

WEAVER STUDY GUIDES

The Biblical Doctrine of Self-Defense

Study Guide

Biblical Law

Weaver Bible College

Complete collection | October 1, 2026

A companion for reading, discussion, and written responses.

US Letter classroom edition | Editorial review needed

Name / group

Date

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Using this guide

Read the assigned chapter before working through each lesson. Write responses before group discussion.

The five study sections retain the existing lecture-record study material. This material predates the October 1, 2026 restored manuscript edition and requires editorial review against that edition. Missing source fields are identified in each lesson. Response lines are supplied for student use.

Reading assignments refer to the October 1, 2026 completed book editions. For collections issued in two volumes, use the named volume and its own printed page numbers. Chapter numbering continues across the set.

Print at Actual Size / 100% on US Letter paper. Lessons begin on the next available page. No blank padding pages are inserted. The contents lists lessons; PDF bookmarks also list all study sections.

Online resources link to the corresponding lecture using the destination convention retained in earlier lecture guides. Live availability has not been checked.

LESSON 1

The Biblical Doctrine Of Self Defense

Part One of Two

April 02, 2014

Read Chapter 1 in the companion book, pages 5-26 (October 1, 2026 edition).

Study source: existing lecture enrichment; review needed against the restored manuscript.

Major Themes

The Sixth Commandment Prohibits Murder, Not All Killing

The Hebrew and Greek of Exodus 20:13 mean 'Thou shalt not murder,' allowing for lawful taking of life under God's terms.

Lecture support: Weaver states: 'Actually, in the Hebrew, it literally refers to this, "Thou shalt not murder." In the New Testament, when it is translated in the Greek, it is still, "Thou shalt not murder."'

Self-Defense is a Biblical Obligation

The sixth commandment implies a positive duty to preserve life, making self-defense mandatory; failure to defend oneself is a violation.

Lecture support: Weaver says: 'Based upon the sixth commandment, self-defense is obligatory. We must defend ourselves in order to obey God's law.'

God Defends His People and Commands Defense of Others

God's defense of Jerusalem and His empowerment of human defenders show that defense is righteous; Scripture commands helping even enemies' animals, implying a greater duty to protect human life.

Lecture support: Weaver cites 2 Kings 19:34 and Exodus 23:4-5, arguing: 'If you're obligated to help to preserve the lives of his animals, how much more are you obligated to help to preserve his life?'

Historical and Modern Necessity of Armed Defense

Early American Christians carried weapons to church by law and custom, and modern church attacks demonstrate the ongoing need for self-defense.

Lecture support: Weaver recounts: 'In 1640 in Massachusetts, it was ordered that attendants at churches should carry... a competent number of pieces... every Lord's Day to the meeting house.'

Lawful Killing in Scripture is Not Murder

Biblical examples like Moses, David, and the laws of restitution show that killing in defense of life or property is sanctioned by God.

Lecture support: Weaver says of Moses: 'Neither in the Old Testament nor in the New Testament is Moses ever condemned for killing this Egyptian.'

Key Arguments

The Sixth Commandment's Positive Duty

The command 'Thou shalt not kill' implies a positive obligation to preserve life, making self-defense a requirement, not an option.

Lecture support: Weaver argues: 'When God says, "Thou shalt not kill," the positive is, "Thou shalt preserve life."'

God's Example of Defense

God's killing of 185,000 Assyrians to defend Jerusalem proves that taking life in defense is not inherently sinful.

Lecture support: Weaver asks: 'Who's going to be so blasphemous as to charge God with murder?'

Scriptural Precedent for Human Defenders

God raised up judges and mighty men to defend Israel, and their victories were attributed to God, showing divine approval of defensive violence.

Lecture support: Weaver notes: 'It was the Lord who was enabling and empowering Eleazar to fight.'

The Law of Restitution Permits Deadly Force

Exodus 22:2-3 allows killing a night intruder without penalty, establishing the right to defend one's home and family.

Lecture support: Weaver reads: 'If a thief be found breaking up and be smitten that he die, there shall no blood be shed for him.'

Duty to Defend Others

Deuteronomy 22:23-27 implies that bystanders have a duty to rescue those in danger, and failure to do so makes them complicit.

Lecture support: Weaver states: 'If she had cried aloud, that means anyone who heard her would have had the duty and the obligation and the responsibility to save her.'

