

## War as a New Testament Concept

*Some soldiers also questioned him: "What should we do?" He said to them, "Don't take money from anyone by force or false accusation; be satisfied with your wages." – Luke 3:14*  
HCSB

Some look on the doctrine of just war as a primitive and barbaric theology, but in this view, they have created a god in their own image.<sup>1</sup> They have demeaned themselves and their fellow man; their theology debases mankind to some kind of cosmic accident unworthy of protection.

They often claim that the basis for the belief in the validity of a just war or of a war-prosecuting God can only be found in the Old Testament – as though immutable God<sup>2</sup> changed His mind during the four hundred year silence between the Testaments!

But isn't it interesting that John the Baptist didn't advise the soldiers to quit their jobs?<sup>3</sup> And an officer of the invading, Gentile army found approval for his demonstrated faith.<sup>4</sup> There was no mention of any gentle correction, "Now, you know you need to stop fighting..."

Paul taught that properly elected authority may use force in order to bring about justice. Along with increased responsibility, increased authority must come.<sup>5</sup>

God allows a society to develop a police force to stop evil doers from within its borders. Similarly, society must be allowed to develop a military force to stop evil doers from attacking from outside its borders. It is only common sense - good stewardship - to take the battle to your enemy, fighting in and ruining his territory rather than your own.<sup>6</sup>

Jesus used war as a positive illustration.<sup>7</sup> The Master was passionately zealous<sup>8</sup> for "rightness" and in righteous indignation chose aggressive physical action to bring it about.<sup>9</sup> He also said a king should make sure he had the resources to win a war – not just automatically capitulate.<sup>10</sup>

In the Gospels, Jesus did say to turn the other cheek. However, if you look at the context, you will see that this is always to be done in response to religious persecution.

Further, it is a personal decision that can only be made for oneself. I cannot turn my wife's cheek. My role as her husband precludes it. If she decides to "turn the cheek" to religious persecution, then I must respect her decision. However, until then, I must fulfill my responsibilities as a husband and father and protect my family.<sup>11</sup>

It is true that Jesus said "Blessed are the peace makers"<sup>12</sup>, but notice that peace must be "made."<sup>13</sup> Every day, police officers and DEA agents faithfully prosecute an ongoing war so that we might peacefully enjoy our lives.

Peacefulness is not passivity, for God demanded, "Isn't the fast I choose to break the chains of wickedness, to untie the ropes of the yoke, to set the oppressed free, and to tear off every yoke?"

Following that particular Mitzvah is going to demand the sacrifice of our comfort. He did not call us to a comfortable, feel-good theology but to the prosecution of justice.

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<sup>1</sup> Romans 1:18-22

<sup>2</sup> Numbers 23:19; 1 Samuel 15:29; Psalm 33:11; Isaiah 40:28; Malachi 3:6; Hebrews 6:17-18; James 1:17

<sup>3</sup> Luke 3:14

<sup>4</sup> Acts 10

<sup>5</sup> Romans 13:1-6

<sup>6</sup> Romans 13:1-4

<sup>7</sup> Luke 14:31

<sup>8</sup> John 2:17; Psalm 69:9

<sup>9</sup> Matthew 21:12; John 2:15

<sup>10</sup> Luke 14:31-32

<sup>11</sup> Matthew 5:39; Luke 6:29

<sup>12</sup> Matthew 5:9

<sup>13</sup> Romans 14:19