

War  
April 7<sup>th</sup>, 2019

Intro:

“As you sort out the ethics of war, the stakes are high for your spiritual formation. Sure, you probably won’t single-handedly decide whether the United States should invade Canada. But the way you think through the rightness or wrongness of military action tells you something about how you see your own personal story in light of the bigger story of the kingdom of Christ. Unbalanced and unbiblical attitudes about war often point to distorted views we hold about the meaning of peace, and even the gospel itself.” Russell Moore

Christians must be careful to neither glorify war nor be naïve about it.

Books: *Killer Angels* vs. *All Quiet on the Western Front*

Real people involved – soldiers, parents, civilians, wounded vets

***What are key questions related to war from a Christian ethics perspective? What are questions we should seek to have answers for?***

Should Christians serve? How should they conduct themselves?

How should a government decide when to go to war? Is war ever justified?

Easy to fall down politically liberal or conservative lines, but as Christians we can’t do that. One manifestation of being “immersed” in the world rather than Biblically engaging in it.

1. Biblical perspective on war

From a Biblical worldview, war is a sad but unavoidable occurrence in a fallen world.

- a. Man is made in the image of God but has a fallen nature.
  - i. Man was made in God’s image with intrinsic worth and dignity
    1. **Genesis 1:26-27** Then God said, "Let Us make man in Our image, according to Our likeness; and let them rule over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the sky and over the cattle and over all the earth, and over every creeping thing that creeps on the earth." <sup>27</sup> God created man in His own image, in the image of God He created him; male and female He created them.
    2. **Genesis 9:6** "Whoever sheds man's blood, By man his blood shall be shed, For in the image of God He made man.
  - ii. But man has sinned and possesses a fallen nature.
    1. **Romans 3:10-18** <sup>10</sup> as it is written, "THERE IS **NONE RIGHTEOUS**, NOT EVEN ONE; <sup>11</sup> THERE IS NONE WHO UNDERSTANDS, THERE IS NONE WHO SEEKS FOR GOD; <sup>12</sup> ALL HAVE TURNED ASIDE, TOGETHER THEY HAVE BECOME USELESS; THERE IS NONE WHO DOES GOOD, THERE IS NOT EVEN ONE." <sup>13</sup> "THEIR **THROAT IS AN OPEN GRAVE**, WITH THEIR TONGUES THEY KEEP DECEIVING," "THE POISON OF ASPS IS UNDER THEIR LIPS"; <sup>14</sup> "WHOSE MOUTH IS FULL OF CURSING AND BITTERNESS"; <sup>15</sup> "**THEIR FEET ARE SWIFT TO SHED BLOOD**, <sup>16</sup> **DESTRUCTION AND MISERY ARE IN THEIR PATHS**, <sup>17</sup> AND THE PATH OF PEACE THEY HAVE NOT KNOWN." <sup>18</sup> "THERE IS NO FEAR OF GOD BEFORE THEIR EYES."
    2. **James 4:1** What is the source of quarrels and conflicts among you? Is not the source your pleasures that wage war in your members?

3. Pervasive depravity that invades in all of humanity and every aspect of humanity. This includes the reality that violent acts will be part of life in a fallen world. This doesn't justify us doing the violence, but we can't naively assume it will go away until the new heaven and new earth.
4. We need to have a realistic view of man, not an idealistic view or a view as we wish things were or will be one day. Presently, what is the state of mankind?

b. Governments have the God-given right and responsibility to maintain ***justice***.

**Daniel 5:21** "He was also driven away from mankind, and his heart was made like *that of* beasts, and his dwelling place *was* with the wild donkeys. He was given grass to eat like cattle, and his body was drenched with the dew of heaven until he recognized that the **Most High God is ruler over the realm of mankind and *that He sets over it whomever He wishes.***

**Romans 13:1-4** Every person is to be in subjection to the governing authorities. For there is **no authority except from God, and those which exist are established by God.** <sup>2</sup> Therefore whoever resists authority has opposed the ordinance of God; and they who have opposed will receive condemnation upon themselves. <sup>3</sup> For rulers are not a cause of fear for good behavior, but for evil. Do you want to have no fear of authority? Do what is good and you will have praise from the same; <sup>4</sup> for it is a minister of God to you for good. But if you do what is evil, be afraid; for **it does not bear the sword for nothing; for it is a minister of God, an avenger who brings wrath on the one who practices evil.**

**1 Peter 2:13-14** Submit yourselves for the Lord's sake to every human institution, whether to a king as the one in authority, <sup>14</sup> or to governors as sent by him for the punishment of evildoers and the praise of those who do right.

But those passages refer primarily to evil and disorder within the state. War is typically from outside the state. Does this justify war to protect its citizens?

"[When] a whole country is attacked (rather than an individual or group within the state), there seems to be no other organization given authority to respond to attacks upon the state than the attacked state's government. Responding to the attack often results in wars between countries." (Feinberg)

Distinguish between public (state) responsibilities and private responsibilities

c. God will one day establish ***peace*** on earth, but until then wars will continue.

