

*Missio Dei Fellowship exists to glorify God by delighting in Him and making Him known through the proclamation of the gospel of Jesus Christ.*

## *Biblical Principles of War, Pt 1*

### **Selected Passages**

**Keywords:** War, Violence, Government, Peace

**PowerPoint Presentation included:** none

**SermonAudio Blurb:** Though there are many opinions and approaches to war and violence within the Church-at-large, the opinions do not necessarily reflect all the subtle aspects that come with war. The same is true of Christians and internal conflicts that involve police action. The result too often is a conviction that is not based as much on the bible as the passing, ever-changing cultural climate of the time. Nations obviously exist. Police obviously need to exist. Evil cannot be ignored. And war and violence are part of life. So how does a Christian begin to approach dealing with these realities? Having surveyed the broad causes of war and violence and the common positions Christians take, in this related series we consider the many principles in the bible that relate to war, violence and even law enforcement.

#### **I. Introduction.**

- A. We start a new, related series on war and violence and how a Christian ought to view these realities.
- B. What stood out to me the most is that none of the positions seemed to deal with a couple of key realities that most certainly confront us today.
  - 1. The first is that though a Christian may be a pacifist by conviction and conscience, it gives no real counsel or direction on what a nation or local government ought to do when violence erupts.
  - 2. The second thought is what happens if you take a position for the Just War theory which is more responsive to war and violence?
- C. For the next few weeks we will consider many principles of war and violence from a biblical perspective.
  - 1. At this point I have 27 principles and am not done working on this. But there will likely be more to come so we will work through them all one by one and see if we can develop a solid theology of war and violence.
  - 2. Today we will see four key principles to consider when thinking through war and violence. Four principles in how we ought to approach situations that may require going to war.

#### **II. Biblical Principles of War.**

- A. #1 War is used by God for His purposes.

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1. We see much that unfolds in this age we live in and we must understand always that though we may not grasp what is happening; that nonetheless, God does. He is in every moment; aware of all the hidden intentions and plans.
  2. So when we see the descriptions of war, violence, famine and destruction, we must always factor God into it. But we also need to be careful to not go beyond what we actually know and inadvertently judge God according to our knowledge.
  3. So we must take into account the fact that the bible is filled with many situations where God commands a nation to go to war, or raises them up for war.
  4. So we find repeatedly that God tells the nation of Israel to engage in war and that fact alone is sufficient for us to see that war has a place in this age.
  
  5. So the first principle regarding war is that we cannot assume God is automatically against it. God uses and ordains war and violence at times for His purposes.
- B. #2 The Divine purposes in any war are manifold and mysterious.
1. Exodus 9:1-16.
    - a. Note the use of “Lord” or YHWH in this section. Worth underlining each of these and connecting them until you come to vs 16. Note the “name.”
    - b. War and violence was done intentionally by God so that His fame and reputation would go forth throughout the world.
    - c. In other words, these actions by God were evangelistic in nature.
  2. Habakkuk 1:1-6.
    - a. Note in vss 2-4 the conditions: Violence. Trouble. Wickedness. Destruction. Strife and contention. Law is ignored. Justice perverted. The wicked are against the righteous.
    - b. Now look down at vs 5 and see God’s response.

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- (1) “Look, be shocked and amazed.”
- (2) But look a bit more closely...’I am doing something that is beyond what anyone would ever believe or conceive.”
- (3) We learn several things here.
  - (a) First, that we need to be careful assuming that God will act in a specific way in every situation.
  - (b) Second, He values a righteous people who follow and obey Him out of faith. And He will discipline to the uttermost those who are called by His Name.
  - (c) Third, nations rise and fall by His will. Babylon’s rise into power was not due to their greatness or wisdom; but the will of God.
  - (d) Fourth, When God takes even evil actions and plans they are intrinsically good in His hands.
3. So we see that though much evil and violence is present in nations and war; God is not somehow absent in those times. But does this mean that war and violence is the way to build a nation? This is the next principle:
  - C. #3 Violence and War are not the way to build a nation (Habakkuk 2:12).
    1. Habakkuk is struggling with this news and he appeals to God’s nature in protest (1:12-13).
    2. So he asks God again in vs 17 what is going to happen.
    3. And in 2:1 he then settles down to wait and see how YHWH responds. And God does and tells him to write it down.
    4. First lesson is vs 4. A text that is central to the Christian faith.
    5. The second lesson is that God sees all the wickedness. Vss 5ff simply is God acknowledging all of the evil of the Babylonian nation.
    6. The third lesson is that though in the short term a nation or people can prosper through evil, in the end it will all come to nothing.
    7. So in vs 12 we see that the means to establishing a home or nation is not through violence. This violence is not that of defense but offense. It is looking at a place and in your arrogance you decide to take what is not yours through violence.
  - D. #4 Deadly force is specifically ordained by God (Genesis 9).

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1. Noah and family pos-flood and God commands them the same as with Adam and Eve, be fruitful and multiply (1).
2. But God also says that the relationship between man and animal world is changed (2).
3. But this violence and death is expanded even more in vss 5-7. This is the key passage for capital punishment/death penalty in the entire bible.
4. In the same way, when it comes to the life of a person, God says that He will require the life of anyone who kills another. But how is that to occur?
  - a. It is through the hands of another person. God has made this standard and it is not to be ignored. And no where does the bible ever rescind this standard.
  - b. Please note that God is not saying in Genesis 9 that the purpose for capital punishment is so that others won't murder. This is the common argument for those who oppose capital punishment.
  - c. The purpose is because man is made in God's image and to rob a person of their life makes your life now forfeit.
  - d. I would argue that this goes both ways within a nation. You take this passage and Romans 13 about the sword and I think that these authorize deadly force both within the nation and outside the nation to those who attack you.

### **III. Conclusion.**

- A. So four principles about war and violence for you to consider.
  1. #1 War is used by God for His purposes.
  2. #2 The Divine purposes in any war are manifold and mysterious.
  3. #3 Violence and War are not the way to build a nation.
  4. #4 Deadly force is specifically ordained by God.
- B. But it is very important that though we see in these principles that war and violence are part of our existence, that they are our enemies as well.
  1. It is all due to sin the dominates us.
  2. That no motives by any person are utterly pure.
  3. That we ought to have great suspicion when war and violence is being proposed. Great care must be taken.

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4. That even in those righteous moment where we conduct ourselves properly and justly; we also ought to ache. Shattered nations and shattered people are all due to sin. And that sin reigns in the hearts of all people.
5. So we look to Christ. The One who defeated sin and death through His own death. A death in our place.
6. And He bids each of you to come, see and believe. Believe in the One sent by God. Believe in the sinless God-man who took our place and took our sin and died our death. Believe and follow Jesus Christ who shook off the chains of death.
7. And to wait with expectant hope for His return. An event of salvation for those who believe and an event of great violence and judgment against all who ignore and reject Him.

## **Benediction**

**May our God cause you all to not stumble and to make you stand one day in His presence filled with joy. May God's Spirit hold you in His mighty hand until that day of redemption. And may you find your hope, joy and life in His Son, Jesus Christ the Lord. To Him be the glory and majesty and dominion for all time. Amen**