

Biblical War & Peace

A Study of SBC Baptist Faith & Message Article XVI

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Preview

- Baptists—people of the Bible and the Bible’s God!
- What’s the purpose of the *Baptist Faith and Message*?
- What does the Baptist statement say? Is it the Bible’s view?
- The three views on Christian peace and war are Pacifism, Just War, and Crusaderism.
- What do they mean?
- Is peace the most important element of Christian faith? –Is pacifism biblical?
- Is war always wrong?
- What is the most important element of the Christian faith?
- Love God? – Should we *enforce* that?
- Jesus observed that there *will* be war this side of heaven. We are to be peacemakers, not pacifists or crusaders.

The SBC Article XVI on peace and war is a bit passive for most Baptists, especially all the hunters, LHC holders, soldiers, law officers, and pretty much all who would desire to defend their home from a marauder. I gave this presentation at a New Bethel Baptist Association in 2001 in a series with other ministers on the articles of the BF & M. *Enjoy.*

A. Article XVI. Peace and War – *Baptist Faith and Message 1963 & 2000*

Entire Paragraph of Article: It is the duty of Christians to seek peace with all men on principles of righteousness. In accordance with the spirit and teachings of Christ they should do all in their power to put an end to war. The true remedy for the war spirit is the gospel of our Lord. The supreme need of the world is the acceptance of His teachings in all the affairs of men and nations, and the practical application of His law of love. Christian people throughout the world should pray for the reign of the Prince of Peace [Last sentence added in 2000].¹

B. Scriptures in Baptist Faith and Message from NIV

Isa. 2:4 – He will judge between nations ... settle disputes.... They will beat their swords into plowshares ... Nation will not take up sword against nation, nor will they train for war anymore. **Matt. 5:9** – “Blessed are the peacemakers ... called sons of God” **Matt. 5:38-48** – “‘Eye for eye, and tooth for tooth.’ But I tell you, Do not resist an evil person. If someone strikes you on the right cheek, turn to him the other also.... sue you ... let him have your cloak.... forces you to go one mile, go ... two miles. Give to the one who asks you, and do not turn away from the one who wants to borrow from you.... ‘Love your neighbor and hate your enemy.’ But I tell you: Love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you, that you may be sons of your Father in heaven. He causes his sun to rise on the evil and the good, and sends rain on the righteous and the unrighteous. If you love those who love you, what reward will you get? ... the tax collectors doing that? And if you greet only your brothers, what are you doing more than others? Do not even pagans do that? Be perfect, therefore, as your heavenly Father is perfect.” **Matt. 6:33** – “Seek first his kingdom and his righteousness, and all these things will be given to you.” **Matt. 26:52** – “Put your sword back in its place,” ... “for all who draw the sword will die by the sword.” **Luke 22:36, 38** – “If you have a purse, take it ... if you don’t have a sword, sell your cloak and buy one.” 38 – The disciples said, “See, Lord, here are two swords.” “That is enough,” he said. **Rom. 12:18-19** – If it is possible, as far as it depends on you, live at peace with everyone. Do not take revenge, my friends, but leave room for God’s wrath, for it is written: “It is mine to avenge; I will repay,” says the Lord. **Rom. 13:1-7** – Must submit himself to governing authorities ... no authority except that which God has established. The authorities ... established by God.... rebels against the authority is rebelling against what God has instituted.... For rulers hold no terror for those who do right, but for those who do wrong.... Free from fear...? Then do what is right and he will commend you. For he is God’s servant to do you good. But if you do wrong, be afraid, for he does not bear the sword for nothing. He is God’s servant, an agent of wrath to bring punishment on the wrongdoer.... necessary to submit to the authorities, not only because of possible punishment but also because of conscience.... pay taxes ... God’s servants, who give full time to governing. Given everyone what you owe him: if you owe taxes, pay taxes; if revenue, then revenue; if respect, then respect; if honor, then honor. **Rom. 14:19** – Make every effort to do what leads to peace and to mutual edification. **Heb. 12:14** – Make every effort to live in peace with all men and to be holy; without holiness no one will see the Lord. **James 4:1-2** –

¹ See www.PreciousHeart.net/Baptist_Faith.htm.

What causes fights and quarrels among you? Don't they come from your desires that battle within you? You want something but don't get it. You kill and covet, but you cannot have what you want. You quarrel and fight. You do not have, because you do not ask God.