**Isaiah 2:2-4** Now it will come about that In the last days . . . <sup>4</sup> And He will judge between the nations, And will render decisions for many peoples; And they will hammer their swords into plowshares and their spears into pruning hooks. **Nation will not lift up sword against nation, And never again will they learn war.**

**Revelation 21:3-4** <sup>3</sup> And I heard a loud voice from the throne, saying, "Behold, the tabernacle of God is among men, and He will dwell among them, and they shall be His people, and God Himself will be among them, <sup>4</sup> and He will wipe away every tear from their eyes; and **there will no longer be any death; there will no longer be any mourning, or crying, or pain; the first things have passed away.**"

**Psalms 46:9** He makes wars to cease to the end of the earth; He breaks the bow and cuts the spear in two; He burns the chariots with fire.

**Matthew 24:6-8** <sup>6</sup> "You will be hearing of **wars and rumors of wars**. See that you are not frightened, for *those things* must take place, but **that is not yet the end**. <sup>7</sup> "For **nation will rise against nation**, and kingdom against kingdom, and in various places there will be famines and earthquakes. <sup>8</sup> "But all these things are *merely* the beginning of birth pangs.

d. In the New Testament, soldiers were told to act **justly** but not commanded to leave the service.

**Luke 3:14** Some soldiers were questioning him, saying, "And *what about* us, what shall we do?" And he said to them, "Do not take money from anyone by force, or accuse *anyone* falsely, and be content with your wages."

**See also centurion in Luke 7:9, soldier in Acts 10:2**

e. We should never **delight** in war and violence.

**Psalms 68:30** Rebuke the beasts in the reeds, The herd of bulls with the calves of the peoples, Trampling under foot the pieces of silver; He has scattered the peoples who delight in war.

**Genesis 6:11** Now the earth was corrupt in the sight of God, and the earth was filled with violence.

War is a brutal, horrible thing.

Short video on children in war in Syria (about 90 seconds)

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=RBQ-IoHfimQ>

*Unbreakable* about Louie Zamperini

f. The challenges of war can be a backdrop to highlight **virtue**.

i. Courage, compassion, forgiveness, discipline, sacrifice – all can be seen on the battlefield or in the military life and should be commended.

2. Nations Should Seek To Follow The **Just War** Theory.

Defense and articulation of the just war theory go back to Plato, Aristotle, and Cicero but were clarified and altered by a Biblical world view by Augustine, Martin Luther, Dietrich Bonhoeffer, and others.

Augustine, *City of God*, after barbarians sacked Rome in 410 AD, pagans charged that the Christians, by their indifference to civic affairs and the military virtues of the Roman tradition, were helping to undermine the state and the values of civilization. Augustine defended the legitimacy of Christian participation in war.

Martin Luther, "without armaments peace cannot be kept; wars are waged not only to repel injustice but also to establish a firm peace."

John Calvin, "Both natural equity and the nature of the office dictate that princes must be armed not only to restrain the misdeeds of private individuals by judicial punishment, but also to defend by war the dominions entrusted to their safekeeping, if at any time they are under enemy attack."

The just war theory sees war as evil. The point at issue is not whether it is good, but whether it is unavoidable in all cases and whether it can be conducted in a just way. (Feinberg)

Builds on the view that war is not a good thing in itself but is inevitable given the Biblical considerations already stated. In a sinless world, we wouldn't need to articulate a theory to justify any wars. But that isn't the world we live in. Some evil cannot be avoided, appeased, sanctioned until it stops.

What we can do is develop some criteria that should govern when and how nations go to war.

If there is such a thing as a “just war” in an abstract sense, then it must be just for a Christian to participate. Wars aren’t fought by governments as if the government is disconnected from people. People are the government (especially in the US) and people are the means of fighting the war.

“If a war is just, it should not be viewed as morally wrong but still necessary, nor as morally neutral, but as something that is morally right, carried out (with sorrow and regret) in obedience to responsibilities given by God (Romans 13:4). Those who serve in a just war should understand that such service is not sinful in God’s sight but that they do this as ‘God’s servant for your good.’” ESV Study Bible

a. The **Right** And **Reason** To Go To War Must Be Just.

### **Cause**

Historically, self-defense of a nation.

Get’s tricky when considering preemptive attacks (Iraq) – best evidence showed that they possessed WMD and had a history of aggressive behavior.

Difficult to know whether a war is just sometimes until it is well under way or maybe even until it is over.

Afghanistan – 9/11 attacks and wanted to act to stop further terrorist actions against US. Part of the broader “war on terror” that is defensive – we didn’t choose it but have little alternative but to defend ourselves.

More recently, to stop acts of genocide.

### **Authority**

Who decides whether to go to war? The head of state, congressional approval

I can’t just decide to invade Canada with some friends!

