

## **(8<sup>th</sup> Sunday after Pentecost)**

The Psalmist, Dr. Seuss and God

"I will both lie down and sleep in peace, for you alone, O Lord, make me lie down in safely."

"The Butter Battle Book"

"The Big War is coming. You're going to begin it! And what's more, this time you are certain to win it... Big Boy Boomeroo... 'Grandpa!' I shouted. 'Be careful! Oh, gee! Who's going to drop it? Will you...? Or will He...?' 'Be patient,' said Grandpa. 'We'll see. We will see...'"

When did it begin? Who started it? My guess is that whoever and however it all began, it had little to do with which side a person buttered their bread, though maybe it was something just as silly as that.

Did it begin when Cain picked "a tough-tufted prickly Snick-Berry Switch" and attacked his brother Abel? Though a better guess would be he used a stone from the field to kill him?

Who really knows when the desire to kill, destroy, and/or annihilate the "other" person, people, side, culture, nation began or why it began at all?

In the book, *Guns, Germs, and Steel: The Fates of Human Societies*, author Jared Diamond writes: **"Twelve thousand years ago, everybody on earth was a hunter-gatherer; now almost all of us are farmers or else are fed by farmers. The spread of farming from those few sites of origin usually did not occur as a result of the hunter-gatherers elsewhere adopting farming... instead, farming spread mainly through farmers outbreeding hunters, developing more potent technology, and then killing the hunters or driving them off of all lands suitable for agriculture."**

The first weapons were sticks and stones to break the bones of humans. In the third millennium BCE, humans learned to forge copper and then bronze into daggers, swords, and spears. In 1044 CE, gunpowder was invented, allowing explosive devices to be developed into weapons. Cannons were invented in the 1200s. In 1364, the first use of a firearm was recorded.

In 1860, inventor Alfred Nobel, yes, the namesake of the Nobel Prize, discovered that by mixing nitroglycerine with silica it would turn liquid into a malleable paste – and voila – dynamite was invented!

And we all know that on December 17, 1903, those two bicycle store owners, brothers Wilber and Orville Wright, on the beach of Kitty Hawk, North Carolina, gave us the ability to fly!

Humans now had a new means of killing their enemies from the air by dropping bombs on them! And drop them we did, millions of tons of bombs on

each other! Whole cities were destroyed killing hundreds of thousands of men, women, and children.

Of course, all of that changed "at 5:29:45 a.m. (Mountain War Time) on July 16, 1945. In the pre-dawn hours in a New Mexico desert when a single bomb developed by the 'Boys in the Backroom' called 'The Gadget' exploded, ushering in the Atomic Age.

"Upon witnessing the explosion... Robert Oppenheimer, head of the Manhattan Project, quoted from the Bha-ga-vad Gita. **'I am become Death, the destroyer of worlds.'**" (<https://www.thoughtco.com/history-of-the-atomic-the-manhattan-project-1991237>)

On August 6, 1945 the **Enola Gay** loaded with an atomic bomb, nicknamed the "Big Boy Boomeroo," oops, wrong story, nicknamed the "Little Boy," flew over the Japanese mainland, unloaded its payload on the citizens of Hiroshima and changed the course of a war and the world. In a flash, 146,000 men, women, and children died – many being vaporized.

The Enola Gay pilot, Robert Lewis, in seeing the giant mushroom cloud, said: **"My God, what have we done?"**

**"My God, what have we done?"** is right. We have enough nuclear weapons to destroy the world many times over. But really, we only need to do it once, don't we?

The Congressional Budget Office, which provides budget and economic information to Congress, estimates that in the United States alone, through 2026, we will spend \$400 billion on our nuclear forces.

Let me break that down for you: \$189 billion is for strategic nuclear delivery systems and weapons (long range bombers, ICBMs, and SSBNs). \$9 billion is for shorter range nuclear delivery systems. \$87 billion for nuclear weapons laboratories and their supporting activities. \$58 billion for Department of Defense's command, control, communications and early warning system. The CBO estimates that the nuclear forces budget alone will increase by roughly 60 percent between 2017 and 2026.