Argument from Lesser to Greater

If God commands helping an enemy's animal, how much more are we obligated to preserve human life, including through self-defense.

Lecture support: Weaver says: 'If you're obligated to help preserve the life of my animals, how much more are you obligated to help preserve my life?'

Scripture References

Exodus 20:13

The sixth commandment, 'Thou shalt not kill,' is the foundational text for the sermon, interpreted as prohibiting murder.

Exodus 21:12-14

Cited as the first of 18 instances where God demands the death penalty, for murder.

Exodus 21:15

Death penalty for striking or cursing a parent.

Exodus 21:16

Death penalty for kidnapping.

Exodus 22:1-3

Law of restitution: killing a night intruder is not punishable, but killing a daytime thief is murder unless in self-defense.

Exodus 22:18

Death penalty for witchcraft.

Exodus 22:19

Death penalty for bestiality.

Exodus 22:20

Death penalty for sacrificing to false gods.

Exodus 23:4-5

Command to help even an enemy's animal, used to argue for the greater duty to preserve human life.

Exodus 35:2

Death penalty for Sabbath desecration.

Leviticus 20:2

Death penalty for offering human sacrifice.

Leviticus 20:9

Death penalty for cursing a parent.

Leviticus 20:10-21

Death penalty for adultery and incest.

Leviticus 20:13

Death penalty for sodomy.

Leviticus 24:11-14,16,23

Death penalty for blasphemy.

Deuteronomy 13

Death penalty for propagating false doctrines.

Deuteronomy 17:8-13

Death penalty for refusing to abide by a biblical court decision.

Deuteronomy 21:18-21

Death penalty for incorrigible delinquency.

Deuteronomy 22:4

Command to help a brother's animal, used in the lesser-to-greater argument for preserving life.

Deuteronomy 22:23-27

Law distinguishing rape in the city vs. field, implying a duty to rescue those crying for help.

Discussion Questions

1. How does understanding the Hebrew and Greek words for 'kill' in Exodus 20:13 change your view of the sixth commandment?

Consider: Weaver explains that the original languages mean 'murder,' not all killing.

2. In what ways does the positive duty to preserve life challenge a passive approach to personal safety?

Consider: Weaver argues that the sixth commandment implies an obligation to defend oneself and others.

3. How do the historical examples of armed church attendance in early America inform our understanding of the relationship between faith and self-defense?

Consider: Weaver provides multiple historical laws and anecdotes about carrying weapons to worship.

4. What does God's killing of 185,000 Assyrians teach us about the morality of taking life in defense?

Consider: Weaver uses Isaiah 37 to show God actively defending Jerusalem through lethal means.

5. How should Christians balance trust in God's sovereignty with the practical use of weapons for self-defense?

Consider: Weaver tells the story of the Puritan pastor who carried a blunderbuss while believing in God's sovereignty.

6. What responsibilities do we have to intervene when others are in danger, based on Deuteronomy 22 and the Kitty Genovese case?

Consider: Weaver argues that biblical law holds bystanders accountable for failing to rescue those crying for help.

7. How does the command to help an enemy's animal (Exodus 23:4-5) expand our understanding of the duty to preserve life?

Consider: Weaver uses this passage to argue from lesser to greater: if we must help animals, we must help humans.

8. In light of modern church shootings, how should congregations think about security and the possibility of armed members?

Consider: Weaver lists numerous church attacks from 1999 to 2007 to show the reality of the threat.

Applications

Recognize self-defense as a biblical duty

Christians must understand that preserving their own lives and the lives of others is not optional but commanded by the sixth commandment.

Lecture support: Weaver states: 'Self-defense is obligatory. We must defend ourselves in order to obey God's law.'

Be prepared to defend your family and church

Given historical and modern threats, believers should consider practical measures for protection, including being armed if lawful and appropriate.

Lecture support: Weaver recounts the missionary in South Africa whose quick action with a revolver saved lives.

Do not be passive in the face of evil

Failure to act when others are in danger makes one complicit in the crime, as illustrated by the Kitty Genovese case.

Lecture support: Weaver says: 'The 38 who watched her raped, murdered, and robbed are just as guilty before God as the men who did it.'

Trust God while using means

Like David, believers should rely on God for victory but still use the weapons He provides, recognizing that success comes from Him.