### **Intent/goal**

Secure a just and lasting peace, protect citizens

Not conquest, economic gain

### **Process** ( Used As A Last Resort)

Were negotiations and compromise tried and/or possible?

However . . . Neville Chamberlin and “peace for our time” – tried to negotiate with Germany when Hitler was clearly bent on destruction and domination.

War on terror – terrorists won’t sit down and negotiate before attacking.

Reasonable hope of **success**

Otherwise lives are sacrificed in vain

Afghanistan, Iraq – is there a reasonable chance of success or are we attempting to change a deepseated view of government, leadership, and people that isn’t going to happen by outsiders?

Some say this is still justified if the evil is so horrendous that at least an attempt, however unlikely, should be made to respond to evil. If nothing else, the response is a form of protest.

Proportional gain in relation to the harm caused

“The cure (war) should not be worse than the disease (injustice)”

War is going to be brutal – lives will be lost, property destroyed, civilians affected, maybe starvation – is the gain going to be worth it?

***If you're a boots-on-the-ground soldier, which of these would be difficult for you to know in advance?***

Most!

b. The Conduct In War Must Be Just.

i. Limited in objective

1. Overrunning a nation until they are completely destroyed

ii. Limited loss of lives

1. avoid killing civilians, incapacitate or restrain rather than kill soldiers when possible (POW's)

2. Sometimes not possible to take POW's – Japan in WWII – for every 1 american killed, 4 were taken as POWs, for every 120 Japanese killed, 1 was taken as a POW – their mindset was that to become a POW was shameful so would fight to the death.

3. “the weapons of war have increasingly become more destructive so that it seems nearly impossible to wage a modern war without having casualties among noncombatants. Some ethicists believe that these facts make it virtually impossible to justify any contemporary war.” Feinberg

4. Sometimes unavoidable that civilians die, but that should be collateral rather than intended.

a. i.e. Japan in WWII placing manufacturing machines in houses scattered all around so they would be hidden and not taken out when factories were bombed.

5. Principle of double effect –

a. the good effect is intended while the bad effect is at most foreseen but unintended;

b. the bad effect is not the means to the good effect (we should not do evil that good may come);

c. the good achieved by doing the act is proportionally greater than the evil produced as well, i.e., the intended good is worth the resultant evil .47

analogy – chemotherapy to treat cancer – would I poison someone, causing them to lose their hair, feel weak and nauseous? Of course not, but that's what we do in chemo – but the good effect (ridding the body of cancer) is intended and is greater than the harm produced to the body

This is where an average soldier can definitely know what is going on and conduct himself justly – not torturing, demeaning, dehumanizing prisoners; capturing instead of

killing when possible; treating civilians well; showing respect to cultural landmarks and people groups, etc.

- iii. Use the minimum means necessary to accomplish the goals
  1. Smallest bomb, not “total war” or “scorched earth” when possible
  2. Moreover, showing compassion to our enemies and grace to all can be expressed by an army not following a “scorched earth” policy as it fights an opposing country, and by offering help to rebuild a war-ravaged country once the war ends. (Feinberg)
  3. Destroy a munitions factory when fewest people likely to be working
    - a. 500 people there during the day but only 100 at night – bomb at night
  4. Develop “smart” bombs that increase accuracy and limit collateral damage
- iv. There may be instances where the reason for going to war is just but an example of the conduct in the war is unjust. Doesn’t automatically negate the reason for going to war, as much as we are grieved and outraged about the conduct.

### 3. Nuclear bombs and just war doctrine

- a. How does the prospect of nuclear war relate to the principles of “just war”?
  - i. Proportional gain? Would it be better to be ruled by a tyrant than to extinguish all mankind?
  - ii. Limited to soldiers? Clearly not
  - iii. Minimum means? Unlikely
    1. Truman justified bombing Japan because although 50,000 were killed, perhaps a million lives would have been lost if the war continued. Thought that the Japanese civilians would all fight to the death in resistance if a ground force invaded
- b. Virtually everyone agrees that we shouldn’t use nuclear weapons. The disagreement is how we should go about ensuring that they aren’t used.
  - i. “The policy debate about deterrence is not a debate between those in favor of nuclear war and those against it. It is a debate between persons with differing perspectives and convictions on how to prevent nuclear violence.” David Hollenbach
  - ii. Disarmament? What if we disarm but the other side doesn’t and utilizes the threat or actuality of a nuclear strike against us?
    1. Some argued that we should basically disarm and surrender to there would be no chance of a world ending war. That would have been horrendous!
  - iii. Keep them as a deterrent – having a strong and usable nuclear arsenal with the willingness to use it is the best way to ensure that nuclear weapons are not used by anyone.
    1. M.A.D. during 1960’s
    2. After that the US began to unilaterally scale back. Targeted military installations instead of population zones.
    3. Side note – British nuclear attack subs with a secret safe known only to the captain that contained a sealed letter with instruction from the Prime Minister on what to do if the

homeland is completely destroyed by nuclear bomb. Should he retaliate or is it pointless?

