

I remember their saying that back in 1939 when Hitler made his non-aggression pact with Stalin. They said, Look, Germany and Russia are getting together! Scripture is proven true. Scripture predicts they are going to get together. Well, people said that and then about 6 months later Hitler attacked Stalin and it looked as if that proved Scripture was true, this proved it was false. The fact is we should not be too dogmatic with saying that conditions that occur, or what the --- are what the Scripture points to. Because the Scripture may be pointing to something that has not come yet. And that will be fulfilled much more fully later. But these early Christians took this argument that that was the period Amos (Micah) was speaking about because that was the time when the mass of the people could beat their swords into plowshares and their spears into pruning hooks, and nations were not lifting up swords against nation because the Roman empire was holding nearly all of them in subjection during that period.

The average person did not have to learn war any more, and the result was when the barbarians broke into the empire they just pushed everything under them -- crushed everything under them and civilization disappeared practically for 1000 yrs. because the people should have been learning war to protect themselves against these barbarians, that broke into the empire. That was not the period that this describes.

Now do you think this is describing the Gospel dispensation as a whole? I do not know of any period when we could just not learn war any more unless we wanted to let ourselves be trampled upon and destroyed. That period has not come. As long as we have sin in the world, we've got to have policemen and armies! We've got to have them until Jesus Christ Himself sets up His kingdom of righteousness and peace. Oh, of course it is true that if everyone in the world would accept the Gospel, if everyone would be indwelt by the Holy Spirit then we could have a condition of universal righteousness. But I don't think we've ever had one town in which every single person had truly accepted Christ for himself. Individuals here and there have been reached by the Gospel, but God has not chosen to make every individual in any particular area of the earth Christ. As long as there is one individual who is not sincerely devoted to Christ you have a condition in which murder and fatalities can break out at any time. You need policemen. You need armies. You need people to learn war.

This is a glorious promise of a time of universal happiness and peace, but I don't see how it can be interpreted from an a-mil viewpoint! I don't see how it can be interpreted as describing the condition of the world today, or describing the church! Even within the professing church I don't think you could say they haven't learned war any more! There is certainly plenty of dispute and discension even within the professing church and there has always been as long as there are sinful people. This must look either to a time when the whole world has been converted to Christ or look to a time when Jesus sits in Jerusalem and reigns with a rod of iron and everyone must submit to him. They have no choice. Then we can no longer learn war because no nation will lift up sword against nation any more.

Then v.4 has what to people living in Israel in ancient times would seem like a most astonishing promise and it would have seemed so to most any body during the middle ages. "But they shall sit every man under his vine and under his fig tree and none shall make them afraid, for the mouth of the Lord of Hosts has spoken it. He says, You can sit right out in the open. You don't have to be in your house, with your gates and bars.