

“What God’s Word Says About War”

⇒ **Text:** **James 4:1-2**

⇒ **Intro:**

- o On Wednesday evening March 19th our country went to war against the nation of Iraq.
 - War is a horrible thing!
 - War brings about large scale destruction of life and property.
 - It butchers men in wholesale fashion.
 - Property is wantonly wasted.
 - In war the flower of civilization, the best of our men are destroyed and multitudes of widows and orphans are created.
- o It was reported at the 21st International Congress of the Red Cross in Istanbul, Turkey that over 90 million people were killed in wars during the 20th century.
 - 20 million soldiers and civilians died in WWI.
 - 50 to 60 million in WWII.
 - 6 million died in the Korean war not to even mention the Viet Nam War where over 50,000 Americans lost their lives.
- o There is great pain and heartache when our fathers, brothers, sons, daughters, sweethearts, and husbands leave home to go to war!
 - Some of them won’t come home!
 - Some will come home crippled and/or emotionally wounded.

- o In thinking about the horrors of war the important question for Christians is, “What does God’s word have to say about it?”
 - God’s inspired, inerrant, infallible, preserved word is our only rule of faith and practice in this world.
- o It is impossible in one brief study to deal with everything God’s word has to say about this matter of war.
 - So, I will mention some general principles that are taught in God’s word and leave it to each of you to make further study of God’s word for yourselves.
 - In this study, we shall consider six things God’s word has to say about war.

⇒ **I. God’s Word Does Not Teach That War Is Always Wrong**

- o A lot of people say that war is all wrong and is always wrong, for defense as well as a matter of aggression.
 - But God’s word will just not bear this out.
 - **Ecclesiastes 3:8** says there is a time for war.
 - **“...a time of war, and a time of peace.”**
- o In the scriptures we read that God has actually commanded war on certain occasions in the past.
 - God not only permitted war, he commanded it at times.
 - For example in **Deuteronomy 7:2**, God ordered Israel to destroy the Canaanities when Israel entered the land after the Exodus.

- **“And when the LORD thy God shall deliver them before thee; thou shalt smite them, and utterly destroy them; thou shalt make no covenant with them, nor shew mercy unto them:”**
- Other examples of God’s commanding war include **Numbers 21:14-15, Numbers 31, Joshua 5:13-6:27, Judges 4:1-23, Judges 6&&, and II Samuel 5:19-20.**
- o **Joshua 10:14** says that in the valley of Ajalon, God fought for his people.
 - **“And there was no day like that before it or after it, that the LORD hearkened unto the voice of a man: for the LORD fought for Israel.”**
- o The scriptures reveal God as a God of war as well as a God of peace.
 - **Exodus 15:3** says **“The LORD is a man of war: the LORD is his name.”**
 - God commanded his people to go to war and God would certainly not command something that is inherently wrong.
 - To say therefore that all war is unrighteous is to say that God is unrighteous!
- o Many of God’s choice saints were warriors, military men.
 - If all war is wrong what about David, Abraham, Joshua, Gideon, Jephthah, Barak, Samson and other great warriors whom God used, commended and blessed?
 - God gave these men great military skill and courage.

- In **Psalm 144:1**, David recognized this skill for war was a gift from God.
- **“Blessed be the LORD my strength which teacheth my hands to war, and my fingers to fight:”**
- These warriors were God’s chosen saints and it was as **Hebrews 11:34** says, **“Through faith (that) they waxed valiant in fight (and) turned to flight the armies of the aliens.”**
- o Some wars have certainly resulted in much good in this world.
 - Most of the religious and political freedom we now enjoy was made possible because of the willingness of our forefathers to fight these things!
 - What if Charles Martel had not defeated the Moslems in the Battle of Tours in 732 AD?
 - Europe would be Muslim and America would most probably not even exist.
 - What if the American farmers had not joined the Continental Army and fought in the American Revolution?
- o War is sometimes necessary and even a duty in order to preserve the blessing of true peace.
 - War is sometimes necessary for the defense of just and vital rights.
 - War is sometimes the only thing left that will protect justice and protect the people of a nation.

- Rulers justly use force to protect their people and other people from harm.
 - War is justified when a ruler uses force to remove a genuine threat to the safety and security of his people.
- o We have an increasing number of professed pacifists in our nation today and many of them claim they base their non-resistance to evil in God's word.
- These pacifists sometimes quote such verses as **Matthew 5:39** as the basis of their pacifism.
 - Here the Lord Jesus says, **“But I say unto you, That ye resist not evil: but whosoever shall smite thee on thy right cheek, turn to him the other also.”**
- o But “turn the other cheek” does not apply to war.
- “Turn the other cheek” applies to individuals who have been abused for their testimony for Christ.
 - It certainly does not apply to self defense nor does it mean that a man is to turn his wife's cheek nor his children's cheeks nor the cheek of the weak whom he is called on to protect!
 - God's word never teaches passive non-resistance to aggressive attack or potential aggressive attack.
- o It has been demonstrated again and again throughout history that passive non-resistance only provokes aggression by evil men.