#### 4. Christian Pacifism

- a. Universal Pacifism – killing or violence is always wrong
  - i. Albert Schweitzer, Mohandas Gandhi, Leo Tolstoy
- b. Christian Pacifism - Christians are never allowed to use killing or violence, but unbelievers may justly resort to killing and violence in certain instances.
- c. Private Pacifism - Personal violence is always wrong, but a nation may at times be justified in using force as in a just war (Augustine)
- d. Antiwar Pacifism – Personal violence may be justified in some cases in defense of one’s rights, but war is never morally justified.
- e. Hypocritical pacifists vs. principled pacifists (Ronald Nash)
  - i. Hypocritical pacifism
    1. Entirely different group of pacifists. Could call them unprincipled pacifists, but that wouldn’t be very nice. Hypocritical pacifists also isn’t very nice, but that’s what he calls them!
    2. Part of the political left with an anti-american bias
      - a. denounce anything to do with the military as long as it is American or anything to do with America. But if it is their organizations they support, then they are in favor of it!
    3. 2. Principled pacifism
  - ii. Doesn’t want to say anything derogatory about principled pacifism. He believes it is wrong but doesn’t want to derogatory. If a principled pacifist and just war theorist debate, likely neither will be persuaded.
- f. Matt 5:38-48
  - i. How can nonresistance be consistent with warfare or loving one’s enemies with the use of deadly force? (John Jefferson Davis)
- g. OT passages on war reflect the hardness of people’s hearts just like with permission of divorce by Moses.
- h. **Romans 12:17** <sup>17</sup> Never pay back evil for evil to anyone. Respect what is right in the sight of all men.
- i. **Romans 12:19-20** <sup>19</sup> Never take your own revenge, beloved, but leave room for the wrath of God, for it is written, "VENGEANCE IS MINE, I WILL REPAY," says the Lord. <sup>20</sup> "BUT IF YOUR ENEMY IS HUNGRY, FEED HIM, AND IF HE IS THIRSTY, GIVE HIM A DRINK; FOR IN SO DOING YOU WILL HEAP BURNING COALS ON HIS HEAD."
- j. 1 Peter 1:21ff Jesus’ example of suffering under injustice
- k. “In the pacifist understanding, if one finds oneself in a situation in which it seems impossible to preserve both the values of justice and nonviolence, then one chooses nonviolence, even at the price of allowing great injustices to be perpetrated upon oneself and innocent third parties.” (John Jefferson Davis)
- l. Response

- i. As a private individual I may choose to turn the other cheek in the face of unjust aggression. However when I stand in relation of guardianship to third parties, as a civil magistrate, a parent, or a husband, however, then the responsibilities of Christian love have a different application. Because of my love for those under my care, and out of concern for their lives and welfare, I must resist unjust aggression against them. Love for my neighbor does not mean standing idly by when my wife is being brutally raped; it means using whatever force is necessary to protect her life and safety. (Davis)
- ii. **Hebrews 11:32-34** And what more shall I say? For time will fail me if I tell of Gideon, Barak, Samson, Jephthah, of David and Samuel and the prophets, <sup>33</sup> who by faith conquered kingdoms, performed *acts of righteousness*, obtained promises, shut the mouths of lions, <sup>34</sup> quenched the power of fire, escaped the edge of the sword, from weakness were made strong, became mighty in war, put foreign armies to flight.
  - 1. Their faith, not hardness of heart is commended
- m. Value in pacifism because war is a sad and tragic thing that we should not desire. Eventually God will bring peace and we should desire and look ahead to that. However, I think pacifism is too idealistic.
- n. Scenario –
  - i. Your house is invaded by evil men bent on rape, pillage, and murder. The pacifists wife and children are there. Only 3 things anyone in that position could do.
    - 1. 1 – resist – probably include violence
    - 2. 2 – turn the other cheek – obvious consequence to nonviolence response will be enormous evil to people you love.
    - 3. 3 – pick up the phone and dial 911 – tantamount to drafting other people to do your dirty work for you.
    - 4. By refusing to resist evil he is responsible for greater evil occurring to those for whom he is responsible. By calling police, he is violating principles by asking others to do the work for him.



## Did God support genocidal war in the Old Testament?

### Intro

We know God is different than us so sometimes we can't understand how He operates. Different cultures end up confused and/or upset about different parts of the Bible. This one is an aspect that is really tough to work through. Why does God command the Israelites at times to wipe out whole groups of people, including women and little children?

**Deuteronomy 7:1-2** "When the LORD your God brings you into the land where you are entering to possess it, and clears away many nations before you, the Hittites and the Girgashites and the Amorites and the Canaanites and the Perizzites and the Hivites and the Jebusites, seven nations greater and stronger than you, <sup>2</sup> and when the LORD your God delivers them before you and you defeat them, then you shall utterly destroy them. You shall make no covenant with them and show no favor to them.

**Joshua 6:21** They utterly destroyed everything in the city, both man and woman, young and old, and ox and sheep and donkey, with the edge of the sword.

