

“Not Peace but a Sword”: Jesus and the Sword in Matthew

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Abstract

South African society is characterised by the violence of crime, poverty and inequality as well as civil rebellion and disobedience, posing the question to Christians whether they should and may participate in violence against injustice and crime, and as a possible reaction to, for example, poor service delivery or civil rights wrongs. This article limits the discussion about the possible justification of the Christian’s use of violence to Matthew’s references to the sword as a metaphor of violence within the context of Jesus’s ministry. The first reference is found when Jesus prepares the apostles for the Jewish mission in Matthew 10, and he states that they should not suppose that he has come to bring peace to the earth, but a sword, because his coming will turn the members of their own households against them. Did Jesus endorse and encourage violence, even if presumably a righteous kind of violence? During his arrest scene, in Matthew 26, an unknown companion of Jesus reaches for his sword and strikes the servant of the high priest, cutting off his ear. Jesus responds by commanding the disciple to put his sword back in place, “for all who draw the sword will die by the sword.” These references to “sword” are discussed in order to answer the question whether Jesus in any way supported violence.

Key Terms

Violence; sword; peace; Matthew 10:34; Matthew 26:51–52

1 Introduction

South Africa strikes many observers as a country riven by excessive and widespread violence (Centre for the Study of Violence and Reconciliation 2008, 9). Interpersonal violence is a daily reality for many, and several studies of crime statistics indicate that poorer people are more likely to be

subjected to such violence (Fick 2014, 1). As a violent society South Africa is characterised by domestic violence; robbery and other violent property crime; conflict between groups over territory, markets and power; xenophobia; attacks on farmers and farm workers; vigilantism and the abuse of excessive force by law enforcement; and resistance to law enforcement intervention (Centre for the Study of Violence and Reconciliation 2008, 5). Levels of public violence also remain disconcertingly—and even if, given the country’s colonial and apartheid history, explicably—high. The rituals of violent protest against the apartheid state have not been fully exorcised from communities, seen in their engagement with the current government, especially when displeased with officials’ performance, poor service delivery, or perceived wrongs of civil rights (Lancaster 2013, 1). Violent protests against poor service delivery have accelerated dramatically (Fick 2014, 1).

The South African context poses the question to Christians whether it is allowed to utilise violence, for instance, as a means of self-protection against crime or to participate in protest actions against the perceived lack of services provided by the state or against other wrongs. The supposition here is that the meaning of Scripture for believers is the “ruling principle of Christian morality” (Collins 1979, 237). The above question may be complicated by the Bible’s ambiguous depiction of violence leading to Crossan’s (2015) discussion on how to read the Bible and still be a Christian while struggling with the ambiguity surrounding divine violence in the Bible. Matthew’s depiction of Jesus also provides seemingly conflicting data about Jesus’s attitude towards violence. The non-violent Jesus of the Sermon on the Mount (chs. 5–7) seems annulled and dismissed by the rhetorically violent Jesus who argues with the religious leaders by denigrating motive and intention or by destroying character and integrity when he stereotypes them as exacting casuistry without practising what they preach (e.g., Matt 23:1–36). The physically violent Jesus who has brought the sword rather than peace (Matt 10:34) predicts violence in his notion of God’s justice that damns some people to a place of pain where there will be weeping and grinding of teeth (Matt 13:41–42; 13:49–50; 22:12–13; 24:50–51; 25:30). And he overthrows the tables of the money-changers and the seats of the dove-sellers (Matt 21:12–13; Hays 1996, 282; Crossan 2015, 9).

Matthew is described as the most “Jewish” of the Gospels, in that Jesus places a greater emphasis on following the Mosaic Law than in the other Gospels (Matt 5:17–19; cf. Ehrman 2006, 37). However, Matthew is

also the most “anti-Jewish” of the Gospels, in that here it is the Jewish leaders in particular who are portrayed as Jesus’s harshest enemies, whom he vigorously opposes on numerous occasions, lambasting their hypocrisy and constant inclinations to do evil and to lead the Jewish people astray, most stridently in Matt 23:1–36 (Ehrman 2006, 38). The Jesus solemnly forbidding anger, insult, and name-calling (Matt 5:21–22) and encouraging his disciples to show the other cheek and to love their enemies (Matt 5:44; Nolland 2004, 29) uses invective in his sevenfold indictment of the scribes and Pharisees (Matt 23:13–32; Jones 1985, 1647) and instructs social withdrawal for the purposes of church discipline (Nolland 2004, 31). Did Jesus change his mind, or did Matthew change his Jesus (Crossan 2015, 173)? Does Matthew present a “bipolar” God (Crossan 2015, 16) of non-violent distributive justice and violent retributive justice (Ehrman 2003, 15; 2014, 32; Crossan 2015, 18)? How are Christians to act against injustice and violence—non-violently or violently? Does Jesus’s enigmatic pronouncement that he has not come to bring peace but the sword (according to Matt 10:34) allow for Christian justification of violence?

In this article, Matthew’s statements about swords are discussed in order to relate these to the view of Jesus’s reaction to injustice and violence.¹ The Roman Emperor Constantine and his “Christian” successors, the medieval Crusaders, and Protestants and Catholics in different settings used the sword against unbelievers and each other, even as a means of evangelization. And the use of the sword was justified among other arguments with an appeal to Jesus’s statements about swords (see, e.g., Ehrman 1999, 7; Kaminsky 2006; Clanton 2008; Smith 2012, 4–18; Clarke 2014, 141–173).

2 The Sword, Not Peace: Matthew 10:34

2.1 The mission of the Twelve

The first saying of Jesus about the sword is in the context of Jesus’s instruction to the twelve apostles regarding their mission (10:5–42) following on Jesus’s bestowal of authority on them (10:1) and the list of their names (10:2–4). Jesus’s instruction for their mission consists of three parts. In the first part (10:5–15), he admonishes them not to waste any time

¹ The discussion is limited to the Gospel of Matthew for reasons of space. References to Q, the other Synoptic Gospels and John will only serve to explain Matthew’s references.

in bringing their message that the kingdom of heaven has drawn near by calling the Samaritans to repentance. Their message should be authorised by healing the sick, raising the dead, cleansing lepers, and casting out demons. They should not get gold, or silver, or copper for their belts, a bag for the journey, or two tunics, sandals, or a staff. These are the normal and necessary accoutrements of the traveller (Davies and Allison 2004a, 153). By going about without any possessions the disciples not only put themselves beyond the suspicion that they are preaching for its monetary worth but also serve as examples of trust in God's providential care. Jesus uses a proverbial saying that the worker is worthy of food, distilling biblical principles regarding day labourers and priests (Lev 19:13; Num 18:31; Deut 24:15; cf. Luke 10:7; 1 Cor 9:9; 1 Tim 5:18). They should stay with someone who is worthy, evidently shown by acceptance of the kingdom message; if the house is not worthy, they should let the peace return to them. To greet a house was the idiomatic equivalent of the command to say, "Peace be to this house" (Keener 1997, 215). Where there are people who do not listen to their message or do not receive them, the dust of that house or town should be shaken off their feet as a judgment against them and as a symbolic act of renunciation and severance of relationships.

