

GLEANINGS — April 24, A.D. 2016  
Genocide, Part II

*"Now go and attack Amalek, and utterly destroy all that they have, and do not spare them. But kill both man and woman, infant and nursing child, ox and sheep, camel and donkey." – 1 Samuel 15:3*

In today's gleaning we conclude our discussion rooted in consideration of that dreadful judgment of God upon an ancient nation (Amalek) which was to be carried out by King Saul.

Our first apologetic response to those who would accuse Christians of hypocrisy when they judge Islamists and others of violent, murderous imperialism was to point out that Saul (like Joshua before him) was an instrument in God's hands, given an extraordinary assignment of a kind not to be taken as normative for God's people. The Amalekites and other nations had been judged as worthy of punishment by God, not man...but men were sent to carry out the sentence.

This principle is found elsewhere in Scripture as well. A case such as when consuming fire and brimstone fell from the heavens upon Sodom, Gomorrah, and vicinity is an extraordinary one. Ordinarily God raises up a nation to punish or chasten another by His inscrutable, providential ordering of all things. Post-biblical history showcases His sovereignty over the affairs of all who dwell on Earth. In cases like those of Joshua and Saul, He gave specific commands to specific servants to carry out specific, limited judgments.

In light of that, we also answer the charge of hypocrisy according to the ordinary, normative calling God has given to His people of all time. Jesus was not giving a new commandment when He said "Love your enemies." He was correcting those who had distorted or were despising God's standing orders for those who name His name:

"If you meet your enemy's ox or his donkey going astray, you shall surely bring it back to him again. (Exodus 23:4).

"You shall not take vengeance, nor bear any grudge against the children of your people, but you shall love your neighbor as yourself: I am the LORD." (Leviticus 19:18)

"Do not rejoice when your enemy falls, and do not let your heart be glad when he stumbles..." (Proverbs 24:17)

"Thus says the LORD of hosts: 'Execute true justice, show mercy and compassion everyone to his brother. Do not oppress the widow or the fatherless, the alien or the poor. Let none of you plan evil in his heart against his brother.' " (Zechariah 7:9-10).

To those who were in captivity in Babylon He commanded, "...seek the peace of the city where I have caused you to be carried away captive, and pray to the LORD for it; for in its peace you will have peace. (Jeremiah 29:7)

Finally we answer that though self defense is certainly not forbidden to Christians (*of that nature were the Crusades*), God will never again issue an extraordinary call by direct revelation such as those he gave to Joshua or Saul. For God has made an end of speaking until Jesus appears. Until then, the abiding and precious special revelation called the Bible gives us all we need to know to be workers in His kingdom (2 Timothy 3:16,17). We do well to take as a banner of the Kingdom the very words of our King:

**"For the Son of Man did not come to destroy men's lives but to save them."** (from Luke 9:56)