

Appendix B: The Transition from Violence to Peace

When an act of violence is committed against us, we often respond to such an offense, with violence of our own. Is this wrong? Not necessarily! God responded to the “**shachath**” of the ancient world with a “**shachath**” of His own (Genesis 6:11-13), by means of a world-wide flood. When God gave Noah instructions regarding the establishment of human government in the aftermath of the flood; at the very core of maintaining law and order was the death penalty (Genesis 9:5-6). What nation on earth, that truly cares for the safety and well-being of its people, does not have a military force, designed to protect and defend its citizenry from acts of foreign violence? What locality, whose concern is the same, does not have a police force for protecting and defending us from acts of domestic violence? (Ecclesiastes 8:11) On a personal level, self-defense is recognized by virtually every human court as a perfectly appropriate response to an act of individual violence against us. However, because violence has been the chronic condition of Plan B, it is easy to become enamored with it. We can actually begin to see violence, in and of itself, as a virtue: something admirable and even heroic. It is not (Psalm 11:5). It is being allowed by God as a necessary negative element in the outworking of Plan B.

There is a passage in the New Testament where Jesus teaches His disciples an important lesson on one subject, which in turn applies to a variety of other equally important issues. It is found in Matthew 19:3-9. To summarize, Jesus answers a question from the Pharisees about the marriage relationship in affirming that it should be life-long; until the death of one spouse or the other (v6). Of course, the Pharisees immediately seize upon what they consider to be a contradiction by citing the Mosaic certificate of divorce ((v7). So, Jesus answers them in Matthew 19:8 – **“He said to them, ‘Because of your hardness of heart Moses permitted you to divorce your wives; but from the beginning it has not been this way.’”**

Is this not an allowance for Plan B, never originally intended as a part of Plan A? If so, how can it impact the development of a broader and deeper perspective for each of us, as Christians, in these last days, at the end of the Church Age? **It begins by realizing that God’s “allowance” of it, does not imply God’s “approval” of it.** If hardness of heart is the root cause for a man divorcing his wife, what other manifestations of a hard heart could be cited? If God hates divorce (Malachi 2:16), but allows it as a necessary element of Plan B, then what else does God hate, yet allow? Isn’t it also possible that God hates slavery? Isn’t it obvious that the same hardness of heart that causes a man to divorce his wife, also motivates one man to make another man his slave? Isn’t it likely then, that slavery was never intended by God to be a part of His original Plan A? Isn’t it also likely that violence would have never become a part of Plan A, even though God has allowed it to become the predominant characteristic of Plan B? **My point?** My point is Jesus’ point, one not to be brushed off for a future time, but for each of us to live out, here and now; taught in Matthew 5:9, confirmed in James 3:18, and repeated in 2 Peter 3:14 –

“Blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be called sons of God.”

“And the seed whose fruit is righteousness is sown in peace by those who make peace.”

“Therefore, beloved, since you look for these things, be diligent to be found by Him in peace, spotless and blameless . . .”

Bonus Post: May 7 – The Attitude of the Christian Toward Those Who Are Lost/Without Christ