In the second part (10:16–23), Jesus admonishes them to be wise as snakes, innocent as doves and wary of people, because they are like sheep in the midst of wolves. They will be persecuted but the Spirit of the Father will teach them how to defend themselves and their message. When they experience persecution they should flee to the next town and carry on with their task with urgency in view of the imminent coming of the Son of Man. They will be persecuted, the result of family divisions (Hays 1996, 336). Verse 21 reflects Mic 7:6, which is more explicitly alluded to in vv. 35–36, but Micah's family divisions indicate the breakdown of social order while here it assumes a more radical meaning, of religious persecution διὰ τὸ ὄνομά μου ("for my Name's sake") (France 1985, 187). The one who stands firm εἰς τέλος ("to the end"; BDAG, 812 translates "right through") will be saved. An identical promise occurs at 24:13, and there the context also refers to mission and the resultant persecution (Keener 1999, 175).

The third part (10:24–42) consists of the encouragement that the apostles will be treated like their master and teacher (Οὐκ ἔστιν μαθητῆς ὑπὲρ τὸν διδάσκαλον οὐδὲ δούλος ὑπὲρ τὸν κύριον αὐτοῦ), but they should fearlessly speak the truth because their enemies can only kill their bodies. "Fear" (φόβος) is the key word in this section, occurring in vv. 26,

28 and 31. The fear engendered by the conditions described in vv. 17–25 could serve as a brake to the disciples’ mission and for this reason Jesus warns them three times to overcome their natural reluctance to incur others’ hostility. It is a given that the disciples will share in their Master’s persecution (10:24–25). In following in their Master’s footsteps they must not fear their prosecutors (10:26–27) but they should fear only the ultimate Judge (10:28–33). In each case the witness of the disciples forms the context for not fearing (France 1985, 189–190). Jesus’s teaching is to be proclaimed publicly, on the housetops (ἐπὶ τῶν δωμάτων)—the flat housetop forming a natural platform for public announcements (Schweizer 1970, 273). They should fear no one because they are more important than sparrows and the hairs of their head are all counted.² What is important in the saying is that it does not promise that a disciple will not suffer or die but that the time of their persecution is in the hands of the Father. His knowledge and concern for his children are such that the hairs of their head are all numbered (cf. 1 Sam 14:45; 2 Sam 14:11; 1 Kgs 1:52; Luke 21:18; Acts 27:34). God has the knowledge, the power, and the concern to protect the disciples from any *ultimate* harm or injury (Hagner 1993, 286). They should acknowledge Jesus before people and he will then acknowledge them before his Father in heaven. “Acknowledgement” (ὁμολογήσει; “confess”) is an act of solidarity, expressing that “we belong together” (France 1985, 191).

2.2 *The cost of following Jesus*

The apostles’ mission will be determined by persecution; Jesus has not come to bring peace to the earth; he came to bring a sword (10:34). The time of eschatological peace, with the lion lying with the lamb (Isa 11:6), swords beaten into ploughshares (Isa 2:4) and God making a covenant of peace with Israel (Ezek 34:25) is not yet (Davies and Allison 2004a, 167). Luke 2:35 recounts that when Simeon blesses Mary he predicts that a sword would pierce her soul. Jesus’s apostles will also experience the effect of the sword when they are willing to forsake the members of their family in order to follow Jesus and carry their cross. This difficult teaching

² Στρουθία (“sparrows”) were cheap food for the poor (as well as pets for the rich); Deissmann (1927, 272–275) lists sparrows as the cheapest of the birds sold for food according to a third-century CE decree. The monetary worth of two sparrows was insignificant, since an *assarion* (ἀσσάριον) was a copper coin worth about one-sixteenth of a denarius, the normal wage for day labourers (Turner 2008, 340; cf. MacDonald 1989).

is only exacerbated when one considers the importance of the family in the HB (Exod 20:12; 21:17; Lev 20:9; Deut 5:16) and in the teaching of Jesus (Matt 15:4–6; 19:8–9, 19) (Turner 2008, 334; Malina, Joubert and Van der Watt 1995, 26). The situation of the first Jewish readers should be kept in mind (Borg and Crossan 2006, 136), where Jewish Christians experienced lethal persecution in the Jewish homeland during the great rebellion of 66 to 74 CE, and the ongoing persecution when Jewish Christians were rejected by Jewish nationalists for their perceived betrayal during the Roman siege of Jerusalem and the temple. The persecutions of Jewish Christians were characterised by interfamily betrayals and denials (Borg and Crossan 2006, 137).

In 10:32–33 the evangelist uses a tightly structured double parallelism: confession before others; confession before God // denial before others; denial before God (Nolland 2005, 438). Only Πᾶς οὖν ὅστις (“everyone then who”) in v. 32 and ὅστις δ’ ἄν (“but whoever”) in v. 33 disturb the exact balance. The parallel text in Luke 12:8–9 does not use the same tightly controlled parallelism; for the sake of brevity and variety Luke loosens the parallelism. Mark 8:38 influences Luke’s use at 9:26 in the first confession statement. οὖν (“therefore,” 10:32) should be read against the background of the need for public proclamation in v. 27 (“preach from/on the rooftops what I say to you”) and the prospect of destruction of body and soul in Gehenna (Sim 2005, 94).³ At the heart of the apostles’ identification with Jesus, which inevitably will lead to persecution, lies the acknowledgement that they belong to him.⁴ When and where would the acknowledgement before God take place? It is not specified but Nolland (2005, 439) suggests that there may be an echo of 7:22–23 where the timing is ἐν ἐκείνῃ τῇ ἡμέρᾳ (“on that day”), referring to the day when people will enter, or fail to enter, into the kingdom of heaven. The same idea is emphasised in 10:28 with its reference of the destruction of καὶ ψυχὴν καὶ σῶμα ἀπολέσαι ἐν γεέννῃ (“destroy both soul and body in Gehenna”). However, the context does not provide for a judicial setting although some think that ἔμπροσθεν (“in front of, ahead,

³ Gehenna, the valley of Hinnom southwest of the old city of Jerusalem, is a dreadful place where human sacrifice was at one time offered to the god Molech (2 Kgs 23:10; 2 Chr 28:3; 33:6; Jer 7:31–32; 19:2–9; 32:35) and where a constant fire burned, incinerating the city’s garbage (see Turner 2008, 339; Milikowsky 1988).

