

Burglar Beware

You awake from a deep sleep. What was that sound that awoke you? Tinkling glass? Was it a dream? You lie still next to your sleeping wife. Nothing. You think of the kids in the next bedroom. Maybe you should check they're OK. You get up and reach for the light switch. Nothing happens when you press, and then you hear movement downstairs, quiet muttering and then a stifled laugh. You go cold all over.

What do you do now? Horrific thoughts go through your head as you remember reading of couples tortured for bank account details, women raped. You pick up the phone by the bedside. Dead. No chance to phone for help. Now the ball is in your court – a Christian with a believing family. What should you do? Pray for a start.

You live in the country like Tony Martin, who ended up in prison in a similar situation. You too have a shotgun in the gun cabinet, used for rabbits, pheasants and squirrels. In the dark you feel for the key under the cover on your bedside table. The decision has already been made. No one will harm your family, no matter what the law says, because you believe in a higher law which gives you the right to protect your loved ones in exactly the same situation.

Exodus 22: 2-3. 'If a thief is caught breaking in and is struck so that he dies, the defender is not guilty of bloodshed; but if it happens after sunrise, he is guilty of bloodshed. A thief must certainly make restitution, but if he has nothing, he must be sold to pay for his theft.' NIV

There was a time when this very scripture made every Englishman's home his castle, for the scriptures became the foundation of English Common Law. Over the years liberal politicians have replaced those Biblical laws with their weak-kneed, ineffective, politically correct legislation, which often means the victim of crime ends up in jail, while the criminal goes free.

God knew this would happen, and declares: Isaiah 5:20, 'Woe to those who call evil good and good evil, who put darkness for light and light for darkness, who put bitter for sweet and sweet for bitter.' NIV Recently there have been signs that maybe sense is returning and this legislation may be reversed, so that those who break into a home at night will understand that any result will be upon their own head, as God's law declares.

Oh, and by the way, this law was part of the law God gave at Mount Sinai, about which Jesus said Matthew 5:17-18, 'Do not think that I have come to abolish the Law or the Prophets; I have not come to abolish them but to fulfill them. I tell you the truth, until heaven and earth disappear, not the smallest letter, not the least stroke of a pen, will by any means disappear from the Law until everything is accomplished.' NIV

The principle we are talking about here is the right of self defense, not the inflicting of punishment, which God has given over to the state. Romans 13:4. 'The authorities are God's servants, sent for your good. But if you are doing wrong, of course you should be afraid, for they have the power to punish you. They are God's servants, sent for the very purpose of punishing those who do what is wrong.' NLT.

So, if you have a weapon which you use to protect your family, the Biblical principle is: use as little force as required to ensure your families' safety, but, as far as God is concerned, you have every right to do that. The pity is that, at the moment, the courts don't yet see it that way!