**1 Samuel 15:2-3** "Thus says the LORD of hosts, 'I will punish Amalek *for* what he did to Israel, how he set himself against him on the way while he was coming up from Egypt. <sup>3</sup> 'Now go and strike Amalek and utterly destroy all that he has, and do not spare him; but put to death both man and woman, child and infant, ox and sheep, camel and donkey.'"

These questions are legitimate but the implications are huge –

Does any country or group of people have the right to wipe out another, including women and children?

Is this any different than what the Nazis would do to the Jews in Germany and Eastern Europe 3,000 years later?

### 1. As Creator, God has the right to give life, take life, and judge sin.

- a. **Exodus 19:5** <sup>5</sup> 'Now then, if you will indeed obey My voice and keep My covenant, then you shall be My own possession among all the peoples, for all the earth is Mine;
- b. **Psalm 24:1** A Psalm of David. The earth is the LORD'S, and all it contains, The world, and those who dwell in it.
- c. We see His judgments on all people (the flood in Gen. 6-8), on particular nations or cities (Nineveh in Jonah and Nahum), and Israel several times throughout its history.
  - i. Do we deny God's right to judge as He does with the flood or with the fire in Sodom and Gomorrah? Were all ages of people impacted by those judgments?
  - ii. The difference between those situations and the situations in Joshua and 1 Samuel is that God acted directly instead of through human means.
- d. **Job 1:21** <sup>21</sup> He said, "Naked I came from my mother's womb, And naked I shall return there. The LORD gave and the LORD has taken away. Blessed be the name of the LORD."
- e. **Deuteronomy 32:39** <sup>39</sup> 'See now that I, I am He, And there is no god besides Me; It is I who put to death and give life. I have wounded and it is I who heal, And there is no one who can deliver from My hand.

### 2. The people destroyed in Joshua were given more than 400 years to repent.

- a. **Genesis 15:13-16** God said to Abram, "Know for certain that your descendants will be strangers in a land that is not theirs, where they will be enslaved and oppressed four hundred years. <sup>14</sup> "But I will also judge the nation whom they will serve, and afterward they will come out with many possessions. <sup>15</sup> "As for you, you shall go to your fathers in peace; you will be buried at a good old age. <sup>16</sup> "Then in the fourth generation they will return here, ***for the iniquity of the Amorite is not yet complete.***"

b. **Leviticus 18:24-30** 'Do not defile yourselves by any of these things; for by all these the **nations which I am casting out before you have become defiled.** <sup>25</sup> 'For the land has become defiled, therefore I have brought its punishment upon it, so the **land has spewed out its inhabitants.** <sup>26</sup> 'But as for you, you are to keep My statutes and My judgments and shall not do any of these abominations, *neither* the native, nor the alien who sojourns among you <sup>27</sup> (for the men of the land who have been before you have done all these abominations, and the land has become defiled); <sup>28</sup> **so that the land will not spew you out, should you defile it, as it has spewed out the nation which has been before you.** <sup>29</sup> 'For whoever does any of these abominations, those persons who do so shall be cut off from among their people. <sup>30</sup> 'Thus you are to keep My charge, **that you do not practice any of the abominable customs** which have been practiced before you, so as not to defile yourselves with them; I am the LORD your God."

c. What was their wickedness?

i. They were burning their children in sacrifices

1. **Leviticus 18:21** <sup>21</sup> 'You shall not give any of your offspring to offer them to Molech, nor shall you profane the name of your God; I am the LORD.

ii. They were practicing bestiality and a host of sexual sins

iii. The Amalekites in 1 Samuel 15:2-3 had picked off and slaughtered the old and infirm at the end of the marching lines as the Israelites came out of Egypt.

1. **Deuteronomy 25:17-19** Remember what Amalek did to you along the way when you came out from Egypt, <sup>18</sup> how he met you along the way and attacked among you all the stragglers at your rear when you were faint and weary; and he did not fear God. <sup>19</sup> "Therefore it shall come about when the LORD your God has given you rest from all your surrounding enemies, in the land which the LORD your God gives you as an inheritance to possess, you shall blot out the memory of Amalek from under heaven; you must not forget.

d. There was no double standard to God. He called Israel to practice righteousness as well so that they would not be "spewed out" as well.

e. Had they repented would God have relented? Surely – He did in many other cases (i.e. Nineveh in Jonah)

### 3. Israel was in a unique situation as a theocracy.

a. There was no separation between church and state – it was a religious and political state wrapped up in one. God was leading the nation, which was not pictured as normative for other nations to follow. It was unique in history.

b. God was doing something unique that does not apply today. Christians are no longer identified with one particular country.