Lecture support: Weaver explains: 'It was not their bow nor their spear that delivered them. It was God who delivered them.'

Help even your enemies in non-lethal situations

The command to assist an enemy's animal teaches that we must be ready to preserve life whenever possible, extending grace even to adversaries.

Lecture support: Weaver cites Exodus 23:4-5: 'If thou meet thine enemy's ox or his ass going astray, thou shalt surely bring it back to him again.'

LESSON 2

The Biblical Doctrine Of Self Defense

Part Two of Two

April 02, 2014

Read Chapter 2 in the companion book, pages 27-48 (October 1, 2026 edition).

Study source: existing lecture enrichment; review needed against the restored manuscript.

Major Themes

Continuity of Old and New Testament Law

The moral law, including the sixth commandment's obligation to preserve life, is not abolished by Christ but fulfilled; self-defense remains valid.

Lecture support: Christ did not come to destroy the law but to fulfill it (Matthew 5:17). The positive side of the sixth commandment is 'Thou shalt preserve life.'

Proper Use of Means and Trust in God

Believers must use practical means (purse, scrip, sword) for provision and protection while trusting God to bless those means, avoiding both presumption and self-reliance.

Lecture support: We must use the means that God has placed at our disposal... On the other hand, we must trust in God to make those means effectual.

Distinction Between Unwise and Sinful Actions

Peter's use of the sword was unwise due to pride and circumstances, but not inherently sinful; Christ did not condemn weapon ownership or self-defense.

Lecture support: One may act unwisely and still not act sinfully... Christ did not rebuke Peter for having a sword... What Christ rebuked Peter for was his unwise, unnecessary, and unenlightened actions.

The Uniqueness of Christ's Mission

Christ's situation was unique because He came to die voluntarily for redemption; preventing His arrest would have thwarted Scripture, so Peter's defense was inappropriate.

Lecture support: The case of Jesus Christ is unique... He didn't come to be delivered. He came to die.

An Armed Society as a Polite Society

The widespread carrying of weapons tends to deter aggression and promote civility, as illustrated by historical and personal anecdotes.

Lecture support: An armed society is a polite society... If folks are armed, you will indeed be polite.

Key Arguments

Jesus' command to buy a sword shows self-defense is legitimate

In Luke 22:36, Jesus commanded disciples to sell garments and buy swords, indicating preparation for self-defense is not only permitted but commanded.

Lecture support: He that hath no sword, let him sell his garment and get one... it is in the imperative mode in the Greek. An imperative is a command.

Peter's action was unwise, not a violation of a moral prohibition

Peter acted rashly against an overwhelming force out of pride; Christ's rebuke targeted the imprudence, not the act of self-defense itself.

Lecture support: It is one thing to defend yourself against a multitude. It is quite another thing to start a fight with a multitude.

Christ's ability to summon angels made Peter's defense unnecessary

Jesus stated He could call twelve legions of angels, proving Peter's violent intervention was not needed for Christ's protection.

Lecture support: Thinkest thou that I cannot now pray to my Father, and He shall presently give me more than twelve legions of angels?

Peter's ignorance of Christ's redemptive mission made his act unenlightened

Peter still resisted the idea of Christ's death, not understanding that the crucifixion was necessary to fulfill Scripture and save sinners.

Lecture support: Peter actually did not know what he was doing when he drew the sword... Peter was still under the impression that the Messiah was not to die.

Christ did not condemn weapon ownership or self-defense

Jesus only told Peter to put the sword in its place; He never commanded disposal of weapons or taught pacifism.

Lecture support: Christ did not rebuke Peter for having a sword... He didn't say to Peter, 'Throw that thing away.'

Scripture References

Matthew 26:51-52

Peter cuts off Malchus' ear; Jesus tells him to put away the sword, for those who take the sword will perish by it.

Mark 14:47-48

One of the bystanders strikes the high priest's servant; Jesus questions the armed crowd.

Luke 22:49-51

Disciples ask if they should strike with the sword; Peter cuts off the servant's ear; Jesus says 'Suffer ye thus far' and heals him.

John 18:10-12

Peter, identified by name, cuts off Malchus' right ear; Jesus commands him to sheathe the sword.

Luke 22:35-36

Jesus contrasts His earlier sending without provisions with the new command to take purse, scrip, and sword.

Luke 9:3

Jesus initially sent disciples without staff, bag, bread, money, or extra tunic.

