could work on the most because of what happened. *Shmu’el* saw a Jewish man who said that Yeshua was the Messiah. *Shmu’el* hated me with everything he had inside him, but what he got back was the *love* of Yeshua the Messiah for him.

Two days after the encounter, on Friday, April 4th, 1997, Yeshua again strengthened me and gave me a great peace about a tormenting fear that I had—of being stoned in the face. I wasn’t afraid now. I felt that I was again ready to meet *Shmu’el*.²⁰ I prayed that *Shmu’el*, and many others, would be convicted by the Holy Spirit and drawn to Yeshua.

By the way, the town’s name, Mevaseret Zion means, ‘Proclaiming (or Bringing) Good News to Zion!’ It’s found in Isaiah:

“Get yourself up on a high mountain, you who *brings Good News to Zion!* Lift up your voice mightily!, you who brings Good News to Jerusalem! Lift it up! *Do not be afraid!* Say to the cities of Judah, ‘Behold your God!’” (Isaiah 40:9)²¹

Roman Soldiers at John’s Baptism?

In 2018 a 70 year old man named Stuart came to a few of our Tuesday night Bible Studies. He had served in the US Army, and one night I spoke of the Lord not wanting us to kill or murder anyone. Stuart sought to justify killing people, both militarily and in self-defense, by saying that John the Baptist baptized some Roman soldiers, who were obviously able to kill or murder people. With John saying to them that they were not to intimidate anyone nor accuse anyone falsely, and to be content with their wages (Luke 3:14), Stuart surmised that killing people was alright since John hadn’t told them to stop killing people.

Actually, the soldiers weren’t Roman. They were Jewish soldiers. Gary Manning, of the Talbot School of Theology at Biola University, writes that, “Since John’s primary ministry was in Galilee, these are probably Jewish soldiers of Herod Antipas.”²² These Jewish soldiers had come to be baptized by John and to repent of their sins to a Jewish prophet in the dessert by the Jordan River. After all, what would Roman soldiers be doing in the dessert at a Jewish prophet’s baptism of repentance? Roman soldiers were pagan in their religion, having come from various parts of the Roman Empire. The soldiers were Jewish, but they, under someone like a Herod Antipas, would have Rome’s authority to kill. Manning speaks of Herod the Great and one of his sons, Antipas, and reveals those who made up their armies:

“Herod the Great—During Herod’s rise to power his personal army consisted of Jews as well as bands of foreign mercenaries. Rome also loaned Herod the use of three legions to help him expel the Parthian invaders and their puppet king, the Hasmonean prince, Antigonus, but by the time of Jesus’ birth, Herod had no Roman troops although he still had a sizable Jewish army, as well as one cohort each of German, Thracian and Gallic

²⁰ I never encountered *Shmu’el* again. About two months after this the Lord led Ruti and me back to the States for a year and a half. We returned to Israel on Jan. 8th, 1999 and after that lived in Jerusalem, Tiberias, Eilat and Ramat Gan, the Lord moving us in the Land as He willed, until April 2013.

²¹ From pp. 1-4 in [Sam the Rock Thrower](#).

²² [Gary Manning](#).

mercenaries. Herod continued to use some Roman advisors and officers.”

“Herod Antipas, Tetrarch of Galilee—Herod Antipas also had his own army. Although details are sketchy, his soldiers were likely Jews and Gentile mercenaries, like his father’s army.”²³

As there’s no mention in the New Testament of any other race or nationality than Jews coming to John’s baptism, it’s more than reasonable to think that the soldiers John baptized were Jewish, and that they had the authority to kill. Stuart’s glaring error, though, is that John the Baptist wasn’t Messiah Yeshua. Even John the Baptist, at one point, doubted that Yeshua was the Messiah (the Coming One; Mt. 11:1f.) because Yeshua didn’t *act* like John (and perhaps Stuart?) thought the Messiah should act. In other words, Yeshua didn’t raise an army and seek to overthrow Rome as the conquering Son of David, but taught the Jewish people that they should love their enemies and turn the other cheek:

“But I tell you not to resist an evil person. But whoever slaps you on your right cheek, turn the other to him also.” (Matthew 5:39 NKJV)