C. Peace in the O.T. and N.T.

1. Peace in O.T. Hebrew

Edited from: *Vine's Expository Dictionary of Biblical Words* (Thomas Nelson, 1985)

NOUN: *shalom* OT:7965, "peace; completeness; welfare; health." The Semitic root with the meaning "peace" in Akkadian, Ugaritic, Phoenician, Aramaic, Syriac, Arabic, and Ethiopic. A very important term in the O.T. maintaining its place in Mishnaic, rabbinic, and modern Hebrew. In Israel today, people greet the newcomer and each other with the words *mah shalomka*—*what is your peace? or how are you doing?* and ask about the peace of one's family. *Shalom* is used 237 times in a varied semantic range. The first two occurrences in Genesis already indicate the changes in meaning: "And thou shalt go to thy fathers in peace" with *shalom* in the sense of tranquility, at ease, and unconcerned in Gen. 15:15; and "that thou wilt do us no hurt.... as we have done unto thee nothing but good, and have sent thee away in peace" with *shalom* meaning of unharmed in Gen 26:29. Both uses are essentially the same expressing the root *to be whole*. The phrase *ish shelomi* or *friend of my peace* in Ps. 41:9, "Yea, mine own familiar friend" is literally *friend of my peace* (cf. Jer. 20:10), a state of feeling at ease with someone. The relationship is one of harmony and wholeness.

Closely associated is the use referring to personal welfare or health, as in 2 Sam 20:9, "Joab said to Amasa, Art thou in health, my brother?" or in the phrase *eshalom* with the verb *to ask* as in Gen 43:27: "And he asked them of their welfare, and said, Is your father well, the old man of whom ye spake?" *Shalom* also signifies peace as with a prosperous relationship between two or more parties: "Their tongue is as an arrow shot out; it speaketh deceit: one speaketh peaceably [literally, "in peace"] to his neighbor with his mouth, but in heart he layeth his wait" Jer 9:8; in diplomacy: "Howbeit Sisera fled away on his feet to the tent of Jael the wife of Heber the Kenite: for there was peace between Jabin the king of Hazor and the house of Heber the Kenite" Judg 4:17; and in warfare: "...if it make thee answer of peace, and open unto thee, then it shall be, that all the people that is found therein shall be tributaries unto thee, and they shall serve thee" Deut. 20:11.

Isaiah prophesied concerning the "Prince of peace" Isa 9:6, whose kingdom was to introduce a government of peace in Isa 9:7. Ezekiel spoke about the new covenant as one of peace: "Moreover I will make a covenant of peace with them; it shall be an everlasting covenant with them: and I will place them, and multiply them, and will set my sanctuary in the midst of them for evermore" in Ezek. 37:26. Ps. 122 is a great psalm in celebration of and in prayer: "Pray for the peace of Jerusalem: they shall prosper that love thee," Ps. 122:6.

The Septuagint gives the following translations: *eirene* to peace, welfare, health; *eirenikos* to peaceable and peaceful; *soteria* deliverance, preservation, salvation; and *hugiainein* to be in good health and sound. Related noun is *shelem*, 87 times, means peace offering.

VERB: *shalem* OT:7999, “to be complete, be sound.” 103 times. In 1 Kings 9:25: “So he finished the house.” Another verb, *shalam*, means to make peace: “When a man’s ways please the Lord, he maketh even his enemies to be at peace with him” Prov 16:7.