Luke 10:4

Disciples sent without purse, bag, or sandals.

Luke 22:37

Jesus explains the change: He must be numbered with transgressors, and things concerning Him have an end.

John 15:18-20

Jesus warns that the world will hate and persecute His followers as it did Him.

Acts 2:22-23

Jesus was a man approved by God through miracles, delivered up by God's plan and crucified.

Matthew 26:47

Judas arrives with a great multitude armed with swords and clubs.

Mark 14:43

Judas comes with a crowd armed with swords and clubs from the chief priests.

Luke 22:47

A crowd led by Judas approaches Jesus to kiss Him.

John 18:3

Judas brings a detachment of soldiers and officers with lanterns, torches, and weapons.

Matthew 26:31-35

Jesus predicts all disciples will fall away; Peter insists he will never deny Christ, even if he must die.

John 18:4-6

When Jesus says 'I am He,' the soldiers draw back and fall to the ground.

John 18:7-9

Jesus asks again whom they seek, then says to let the disciples go, fulfilling His word that He lost none.

Revelation 13:10

He who kills with the sword must be killed with the sword; a call for patience and faith.

Isaiah 33:1

Woe to the destroyer who has not been destroyed; when you stop destroying, you will be destroyed.

Matthew 26:53-54

Jesus says He could call more than twelve legions of angels, but then Scripture would not be fulfilled.

Discussion Questions

1. How does the command to buy a sword in Luke 22:36 shape our understanding of self-defense in the New Testament?

Consider: Weaver emphasizes that Jesus commanded disciples to acquire swords, indicating preparation for self-defense is not only permitted but required.

2. In what ways can we distinguish between unwise and sinful actions when considering self-defense?

Consider: Weaver argues Peter's act was unwise due to pride and circumstances, but not sinful; this distinction is crucial for ethical evaluation.

3. How should Christians balance the use of practical means (like weapons) with trust in God's protection?

Consider: Weaver teaches that we must use God-ordained means while relying on God to make them effectual, avoiding both presumption and self-reliance.

4. Why is the case of Jesus' arrest considered unique, and how does that affect the application of His command to Peter?

Consider: Weaver explains Christ came to die voluntarily; preventing His arrest would have thwarted redemption, so Peter's defense was inappropriate in that specific context.

5. What does the principle 'an armed society is a polite society' imply for Christian views on gun ownership and public safety?

Consider: Weaver uses historical and personal anecdotes to argue that widespread armament deters crime and promotes civility.

Applications

Prepare responsibly for self-defense

Believers should take practical steps to ensure their safety and that of their families, including the lawful ownership and training with weapons, as commanded by Christ.

Lecture support: He that hath no sword, let him sell his garment and get one... it is in the imperative mode in the Greek.

Exercise wisdom and restraint in using force

Self-defense must be exercised with prudence, avoiding rash actions driven by pride or anger, and recognizing when discretion is the better part of valor.

Lecture support: It is one thing to defend yourself against a multitude. It is quite another thing to start a fight with a multitude.

Trust God while using means

While employing practical means of protection, believers must ultimately depend on God's blessing and sovereignty, not on the means themselves.

Lecture support: We must use the means that God has placed at our disposal... On the other hand, we must trust in God to make those means effectual.

Understand the unique redemptive context of Christ's passion

Recognize that Christ's submission to arrest and crucifixion was a unique, once-for-all act of redemption, not a pattern for passive submission in all circumstances.

Lecture support: The case of Jesus Christ is unique... He didn't come to be delivered. He came to die.

Personal Response and Notes

Student notes after reading the assigned chapter

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LESSON 3

The Biblical Doctrine of Self-Defense

July 22, 2008

Read Chapter 3 in the companion book, pages 49-70 (October 1, 2026 edition).

Study source: existing lecture enrichment; review needed against the restored manuscript.

Major Themes

Self-Defense as a Biblical Obligation

The sixth commandment's positive requirement is to preserve life, making self-defense not just permissible but obligatory.

Lecture support: The sixth commandment, Thou shalt not kill, has a positive. Every negative has a positive. And the positive of the sixth commandment is Thou shalt preserve life. So I proved one point last night, and that is that self-defense is obligatory.

Proper Use of Means and Trust in God

Believers must use the means God provides (like weapons) while trusting Him to make them effectual, avoiding both self-reliance and tempting God.

