

War Justly Prosecuted

Jacob's Portion is not like these because He is the One who formed all things. [Israel is] the tribe of His inheritance; the Lord of Hosts is His name. You are My battle club, my weapons of war. With you I will smash nations; with you I will bring kingdoms to ruin. – Jeremiah 51:19-20 HCSB

Though God approves of the use of war¹, He still finds it repugnant.² He doesn't want anyone to die. He said He wants everyone to find eternal life³ and He backed up those words by dying for that desire⁴.

Therefore, before entering into any war, we must be sure that it is just. What is a just war? Five criteria must be met before combat may be pursued:

It must be ordered by an appropriate authority.⁵ The government of Britain no longer represented or cared for its colonies and they rightly rebelled. That action gave us a (somewhat) representative government and freedom of worship.

Its purpose must be to bring about justice.⁶ The U.S recognized both the tragedy of millions losing their lives under the Nazi regime and the potential threat to themselves if they did nothing. The U.S.' entry into that conflict brought about the creation of the State of Israel.

It must be undertaken with the right intentions.⁷ I proudly participated in the First Gulf War as a Marine because Iraq had invaded its neighbor. And though I have spent much valuable time arguing for the doctrine of just war, I do not personally believe the U.S.' current war in Iraq is just. It is my belief that this particular war is not about justice but oil. Moses taught that we should not follow a crowd in wrongdoing.⁸ As a patriotic ex-Marine, I use my rights as a citizen of a free country to use legal means to protest what I view as an unjust war, hoping that my efforts will save the lives of fellow warriors as well as Iraqi citizens.

It must have a reasonable chance of success.⁹ If there is any way possible, we should avoid going to war.¹⁰ But if it is determined that war is the best way to save the most lives, then we must be certain that we have sufficient resources to see it through to victory.

It must be proportionate.¹¹ We may not, as the current president of Iran apparently desires, drop an atom bomb killing millions in response to a verbal insult.

Peace often comes at a cost of many acts of liberation. Jesus died once, but that spiritual battle must be fought every day, for every life, until He returns and establishes peace.

Until then we must continually pursue justice and peace – just like the Angel of the Lord, the Lord of Hosts, the King of Kings and Lord of Lords who will one day rule with a rod of iron – sweet Jesus meek and mild.

¹ 2 Samuel 22:35

² 1 Chronicles 22:8-9; Psalm 68:30; 120:6-7; Revelation 13:10

³ 2 Peter 3:9

⁴ John 3:16; Romans 5:8

⁵ Matthew 22:21; Romans 13:1-6; Titus 3:1

⁶ Psalm 82:1-4; Isaiah 1:16-18; 56:1; 58:6-12; Micah 6:8; James 1:16-18

⁷ Matthew 6:1-18; Philippians 2:4

⁸ Exodus 23:1

⁹ Luke 14:31-32

¹⁰ Romans 12:18

¹¹ Exodus 21:23-27