2. Peace in the O.T. NIV

The word **peace** appears 124 times in the O.T.: **4 times in Genesis**, Gen. 15:15 – You ... will go to your fathers in peace; 1 time in Leviticus, Lev. 26:1-6 – Observe my Sabbaths.... If you follow my decrees ... I will send you rain.... I will grant peace in the land; **2 times in Numbers**, Num. 6:22-26 – [Lord to Moses] bless the Israelites.... The LORD bless you and keep you;... the LORD turn his face toward you and give you peace; **3 times in Joshua**, Josh. 9:15 – Joshua made a treaty of peace with them to let them live; 6 times in Judges, Judges 6:23-24 – [to Gideon] the LORD said to him, “Peace! Do not be afraid. You are not going to die.” So Gideon built an altar to the LORD there and called it The LORD is Peace; **41 times in 1 & 2 Sam., 1 & 2 Kings, and 1 & 2 Chronicles**, 1 Sam. 1:17 – Eli answered, “Go in peace”; 1 Sam. 16:5 – Samuel replied, “Yes, in peace; I have come”; 2 Sam. 10:19 – When all the kings who were vassals of Hadadezer saw that they had been defeated by Israel, they made peace with the Israelites and became subject to them. So the Arameans were afraid to help the Ammonites anymore; **4 times in Job**, Job 3:26 – I have no peace, no quietness; I have no rest, but only turmoil; **17 times in Psalms**, Psalm 4:8 – I will lie down and sleep in peace, for you alone, O LORD, make me dwell in safety; Psalm 29:11 – The LORD blesses his people with peace; Psalm 85:8 – I will listen to what God the LORD will say; he promises peace to his people, his saints; Psalm 120:7 – I am a man of peace; but when I speak, they are for war; **7 times in Proverbs**, Prov. 3:17 – all her paths are peace; Prov. 12:20 – joy for those who promote peace; Prov. 14:30 – A heart at peace gives life to the body, but envy rots the bones; Prov. 16:7 – When a man’s ways are pleasing to the LORD, he makes even his enemies live at peace with him; Prov. 17:7 – Better a dry crust with peace and quiet than a house full of feasting; **26 times in Isaiah**, Is. 9:6-7 – For to us a child is born ... and the government will be on his shoulders. And he will be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace. Of the increase of his government and peace there will be no end; Is. 26:3 – You will keep in perfect peace him whose mind is steadfast, because he trusts in you. Trust in the LORD forever, for the LORD, the LORD, is the Rock eternal; Is. 26:12 – LORD, you establish peace for us; Is. 32:17 – The fruit of righteousness will be peace; the effect of righteousness will be quietness and confidence forever; **18 times in Jeremiah**, Jer. 6:13-14 – greedy for gain; prophets and priests alike, all practice deceit. They dress the wound for my people as though it were not serious. “Peace, peace,” they say, when there is no peace; **7 times in Ezekiel**, Ezek. 13:10 – saying, “Peace,” when there is no peace; Ezek. 13:16 – those prophets of Israel who prophesied to Jerusalem and saw visions of peace for her when there was no peace, declares the Sovereign LORD.

3. Peace in N.T. Greek

Edited from: *Vine’s Expository Dictionary of Biblical Words* (Thomas Nelson, 1985)

NOUN: *eirene* NT:1515 “occurs in each of the books of the NT (save 1 John and save in Acts 7:26 it is translated as *at one again* in the KJV but translated *peace* in the

RV). It describes (a) harmonious relationships between men, Matt 10:34; Rom 14:19; (b) between nations, Luke 14:32; Acts 12:20; Rev 6:4; (c) friendliness, Acts 15:33; 1 Cor. 16:11; Heb. 11:31; (d) freedom from molestation, Luke 11:21; 19:42; Acts 9:31 (RV, *peace*, KJV, *rest*); Acts 16:36; (e) order, in the State, Acts 24:2 (RV, *peace*, KJV, *quietness*); in the churches, 1 Cor. 14:33; (f) the harmonized relationships between God and man, accomplished through the gospel, Acts 10:36; Eph. 2:17; (g) the sense of rest and contentment consequent thereon, Matt 10:13; Mark 5:34; Luke 1:79; 2:29; John 14:27; Rom. 1:7; 3:17; 8:6; in certain passages this idea is not distinguishable from the last, Rom. 5:1.”

VERB: 1. *eireneuo* NT:1514, primarily, “to bring to peace, reconcile,” denotes in the NT, “to keep peace or to be at peace”: in Mark 9:50, RV, the Lord bids the disciples “be at peace” with one another, gently rebuking their ambitious desires; in Rom. 12:18 (RV, “be at peace,” KJV, “live peaceably”) the limitation “if it be possible, as much as in you lieth,” seems due to the phrase “with all men,” but is not intended to excuse any evasion of the obligation imposed by the command; in 2 Cor. 13:11 it is rendered “live in peace,” a general exhortation to believers; in 1 Thess. 5:13, “be at peace (among yourselves).” 2. *eirenopoieo* NT:1517, “to make peace” (eirene, and poieo, “to make”), is used in Col 1:20. In the Sept., Prov 10:10.