Lecture support: We must use the means that God has provided for us. And at the same time, we must trust God to make those means effectual.

The Uniqueness of Christ's Arrest

Christ's command to Peter to sheathe his sword does not negate self-defense because Christ's death was divinely ordained and unique; He came to die for sinners.

Lecture support: Anytime someone pulls up this objection to the biblical doctrine of self-defense, I hope you understand that the case of Jesus Christ is unique. There is none like it.

Wisdom in the Use of Force

Peter's actions were unwise, unnecessary, and unenlightened; believers must think before acting and not start fights against overwhelming odds.

Lecture support: Peter's actions were unwise... Peter's actions were unnecessary... Peter's actions were also unenlightened.

The Law of Retribution (Lex Talionis)

Those who take the sword will perish by the sword; God's justice ensures that people reap what they sow, a principle seen throughout Scripture.

Lecture support: Those who take the sword will perish by the sword, or the lex talionis, you reap what you sow.

An Armed Society as a Polite Society

Historical and anecdotal evidence suggests that widespread armament deters crime and promotes civility.

Lecture support: An armed society is a polite society... the Old West was much safer than we are today.

Key Arguments

Jesus' command to buy a sword proves self-defense is intended

In Luke 22:36, Jesus commands disciples to sell a garment and buy a sword, indicating a new era where they must provide for their own protection.

Lecture support: He that hath no sword, let him sell his garment and buy one... Whatever it takes, get a weapon.

Peter's sword use was rebuked for its timing and motive, not for self-defense

Jesus told Peter to put the sword in its place, not to throw it away; the rebuke was for unwise, prideful, and unnecessary action, not for having a weapon.

Lecture support: Christ did not say, Throw that thing away, boy. Don't ever touch that thing. That sword is evil... He just said, Peter, put it up, indicating now is not the time to use it.

Christ's death was necessary for redemption, making defense of Him contrary to God's will

If Peter had succeeded in defending Christ, Scripture would not have been fulfilled and redemption would not have been accomplished.

Lecture support: But how then shall the scriptures be fulfilled, that thus it must be? ... If Peter had saved Christ, how would the scriptures have been fulfilled? How would redemption have been accomplished?

Self-defense is required by the sixth commandment's positive aspect

The command 'Thou shalt not kill' implies a positive duty to preserve life, making self-defense obligatory, not optional.

Lecture support: The sixth commandment that says Thou shalt not kill has as its positive, Thou shalt preserve life. You're required and responsible under God to preserve your life and the lives of others, even if it means taking another life in doing so.

Avoidance is a legitimate form of self-defense used by Christ

In John 7:1, Jesus avoided Judea because the Jews sought to kill Him, demonstrating that avoiding danger is a biblical means of self-preservation.

Lecture support: After these things Jesus walked in Galilee: for he would not walk in Jewry, because the Jews sought to kill him. What did Christ do? He avoided them. He stayed out of the way. Avoidance is a means of self-defense.

Scripture References

Matthew 26:51-52

Peter cuts off Malchus's ear and Jesus tells him to put the sword away, stating that those who take the sword will perish by the sword.

Mark 14:47

One of the bystanders draws a sword and cuts off the servant's ear; Jesus questions the armed crowd.

Luke 22:49-51

The disciples ask if they should strike with the sword; Peter cuts off the ear, and Jesus says 'Suffer ye thus far' and heals the ear.

John 18:10-11

Peter cuts off Malchus's right ear; Jesus tells him to put the sword into the sheath, referencing the cup the Father has given Him.

Luke 22:35-36

Jesus contrasts the earlier mission when they lacked nothing with the new command to take purse, scrip, and buy a sword.

Luke 9:3

Jesus initially sent the disciples without staff, bag, bread, money, or extra tunic.

Luke 10:4

Jesus instructs the disciples to carry no purse, bag, or sandals.

Luke 22:37

Jesus says He must be numbered with the transgressors, fulfilling prophecy, which explains the change in instructions.

John 15:18-21

Jesus warns that the world will hate and persecute the disciples as it hated Him.

Acts 2:22

Peter declares that Jesus was a man attested by God through miracles, wonders, and signs.

Judges 15:16

Samson slew a thousand Philistines with the jawbone of a donkey, illustrating God using available means.