“You have heard that it was said, ‘You shall love your neighbor and hate your enemy,’ but I say to you, love your enemies; bless those who curse you; do good to those who hate you, and pray for those who spitefully use you and persecute you.” (Matthew 5:43-44)

Yeshua’s Kingdom is not like any earthly kingdom, even Joshua’s or David’s, where obviously, killing the enemy was authorized by God. Yeshua told Pontius Pilate that His Kingdom was *not* of this world:

“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 Jewish authorities, but now My Kingdom is not from here.” (John 18:36)

So, as for self defense and killing others, it really doesn’t matter if the soldiers were Roman or Jewish, and that John the Baptist didn’t tell them to not kill anyone—John is not our Messiah. Now, there is a difference between killing and murdering someone. The state, any nation, reserves the right to *kill* certain criminals who *murder* people. The state also authorizes people (e.g. an army) to *kill* enemy soldiers, etc., but the state is not Yeshua, either. Remember those bracelets that had on them, “What Would Jesus Do” (WWJD)? Our allegiance is not to John the Baptist nor even the country we reside in. Our first allegiance is to Messiah Yeshua. This doesn’t mean we should disobey the laws of the land we live in. It means that we are to serve and obey our risen Lord in all matters of faith and practice, and when there’s a conflict, we take a stand with Yeshua, as the Apostles Peter and John reveal, when the highest Jewish authority in the land, the Sanhedrin, told them to not preach in the name of Yeshua anymore:

“So the Jewish Sanhedrin called them and commanded them *not to speak at all nor teach in the name of Jesus*, but Peter and John answered and said to them, “Whether it is right in the sight of God to listen to you more than to God, you judge. For we cannot but speak the things which we have seen and heard.”” (Acts 4:18-20)

So the question is, “Would Jesus kill an enemy soldier or person?” The answer is obvious, even though our culture says otherwise. Of course He would not kill or murder anyone. Would Jesus defend Himself against personal attack by breaking the neck of His attacker, or stabbing him to death, or breaking his arm, etc? It’s hard to fathom that the Prince of Peace would do that since He laid down His life for *every* person in the world and taught us not to resist evil, but to turn the other cheek.

Who though, someone might ask, can live in this violent and vicious world without protecting and defending himself and his loved ones? This is where Yeshua calls us to trust in Him with *all* our heart (cf. Prov. 3:5-6). The Ladder of Faith (i.e. trust in the Lord) has many rungs. We all start out on the bottom

²³ Ibid.

rung, like Father Abraham did, but in walking with Yeshua we are called to climb up the Ladder of Trust, just as Abraham did (cf. Gen. 12:10f.; 22:1f.; Rom. 4:16), *and become like Jesus*. Isn't that why He laid His life down for you?

God asked Father Abraham to do the impossible—much more painful than allowing someone to kill him (Abraham). God asked Abraham to sacrifice the unique son that he loved—Isaac. It would have been far easier for Abraham to have slit his own throat than to have to slit the throat of his son, Isaac, but Abraham loved God more than he loved his most precious possession—Isaac.²⁴ This test revealed both Abraham's love and trust in God and Isaac's love for his father, who was also the authority in his life.

Messiah Yeshua calls us to a radical and 'other worldly' love of others. It totally goes against our carnal nature and this world of darkness, but Paul, showing us 'the Way,' writes:

“I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that you *present your bodies a living sacrifice*, holy, acceptable to God, which is your reasonable service. And *do not be conformed to this world*, but be *transformed* by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove what is that good and acceptable and perfect will of God.” (Romans 12:1-2)

At this point we have to ask ourselves, “Are we following Yeshua or Stuart?” There are probably many more Christians following Stuart than Jesus, but Yeshua said:

“whoever desires to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for My sake will find it.” (Matthew 16:25 NKJV)

Our responsibility as *followers* of Yeshua is to ascertain *who* Yeshua really is and how He wants us to live out our lives of faith in Him. The Hebraic Perspective, not Catholicism nor Protestantism nor Pentecostalism, etc., is the closest understanding we have as to *how* Yeshua wants us to think, believe and interact with others. Yeshua is still a Sabbath keeping, Feasts of Israel celebrating, pig rejecting, and self-sacrificing Savior. He is our Example and as He laid down His very life for us, He calls us to do the same for others, even and especially those who would destroy us. How else will they ever see the glory of love and forgiveness that is our Lord Yeshua?

