

Biblical Light on a Nation and War

1. What are some of the reasons for war? (See James 4:1-3; Matthew 24:4-8; Psalm 68:28-31)
2. Under ordinary circumstances, what does God encourage us to do in relationship with our enemies? (See Romans 12:14-21; 13:8-10; Matthew 5:38-48; 7:1-6)
3. What does God say about the purpose of government, and its right to wage war? (See Romans 13:1-7; 1 Peter 2:13-17)

The Just War Theory

In order for a war to be declared just ...

- A. Its cause must be righteous.
 1. Defensive, not selfishly aggressive (Abraham rescuing Lot, pre-exilic events).
 2. It must have one of two clear objectives:
 - 1) to secure justice or remedy injustice (Maccabees).
 - 2) to protect the innocent or champion human rights (Amos).
 3. It must be undertaken as a last resort only, after all attempts at negotiation or reconciliation have been exhausted (See Matthew 18:15-20 for these steps).
 4. It must follow a formal declaration (See 1 Kings 2:5, 31-34).
 5. It must have a just cause (not revenge, for vengeance is the Lord's (Isaiah 34:8)).
2. Its means must be controlled, without wanton or unnecessary violence.
 1. It should be **proportionate**;
 - 1) War should clearly be the lesser of two evils.
 - 2) Violence must be in proportion to the evil.
 2. It should be **discriminate**;
 - 1) Directed against enemy combatants and military targets.
 - 2) Civilians are to be protected (Proverbs 6:16-17).
3. Its outcome must be predictable; there must be a calculated prospect of victory (See Luke 14:31-32).

If our government goes to war and calls men (and women) to fight, God expects us to comply unless there is a clear case why the war is indefensible according to the Bible; and contradicts the Just War principles. In all cases, we must obey God rather than man.