### 4. But why were all the people destroyed?

a. Weren't some possibly innocent? What about the children?

b. "Just as surgeons do not hesitate to amputate a gangrenous limb, even if they cannot help cutting off some healthy flesh, so God must do the same. This is not doing evil that good may come; it is removing the cancer that could infect all of society and eventually destroy the remaining good." Walt Kaiser

c. There were not even 10 found to be righteous in Sodom

i. **Genesis 18:32** Then he said, "Oh may the Lord not be angry, and I shall speak only this once; suppose ten are found there?" And He said, "I will not destroy *it* on account of the ten."

ii. Why should we assume it is different with these other groups?

- d. The children are tragic but the situation had so deteriorated that the people had to be wiped out so that another generation wouldn't arise that would sacrifice *their* children to Molech and lead Israel to do the same.
- e. "In the providential acts of life, it is understood that individuals share in the life of their families' and nations' rewards and punishments. Naturally this will involve some so-called innocent people; however, even that argument involves us in a claim to omniscience which we do not possess. If the women and children had been spared in those profane Canaanite nations, how long would it have been before a fresh crop of adults would emerge just like their pagan predecessors?" Walt Kaiser
- f. These laws only applied to the nations within the land Israel was to possess. There was a different set of rules when they engaged in war against outside nations.
  - i. Deut. 20:10-15 – offer terms of peace, if they don't agree then wage war, even then don't kill the women and children.

## 5. Conclusion

- a. God is not a Stepford God, acting in every way just as we think He ought to act.
- b. In any true relationship the other person is able to contradict you.
- c. "To stay away from Christianity because part of the Bible's teaching is offensive to you assumes that if there is a God he wouldn't have any ideas that upset you. Does that belief make sense? . . . Only if your God can say things that outrage and make you struggle (as in a real friendship or marriage) will you know that you have gotten hold of a real God and not a figment of your imagination." (Tim Keller, *The Reason for God*)

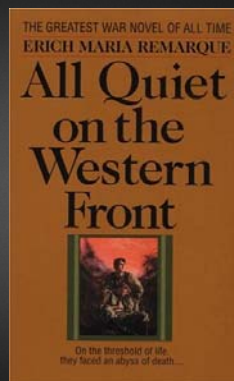
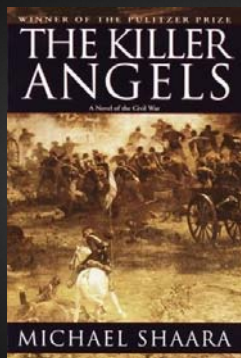
# War

1

“As you sort out the ethics of war, the stakes are high for your spiritual formation. Sure, you probably won’t single-handedly decide whether the United States should invade Canada. But the way you think through the rightness or wrongness of military action tells you something about how you see your own personal story in light of the bigger story of the kingdom of Christ. Unbalanced and unbiblical attitudes about war often point to distorted views we hold about the meaning of peace, and even the gospel itself.”

~Russell Moore, President of the Ethics and Religious Liberty Commission of the SBC.

2



3

## 1. Biblical perspective on war

From a Biblical worldview, war is a sad but unavoidable occurrence in a fallen world.

4

1. Biblical perspective on war

- a. Man is made in the image of God but has a fallen nature.

Genesis 1:26-27

Genesis 9:6 "Whoever sheds man's blood, By man his blood shall be shed, For in the image of God He made man.

5

1. Biblical perspective on war

- a. Man is made in the image of God but has a fallen nature.

Romans 3:10-18

James 4:1 What is the source of quarrels and conflicts among you? Is not the source your pleasures that wage war in your members?

6

1. Biblical perspective on war

- b. Governments have the God-given right and responsibility to maintain justice.

**Daniel 5:21** "He was also driven away from mankind, and his heart was made like *that of beasts*, and his dwelling place *was* with the wild donkeys. He was given grass to eat like cattle, and his body was drenched with the dew of heaven until he recognized that the **Most High God is ruler over the realm of mankind and that He sets over it whomever He wishes.**

7

**Romans 13:1-4** Every person is to be in subjection to the governing authorities. For there is **no authority except from God, and those which exist are established by God.** <sup>2</sup> Therefore whoever resists authority has opposed the ordinance of God; and they who have opposed will receive condemnation upon themselves. <sup>3</sup> For rulers are not a cause of fear for good behavior, but for evil. Do you want to have no fear of authority? Do what is good and you will have praise from the same; <sup>4</sup> for it is a minister of God to you for good. But if you do what is evil, be afraid; for **it does not bear the sword for nothing; for it is a minister of God, an avenger who brings wrath on the one who practices evil.**

8

**1 Peter 2:13-14** Submit yourselves for the Lord's sake to every human institution, whether to a king as the one in authority, <sup>14</sup> or to governors as sent by him for the punishment of evildoers and the praise of those who do right.

9

“[When] a whole country is attacked (rather than an individual or group within the state), there seems to be no other organization given authority to respond to attacks upon the state than the attacked state’s government. Responding to the attack often results in wars between countries.” (Feinberg)

10

## 1. Biblical perspective on war

c. God will one day establish peace on earth, but until then wars will continue.