“Be *diligent* to present yourself *approved to God*, a workman who does not need to be *ashamed* (before God), *rightly* dividing the Word of Truth.” (2nd Timothy 2:15)

“Blessed *is* every one who fears Yahveh and who walks in *His Ways!*” (Psalm 128:1)

It seems reasonable that only Jewish soldiers went to John's Baptism, and even if they were able to kill people at the orders of say, a Herod, and even though John didn't tell them not to kill anyone, John the Baptist was not our Messiah. Yeshua came with a new Way of Life—love and forgiveness for even our enemies. As the maxim states: We're really only able to live for the Lord if we're ready to die for Him.

Turn the Other Cheek

Russell Tardo, a former Martial Artist who came to Jesus and became a Christian pastor, writes of the *contrary and conflicting practices and philosophies* of Karate and Christ:

“I was once among the millions of Americans who sought the black belt, and I dedicated almost five years of my life to its pursuit...When I received Christ, no one had to tell me that karate was wrong or unchristian, for I knew it automatically...The fact is, all of the marital arts were birthed from an anti-Christian womb. This is why their philosophy at-

²⁴ Isaac was unique because he was 'the son of promise' to Abraham and Sarah, when Sarah was too old to have a son (Gen. 18:9f.). In this Isaac reflects 'the Son of Promise' to Israel—Messiah Yeshua, born of a virgin.

tacks the teachings of Jesus at every hand, and their practice conflicts with His example ...The particular style I studied was Korean (hap-ki-do), but all of the styles spring from the same source.”²⁵

Tardo rightly asks:

“how can someone preach ‘turn the other cheek’ when he’s teaching self-defense? And how can one preach ‘love your enemies’ while teaching you how to hurt them?...when the method contradicts the message, it destroys credibility.”²⁶

Tardo goes on to state that they Martial Arts violate “the Golden Rule (Mt. 7:12) and contradicts the direct commands of Jesus:”

1. “Love your enemies (Mt. 5:44),
2. Turn the other cheek (Mt. 5:39),
3. Resist not evil (Mt. 5:39),
4. Bless them that curse you (Mt. 5:44), and
5. Do good to them that hate you (Mt. 5:44), and also,
6. Pray for the happiness of those who curse you, implore God’s blessings on those who hurt you (Lk. 6:28),
7. If someone slaps you on the one cheek, let him slap the other, too. (Lk. 6:29).”²⁷

Summarizing the lessons he’s learned from the Martial Arts in relation to the Messiah, Tardo states of the seven points:

“This isn’t the philosophy one learns in karate. Turn the other cheek or kick your adversary’s cheek? Surrender your goods to the robber or harm him if you can? Will that cause a person watching to repent and turn to Christ? With the learning of the martial arts comes the longing to use it. The martial arts are just another ‘form of Eastern mysticism’ stemming from Taoism and Zen.”²⁸

The Martial Arts and Messiah Yeshua are diametrically opposed to each other. Each calls for the soul of their followers. Martial Arts are not just a form of defense, but also a religion. “Christian Martial Arts” is an oxymoron.²⁹

Conclusion

There is *no one* in the New Testament, who follows Yeshua, that uses force, especially deadly force against anyone, except for the incident with Peter in the Garden, but once rebuked, we never hear of him writing that it’s alright to fight back. On the contrary, he speaks of taking the unjust punishment ‘in stride’ for the glory of the Lord.

Also, Paul, who was lashed and stoned on several occasions, never physically fought back, and when we look at our Lord, mocked, tortured and crucified, He could have called 12 legions of angels to fight for

²⁵ [The Spiritual Danger of the Martial Arts](#) by Russell Tardo.

²⁶ Ibid.

²⁷ Ibid.

²⁸ Ibid.

²⁹ An oxymoron is “a contradiction of terms.” For example, ‘cruel kindness;’ ‘paid volunteers;’ and ‘friendly fire.’