⁴ The use of ἐν after ὁμολογήσω is probably a Semitism.

forward”) might betray a reference to a judgment scene.⁵ Matthew views Jesus as the one who will determine entrance to the kingdom of heaven for those with whom he is in relationship. And God is for Matthew’s Jesus *πατρός μου τοῦ ἐν οὐρανοῖς* (“my Father who is in heaven”), as happens often in Matthew (Carter 2001, 63).⁶

Jesus has explained in 10:17–22 what difficulties the disciples will face during their mission, and according to 10:34 Jesus claims for himself the initiative in creating those difficulties. Jesus has come not to bring peace; in this context Jesus’s remark should be understood that he came to bring a sword. It seems that the reference is the result of his disciples’ choosing to follow him. They will be persecuted by friend, foe, and family. Jesus brings the sword which cuts families in half (Sim 2000, 103).

Conversely, Isa 9:5–7 and Zech 9:9–10 explicitly mention that the Messiah would bring peace and Luke 2:14 declares that peace was his mission.⁷ The peace Matthew’s Davidic king-Messiah (Oedema 2012, 103, 110) brings consists, however, of more than the absence of fighting: it is a restored relationship with God (“to stand before my Father in heaven,” v. 33). In the bringing of such peace, conflict is inevitable, as not all will accept one’s new allegiance to Jesus, including one’s family members. In that sense Jesus has come to bring the sword. France (1985, 192) is correct in stating that as long as some men refuse the Lordship of God, to follow the prince of peace will always be a way of conflict. He came to turn family members against each other. Jesus is the subject of the action in a “shockingly counterintuitive statement” (Turner 2008, 341): *Μὴ νομίσητε ὅτι ἦλθον βαλεῖν εἰρήνην ἐπὶ τὴν γῆν . . . ἦλθον γὰρ διχάσαι ἄνθρωπον κατὰ τοῦ πατρὸς αὐτοῦ . . .* (“Think not that I came to send peace on the earth . . . I came to set a man at variance against his father”). Is this deliberately meant to be paradoxical? In 10:13 the apostles are to bring peace to the house where they are staying: *ἐὰν μὲν ᾗ ἡ οἰκία ἀξία, ἐλθάτω ἡ εἰρήνη ὑμῶν ἐπ’ αὐτήν* (“if the house be worthy, let your peace come upon it”). And children of God are peacemakers (*οἱ εἰρηνοποιοί*), according to 5:9. However, Jewish eschatological hope allowed that the longed-for “day of YHWH” would be “darkness, not light . . . Will not the day of the LORD be darkness, not light; pitch-dark, without a ray of

⁵ The same word is used in Matt 26:70 of Peter’s denial, again in a non-judicial context.

⁶ Matt 5:16, 45; 6:1, 9; 7:11, 21.

⁷ This may also explain why Luke in his parallel to Matt 10:34 does not use “sword” but interprets the conflict only in terms of division (Stronstad 2001, 58).

brightness?” (Amos 5:18–20; cf. Joel 1:15; 2:1–2, 11, 31; Isa 13:6). And this is supported and taken further in the apocalyptic tradition that anticipated a time of great distress and strife (*4 Ezra* 6:24; 9:2–3; *Jub.* 23:16; *1 En.* 100:1–4; Nolland 1990, 709; Robinson 2004, 112). It seems that paradoxical statements determine to a certain extent the way the Gospel presents its Jesus (Davies and Allison 2004a, 289).⁸

In 5:17 Jesus asserts that his listeners should not think that he came to abolish the Law or the Prophets; he had not come to abolish them but to fulfil them (Μὴ νομίσητε ὅτι ἦλθον καταλῦσαι τὸν νόμον ἢ τοὺς προφῆτας· οὐκ ἦλθον καταλῦσαι ἀλλὰ πληρῶσαι). In other words, Jesus assures his listeners that he conforms to traditional expectations, although it might seem that he does not. In 10:34 he asserts that his listeners should not suppose that he came to bring peace to the earth; he did not come to bring peace but the sword (Davies and Allison 2004b, 1:551–553). He claims not to conform to traditional expectations even though he does seem to conform to the expectation that he will be the prince of peace. The Gospel warns not to mistake Jesus by relating him too rigidly to popular traditional categories, whether in a positive or negative sense (Horsley 2003, 14; Nolland 2005, 440).

2.3 *The literal meaning of “sword”*

What is the meaning of “sword” (μάχαιρα)?⁹ According to Louw & Nida (1996, 57), μάχαιρα refers to a relatively short sword (or even dagger)

⁸ Examples of such paradoxical remarks are found in Matt 3:8 where repentance is viewed as a precondition for becoming a disciple but where even the righteous had need of it; 4:19’s “fishers of men” with its negative ring causing one to think of deceit or persuasion in order to “trap” people but also in the positive sense; 8:22’s “the dead burying their own dead”; 11:30’s “my yoke is easy, and my burden is light” when no yoke is comfortable or light; 17:20, “to move mountains”; in 24 sketching Jesus’s consoling and all-powerful presence but also as the absent Master whose delay permits the power of evil to inflict tribulation; and in the exclusivity/inclusivity that marks Jesus’s respective remarks, where the mission to Samaritans is discouraged but the whole world is to be reached with the gospel (Matt 28:19). In this way, Matthew presents Jesus with the head of Janus, a personage with two faces (Weren 2015, 9). See also §1.