4. Peace in the N.T. NIV

The word **peace** appears 81 times in the N.T.: **4 times in Matthew**, Matt. 10:11-16 – Whatever town or village you enter, search for some worthy person there and stay.... If the home is deserving, let your peace rest on it; if it is not, let your peace return to you.... shake the dust off your feet.... more bearable for Sodom and Gomorrah ... than for that town. I am sending you out like sheep among wolves. Therefore be as shrewd as snakes and as innocent as doves; Matt. 10:34 – Do not suppose that I have come to bring peace to the earth. I did not come to bring peace, but a sword; **2 times in Mark**, Mark 9:50 – be at peace with each other; **12 times in Luke**, Luke 10:5-6 – When you enter a house, first say, “Peace to this house.” If a man of peace is there, your peace will rest on him; if not, it will return to you; Luke 12:51 – Do you think I came to bring peace on earth? No, I tell you, but division; Luke 24:36 – Jesus himself stood among them and said to them, “Peace be with you”; **6 times in John**, John 14:27 – Peace I leave with you; my peace I give you.... not ... as the world gives. Do not let your hearts be troubled and do not be afraid; John 16:33 – told you these things, so that in me you may have peace. In this world you will have trouble. But take heart! I have overcome the world; **11 times in Romans**, Rom. 1:7 – Grace and peace to you from God our Father; Rom. 2:10 – glory, honor and peace for everyone who does good; Rom. 5:1 – we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ; Rom. 8:6 – the mind controlled by the Spirit is life and peace; Rom. 12:18 – as it depends on you, live at peace with everyone; Rom. 14:19 – make every effort to do what leads to peace; Rom. 15:13 – May the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace as you trust in him, so that you may overflow with hope by the power of the Holy Spirit; Rom. 16:20 – God of peace will soon crush Satan under your feet; **8 times in 1 & 2 Corinthians**, 1 Cor. 14:33 – For God is not a God of disorder but of peace; 2 Cor. 13:11 – be of one mind, live in peace. And the God of love and peace will be with you; **3 times in Galatians**, Gal. 5:22 fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace., patience; Gal. 6:15-16 – what counts is a new creation. Peace and mercy to all who follow this rule; 8 times in Ephesians, Eph. 2:14-18 – for he himself is our peace, who

has made the two one.... His purpose was to create in himself one new man out of the two, thus making peace ... reconcile both to them to God through the cross.... He came and preached peace to you who were far away and peace to those who were near. For through him we both have access to the Father by one Spirit; **3 times in Philippians**; **4 times in Colossians**, Col. 1:19-20 – God was pleased to have all his fullness dwell in him, and through him to reconcile to himself all things ... by making peace through his blood, shed on the cross; Col. 3:15 – Let the peace of Christ rule your hearts, since as members of one body you were called to peace; **7 times in 1 & 2 Thessalonians**, 1 Thess. 5:13 – Live in peace with each other; 1 Thess. 5:23 – May God himself, the God of peace, sanctify you; 2 Thess. 3:16 – may the Lord of peace himself give you peace at all times and in every way; **4 times in Hebrews**, Heb. 12:11 – No disciplines seems pleasant.... Later on, however, it produces a harvest of righteousness and peace for those who have been trained by it; **1 time in James 3:18** – Peacemakers who sow in peace raise a harvest of righteousness; **2 times in Revelation**, Rev. 6:4 – Then another horse came out, a fiery red one. Its rider was given power to take peace from the earth and to make men slay each other. To him was given a large sword.

D. War in the O.T. and N.T

1. War & Battle in O.T. Hebrew

Edited from: *Vine's Expository Dictionary of Biblical Words* (Thomas Nelson, 1985)

Noun. *milchamah* OT:4421, “war; battle; skirmish; combat” with a cognate only in Ugaritic. Biblical Hebrew attests it 315 times and in all periods. It means war, the over-all confrontation of two forces Gen. 14:2. It can also mean the hand-to-hand fighting which takes place: “And when Joshua heard the noise ..., he said unto Moses, ‘There is a noise of war in the camp’” Ex. 32:17. *Milchamah* sometimes represents the art of soldiering or combat: “The Lord is a man of war...” Ex. 15:3.

