

**I. Introduction and review.**

**II. War is a terrible evil.**

**A. Why is there war? Js. 4:1-2**

Autonomous man will not be able to end war. Mark 24:6-7 Ecc. 3:1,8

**B. War displeases God.**

1. War violently destroys human life, which is in God's image. Gen. 9:6 6:11
2. Warfare destroys property and damages the environment. Dt. 20:19-20 Ex. 20:15
3. Even in a just war, the shedding of blood grieves God. I Chron. 28:3
4. Human capacity to violently wage war continues to increase.

**C. Our sovereign God uses human warfare for His good purposes. Ro. 8:28 Amos 3:6**

1. God uses war to punish the wicked. Lev. 26:23-26,33 Isa. 1:19-20 10:5 Jer. 5:14f
2. All war is a foretaste of divine judgment. Rom. 1:18
3. War can have some good results.

**D. We should not glory in war. Peace, not war, is glorified in Scripture as the consummation of God's redemptive plan for humanity. Ps. 46:9 Isa. 2:4 9:6f 11:6-16**

**III. Is pacifism biblical?**

**A. Why would someone be a pacifist?**

1. Some religious leaders are against war under any and all circumstances.
2. Pacifists apply principles of non-retaliation, which are directed to individuals, to nations. Ro. 12:17-21 (but see 13:4) Mt. 5:38ff Pr. 24:29 I Pe. 2:21 Isa. 53:7
3. Most pacifists have an unbiblically optimistic view of humanity. Ro. 3:10f 12:18
4. Pacifists claim that Jesus has implemented a higher standard of conduct.
5. Pacifists express some valid concerns. Rom. 12:18
6. It is possible for one to be against a particular war without being a pacifist.

**B. The Bible does not teach pacifism.**

1. Jesus, John the Baptist, and Peter recognized the legitimacy of soldiering as an occupation. Luke 3:14 7:9 Acts 10:2,22
2. Scripture recognizes that warfare will be ongoing. Mt. 24:6 22:7 Lu. 14:31
3. Old Testament warriors are honored as heroes of the faith. Heb. 11:32-34
4. The New Testament is full of soldiering metaphors. If warfare were inherently wrong, these would not be used. Ro. 8:37 I Co. 9:7 II Ti. 2:3 Eph. 6:14-17
5. Civil government has been authorized to use the sword of justice, not only to punish evildoers, but also to protect its citizens from external threats. Rom. 13:4
6. God uses warfare to accomplish His purposes. Ex. 15:3-4

**IV. Holy War!**

**A. Under the Old Covenant, God waged holy war through Israel. Ex. 17:8-16 15:3-4 23 Dt. 7:16 20:5-18 24:5 Num. 31:1-54 II Sam. 5:19-20 Ps. 68:1-2,12,17 144:1**

1. Israel was a theocracy. God was their King, Who led them into battle. Deut. 33:5
2. Israel's warfare in the holy land prefigures the final judgment. Ge. 15:16 Le. 20:23 Ps. 18:9-15 104:1-4 98:1f Isa. 19:1 Deut. 20

3. God sent enemy nations to conquer unfaithful Israel. Dt. 28:49f Lev. 26:23-26,33
- B. Christ is our Holy Warrior.**
1. Old Covenant warfare prefigured the ultimate victory of Christ.
  2. He has conquered Satan, sin and death. Co 2:13f Ro. 16:20 Jo. 12:31 Eph 1:19 4:7 I Co. 15:54-57 He. 2:8 I Jo. 3:8 Lu. 11:20-22 Phil. 2:9-11
  3. Christ will return as a Holy Warrior bringing judgment. Re. 19:11f Da. 7:13 2:44
- C. There is no holy nation, holy land, or holy war under the New Covenant. I Pe. 2:9f**
1. King Jesus entered Jerusalem on Palm Sunday, not as a military leader, but as a spiritual conqueror. Mark 11 John 18:36 Mt. 26:52
  2. The kingdom of God is spiritual under the New Covenant.
  3. Many nations have falsely claimed or assumed theocratic status. *Christendom*
- D. We are engaged in a holy spiritual war. Eph. 6:11f II Ti. 2:3-4 II Co. 10:3-5**  
Our commission is not to slay, but to convert the nations. Mt. 18:16f

## V. Just war.

- A. While there is no longer *holy war*, there may be *just war* in which civil government uses the sword of justice to protect people from theft, slavery, oppression and death.**
- B. Criteria for just war (Augustine: 400 AD with later refinements). Ecc. 3:1,8**
1. War must be fought for a *just cause*. Rom. 13:3-4 Pr. 31:8-9
  2. War must be fought under the direction of a *legitimate authority*. Romans 13:1-2
  3. War must be fought with *rightful intentions*: to avoid evil or achieve good.
  4. War must be fought for *well-defined objectives*.
  5. War must be fought only as a *last resort*. Rom. 12:18 Mt. 5:9 Deut. 20:10
  6. War must be conducted in an *honorable manner*. Mt. 7:12 Ex. 20:16 Ps. 15:4
  7. War must be fought in a way, which *protects non-combatants*. Ex. 20:15,13 Pr. 6:17
  8. War must be fought with *proportionate means* to achieve the objectives. Dt. 20:19f
  9. War must be fought only if there is a *reasonable hope of success*. Lu. 14:31-32 Pr. 20:18 24:6
- C. Individuals also have an obligation to wage war in a just manner. Acts 5:29**
1. It is not wrong to serve as a soldier and to fight in a just war.
  2. If you are convinced a war is unjust, you must be a conscientious objector.
  3. If you are told to conduct warfare in an unjust way, you should refuse orders.
- D. Questions.**
1. Is it ever permissible for citizens to overthrow their own government?
  2. Is it right to fight another nation which is cruelly oppressing its people? Pr. 31:8-9
  3. Are weapons of mass destruction immoral because they kill non-combatants?
  4. Is pre-emptive warfare an option? Anticipatory self-defense. Esther 9
  5. What is the best way to avoid war?

## VI. Concluding applications: What should Christians do in times of war? Be good citizens.

- A. Think biblically and critically.**
1. Don't confuse the kingdom of God with either pacifism or patriotism.
  2. Beware of those who speculate about current events and biblical prophecy.
- B. Pray for our rulers, our soldiers, and our enemies. I Tim. 2:1-4 Rom. 13:14 Mt. 5:44**
- C. Thank God for the religious and political freedom we enjoy.**
- D. Be engaged in spiritual warfare. Eph. 6:12 II Co. 10:3-5 II Ti. 2:3-4**

**E. Eagerly await the triumphant return of King Jesus. Rev. 11:15 19:11f 15:4 20:11f**

**Discussion Questions**

- 1. Why does God hate war?**
- 2. How does God use war for good?**
- 3. Why is pacifism unbiblical?**
- 4. How was Holy War conducted under the Old Covenant?**
- 5. How is Holy War conducted under the New Covenant?**
- 6. In what sense is Christ a Holy Warrior?**
- 7. What is the difference between a just war and a holy war?**
- 8. What are the characteristics of a just war?**
- 9. Under what circumstances should a Christian refuse to fight in a war?**
- 10. What are the duties of a Christian citizen in times of war?**