Him, but He didn't (Mt. 26:53). The key to understanding God's perspective on this is partially found in what Yeshua says in answer to Pilate's question, if Yeshua was a King:

“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* (John 18:36).

The other Scripture that helps us to realize that we're made to be lambs like Yeshua, the Lamb of God (Jn. 1:29, 36), is *why* Yeshua is crucified. He died for all of us—because of our sins of rebellion against the God of Israel. What He said on the cross is paramount to what our attitude and words should be when we are attacked—Father, forgive them, for they don't know what they are doing (Luke 23:34). We are to reflect our Lord, even and especially onto death, that His love and forgiveness would be seen and felt, even and especially by our tormentors and murderers. To Yeshua, truly is the Glory!

If I had defended myself and punched Sam the rock thrower, or my brother Matt, out, and I could have done that because I learned Karate and Judo when I was in college, what kind of a *witness* would that have been for my Savior? Anyone can insert or plaster the name of 'Jesus' or 'Christian' into their business and 'make it Christian,' but the term 'Christian Karate' or 'Christian Martial Arts' isn't really Christian at all, as Tardo reveals. It doesn't follow Yeshua nor His words *and heart* to 'turn the other cheek:'

“But I tell you *not to resist an evil person, but whoever slaps you on your right cheek, turn the other to him also.*” (Matthew 5:39)

In our worst case scenario; in whatever the Lord allows to happen to us, let us trust in Him, forgive and love the other person. Yeshua is truly there with us. We are to fight, but not in the natural realm. Our enemy isn't human. Our fight is in the spiritual realm for the souls of those who are bound by Darkness:

“For though we walk in the flesh, we do not war according to the flesh. For the weapons of our warfare are not carnal, *but mighty in God for pulling down strongholds.*” (2nd Cor. 10:3-4)

We can use the Sword of the Spirit, part of the full armor of God (Eph. 6:17), but also we must learn to speak the Truth in Love. We are the Light of the world. Let us walk in that Light especially where the Darkness is great, to the glory of our risen King who has shown us the Way, the Truth and the Life (John 14:6). We are to pick up our cross, follow Him and trust in Him:

“Blessed are the meek for they shall inherit the Earth.” (Matthew 5:5)

“Blessed are the peacemakers for they shall be called the Sons of God. Blessed are those who are persecuted for righteousness' sake for theirs is the Kingdom of Heaven.” (Mt. 5:9-10)

“For whoever desires to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for My sake will find it.” (Matthew 16:25)

Paul wrote, “As it is written, ‘For Your sake we are killed all day long. We are accounted as sheep for the slaughter.’” (Romans 8:36; cf. Psalm 44:22)

“But God forbid that I should boast except in the cross of our Lord Yeshua the Messiah, *by whom the world has been crucified to me, and I to the world.*” (Galatians 6:14)

God calls us to restrain ourselves, by His Spirit and His Word, in all areas of our lives. I don't have a choice as to which day I must keep holy. It must be His 7th day Sabbath, and also, His Feasts (Lev. 23). I don't have a choice as to which foods I must not eat. I must not eat any unclean foods (Lev. 11).³⁰ I don't have a choice as to how I am to act toward a neighbor or an enemy. I must love them. The first three I

³⁰ See [The Feasts of Israel and the Church](#) and [Law 102](#).

have found easy to follow, but it's the last one that reveals the depths of my heart to me. The King of Israel calls us to *restrain ourselves* in all areas of our lives so that our carnality doesn't rule over us, but His Spirit and His Word rule us. This is the lifestyle of the follower of Messiah Yeshua. The world and our carnal nature are diametrically opposed to this lifestyle, especially when it comes to defending ourselves:

“And the Dragon was enraged with the Woman, and he went to make war with the rest of Her offspring, *who keep the commandments of God* and have the *testimony* (witness or martyrs) of Yeshua the Messiah.” (Revelation 12:17)

When we find ourselves in adverse situations we are to cry out to Yeshua, who is an ever present help in our times of need. With His help we can let His Light and His Love be seen, especially by those who truly need it. We are new creatures ‘in Christ.’ Let us grow into His Image and not be tied down to our carnal nature.³¹

³¹ Revised on Sunday, November 7, 2021.