11

**Isaiah 2:2-4** Now it will come about that In the last days . . . <sup>4</sup> And He will judge between the nations, And will render decisions for many peoples; And they will hammer their swords into plowshares and their spears into pruning hooks. **Nation will not lift up sword against nation, And never again will they learn war.**

12

**Revelation 21:3-4** And I heard a loud voice from the throne, saying, "Behold, the tabernacle of God is among men, and He will dwell among them, and they shall be His people, and God Himself will be among them, <sup>4</sup> and He will wipe away every tear from their eyes; and **there will no longer be any death; there will no longer be any mourning, or crying, or pain; the first things have passed away.**"

**Psalm 46:9** He **makes wars to cease** to the end of the earth; He breaks the bow and cuts the spear in two; He burns the chariots with fire.

13

**Matthew 24:6-8** "You will be hearing of **wars and rumors of wars**. See that you are not frightened, for *those things* must take place, but **that is not yet the end.** <sup>7</sup> "For **nation will rise against nation**, and kingdom against kingdom, and in various places there will be famines and earthquakes. <sup>8</sup> "But all these things are *merely* the beginning of birth pangs.

14

## 1. Biblical perspective on war

d. In the New Testament, soldiers were told to act **justly** but not commanded to leave the service.

**Luke 3:14** Some soldiers were questioning him, saying, "And what about us, what shall we do?" And he said to them, "Do not take money from anyone by force, or accuse anyone falsely, and be content with your wages."

See also centurion in Luke 7:9, soldier in Acts 10:2

15

## 1. Biblical perspective on war

e. We should never **delight** in war and violence.

**Psalm 68:30** Rebuke the beasts in the reeds, The herd of bulls with the calves of the peoples, Trampling under foot the pieces of silver; He has scattered the peoples who delight in war.

**Genesis 6:11** Now the earth was corrupt in the sight of God, and the earth was filled with violence.

16

1. Biblical perspective on war

f. The challenges of war can be a backdrop to highlight virtue.

17

2. Nations Should Seek To Follow The Just War Theory.

Martin Luther, "Without armaments peace cannot be kept; wars are waged not only to repel injustice but also to establish a firm peace."

John Calvin, "Both natural equity and the nature of the office dictate that princes must be armed not only to restrain the misdeeds of private individuals by judicial punishment, but also to defend by war the dominions entrusted to their safekeeping, if at any time they are under enemy attack."

18

2. Nations Should Seek To Follow The Just War Theory.

"If a war is just, it should not be viewed as morally wrong but still necessary, nor as morally neutral, but as something that is morally right, carried out (with sorrow and regret) in obedience to responsibilities given by God (Romans 13:4). Those who serve in a just war should understand that such service is not sinful in God's sight but that they do this as 'God's servant for your good.'" ESV Study Bible

19

2. Nations Should Seek To Follow The Just War Theory.

a. The Right And Reason To Go To War Must Be Just.

- Cause
- Authority
- Intent/goal
- Process (Used As A Last Resort)
- Reasonable hope of success
- Proportional gain in relation to the harm caused

20



2. Nations Should Seek To Follow The Just War Theory.

b. The **Conduct** In War Must Be Just.

Limited in objective

Limited loss of lives

Use the minimum means necessary to accomplish the goals

21

3. Nuclear bombs and just-war doctrine

22

#### 4. Christian Pacifism

**Universal Pacifism** – Killing or violence is always wrong

**Christian Pacifism** – Christians are never allowed to use killing or violence, but unbelievers may justly resort to killing and violence in certain instances.

**Private Pacifism** – Personal violence is always wrong, but a nation may at times be justified in using force as in a just war

**Antiwar Pacifism** – Personal violence may be justified in some cases in defense of one's rights, but war is never morally justified.

23

#### 4. Christian Pacifism

Matt 5:38-48

*How can nonresistance be consistent with warfare or loving one's enemies with the use of deadly force? (John Jefferson Davis)*

24

#### 4. Christian Pacifism

**Romans 12:17** Never pay back evil for evil to anyone. Respect what is right in the sight of all men.

**Romans 12:19-20** Never take your own revenge, beloved, but leave room for the wrath of God, for it is written, "VENGEANCE IS MINE, I WILL REPAY," says the Lord. 20 "BUT IF YOUR ENEMY IS HUNGRY, FEED HIM, AND IF HE IS THIRSTY, GIVE HIM A DRINK; FOR IN SO DOING YOU WILL HEAP BURNING COALS ON HIS HEAD."

**1 Peter 1:21ff**

25

#### 4. Christian Pacifism

"In the pacifist understanding, if one finds oneself in a situation in which it seems impossible to preserve both the values of justice and nonviolence, then one chooses nonviolence, even at the price of allowing great injustices to be perpetrated upon oneself and innocent third parties." (John Jefferson Davis)

26

### Did God support genocidal war in the Old Testament?

**Deuteronomy 7:1-2** "When the LORD your God brings you into the land where you are entering to possess it, and clears away many nations before you, the Hittites and the Girgashites and the Amorites and the Canaanites and the Perizzites and the Hivites and the Jebusites, seven nations greater and stronger than you, <sup>2</sup> and when the LORD your God delivers them before you and you defeat them, **then you shall utterly destroy them.** You shall make no covenant with them and show no favor to them.