Several principles governed war in the O.T.. Unjust violence was prohibited, but war led Judg. 4:13 and used by God Num. 21:14. War was preceded by sacrifices recognizing His leadership and sovereignty 1 Sam. 7:9; if He was consulted and obeyed Judg. 20:23, Israel was promised divine protection Deut. 20:1-4. Not one life would be lost Josh 10:11. God’s presence in battle was symbolized by the ark of the covenant 1 Sam. 4:3-11. His presence necessitated spiritual and ritualistic cleanliness Deut. 23:9-14. Before and during battle, trumpets were blown placing the cause before God in anticipation of the victory and gratitude for it Num. 10:9-10, as well as to relay the orders of the commanders. A war cry accompanied the initiation of battle Josh. 6:5. At the beginning Israel’s army consisted of every man over twenty and under fifty Num. 1:2-3. Sometimes only certain segments of this potential citizens’ army were summoned Num. 31:3-6. There were several circumstances which could exempt one from war Num. 1:48-49 and Deut 20:5-8. Under David and Solomon there grew a professional army. Under Solomon, the army was renowned for its chariotry. Cities outside Palestine were to be offered terms of surrender before being attacked. Compliance meant subjugation to slavery Deut. 20:10-11. Cities and peoples within the Promised Land were to be utterly wiped out. They were under the ban Deut. 2:34; 3:6; 20:16-18. This made these battles uniquely holy battles (a holy war) where everything was especially devoted and sacrificed to God. Israel’s kings were admonished to trust in God as their strength rather than in a great

many horses and chariots Deut. 17:16. Her armies were forbidden to cut down fruit trees in order to build siege equipment Deut. 20:19-20. Soldiers were paid by keeping booty won in battle Num. 31:21-31. The entire army divided the spoil—even those in the rear guard Num. 31:26-47; Judg. 5:30. God, too, was appointed a share Num. 31:28-30.

Verb. *lacham* OT:3898, “to fight, do battle, engage in combat.” This word is found in all periods of Hebrew, as well as in ancient Ugaritic. More than 170 times. Commonly used of armies engaged in pitched battle against each other Num 21:23, Josh 10:5 & 11:5, it is also used to describe single hand-to-hand combat 1 Sam 17:32-33. Frequently, God fights the battle for Israel Deut 20:4.

2. War and Battle in the O.T. NIV

War appears 123 times (**Fight** 111 times) in the O.T.: **8 times in Deut.**, Deut. 21:10 – When you go to war against your enemies and the LORD your God delivers; **9 times in Joshua**, Josh. 11:18 – Joshua waged war against all these kings for a long time; Josh. 11:23 & 14:15 – Then the land had rest from war; and **53 times in 1 & 2 Samuel, 1 & 2 Kings, and 1 & 2 Chronicles.**

Battle appears 202 times in the O.T.: **13 times in Numbers**, Num. 10:9 – When you go into battle ... blast on the trumpets. Then you will be remembered by the LORD your God and rescued from your enemies; 31:4 – Send into battle a thousand men from each of the tribes; **10 times in Deut.**, Deut. 20:2-3 – When you are about to go into battle, the priest shall come forward and address the army. He shall say: “Hear, O Israel, today you are going into battle against your enemies. Do not be fainthearted or afraid; do not be terrified or give way to panic before them. For the LORD your God is the one who goes with you to fight for you ... to give you victory; **94 times in 1 & 2 Samuel, 1 & 2 Kings, and 1 & 2 Chronicles**, 1 Sam. 14:23 – So the LORD rescued Israel that day, and the battle moved on beyond Beth Aven; 1 Sam. 17:47 – [David to Goliath] not by sword or spear that the LORD saves; for the battle is the LORD’s, and he will give all of you into our hands; In 2 Chronicles 17, The LORD was with Jehoshaphat and his army of 1,160,000 fighting men; **9 times in Psalms**, Psalm 18:34 & 39 – He trains my hands for battle ... armed me with strength for battle; Psalm 140:7 – O Sovereign LORD, my strong deliverer, who shields my head in the day of battle; **12 times in Isaiah**, Is. 31:9 – [to Israel about Assyria] “Their stronghold will fall because of terror; at the sight of the battle standard their commanders will panic,” declares the LORD; **16 times in Jeremiah**; in Jeremiah chapter 6, there is a terrible warning of 30 verses against Israel.

3. War & Battle in N.T. Greek

Edited from: *Vine’s Expository Dictionary of Biblical Words* (Thomas Nelson, 1985)

Verbs. 1. ***polemeo*** NT:4170 (Eng., “polemics”), “to fight, to make war,” is used (a) literally, Rev. 12:7 (twice), RV; 13:4; 17:14; 19:11; (b) metaphorically, Rev. 2:16, RV; (c) hyperbolically, James 4:2. 2. ***strateuo*** NT:4754, used in the middle voice, “to make war” (from *stratos*, “an encamped army”), is translated “to war” in 2 Cor. 10:3; metaphorically, of spiritual “conflict,” 1 Tim. 1:18; 2 Tim. 2:3, KJV; James 4:1; 1 Peter 2:11. 3. ***antistrateuomai*** NT:497, “to make war against” occurs in Rom. 7:23.