Matthew 26:47

Judas arrives with a great multitude armed with swords and clubs from the chief priests and elders.

Matthew 26:31-35

Jesus predicts the disciples will fall away; Peter boasts he will never deny Christ, even if he must die.

Mark 14:31

Peter insists vehemently that he will not deny Jesus, and all the disciples say the same.

Matthew 21:32

Jesus rebukes the Pharisees for not repenting after seeing the publicans and harlots believe John's message.

John 18:4-6

When Jesus says 'I am he,' the soldiers draw back and fall to the ground, demonstrating His power.

John 18:7-9

Jesus asks again whom they seek and tells them to let the disciples go, fulfilling His word that He lost none.

Revelation 13:10

He that leads into captivity shall go into captivity; he that kills with the sword must be killed with the sword.

Isaiah 33:1

Woe to the destroyer who has not been destroyed; when you cease destroying, you will be destroyed - the law of retribution.

Judges 1:4-7

Adoni-bezek's thumbs and big toes are cut off; he acknowledges God requited him as he had done to seventy kings.

Discussion Questions

1. How does the positive aspect of the sixth commandment ('Thou shalt preserve life') change the way we view self-defense?

Consider: Weaver argues that every negative command has a positive counterpart, making self-defense obligatory.

2. Why did Jesus tell the disciples to buy a sword in Luke 22:36, and what does this teach us about preparation for danger?

Consider: The command marks a shift after Christ's departure; disciples must now take responsibility for their own protection.

3. In what ways can we balance using practical means of defense with trusting God to protect us?

Consider: Weaver warns against both arrogance (trusting only in weapons) and tempting God (refusing to use available means).

4. What made Peter's use of the sword unwise, unnecessary, and unenlightened, and how can we apply those lessons to our own decision-making?

Consider: Peter acted out of pride, against overwhelming odds, and without understanding God's redemptive plan.

5. How does the uniqueness of Christ's mission (to die for sinners) affect the application of this passage to general self-defense?

Consider: Weaver argues that Christ's arrest is a special case and cannot be used to forbid all self-defense.

6. What does the principle 'those who take the sword will perish by the sword' mean in the context of self-defense versus aggression?

Consider: Weaver explains it as the lex talionis - reaping what you sow - and applies it to rash, unprovoked violence.

7. How does the historical evidence about the Old West challenge common perceptions about armed societies?

Consider: Weaver cites statistics showing lower homicide rates in armed frontier towns compared to modern times.

8. What practical steps can Christians take to be 'swift to hear, slow to speak, slow to wrath' in potentially violent situations?

Consider: Weaver applies James 1:19 to the need for careful thought before using force.

Applications

Recognize self-defense as a biblical duty

Understand that preserving your life and the lives of others is not optional but commanded by God through the sixth commandment.

Lecture support: You're required and responsible under God to preserve your life and the lives of others, even if it means taking another life in doing so.

Prepare practically for danger

Just as Jesus told the disciples to acquire a sword, believers should take reasonable steps to provide for their own protection.

Lecture support: He that hath no sword, let him sell his garment and buy one... Whatever it takes, get a weapon.

Balance means and faith

Use the tools God provides (weapons, training) while trusting Him for the outcome; avoid both self-reliance and passivity.

Lecture support: We must use the means that God has provided for us. And at the same time, we must trust God to make those means effectual.

Exercise wisdom and restraint

Do not start fights against overwhelming odds or act out of pride; think before using force and avoid unnecessary conflict.

Lecture support: It is one thing to defend yourself against a multitude. It is quite another thing to start a fight with a multitude.

Use avoidance when possible

Like Jesus in John 7:1, sometimes the wisest self-defense is to avoid dangerous situations altogether.

Lecture support: After these things Jesus walked in Galilee: for he would not walk in Jewry, because the Jews sought to kill him. What did Christ do? He avoided them.

Do not misinterpret Christ's unique mission

Do not use Christ's command to Peter as a blanket prohibition against self-defense; His death was a unique, redemptive necessity.

Lecture support: Anytime someone pulls up this objection to the biblical doctrine of self-defense, I hope you understand that the case of Jesus Christ is unique.

Be slow to wrath and quick to think

Apply James 1:19 by carefully evaluating situations before reacting, especially when weapons are involved.

Lecture support: Let every man be swift to hear, slow to speak, slow to wrath... you better think things through before you act.