⁹ Between the third millennium BCE and the Graeco-Roman period (333 BCE–324 CE), the sword evolved through a variety of shapes, lengths, and levels of durability (Mattingly 2011, 1001). Although the long sword was improved and used throughout the Mediterranean region until relatively modern times, Greek and Roman soldiers also used shorter swords. The typical sword of Roman soldiers was the *gladius*. It was wide-

used for cutting and stabbing. It was a close-range weapon composed of a metal blade, which was usually bronze or iron in the biblical period, with a wooden or bone handle (Mattingly 2011, 1001). The μάχαιρα was from 35.5 to 45.7 cm long and its special quality was that it was as sharp as a razor (O'Rourke 2015, 3). It was kept in a sheath (1 Sam 17:51; Matt 26:52; Mariottini 2003, 1542–1543). Swords were widely used as offensive weapons and are by far the weapon mentioned most often in the Bible (Myers 1987, 974)—well over four hundred times (Mattingly 1985, 1003).

2.4 *The metaphorical meaning of “sword”*

Jesus's saying purposefully contrasts “sword” to “peace” (εἰρήνη): the sword signifies personal strife and public persecution, and may extend to the thought of martyrdom (Davies and Allison 2004a, 167). “Sword” stands as an image of destructive hostility as well as a symbol of aggression, authority and power (Manser 2009, 431), and as an image for divine judgment (Ezek 21:3; Rev 1:16), although that is not the case in this pericope; it should rather be interpreted in terms of vv. 35–36 and 37–39. Jesus's presence and message disturb the domestic harmony of families where some members become his followers—καὶ ἐχθροὶ τοῦ ἀνθρώπου οἱ οἰκιακοὶ αὐτοῦ (“your enemies will be the members of your own household”) (v. 36), a reference to Mic 7:6 with its general prediction of social disruption. Matt 10:21 changes the referent to religious persecution, and here it is seen as the direct and intended result of Jesus's own mission. Διχάσαι (“set against, turn someone against someone,” or “divide,” v. 35) means more literally “separate”; Jesus brings an inevitable separation between those who respond positively and others who respond negatively to his message (Esler 2005, 16). Six categories of people (and only five persons, because “mother-in-law” and “mother” refer to the same person) are living together in a single household in biblical times because the wife¹⁰ joins her husband's family at marriage. The “daughter” is unmarried because she is still residing with her parents. The reference to οἱ οἰκιακοὶ

bladed, 3.175 to 3.62 kg in weight and 1 to 1.17 m long. The broad blade did horrific damage to internal organs so that survival of the wound to the body was near impossible. Romans bent on suicide fell on the gladius (Yamauchi 1999, 321). Only members of a Roman legion had access to a gladius. Jesus's disciples could not have carried a huge military broadsword without getting arrested.

¹⁰ Νύμφη refers to a “bride,” but in the LXX it gained the meaning “daughter-in-law,” and it is used here in this sense (Newman 1971, 122).

seems to be an echo of 10:25, with Jesus as the οἰκοδεσπότην (“head of the house”) and his disciples as τοὺς οἰκιακοὺς αὐτοῦ (“his household members”). The contrast between the newly formed household of disciples and the former natural household is found in 12:46–50 where Jesus seemingly denies his relationship with his own family in favour of his disciples (Keener 1999, 197). One’s allegiance to Jesus can cause such dissension that one’s family relationships will be severed, no doubt bringing excruciating anguish, but this temporary trauma must be compared with the horror of separation from Jesus and his Father. One’s ultimate loyalty must now lie with the new family of Jesus’s followers, as Jesus demonstrated (Matt 12:46–50; John 7:3–9; Turner 2008, 334).

In what way is Jesus responsible for the experience of the sword rather than peace, as found in this family conflict that would characterise his disciples’ lives? The conflict arises because of Jesus’s claim of extreme loyalty to himself to such an extent that normal family ties and commitments are undercut (Malina 1993, 78). Following Jesus must take precedence over natural love for one’s family (natural affection of φιλέω), implying that one leaves and loses οἰκίας ἢ ἀδελφοὺς ἢ ἀδελφὰς ἢ πατέρα ἢ μητέρα ἢ γυναῖκα ἢ τέκνα ἢ ἀγροὺς ἕνεκεν τοῦ ὀνόματός μου (“houses or brothers or sisters or father or mother or wife or children or fields for my sake”) (v. 37). Jesus underscores the reality that the primary allegiance of disciples must be to Jesus and to their new family of fellow disciples, not to their natural families (Turner 2008, 337). The family ties that defined the identity and world of its members are relativised in favour of a newly found, more fundamental tie.¹¹ Jesus calls not for an unloving attitude, but for a willingness to put him first in the concrete situation where the calls and aims of Jesus and of family conflict (France 1985, 193). The apostles would have understood what Jesus is saying because they have left their families, including parents who were their responsibility as well as their wives and children in order to accompany Jesus for three years (19:27). Verses 37–39 are arranged in a symmetrical manner. As in v. 35, the focus is on cross-generational relationships, but this time Jesus includes cross-gender relationships (πατέρα ἢ μητέρα and ὁ φιλῶν υἱὸν ἢ θυγατέρα) and in this way views the one addressed in terms of the link to the generation above and the generation below and as in v. 36, Matthew does not give preference to one gender contra Luke who

¹¹ The rabbis also taught that the claims of the teacher come before those of the father (*m. B. Meši‘a* 2:11).

addresses only males (Nolland 2005, 441). Matthew's use of "worthy" (ἄξιος) in ch. 10 is remarkable.¹² Worthiness for Matthew is not so much a moral rectitude but a readiness to perceive and respond to what God is now doing in Jesus. It is vital to be worthy to Jesus (ἔστιν μου ἄξιος).

The radicality of the claim of Jesus to fierce loyalty (reminding of the Hebrew *דָּבָר*) sounds discomfoting and it is often softened by interpreting it as a readiness to put God ahead of any other relationship. However, the question remains what Jesus meant with these words, especially in the light of Luke 14:26: Εἴ τις ἔρχεται πρὸς με καὶ οὐ μισεῖ τὸν πατέρα ἑαυτοῦ καὶ τὴν μητέρα καὶ τὴν γυναῖκα καὶ τὰ τέκνα καὶ τοὺς ἀδελφοὺς καὶ τὰς ἀδελφάς, ἔτι τε καὶ τὴν ψυχὴν ἑαυτοῦ, οὐ δύναται εἶναι μου μαθητής ("if anyone comes to me and does not hate father and mother, wife and children, brothers and sisters—yes, even their own life—such a person cannot be my disciple"), linked to Luke 14:27 that emphasises the necessity of carrying one's cross (Davies and Allison 2004a, 168). The imagery of the cross is taken from the Roman custom that requires of the condemned criminal to carry the cross bar of his designated pole to the place of execution, not an uncommon sight in Roman Palestine where cross-bearing language would have a clear enough meaning for all Palestines, victims of Roman oppression (France 1985, 193).¹³ The focus is not on Jesus's cross; the call is rather to make the dangerous choice to follow the Jesus of the sword. For this reason, Matthew's use of ἀκολουθεῖ ("follow") differs from Luke 14:27's βασιτάζει ("come after") and Mark 8:34's ἐλθεῖν ("follow").