(<https://www.cbo.gov/sites/default/files/115th-congress-2017-2018/reports/52401-nuclearcosts.pdf>)

Of course, those figures are for America. Russia, China, France, Britain, Israel, Pakistan, India, and North Korea all have nuclear weapons. Other countries are working on developing them. Why shouldn't they? Wouldn't you want to protect your own nation against the enemy?

There is a lot of money to be made from war. Investing in "Defense" companies is very lucrative. Maybe some of your own money is invested in them?

Take Motif Investment for example. On their home page they offer this thought: **"Invest in Guns, Guards, and Gates: Staying Safe In A Scary World. It's a dangerous world. Terrorist attacks, mass murders,**

**home-invasion robberies, and plenty of other incidents keep safety top of mind for many American individuals and businesses—not to mention the US government. It's left us increasingly vigilant in our hunt for products and security services to keep us safe. Often, after a highly publicized violent incident, government, business, and individual spending on weapons and security-related products and services tend to soar. Which means that, when it comes to keeping the bad guys at bay, price may be no object."** Invest with us!  
(<https://www.motifinvesting.com/motifs/guns-guards-and-gates>)

Staying safe is something we all want for ourselves and our families regardless which side you butter your bread. We are scared of "them." "They" are equally frightened of us. We are one push of a button away from nuclear annihilation. The question is – who will push it first?

**Barry McGuire** got it right when he wrote these lyrics in his 1965 song – ***Eve of Destruction***: **"If the button is pushed, there's no running away. There'll be no one to save with the world in a grave..."**

Mindful of the ability to annihilate ourselves by the push of a button, President Eisenhower, in March 1953, upon the death of Joseph Stalin, gave the famous **"A Chance for Peace"** speech before the American Newspaper Editors Association.

He said, when speaking of the escalating arms race among nations, that the worst thing we face is atomic war, adding: **"The best would be this: a life of perpetual fear and tension; a burden of arms draining the wealth and the labor of all peoples; a wasting of strength that defies the American system or the Soviet system or any system to achieve true abundance and happiness for the peoples of this earth. Every gun that is made, every warship launched, every rocket fired signifies, in the final sense, a theft from those who hunger and are not fed, those who are cold and are not clothed. This world in arms is not spending money alone. It is spending the sweat of its laborers, the genius of its scientists, the hopes of its children. The cost of one modern heavy bomber is this: a modern brick school in more than 30 cities. It is two electric power plants, each serving a town of 60,000 population. It is two fine, fully equipped hospitals. It is some 50 miles of concrete highway. We pay for a single fighter plane with a half million bushels of wheat. We pay for a single destroyer with new homes that could have housed more than 8,000 people. This, I repeat, is the best way of life to be found on the road the world has been taking. This is not a way of life at all, in any true sense. Under the cloud of threatening war, it is humanity hanging from a cross of iron."**

It's just another silly little rhyming tale by Seuss, about a grandpa who tells his grandson about his involvement in the "Big War" with the crazy, evil Zooks who butter their bread all wrong! And in the end, standing on the wall, facing his enemy, eye to eye with a small little pill-like bomb called the "Big Boy Boomeroo."

**“Grandpa!” I shouted. “Be careful! Oh, gee! Who’s going to drop it? Will you...? Or will he...? “Be patient,” said Grandpa. “We’ll see. We will see...”** Tick, tick, tick...

When you go to sleep at night, do you rest peacefully knowing that we have a mighty military with the latest modern weapons money can buy, and enough nuclear bombs to destroy the world, to keep you, your loved ones, and our country safe from the other side? Do people, just like you, who live on the other side feel just as safe knowing they too have weapons to match ours?

The Psalmist sings out: **“I will both lie down and sleep in peace; for you alone, O Lord, make me lie down in safety.”**

We say we believe in God and follow Jesus, who taught us to love one another, and even commanded we love our enemies, praying for them. In a world capable of nuclear annihilation, what is God’s loving presence compared to that?

Which do you believe will keep us safer and bring about a lasting peace in the world, God’s love for all people and you, or all the world’s nuclear weapons? We’ll see...? We will see...?