Understand the deterrent effect of an armed populace

Recognize that a society where law-abiding citizens are armed tends to be more polite and safer, as history and anecdotes suggest.

Lecture support: An armed society is a polite society... the Old West was much safer than we are today.

Personal Response and Notes

Student notes after reading the assigned chapter

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LESSON 4

Biblical Doctrine of Self Defense

August 02, 2023

Read Chapter 4 in the companion book, pages 71-92 (October 1, 2026 edition).

Study source: existing lecture enrichment; review needed against the restored manuscript.

Major Themes

The Sixth Commandment as Prohibition of Murder

The commandment 'Thou shalt not kill' means 'Thou shalt not murder' or take life unjustly, except on God's terms.

Lecture support: Weaver states: 'Thou shalt not kill literally means Thou shalt not murder. Or it means Thou shalt not take life unjustly. Or to say this another way, Thou shalt not take life except it is on God's terms.'

Positive Duty to Preserve Life

Every negative command implies a positive duty; the sixth commandment requires the preservation of life, making self-defense obligatory.

Lecture support: Weaver says: 'So when God says in the sixth commandment, Thou shalt not kill, that's the negative. The positive is Thou shalt preserve life... self-defense is obligatory.'

Lawful Taking of Life on God's Terms

Scripture lists 18 capital offenses where life may be taken justly, and self-defense is a 19th lawful reason.

Lecture support: Weaver enumerates 18 reasons from the Law and adds: 'the 19th reason why life may be lawfully taken on God's terms is because of self-defense.'

Historical Practice of Armed Church Attendance

Colonial American laws and customs required men to bring weapons to church for defense, a practice rooted in biblical principles.

Lecture support: Weaver cites laws from Massachusetts, Connecticut, Virginia, and Plymouth requiring arms at church, and explains the custom of men sitting on aisle ends.

God's Defense and Human Agency

God defends His people and uses human agents, enabling them to fight while they trust in Him.

Lecture support: Weaver points to God defending Jerusalem, raising up judges, and David's mighty men: 'the Lord wrought a great victory' through their fighting.

Duty to Defend Others

The obligation to preserve life extends to defending others, as illustrated by the crying damsel and the law of the lost animal.

Lecture support: Weaver explains Deuteronomy 22: 'anyone who hears her cries has the duty and the responsibility and the obligation to save her.'

Key Arguments

Self-defense is not murder but a lawful taking of life

The sixth commandment forbids murder, not all killing. Scripture provides lawful reasons for taking life, including self-defense.

Lecture support: Weaver says: 'taking a life can be murder, but taking life is not always murder. There are lawful reasons given in the Bible where life can be taken.'

The positive command to preserve life mandates self-defense

Since the sixth commandment positively requires preserving life, failing to defend oneself or others is a violation of the commandment.

Lecture support: Weaver argues: 'If we do not defend ourselves, we're guilty of self-murder. If we don't defend our families, we're guilty of self-murder.'

Using means and trusting God are not contradictory

Biblical figures like David and his mighty men used weapons while trusting God for victory; means are tools, not objects of trust.

Lecture support: Weaver states: 'I am not trusting in a weapon just because I have a weapon. I'm trusting in the Lord.'

Exodus 22:2-3 permits killing a nighttime intruder

God's law allows killing a thief breaking in at night because the homeowner cannot know the intruder's intent, but forbids it in daylight when identification is possible.

Lecture support: Weaver explains: 'If a thief breaks in your home during the night... God says in verse two, If you kill him... there shall be no bloodshed for you.'

The duty to preserve life extends to enemies

Exodus 23 commands helping an enemy's animal, arguing from lesser to greater that we have an even greater duty to preserve human life.

Lecture support: Weaver says: 'If I have a duty and responsibility to preserve my enemy's animals, how much more do I have a duty and responsibility to help preserve his life?'

Scripture References

Exodus 20:13

The sixth commandment, 'Thou shalt not kill,' is the foundational text for the doctrine of self-defense.

Exodus 21:15

Listed as a capital offense: striking or cursing a parent.

Leviticus 20:9

Capital offense for cursing a parent.

Exodus 21:16

Capital offense for kidnapping.

Leviticus 20:10

Capital offense for adultery.

Leviticus 20:11

Capital offense for incest.

Exodus 22:19

Capital offense for bestiality.