Loyalty to Jesus implies for Matthew a collision course for disciples with the natural and traditional expectations of their family members. One loses one's place in the closely-knit community of the first-century Palestinian world (Malina et al. 1995, 67–69). Loss of "life" (ψυχή, v. 39) refers here not to "soul" but "life" since the polarity involved is that of life and death and relates to the imagery of the cross and the sword (vv. 34, 38). John 12:25 modifies the saying to make it more understandable, ὁ φιλοῦν τὴν ψυχὴν αὐτοῦ ἀπολλύει αὐτήν, καὶ ὁ μισῶν τὴν ψυχὴν αὐτοῦ ἐν τῷ κόσμῳ τούτῳ εἰς ζωὴν αἰώνιον φυλάξει αὐτήν ("Anyone who loves their life will lose it, while anyone who hates their life in this world will keep it for eternal life"). However, the emphasis in Matthew is on the immediate threat to one's life if you choose not to follow Jesus. To carry

¹² Cf. Matt 10:10, 11, 13, 37, 38. The word is found elsewhere in Matthew only in 3:8; 22:8.

¹³ "Every criminal who is executed carries his own cross" (Plutarch, *Sera* 9.554b).

your cross implies that you die to what is naturally important to you and live for Christ's sake; the natural consequence is animosity from relatives and others in one's life (Tigcheler 1987, 34).

The sayings are deliberately riddling and paradoxical in order to cloak the dangers and threats that Jesus's instructions pose for the mission of his apostles. Xenophon (*Anab.* 3.1.43) challenges his troops in battle to maintain courage under fire because it is precisely the soldier who is prepared to face death courageously who is least likely to die in battle. Matthew does not refer to the loss or gain of eternal life but to a way of living consisting of not compromising the loyalty due to God/Jesus; the contradiction is that it will seem that disciples lose their life due to the sword and cross but they will be more alive than anyone else. It should be remembered, argues Davies and Allison (2004a, 153, 156), that the proclamation referred to in 10:7 is not only the proclamation by the apostles but also of Matthew's church (Schnackenburg 2002, 197), and Matt 10 is not addressed only to the historic apostles as representatives of the "Jesus movement," as sociologists of the NT refer to them (Arlandson 2015b, 1), but also to later missionaries.

3 All Who Draw the Sword Will Die by the Sword: Matthew 26:52

The first sword saying in Matthew emphasises that Jesus has not come to bring peace but the sword, and "sword" is qualified as a metaphor for discord that would rip families apart due to the exclusive loyalty expected from followers of Jesus. What is the relation between this saying and the reference to the sword in Jesus's arrest?

3.1 Two precautionary swords (Luke 22:35–38)

In Matt 10:9–10 (Luke 9:3; 10:4) Jesus told his disciples not to get any gold, silver, or copper coins to take with them in their belts, or a bag, extra shirt, sandals or staff. According to Luke 22:35, Jesus refers to the previous mission (mentioned in Matt 10 and Luke 9–10) and asks whether the apostles lacked anything when he sent them without purse, bag or sandals. They professed that they lacked nothing. Then, in Luke 22:36, he tells them now to take a purse and bag with them, and to sell their cloak and buy a sword because what is written about him is reaching its fulfilment (v. 37). In v. 38 the disciples assure him that they have two swords available and he replies, "That's enough" (Ἰκανόν ἐστίν). The

saying can be interpreted in four ways: As a rebuke to the disciples, “enough of this kind of talk!” (Morris 1974, 310); as denotation of the fact that even two swords are enough to show human inadequacy at stopping God’s plan for the death of Christ—swords could not stop God’s purpose and plan (Elwell 1995, 312); Jesus may simply have been saying that two swords were adequate for the twelve of them (Reiling and Swellengrebel 1993, 699); or the clause can be seen as in conjunction with the quotation from Isaiah (53:12) and then understand Jesus to mean that by possessing two swords they would be classified by others as transgressors or criminals (Martin 1985, 260; Elwell 1995, 312).¹⁴

3.2 *One sword in action (Matthew 26:47–56)*

The second sword scene in Matthew is part of the Passion account (Matt 26:1–27:66), beginning with the Passover that Jesus celebrates with his disciples, followed by his announcement that one of the Twelve will denounce him, that all of them will forsake him, while one of them will deny him explicitly three times; the prayer in the Garden of Gethsemane; and Jesus’s arrest. During the arrest Jesus is identified by Judas (26:47–56), and Jesus is taken to appear before the Sanhedrin (26:57–68) where Peter denies Jesus three times (26:69–75). The betrayal by Judas in 26:47–56 has its counterpart in the denial by Peter in 26:69–75 (Nolland 2005, 1107), and these two accounts frame the account of Jesus before the Sanhedrin which is the central piece of chs. 26–27. For disciples to abandon their teacher in this way was a betrayal that would have deeply shamed the teacher (Malina 1993, 18).

3.2.1 The betrayal by Judas

Instead of Mark’s ἐὺθὺς (“immediately”; 14:43), Matthew uses the emphatic ἰδοὺ before Ἰούδας in Matt 26:47. This happens again in v. 51 as a means to mark a division in the unit between vv. 47–50 and 51–56

¹⁴ The interpretation of this text illustrates what Weren says (according to Van der Merwe 2015, 2) that the Matthean text has layered and multifaceted meanings that are closely interwoven and determined by the literary, intertextual, cultural, and historical context. Meaning is the result of the interplay between a textual unit and other factors such as language, literary context, and cultural setting and it is constituted by linguistics (structure, discourse analysis and intertextuality) and interpreted in its socio-cultural environment. In following this line of reasoning, a text mediates reading that is not only embedded behind or in the text but with the assistance of the reader mediates meaning that lies in front of the text.