Noun. *polemos* NT:4171, **war** is so translated in the RV, for KJV **battle**, 1 Cor. 14:8; Rev. 9:7,9; 16:14; 20:8; for KJV *fight*, Heb. 11:34; KJV and RV in James 4:1, hyperbolically of private *quarrels*.

4. War & Battle in the N.T. NIV

War appears 11 times in N.T.: **Luke 14:31** – “Suppose a king is about to go to war.... Will he not first; **Rom. 7:23** – Work in the members of my body, waging war against the law of my mind; **2 Cor. 10:3** – We live in the world, we do not wage war as the world does; **1 Pet. 2:11** – in the world, to abstain from sinful desires, which war against your soul; **7 times in Revelation 12:7, 17; 13:4, 7; 17:14; 19:11, 19** – war in heaven. Michael ... fought / enraged at woman and went off to make war / [beast] Who can make war against him? / He was given power to make war against saints and to conquer them / they will make war against the Lamb / with justice he judges and makes war / armies gathered together to make war against the rider on the horse.

Battle appears 7 times in the N.T.: **1 Cor. 14:8** – Again, if the trumpet does not sound a clear call, who will get ready for battle?; **Heb. 11:34** – [in chapter of Hall of Faithful] who became powerful in battle and routed foreign armies; **James 4:1** – desires that battle within you; **Rev. 9:7, 9; 16:14; 20:8** – horses prepared for battle / chariots rushing into battle / They are spirits of demons performing miraculous signs, and they go out to the kings of the whole world, to gather them for battle on the great day of God Almighty. [Then comes 16:15 – Behold, I come like a thief! Blessed is he who stays awake] / [Satan released from prison] will go to deceive the nations in the four corners of the earth – Gog and Magog – to gather them for battle.

Fight appears 14 times in the N.T.: **John 18:36** – If it were [my kingdom of this world], my servants would fight; **1 Cor. 9:26** – I do not fight like a man beating the air; **2 Cor. 10:4** – The weapons we fight with are not the weapons of the world. On the contrary, they have divine power to demolish strongholds. We demolish arguments ... against the knowledge of God; **1 Timothy 1:18 & 6:12** – fight the good fight; **2 Tim. 4:7** – I have fought the good fight; **James 4:2** – You quarrel and fight; **Rev. 2:16** – [to the church in Pergamum] Repent ... Otherwise, I will soon come to you and will fight against them with the sword of my mouth.

E. Peace and War Conclusion & Literature

Bible Indicates Several Kind of War

War caused by God
War caused by Satan
War caused by people sent from God
War caused by people sent from Satan
War caused by both good and bad people

War Against Christians Directly or Indirectly

Satan and his demons war against Christians
Some religious people war against Christians
Some religions war against Christians
Some people war against Christians
Some organizations war against Christians

Bible Indicates Several Kinds of Peace

Redemptive Peace only God can bring
Miraculous Peace only God can give
Community Peace partially at government's hands

Peacemaker Peace that each have a responsibility
Earthly Peace that awaits the reign of Christ
Ultimate Peace that awaits us in heaven

F. Quotes from Arthur F. Holmes' *War and Christian Ethics*

Holmes said, “*Just cause*: the only morally legitimate reason for going to war is self-defense. If this rule were universally followed there would be no aggressors and no wars.... *Just intent*: the only morally legitimate goal in war is the restoration of peace, with justice for both friend and foe.” (p5)

Reformer Martin Luther (1483-1546) said, “For whoever fights with a good and well-instructed conscience can also fight well. This is especially true since a good conscience fills a man’s heart with courage and boldness. And if the heart is bold and courageous, the fist is more powerful, a man and even his horse are more energetic, everything turns out better, and every happening and deed contributes to the victory which God then gives. On the other hand, a timid and insecure conscience makes the heart fearful. It cannot be otherwise; a bad conscience can only make men cowardly and fearful.... [quotes Deut. 28:20, 25] The both man and horse are lazy and clumsy; they lack vigor for the attack, and in the end they are defeated. (p.141)...