27

28

**Joshua 6:21** They **utterly destroyed everything** in the city, both **man** and **woman, young** and **old**, and **ox** and **sheep** and **donkey**, with the edge of the sword.

29

**1 Samuel 15:2-3** "Thus says the LORD of hosts, 'I will punish Amalek for what he did to Israel, how he set himself against him on the way while he was coming up from Egypt.  
<sup>3</sup> 'Now go and strike Amalek **and utterly destroy all that he has**, and do not spare him; but put to death both **man** and **woman, child** and **infant, ox** and **sheep, camel** and **donkey.**"

30

1. As Creator, God has the right to **give** life, **take** life, and **judge** sin.

**Exodus 19:5** 'Now then, if you will indeed obey My voice and keep My covenant, then you shall be My own possession among all the peoples, for all the earth is Mine;

**Psalms 24:1** A Psalm of David. The earth is the LORD'S, and all it contains, The world, and those who dwell in it.

31

1. As Creator, God has the right to **give** life, **take** life, and **judge** sin.

**Job 1:21** He said, "Naked I came from my mother's womb, And naked I shall return there. The LORD gave and the LORD has taken away. Blessed be the name of the LORD."

**Deuteronomy 32:39** 'See now that I, I am He, And there is no god besides Me; It is I who put to death and give life. I have wounded and it is I who heal, And there is no one who can deliver from My hand.

32

2. The people destroyed in Joshua were given more than 400 years to repent.

33

**Genesis 15:13-16** God said to Abram, "Know for certain that your descendants will be strangers in a land that is not theirs, where they will be enslaved and oppressed four hundred years. <sup>14</sup> "But I will also judge the nation whom they will serve, and afterward they will come out with many possessions. <sup>15</sup> "As for you, you shall go to your fathers in peace; you will be buried at a good old age. <sup>16</sup> "Then in the fourth generation they will return here, **for the iniquity of the Amorite is not yet complete."**

34

**Leviticus 18:24-30** 'Do not defile yourselves by any of these things; for by all these the **nations which I am casting out before you have become defiled.** <sup>25</sup> 'For the land has become defiled, therefore I have brought its punishment upon it, **so the land has spewed out its inhabitants.** <sup>26</sup> 'But as for you, you are to keep My statutes and My judgments and shall not do any of these abominations, neither the native, nor the alien who sojourns among you <sup>27</sup> (for the men of the land who have been before you have done all these abominations, and the land has become defiled);

35

**Leviticus 18:24-30** <sup>28</sup> **so that the land will not spew you out, should you defile it, as it has spewed out the nation which has been before you.** <sup>29</sup> 'For whoever does any of these abominations, those persons who do so shall be cut off from among their people. <sup>30</sup> 'Thus you are to keep My charge, **that you do not practice any of the abominable customs which have been practiced before you,** so as not to defile yourselves with them; I am the LORD your God."

36

**Leviticus 18:21** 'You shall not give any of your offspring to offer them to Molech, nor shall you profane the name of your God; I am the LORD.

37

**Deuteronomy 25:17-19** Remember what Amalek did to you along the way when you came out from Egypt, <sup>18</sup> how he met you along the way and **attacked among you all the stragglers at your rear when you were faint and weary**; and he did not fear God. <sup>19</sup> "Therefore it shall come about when the LORD your God has given you rest from all your surrounding enemies, in the land which the LORD your God gives you as an inheritance to possess, you shall blot out the memory of Amalek from under heaven; you must not forget.

38

3. Israel was in a unique situation as a **theocracy**.

39

4. But why were **all** the people destroyed?

"Just as surgeons do not hesitate to amputate a gangrenous limb, even if they cannot help cutting off some healthy flesh, so God must do the same. This is not doing evil that good may come; it is removing the cancer that could infect all of society and eventually destroy the remaining good." Walt Kaiser

40

#### 4. But why were all the people destroyed?

“In the providential acts of life, it is understood that **individuals share in the life of their families’ and nations’ rewards and punishments**. Naturally this will involve some so-called innocent people; however, even that argument involves us in a claim to omniscience which we do not possess. If the women and children had been spared in those profane Canaanite nations, **how long would it have been before a fresh crop of adults would emerge just like their pagan predecessors?**” Walt Kaiser

41

#### 5. Conclusion

“To stay away from Christianity because part of the Bible’s teaching is offensive to you assumes that if there is a God he wouldn’t have any ideas that upset you. Does that belief make sense? . . . Only if your God can say things that outrage and make you struggle (as in a real friendship or marriage) will you know that you have gotten hold of a real God and not a figment of your imagination.” (Tim Keller, *The Reason for God*)

42