(Nolland 2005, 1107–1108). The betrayer leads the arresting group to Jesus and identifies Jesus with a kiss. Jesus accepts the arrest and denies the help of his disciples and protests the use of the sword. Judas is εἷς τῶν δώδεκα (“one of the Twelve”), to emphasise the shocking fulfilment of Jesus’s prediction in v. 21. Judas is joined μετ’ αὐτοῦ ὄχλος πολὺς μετὰ μαχαίρων καὶ ξύλων ἀπὸ τῶν ἀρχιερέων καὶ πρεσβυτέρων τοῦ λαοῦ (“a large crowd [contra Mark’s crowd] armed with swords and clubs, sent from the chief priests and the elders of the people”). Only the chief priests and elders of the Jews are involved; the Roman authorities are not yet co-opted. The number of the crowd is great in comparison with the disciple group but it should not be overestimated as they represent an undercover operation (vv. 3–5) (France 1985, 379). “Clubs” (ξύλων) can also be translated as “cudgels,” “staves” (ASV) or “heavy sticks used in fighting” (L&N 1996, 56). The number of the crowd and their weapons seem to suggest that they intended to take into custody a dangerous criminal. Perhaps they feared that the disciples would defend Jesus at any cost (Hagner 1995, 788). The reference to swords and clubs serves clearly an ironic purpose: weapons are superfluous because Jesus, faithful to his word, eschews physical violence (Davies and Allison 2004a, 485). Matthew’s “great crowd” serves as a contrast to v. 53’s πλείω δώδεκα λεγιῶνας ἀγγέλων (“more than twelve legions of angels”), and their swords and clubs stand in contrast to the one (explicitly mentioned) sword carried by Jesus’s disciples.

On the surface it is Judas who takes the initiative at this stage but the repeated intention of these verses is to show that in fact it is Jesus who is in control. What happens here happens only because Jesus deliberately refuses to prevent it, as he could easily have done (cf. v. 53) (France 1985, 379). From this point on, the narrative takes on an inexorability that reflects a mysterious conjunction of human determination and divine superintendence (Hagner 1995, 787). Judas is ὁ δὲ παραδιδούς αὐτὸν (“the one who handed him over”), kissing Jesus who is his target. Presumably Judas’s choice of a kiss (φιλήσω) as a signal (σημεῖον contra Mark’s rare σύσημον) is based on the desire not to forewarn Jesus or his disciples about what is happening (Nolland 2005, 1109). A disciple does not kiss his master (on hand or foot) as an everyday greeting, but as a mark of special honour (France 1985, 380) and certainly not uninvited; to do so would be “a studied insult” (Albright and Mann 1971, 329). Judas’s greeting of Jesus as rabbi in this context is probably heavily ironic and hypocritical, and the verb for “kiss” in v. 48—φιλήσω—is in an intensive form in v.

49—κατεφίλησεν (Hagner 1995, 788) to emphasise the perfidy of betrayal with a kiss, as in 2 Sam 20:9 (cf. Prov 27:6), or to suggest that the kiss was prolonged to make sure the crowd had time to mark the man (Nolland 2005, 1110). Judas greets Jesus with the standard Greek greeting, Χαῖρε,¹⁵ ῥαββί (v. 49), and Matthew uses the term in conjunction with the greeting of those who crown Jesus with a crown of thorns and pay him homage in 27:29, Χαῖρε, βασιλεῦ τῶν Ἰουδαίων (“Hail, king of the Jews!”). The only other reference to “rabbi” is in v. 25, and there the term is also used by Judas. Jesus replies cryptically (v. 50): Ἐταῖρε, ἐφ’ ὃ πάρει (“Friend, towards what are you here,” probably meaning, “do what you came for”), leading to the action of the crowd with the words τότε προσελθόντες (“then, having come towards”). Matthew is the only evangelist using the vocative Ἐταῖρε (“Friend,” also in 20:13; 22:12; 26:50), indicating the existence of something in common with the other person (Nolland 2005, 1110). Here it may refer to Judas as one of the Twelve although the tone may also be ironic. France (1985, 380) mentions that “friend” is sometimes used for a table-companion, suggesting that Jesus might have wanted to remind Judas of his presence at the supper-table earlier that evening. Matthew uses the term twice in 20:13 and 22:12, and in both cases there is also an element of rebuke. Turner (2008, 770) adds that “friend” refers only to an acquaintance and does not imply a close relationship (so also Eltester 1962, 74). Jesus’s phrase, ἐφ’ ὃ πάρει, is difficult and obscurely elliptical because it implies completion with something that has to be implied. One solution is to punctuate the phrase as a question, “Why are you here?,” “Is that (to kiss me) why you are here?” or “What are you here for?” Otherwise the statement needs to be completed, probably in light of the emphasis in ch. 26 that Jesus knows what is coming, and then the incomplete sentence is implied to be completed with οἶδα (“I know what you are here for”) or γεννηθήτω as in 26:42, “Let what you are here for happen.” “Go on, do what you are here for!” Harrington (2000, 385–388) argues that the sentence should be completed with, “that is what you are here for,” recognising that Judas has by this point fulfilled his role. Otherwise the expression might be an exclamation expressing Jesus’s moment of insight into the significance of the kiss. France (1985, 380) suggests that the sentence can be interpreted as a command (RSV), a wish, or an exclamation. The words in v. 50: τότε προσελθόντες ἐπέβαλον τὰς χεῖρας ἐπὶ τὸν Ἰησοῦν (“Then, having stepped

¹⁵ The angel Gabriel addresses Mary in the same manner according to Luke 1:28.

forward, they laid their hands on Jesus”) serves as the counterpart to v. 45’s παραδίδεται εἰς χεῖρας ἀμαρτωλῶν (“is delivered into the hands of sinners”). It is not necessary to choose which of the alternatives makes more sense; the best is to consider it as a deliberately ambiguous statement.