[Luther continues] “Now slaying and robbing do not seem to be works of love. A simple man therefore does not think it is a Christian thing to do. In truth, however, even this is a work of love. For example, a good doctor sometimes finds so serious and terrible a sickness that he must amputate or destroy a hand, foot, ear, eye, to save the body. Looking at it from the point of view of the organ that he amputates, he appears to be a cruel and merciless man; but looking at it from the point of view of the body, which the doctor wants to save, he is a fine and true man and does a good and Christian work, as far as the work itself is concerned. In the same way, when I think of a soldier fulfilling his office by punishing the wicked, killing the wicked, and creating so much misery, it seems an un-Christian work completely contrary to Christian love. But when I think of how it protects the good and keeps and preserves wife and child, house and farm, property, and honor and peace, then I see how precious and godly this work is; and I observe that it amputates a leg or a hand, so that the whole body may not perish. For if the sword were not on guard to preserve peace, everything in the world would be ruined because of lack of peace. Therefore, such a war is only a very brief lack of peace that prevents an everlasting and immeasurable lack of peace, a small misfortune that prevents a great misfortune.” (p.141 & 143)

James Johnson said, “Peace, then, is more than not having war: it is the final ideal that results from the prior achievement of two other ideals, right order and justice.” (p353)

The tension is not so much between pacifism and just war. For Christians, Duane Friesen said, “This is the tension between the kingdom of God—God’s rule and sovereignty over the entire creation, which in some sense has ‘already’ come—and the reality of a sinful world ‘not yet’ transformed into the kingdom of God.” (p367)

The fog of war in Leo Tolstoy’s *War and Peace*. George Weigel said, “Thus moral muteness in a time of war is a moral stance: it can be a stance born of fear; it can be a stance born of indifference; it can be a stance born of cynicism about the human capacity to promote justice, freedom, and order, all of which are moral goods. But whatever its psychological, spiritual, or intellectual origins, moral muteness in wartime is a form of moral judgment—a deficient and dangerous form of moral judgment.

“That is why the venerable just war tradition—a form of moral reasoning that traces its origins to St. Augustine in fifth-century North Africa—is such an

important *public* resource.... allowed men and women to avoid the trap of moral muteness, to think through the tangle of problems.... Indeed, in the national debate launched by the war against terrorism and the threat of outlaw states armed with weapons of mass destruction, we can hear echoes of the moral reasoning of Augustine and his successors:

“What is the just cause that would justify putting our armed forces ... in harm’s way? Who has the authority to wage war? The President? The President and Congress...? Is it every right to use armed force first? Can going first ever be, not just morally permissible, but morally imperative? How can the use of armed force contribute to the pursuit of justice, freedom, and order in world affairs?” (p.374)

Augustine’s *tranquillitas ordinis* = *peace of order*. George Weigel said, this is the “order created by just political community and mediated through law.... is composed of justice and freedom. The peace of order is not the eerily quiet and sullen ‘peace’ of a well-run authoritarian regime; it is a peace built on foundations of constitutional, commutative, and social justice. It is a peace in which freedom, especially religious freedom, flourishes. The defense of basic human rights is thus an integral component of ‘work for peace.’” (p382).

Conclusion on Biblical Views on Peace and War

What does the Baptist statement say? The statement leans too close to pacifism for most Baptists and Christians. Is peace the most important element of Christian faith? No. The Great Commands to Love God and others, and the Golden Rule are more important than peace or war. Peace is a Christian value, sometimes secured by war.

Is pacifism biblical? Where is pacifism in the Bible? You’re not a 100% pacifist if you would spank your child? Is war always wrong? Not to God. What is the most important element of the Christian faith? Love God! But we *cannot* ever enforce Love, and we should never legislate Love God. Love is best served from a willing heart. What does the Bible say about peace and war? We are to be peacemakers, sometimes supporting the waging of war to protect our freedom to live and worship.

Jesus indicated there *would* be war this side of heaven. We’re to be peacemakers, not pacifists or crusaders.

In just-war theory, many fulcrum concepts magnify complexity. Would you have sanctioned the assassination of Hitler? SBC Ethics Scholar Richard Land would. In a nuclear age, how far do we assert foreign diplomacy? Most importantly, what conditions need to exist to use violence and even lethal force? At least, I think, we would all agree that force and lethal force is justified to prevent a danger to human health, life, and liberty—especially to those we Love.

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