- We all want peace but most of us realize that there are some things that are worse than war.
- War is a ghastly thing but God's word does not teach that war in itself is wrong.

⇒ **II. God's Word Teaches That War Is A Fact Of Life In This World.**

- o God's word never promises that there shall be no war on this earth during this present age.
 - God's word recognizes that in an evil world war must come to pass.
- o In Matthew 24:6 the Lord Jesus says, "**And ye shall hear of wars and rumours of wars: see that ye be not troubled: for all these things must come to pass, but the end is not yet.**"
 - Daniel prophesied in Daniel 9:26 that "**...unto the end of the war desolations are determined.**"
 - In God's word we read of the wars of Assyria and Babylon and the Medes and Persians and Greeks and Romans.
- o The history of this world is the history of war.
 - War has played a large role in the history of our own country.
 - There was the Revolutionary War in the late 1700's
 - The War of 1812
 - The Mexican War in the 1840s
 - The War between the states in 1861-1865
 - The Spanish American War
 - World War I

- World War II
- The Korean War
- The Viet Nam War
- Gulf War
- The Afghanistan War
- And now the War in Iraq
- In my own lifetime the young nation of Israel has fought three major wars since its birth in 1948.
- This is just as God says in His word that it shall be all during this age.

⇒ **III. God's Word Teaches That War Is A Consequence Of Sin**

- o We are living in a world into which sin has entered with devastating effect!
 - War itself is not sin.
 - War is a consequence of sin.
 - War is an expression of sin.
 - The fundamental cause of war is sinful human nature.
 - The cause of war is the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes and the pride of life.
 - The primary cause of quarrels between individuals and of wars between nation is unregenerate, sinful human nature.
 - Man can never live together in harmony as long as their hearts are filled with sin.

- War is characterized by barbarity and brutality that come from corrupt human nature.
- o **See James 4:1-2.**
 - **“From whence come wars and fightings among you? come they not hence, even of your lusts that war in your members? Ye lust, and have not: ye kill, and desire to have, and cannot obtain: ye fight and war, yet ye have not, because ye ask not.”**
 - War is a consequence of the sinful lusts of human nature; jealousy and envy and greed and hatred and pride and bitterness and lust for power and malice, all of which comes from the sinful heart.
 - **See Mark 7:20-23.**
 - **“And he said, That which cometh out of the man, that defileth the man. For from within, out of the heart of men, proceed evil thoughts, adulteries, fornications, murders, Thefts, covetousness, wickedness, deceit, lasciviousness, an evil eye, blasphemy, pride, foolishness: All these evil things come from within, and defile the man.”**
 - The lust of Saddam Hussein for wealth and power and empire and his barbarity in seeking these things and the greed and lust for wealth by France, Germany and Russia is what brought about this war.
 - If we lived in an ideal world there should be no war because there would be no sin but **we do not live in an ideal world!**
- o In peacetime we usually think lightly of sin and highly of human nature.

- War reveals once again more the hideousness of sin and of man’s sinful nature.
 - It reveals once again the truth of Jeremiah 17:9, “**The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked: who can know it?**”
 - War shows men in a clearer way than ever before what sin really is and what it does.
 - Pacifism denies the sinfulness of man thinking instead that man is basically good and if we can just organize and follow the League of Nations or the United Nations or if we can just somehow agree to get along then we can eliminate war.
- o But some may ask at this point, “Why do innocent people have to suffer in war?”
- The partial answer of God’s word to this is that no person is actually innocent.
 - “**All have sinned and come short of the glory of God,**” says Romans 3:23.
 - We are all sinful and have to reap the consequences, not only of our own personal sins but of those of our nation as well.
- ⇒ **IV. God’s Word Teaches That War Is A Judgment Of God On Nations For Their Sins**
- o We may not take sin very seriously but God does!

- Romans 1:18 says, **“For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who hold the truth in unrighteousness;”**
 - War was and is used of God to restrain and punish national sins.
 - God does not postpone all punishment of sin until the next world.
 - He sends some punishment on our sins in this world and this is especially true of national sins.
 - When iniquity abounds in this world, God comes forth out of his place to deal with it in judgment.
 - God punished Israel by sending war with Assyria and the basic cause of this war was the great sins of Israel that are listed and warned against in **Deuteronomy 28:47-58.**
- o War is the rod of God’s anger and the staff of his indignation against sin.
- In Isaiah 10:5-6 God is talking about Assyria’s invasion and war with Israel.
 - **“O Assyrian, the rod of mine anger, and the staff in their hand is mine indignation. I will send him against an hypocritical nation, and against the people of my wrath will I give him a charge, to take the spoil, and to take the prey, and to tread them down like the mire of the streets.”**
 - Samaria, the capital city of Israel was besieged and fell in 722 BC after a three-year siege.