3.2.2 An ear struck by a sword

The beginning of v. 51, καὶ ἰδοὺ, matches the opening of v. 47 and the implication is clear, that the second half of the story begins here. The words connote surprise (Davies and Allison, 2004a, 486). Matthew’s εἷς τῶν μετὰ Ἰησοῦ (“one of those with Jesus”) is rather vague contra Mark’s εἷς δὲ τις τῶν παρεστηκότων (“a certain one of the ones standing there”), Luke 22:49–50’s ἰδόντες οἱ περὶ αὐτὸν τὸ ἐσόμενον (“and when those who were about him saw what would follow”) and εἷς τις ἐξ αὐτῶν (“one of them”) that attributes the action to one of the disciples, and John 18:10’s Σίμων οὖν Πέτρος ἔχων μάχαιραν εἵλκυσε αὐτήν καὶ ἔπαισεν τὸν τοῦ ἀρχιερέως δοῦλον καὶ ἀπέκοψε αὐτοῦ τὸ ὠτάριον τὸ δεξιόν (“Simon Peter who had a sword drew it and struck the high priest’s servant, cutting off [or “shear off” Reiling and Swellengrebel 1993, 704] his right ear”). The disciple uses a μάχαιρα, a sword or knife that can be used to assassinate or kill someone (like a *sica* or *sicarius*; *TDNT* 7:281) but not when used like the disciple or companion does. His use of the sword does not reflect an angry and impulsive attempt to kill the slave; it is a much more deliberate act of maiming the slave, instead of murdering him. O’Rourke (2015, 4) speculates that it might be possible that the disciple sees it as a symbolic act with the slave as personal servant and representative of the high priest, serving as Caiaphas’s “extra ear” at the arrest and the disciple deliberately taking the ear of the eavesdropper. The mutilation of an ear would also have disqualified the victim from any temple service (*ibid.*). Mark and John’s reference to “ear” is extraordinary. ὠτάριον is a diminutive of οὖς, “little ear,” used in later Hellenistic documents as a simple synonym for οὖς, the outward ear, while Matthew uses ὠτίον, a diminutive of οὖς, referring to the lobe of the ear (*TDNT* 5:558). John adds that the servant’s name was Malchus. “With Jesus” (μετὰ Ἰησοῦ) reflects vv. 37 and 40’s “with me” (μετ’ ἐμοῦ). The phrase ἐκτείνας τὴν χεῖρα (“stretching out [his] hand”) is an idiom found commonly in the LXX; Matthew adds it to give significance to the action he is about to report, and it forms one of the few instances where Matthew

adds something to Mark's account not obviously useful or necessary (Hagner 1995, 788).

3.2.3 Jesus's response to violence

Matt 26:52–54 has no equivalent in Mark, although the links between 26:52 and Luke 22:51 as well as John 18:11 are evident. Jesus's saying, πάντες γὰρ οἱ λαβόντες μάχαιραν ἐν μαχαίρῃ ἀπολοῦνται (“for all who draw the sword will die by the sword”) is probably proverbial language. With proverbial language the need is to identify the appropriate setting within which the dictum proves true (Nolland 2004, 32). And the setting of this chiasmically formed proverb (Hagner 1995, 789) may be found in Gen 9:6, “Whoever sheds the blood of a person, by a person their blood will be shed,” a foundational principle in human justice (cf. Rev 13:10, which takes up the logion). Jesus broadens the sphere to embrace the imposition of one's will by violence or threat of violence and by moving from a consideration of violence only as evil done to another, to the use of violence, or the threat of violence, to protect oneself from the will of the other, what the disciple is seeking to do with his sword (Nolland 2004, 32). Nolland (*ibid.*) suggests that we have in Jesus's words a version of the fundamental principle of justice that has been refracted through the lens of his call to love one's enemies because love of enemies is the principle by which God will judge human behaviour. Perishing by the sword may occur at the final judgment or in the daily or cumulative personal life of the individual (Nolland 2004, 32 n. 29). France (1985, 38) suggests that it is more than a proverb; it echoes the interpretation of Isa 50:11 reflected in the Targum, which interprets the “kindling of fire” as taking up the sword. The crowd came μετὰ μαχαίρων καὶ ξύλων (“with swords and war clubs,” vv. 47, 55) in order to embrace their will by violence or threat of violence while the disciple wants to protect himself and his Master from the will of the others. Jesus responds by living out the principle of non-violent non-resistance (France 1985, 380; Gardner 1991, 381–382; Turner 2008, 770). The companion who resists Jesus's arrest by violence has misread the situation. Jesus is not a helpless victim and does not need human help. Matthew wishes to emphasise that Jesus is arrested because he so chooses as he has indicated three times to his disciples when he explained to them how, why and in what manner he will be arrested, tried and killed (16:21–28; 17:22–23; 20:17–19). Jesus could have called upon τὸν πατέρα μου (“my Father”), as Jesus also addresses God in Gethsemane (vv. 39, 42) (Nolland 2005, 1114). His Father would have answered his call by putting

at his disposal ἄρτι πλείω δώδεκα λεγιῶνας ἀγγέλων (“more than twelve legions of angels”); the supposition is that the “large crowd” that the Jewish leaders sent would be as nothing (Nolland 2005, 1114).¹⁶

If Jesus’s words in 26:52 consisted only of the clause that the companion should put away his sword, then it would have been reasonable to suppose that the insistence on non-resistance should be linked to God’s specific will for Jesus at this point. The second part of the verse, however, generalises Jesus’s insistence on non-violence that one should not take up the sword unless one should perish by the sword (Nolland 2004, 32).

Matthew 24:6 states that δεῖ γὰρ γενέσθαι (“for it is necessary . . . to happen”), and repeated in 26:54’s πῶς οὖν πληρωθῶσιν αἱ γραφαὶ ὅτι οὕτως δεῖ γενέσθαι; (“how then would the Scriptures be fulfilled that it must happen in this way?”), as part of the first Passion prediction found in 16:21. The fulfilment of Scripture is mentioned again in v. 56, but with a unique denominator, αἱ γραφαὶ τῶν προφητῶν, occurring only here in the NT (Hagner 1995, 790). προφητῶν refers to the second division of the HB. And as in the Passion prediction, no specific basis for its necessity is offered, with οὕτως referring to “like this”; not the exact form of the event now taking place but the larger shape into which it fits is considered scripturally necessary (Nolland 2005, 1114).

Jesus’s words in 26:52 are meaningful: Ἀπόστρεψον τὴν μάχαιράν σου εἰς τὸν τόπον αὐτῆς (“Put your sword back in its place”); τόπος probably refers to the scabbard or holder in the disciple’s belt or another article of clothing, the receptacle into which a sword is customarily placed for safekeeping (L&N 1996, 67). Jesus does not tell the disciple to throw the sword away or to get rid of it. It might have suggested that the sword will not protect Jesus from arrest but that the disciples may still need the sword to protect themselves during and after the arrest. Jesus affirms that for him it is better to suffer injustice than to use violence as a means of protection or retribution, and this affirmation is underscored by his willingness to suffer and die (Newman and Stine 1992, 822).

