

One group of researchers compiled the following information concerning war: Since 3600 B.C., the world has known only 292 years of peace! During this period there have been 14,351 wars large and small, in which 3.64 billion people have been killed. The value of the property destroyed is equal to a golden belt around the world 97.2 miles wide and 33 feet thick. Since 650 B.C., there have also been 1,656 arms races, only 16 of which have not ended in war.”¹ There have been over 8,000 peace treaties signed and all of them have been broken. As we examine this gut wrenching subject, we want to see what the Bible has to say about it.

PHILISOPHICAL VIEWS CONCERNING WAR

Preventive War

A war started because it is believed that an enemy is a threat to attack and to wait would put the country in greater jeopardy.

Non-Resistance

A believer is to be non-resistant and cannot execute bloodshed or violence whether it is self-defence or war.

Pacifism

The belief that all disputes, whether personal or international, should not be settle through violence but peaceful means.

Just War

After all efforts to settle a conflict peacefully have failed, war is alright if it is carried out according to just standards.

CHURCH VIEWS CONCERNING WAR

Mennonites

Jesus said that we should love our enemies and war is not in agreement with the standard Christ set for His followers. Based on that Mennonites are against any involvement in war.

Quakers

They believed that the Spirit of Christ would never lead His followers to fight in a war whether it is for the “Kingdom of Christ or the Kingdom of the world.”

Baptist

Generally Baptist believe, in staying accordance with the teachings of Christ, Christians should seek peace and avoid war.

Catholic

All entities should make effort to avoid going to war. However, in the event that peace talks have failed and self-defense is necessary, war is then permissible.

Methodist:

Methodist reject war on the basis that it is incompatible with the teachings of Christ.

THE BIBLE AND WAR

Biblical Arguments Opposing War

Those who have war use the following arguments based on Scripture to support their view.

1. David was not allowed to build God's temple because he was a man of war (1 Chron. 22:8-9; 28:3).

2. War focuses on destroying lives, Jesus focused on saving lives (Lk. 9:56).
3. War stirs up hatred and this directly contradicts Christ's message of love (Mk. 12:30-31). Furthermore, Jesus and other New Testament writers taught that we should love and show kindness to our enemies (Matt. 5:39; Lk. 6:35; Rom. 12:17-21).
4. Jesus discouraged settling conflicts by violent means (Matt. 26:52).
5. The weapons used in the Kingdom of Christ are not military weapons but spiritual (2 Cor. 10:4).
6. Jesus does not commission his servants to fight (Jn. 18:36).
7. War causes fellow believers to fight against each other.
8. Following the teachings of Jesus regarding non-violence may bring harm or even death to His followers (Matt. 16:24-25).

Biblical Arguments Supporting War

1. Sometimes the only way to keep evil people from harming innocent people is by going to war. If it were not for war, Hitler would have never been stopped and the slaves in American would have continued to suffer (Rom. 13:1-7).
2. God commanded the Israelites to go to war with other nations (Num. 31:2; Deut 20:16-17; 1 Sam. 15:3, 18; Josh 4:13).

THE BIBLE AND WAR

3. War is inevitable because we live in a world filled with sinful people (Rom. 3:10-18).
4. When Jesus comes back to earth, He will wage war against His enemies (Rev. 19:11-21).
5. Ecclesiastes 3:8 says that there is a time for war and a time for peace.
6. Jesus told the disciples to take a sword for self-defense (Lk. 22:35-38). This is the same principle found in Nehemiah (Neh. 4:15-17).
7. In Exodus 20:13 it says, “Thou shall not kill” but the Hebrew word used there is better translated murder. Even though it may be necessary to kill another person (war, self-defense, etc.) it is never alright to murder another individual.
8. In Matthew 26:52 when Jesus tells Peter to put up his sword, this is not a commentary on war but on the fact that nothing should deter Him from the mission of going to die on the cross.

CONCLUSION

War is a dreadful occurrence and must be avoided at all costs. Based on Christ’s teachings, believers should promote love, kindness and reconciliation in the place of war. God’s people must also pray and work for a world in which war no longer exists. Sad to say the day when war will no longer exist will not occur until Jesus Christ, the Prince of Peace comes to rule on this earth. Until He comes, both Daniel (Dan. 9:26) and the Lord Jesus Himself (Matt. 24:6) pointed out that there will

be continual war. Furthermore, we live in lustful and greedy world in which humans will always be at war (James 4:1). This puts the children of God in a dilemma, should we promote peace at any cost or should we be numbered among the warmongers. First and foremost we must be peacemakers by promoting peace, praying for peace and seeking to make peace wherever possible. Second we have to realize that we cannot control what happens in a wicked world (Rom. 3:10-18) in which war is inevitable (Eccl. 3:8) unless the Lord intervenes.

Biblical Principles in Relationship to War

- We must pray for those who make decisions about going to war (1 Tim. 2:1-3). This is a more powerful weapon than any guns or tanks.
- Peaceful resolutions must be sought first and foremost (Heb. 12:14; 1 Tim. 2:1-3).
- If war is necessary it must be waged by a government that is subject to the God of the Bible and the purpose of it must be to bring an end to a growing evil where innocent lives are continually being lost (Rom. 13:1-7).
- The ultimate objective of any war is to bring peace to a situation (Rev. 19:11-21).
- The targets of war should be perpetrators of evil and not innocent victims (Rom. 13:3-4).



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