

Questions week beginning 4 May 2025

On Thursday it is the 80th anniversary of VE (Victory in Europe) day which marked the official surrender of all German military operations during World War 2. Today's study therefore focuses on the subject of warfare in the Bible. The scene is that the first generation who came out of Egypt had refused to go into the Promised Land of Canaan, so God had kept them in the wilderness until they had all died. The second generation was now poised to enter the Land.

READ DEUTERONOMY 20:1-4

1. In this scenario God was on the side of the Israelites. Bearing in mind that there were probably Christians in all countries during the first and second world wars, do you think God ever took sides?
2. When it comes to the subject of war what do you think should be the Christian's approach to it? As a Christian is it okay to kill during wartime or should all Christians be pacifists?
3. When it comes to commemorating specific events linked to a war that ended before we were born, do you ignore them, have an interest in them or immerse yourself in them?

READ DEUTERONOMY 20:5-9

4. Why do you think God provided these concessions for the soldiers rather than insist that they all fight with no excuse?
5. Note the 4 scenarios that are mentioned in this passage and then read LUKE 14:15-24.
 - i. What similarities are there between the 2 passages?
 - ii. Why do you think Jesus was more negative about the excuses made in this context?
 - iii. What excuses have you heard from people as to why they weren't interested in God/Jesus/coming to Church or a Christian event that you have invited them to?

READ DEUTERONOMY 20:10-20

6. Why do you think God established 2 different approaches when it came to battle – the way of peace with nations at a distance (v11 & 15) and total annihilation of the nation's living in the cities God was giving them (v16-18)?
7. On Sunday Glyn gave some examples of how people deal with violent Old Testament texts. These included ignoring them, seeing them just as fictional stories or an exaggeration of the truth or spiritualising them. How do you respond to the violent passages found in the Old Testament?
8. God owned the Promised land of Canaan, and the Canaanites were dreadful tenants that He wanted evicted because of their "detestable" practices (v18) – these included worshipping false gods, sexual promiscuity and child sacrifice. He did not want the Israelites living with them lest they adopt these same practices (v18). It is often said that Christians are "in the world but not of it". We live in a very immoral and corrupt world – how can we as Christian keep ourselves safe from being influenced by such practices?

READ JUDGES 2:6-19

9. Chapter 1 of Judges tells us that the Israelites did **not** drive out all of the Canaanites as instructed. What does Judges 2:6-19 say are the specific consequences of that failure?

READ COLOSSIANS 3:5-10

- 10.i. What does it mean to "put to death" (v5) and "rid yourselves" (8) of these bad behaviours?
 - ii. Why would Christians be doing these things?
 - iii. What might the consequences be for us, and others, if we don't get rid of them?
11. Close by reading COLOSSIANS 3:11-17 and use it as a basis for your personal prayers this week