Brandon (1967, 139), Aslan (2013, 216) and Hutchinson (2015, 193) insist that Jesus is best understood as a political insurgent, who was

¹⁶ A “legion” was up to six thousand soldiers, not including the auxiliary troops, which were generally of approximately equal number (Newman and Stine 1992, 823). Perhaps the twelve legions may be one each for Jesus and the eleven remaining disciples (France 1985, 381) but it may also be intended to correspond to the twelve tribes of Israel (Hagner 1995, 790). The number twelve has important implications (Matt 10:1; 19:28; cf. Rev 21:12–14; Turner 2008, 771).

recognised and treated as such by the Romans. At least one of Jesus's companions was armed when the authorities came to arrest him and this serves as evidence for the violent nature of Jesus's enterprise. In a politically incendiary time (Pesach) in the Jewish capital city, Jesus's group qualifies as an armed group. However, Ehrman (2006, 217) points out (to my mind correctly) that however one explains the sword carried by one (or more) of Jesus's followers, the emphasis on peacemaking and on the future intervention of God (and not humans) in Jesus's teaching has suggested to most historians (e.g., Latourette 1953, 42; Armstrong 2014, 124–126) that Jesus himself was not a proponent of violent overthrow of the empire. And it is important to note that Jesus himself is never said to have been armed. If he was the leader of a group of insurrectionists, this would be odd.

Jesus's further response is also telling: Ὡς ἐπὶ ληστὴν¹⁷ ἐξήλθατε μετὰ μαχαίρων καὶ ξύλων συλλαβεῖν με; (“Am I leading a rebellion that you have come out with swords and clubs to capture me?”) Why did the authorities not arrest him while he was teaching in the temple? Not far beneath the surface of Jesus's statement is an exposure of their cowardice (Hagner 1995, 790). He is not a ληστής; the term is understood in terms of political subversion or revolution (NIV, NLT) or mere theft (KJV, NRSV). Given the context, the former seems more likely (Turner 2008, 771). The pericope closes with the remark, τότε οἱ μαθηταὶ πάντες ἀφέντες αὐτὸν ἔφυγον (“Then all the disciples deserted him and fled”), which Jesus foretold as a fulfilment of Zechariah (Matt 26:31; Zech 13:7; Weren 2015, 2).¹⁸ Why do the disciples only now flee? Chrysostom seems to get it right, “Thenceforth they saw that escape was no longer possible, when he was giving himself up to them voluntarily, and saying, that this was done according to the Scriptures” (Davies and Allison 2004a, 488). Their flight

¹⁷ Moule (1965, 119) mentions that Josephus most frequently applies the term ληστής to “revolutionaries.”

¹⁸ Weren (2015, 8) notes that the LXX version of Zech 13:7 creates a dichotomy between the shepherds (in plural, indicating the ruling classes), those struck by the sword, and the sheep (referring to the populace). The shepherd in Matt 26:31 refers to Jesus; he enjoys God's grace. Matthew reads these texts as a sort of photographic negative when he develops a positive image of Jesus as the shepherd (Weren 2015, 9). In this way he relates Judas who betrays Jesus as a representative of disaffected followers, and the high priests and scribes as the bad shepherds, contra Jesus as the true shepherd. These images get their power in the Matthean usage through the author's vagueness and ambiguity. He connects his story to Israel's heritage while taking the liberty to place new and own accents (Weren 2015, 9).

poignantly recalls their empty promise that if necessary they would die with Jesus (v. 35). Interestingly, since the focus is on Jesus, there is no mention of the arrest of the sword-bearer, even though one would have expected it.

4 Conclusion

The matter addressed was the possible justification of the Christian's use of violence in terms of Matthew's references to the sword as a metaphor of violence within the context of Jesus's ministry. Jesus prepares the apostles for the Jewish mission in Matt 10 and declares that they should not suppose that he has come to bring peace to the earth. He has come to bring a sword that will turn the apostles' household members against them. A next reference to a sword is in Jesus's arrest scene, in Matt 26, when an unknown companion of Jesus strikes the servant of the high priest with his sword. Jesus reacts by requesting the disciple to set aside his sword because people who draw swords die by the sword. Do these references show that Jesus in any way supported violence? It was mentioned earlier that Matthew's depiction of Jesus provides conflicting data about Jesus's attitude towards violence, with the non-violent Jesus of the Sermon on the Mount contrasted to the rhetorically violent Jesus who argues with the religious leaders and intentionally destroys their character and integrity, leading to the question whether Matthew presents a "bipolar" God of non-violent distributive justice and violent retributive justice. This tension continues in the seemingly physically violent Jesus who claims that he has brought the sword rather than peace (Matt 10:34), a tension that is only relieved by Matthew in the sword scene during Jesus's arrest (Matt 26:51–52).

The question is, how should Christians act against injustice and violence: non-violently or violently? Does Jesus's enigmatic pronouncement that he has not come to bring peace but the sword justify Christians to resort to violence? It is concluded that Matthew's Jesus does not endorse or encourage violence as a reaction to injustice or violence, and does not allow the use of violence by Christians contra what was advocated in some apocalyptic and zealot circles (Oegema 2012, 92). The paradox is that the cross and not the sword, suffering and not brute power determines the meaning of history (Yoder 1994, 232).¹⁹ However, Jesus

¹⁹ Hays (1996, 338) asserts that the texts about the sword should in particular be read and interpreted in light of the story of the cross. "The Old Testament taken by itself can

allows that his disciples would need to protect themselves, leaving room for carrying a sword. His commitment to non-violence demonstrated in *inter alia* Matt 5:22, 38–42, 44–48 is not annulled by what he remarks about swords; for that reason he does not provide for violent resistance to his arrest and trial. He does not call his disciples to violence, not even to a righteous kind of violence. Matthew 10:34 cannot, therefore, be used as a call to war; the context is family relationships and the metaphor of a “sword” refers to the possibility that following Jesus has the potential to split up households (Arlandson 2015c, 1). And although the fact that Jesus uses the proverb in 26:52—that all who draw the sword will die by the sword—cannot be taken as a proof text for absolute pacifism, Jesus does discourage violence in general as an unproductive path (Hagner 1995, 791), because violence only begets more violence (cf. 1 Pet 2:11–12). In the case of the arrest, passive submission alone is consonant with the will of God.

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obviously be used to authorize armed violence; however, the New Testament radically redefines obedience through the cross in such a way that disciples of Jesus can no longer wield the sword” (Hays 1996, 309).

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