- 27,290 people were carried away captive, the suffering was unspeakable and Israel as a nation ceased to exist.
- o In **Isaiah 1:20** God threatened the nation of Judah with war as judgment on them for their sins when he said,
 - **“But if ye refuse and rebel, ye shall be devoured with the sword: for the mouth of the LORD hath spoken it.”**
 - Saddam Hussein’s regime has committed unspeakable atrocities and if left alone would have moved to even greater ones.
- o Do you think God will continue to spare our nation from war, that he will continue to give us peace at home so that we can continue living in a way that insults his holy name?
 - What have we done with the peace that God in his goodness has given us?
 - We have forsaken God and settled into lives that are basically materialistic and sinful, lives that are basically hedonistic!
 - We have given ourselves to lives of pleasure seeking.
 - We have forsaken the house of God for own work and pleasure and travel.
 - In our disobedience and ungodliness and sinfulness we have utterly abused the blessings of peace.
 - The important question we Americans need to ask ourselves is not, “Why does God allow war?” but, “Why does God not allow the destruction of our nation in judgment on our sins?”

⇒ **V. God's Word Teaches That God Sends War To Call Men And Nations To Repentance**

- **Isaiah 26:9** says, “**With my soul have I desired thee in the night; yea, with my spirit within me will I seek thee early: for when thy judgments are in the earth, the inhabitants of the world will learn righteousness.**”
- The calling of nations to repentance through war was illustrated again and again in the history of Israel in the book of Judges.
 - God would bless them, they would sin and forsake God, God would send war, they would cry out to him for deliverance.
 - God would send another time of blessing.
 - **Psalm 107:6** speaks of the experiences Of Israel when war came when it says, “**Then they cried unto the LORD in their trouble, and he delivered them out of their distresses.**”
- Contrary to what many of these pacifists today believe, there are things that are more important than peace.
 - Repentance from sin is one of them.
 - But since **9/11** there have been few or no signs of real repentance in our nation.
 - We are not really concerned with God's holiness or with sin as such.
 - IF we were we would repent of our sin and begin to walk with God.
- Sexual immorality runs rampant, abortion continues, divorce is commonplace.

- Sodomy is recognized and tolerated.
 - Our public schools have expelled God, prayer, and the Bible.
 - It has only been God's mercy that our land has been spared the ravages of war that other nations have known.
- o Because this particular consequence of sin is especially painful for us we are quick to ask God to prevent it or stop it but when we ask God to prevent war we are asking him to prevent one of the inevitable consequences of sin and he won't do this unless we repent of our sins.

⇒ **IV. God's Word Teaches That War Will Only Cease When Christ Returns To The Earth.**

- o Man, apart from God, has always had an unreasonable optimism about his own ability to prevent and even abolish war.
- Just before 1914 and WWI the world had grown greatly optimistic about human nature and the possibility that war could be abolished.
 - Postmillennialism's (This is the false belief that the millennial reign of Christ will be ushered in by the Church and that Jesus will not return until AFTER the earth has experienced one thousand years of peace and righteousness. This, of course, is pure foolishness. Man has never established peace and righteousness and he never will. The Pre-Millennial view of the Second Coming is the only correct view) optimistic theory that the gospel would conquer the world and peace would come was largely responsible for this optimism.

- When the war broke out Dr. Walter Rauschenbush, famous liberal and one of the greatest such optimists was asked what he thought about the future now, to which he responded, “The armies of Europe are marching over my soul!”
- o Recently, on the Larry King show a Roman Catholic priest quoted **Micah 4:3** as a reason Christians should oppose all war including the present one.
 - Micah 4:3 says, “**...they shall beat their swords into plowshares, and their spears into pruninghooks: nation shall not lift up a sword against nation, neither shall they learn war any more.**”
 - That priest was ignorant of the fact that this is not a command for Christians but a prophecy of the future Kingdom of Christ on this earth.
 - Micah speaks here of the coming millennial kingdom of Christ when this will indeed be a warless world.
 - But in the mean time God has told us the kind of world we live in today, a world of wars and rumors of war.
- o According to God’s word wars will continue until Jesus Christ returns to this earth and even then he will come as man of war seated on a white horse and leading the armies of heaven!
 - **Revelation 19:11-16** says, “**And I saw heaven opened, and behold a white horse; and he that sat upon him was called Faithful and**

True, and in righteousness he doth judge and make war. His eyes were as a flame of fire, and on his head were many crowns; and he had a name written, that no man knew, but he himself. And he was clothed with a vesture dipped in blood: and his name is called The Word of God. And the armies which were in heaven followed him upon white horses, clothed in fine linen, white and clean. And out of his mouth goeth a sharp sword, that with it he should smite the nations: and he shall rule them with a rod of iron: and he treadeth the winepress of the fierceness and wrath of Almighty God. And he hath on his vesture and on his thigh a name written, KING OF KINGS, AND LORD OF LORDS.”

⇒ **Conclusion:**

- Our responsibility as Christians is to preach the gospel of Christ, pray for God to change the hearts of sinful men and support our government in the preservation of peace and security.
- We must seek peace in every legitimate way and ultimately we must watch for and pray for the return and peaceable kingdom of Jesus Christ on this earth!
- The apostle Paul said in **Titus 2:13**, **“Looking for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ;”**