Leviticus 20:13

Capital offense for sodomy/homosexuality.

Deuteronomy 22:20-21

Capital offense for unchastity.

Deuteronomy 22:25-27

Capital offense for rape of a betrothed virgin; also used to show duty to defend.

Exodus 22:18

Capital offense for witchcraft.

Leviticus 20:2

Capital offense for offering human sacrifice.

Deuteronomy 21:18-21

Capital offense for incorrigible delinquency.

Leviticus 24:16

Capital offense for blasphemy.

Exodus 35:2

Capital offense for Sabbath desecration.

Deuteronomy 13:5

Capital offense for propagating false doctrine.

Exodus 22:20

Capital offense for sacrificing to false gods.

Deuteronomy 17:8-13

Capital offense for refusing to abide by a biblical court's decision.

Exodus 22:2-3

Law concerning killing a thief breaking in at night versus daytime; supports self-defense.

Deuteronomy 22:23-27

Law of the betrothed damsel, illustrating the duty to defend those crying out for help.

Discussion Questions

1. How does understanding the sixth commandment as 'Thou shalt not murder' rather than an absolute prohibition on killing change your view of self-defense?

Consider: Weaver explains the Hebrew and Greek meaning of the commandment.

2. In what ways does the positive command to preserve life challenge a passive response to threats?

Consider: Weaver argues that failing to defend oneself or others is self-murder.

3. How do the colonial American laws requiring arms at church inform our understanding of the relationship between faith and preparedness?

Consider: Weaver details historical mandates for armed church attendance.

4. What does the example of David and his mighty men teach us about using human means while trusting in God's sovereignty?

Consider: Weaver discusses 2 Samuel 23 and Psalm 144:1.

5. How should Exodus 22:2-3 guide a Christian's response to a home invasion today?

Consider: Weaver explains the distinction between nighttime and daytime intruders.

6. What responsibilities do we have to intervene when we hear someone crying for help, based on Deuteronomy 22?

Consider: Weaver applies the law of the betrothed damsel to the duty to defend others.

7. How does the command to help an enemy's animal (Exodus 23) expand our understanding of loving our neighbor?

Consider: Weaver argues from lesser to greater regarding the duty to preserve life.

Applications

Prepare a biblical understanding of self-defense before a crisis

Believers must study and settle the issue of self-defense in their minds beforehand, because life-threatening situations require immediate response.

Lecture support: Weaver says: 'You need to have this worked out in your mind... it is too late for you to sit there and try to figure out, Now, Lord, what can I do with this?'

Recognize the duty to preserve life as a positive command

Christians should actively seek to protect their own lives and the lives of others, viewing it as obedience to the sixth commandment.

Lecture support: Weaver states: 'self-defense is obligatory. We must defend ourselves and the lives of others, even if it involves taking the life of another individual.'

Use lawful means of defense while trusting God

Believers should employ weapons or other means of defense as tools, while ultimately relying on God for protection and enablement.

Lecture support: Weaver explains: 'I am not trusting in a weapon just because I have a weapon. I'm trusting in the Lord.'

Defend others as an expression of love and duty

When able, Christians must intervene to protect those in danger, following the biblical pattern of defending the oppressed.

Lecture support: Weaver says: 'anyone who hears her cries has the duty and the responsibility and the obligation to save her.'

Apply the lesser-to-greater principle in ethical decisions

If God requires care for animals, how much more does He require care for human life; this principle should guide our actions toward others.

Lecture support: Weaver argues: 'If I have a duty and responsibility to preserve my enemy's animals, how much more do I have a duty and responsibility to help preserve his life?'

Personal Response and Notes

Student notes after reading the assigned chapter

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Online Lecture Resources

Select the lecture link in the PDF or scan its lecture QR code.

Lesson 1: The Biblical Doctrine Of Self Defense - Part 1 of 2

Lecture JW01383

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Lecture JW01384

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Lesson 4: Biblical Doctrine of Self Defense

Lecture JW00149

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Source information and review

The five study sections retain the existing lecture-record study material. This material predates the October 1, 2026 restored manuscript edition and requires editorial review against that edition. Missing source fields are identified in each lesson. Response lines are supplied for student use.

Chapter order and reading ranges follow the October 1, 2026 completed manuscript manifests. The source record paths, hashes, field coverage, attribution notes, and reading editions are recorded in the companion manifest.