

**Scriptures and Doctrine :: blessed are the peacemakers****blessed are the peacemakers, on: 2003/12/30 11:09**

Given Jesus' pacifism, what Scriptural justification is there for war? (Such as the current war in Iraq.)

Jake

Re: blessed are the peacemakers, on: 2004/1/2 9:23

No replies? I guess there is no Scriptural support for war fighting.

Re: blessed are the peacemakers - posted by crsschk (), on: 2004/1/2 10:52

Hi Jake,

I don't know that Jesus' "pacifism" and justification for war are to be equated together.

I don't find any scriptural support for *not* opposing evil. Nor do I find Jesus instructing military personal that He came into contact with to stop doing so.

The question seems to be a misnomer.

"Now I saw heaven opened, and behold, a white horse. And He who sat on him was called Faithful and True, and in righteousness He judges and makes war. His eyes were like a flame of fire, and on His head were many crowns. He had a name written that no one knew except Himself. He was clothed with a robe dipped in blood, and His name is called The Word of God. And the armies in heaven, clothed in fine linen, white and clean, followed Him on white horses. Now out of His mouth goes a sharp sword, that with it He should strike the nations. And He Himself will rule them with a rod of iron. He Himself treads the winepress of the fierceness and wrath of Almighty God. And He has on His robe and on His thigh a name written:

KING OF KINGS
AND LORD OF LORDS."

The Revelation of Jesus Christ 19:11-16

Re:, on: 2004/1/2 11:32

Crosscheck,

Thanks for your reply.

The command to "love your enemy" seems clear enough to me. There is a lot about Revelations that I don't trust, because, as in the passage you quote, there seems to be a number of contradictions with the Life of Jesus as presented in the Gospels. These Gospels are my proving grounds for the rest of Scriptures. If they support the Gospels, I have no problem with them. If there is contradiction, then I resort to the Gospels and teachings of our Lord. No one but Jesus can speak for Him. The signature I use Zech. 4:6 seems to contradict Revelations as well as the more widely known Isaiah prophesy on beating sword into plowshares and learning war no more.

Jake

Re: - posted by moreofHim (), on: 2004/1/2 12:04

This is only my humble opinion and I am no scholar on war or doctrines. :)

Jas 4:1 -

From whence come wars and fightings among you? come they not hence, even of your lusts that war in your members?

Jas 4:2 -

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.

"See that no one repays another with evil for evil, but always seek after that which is good for one another and for all men." I Thessalonians 5:15

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Many people quote this verse to defend their position on war and fighting: Mt 10:34 -

Think not that I am come to send peace on earth: I came not to send peace, but a sword.

Yet everyone knows that this is supposed to mean a spiritual sword.

Again, I feel that Jesus is the ultimate example. We cannot compare to the Old Testament because Jesus had not come yet to set the ultimate example- but now we know how He expects us to behave and treat others: put others before ourselves, if someone strikes you- turn the other cheek and let him strike the other, the list goes on...

The Jews believed that when the Messiah came, He would come to make war and conquer Rome. But His business was to conquer sin. It is on another realm, another Kingdom. Which is where our allegiance should be- to that of another kingdom.

"They thought Jesus would free them from the tyranny of Rome. But Jesus did not come to conquer Rome. He came to conquer sin and death. He did not come to make war with Rome. He came to make peace with God and man. These people misunderstood His mission." G. Laurie

We now have another way to approach problems, arguments, tyranny, etc... The Lord is perfectly capable of doing what needs to be done- especially if we pray and behave the way He asked us to in the New Testament.

All of the things that Jesus spoke in the Sermon on the mount, and all of the other things that He and Paul taught can not be null and void when it comes to war.

What many don't realize is that refusing to war requires "surrender" of rights, of self, of things carnal people hold dear. I think that, again, Jesus showed us what to do here. Paul showed us what to do here.

People don't like to feel "weak", they don't like to give up their rights- their right to be right.

We have a big enough job warring against our "selves" (flesh) and the enemy. Must we feel obligated to war against "flesh and blood" too? The Bible clearly states that that is not where our war is.

Just some thoughts. :)

**Re: - posted by crsschk (), on: 2004/1/2 13:17**

First off, something I have been meaning to relate to you Jake.

I am glad that you are amongst us.

We need a 'Tim Wakefield/Phil Niekro' to throw us some knuckleballs ("I have faced many knuckleball pitchers in my twenty year career and I can tell you that even a large tree trunk can't hit the knuckleball." Jack Mankin)

Not that they never make contact.

Quote:  
-----There is a lot about Revelations that I don't trust, because, as in the passage you quote, there seems to be a number of contradictions with the Life of Jesus as presented in the Gospels. These Gospels are my proving grounds for the rest of Scriptures.  
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Do you agree with these statements:

"All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness, that the man of God may be complete, thoroughly equipped for every good work."

2 Tim 3:16,17

"knowing this first, that no prophecy of Scripture is of any private interpretation, for prophecy never came by the will of man, but holy men of God spoke as they were moved by the Holy Spirit."

2 Peter 1:20,21

I have heard it put as "apparent contradictions".  
Scripture interprets scripture.

I know this has been touched on before, but if there is anything out of whack in God's revelation to us in scripture, how could we trust any of it?

Are we not dealing with principles and heart issues?

Going by the gospels and teachings of our Lord as you stated, is this "love your enemy's" to thereby include "the devil, your adversary"?

Would Jesus have us to be doormats and allow a Hitler to go unchecked?

Is the context of Matt 5:38-48 to be taken as a statement of fact that applies to whether or not war is justified?

What is it that God hates?

Is it not sin?

Which is the root cause of all of the downfall of man and until it is eradicated from the planet we will never beat our swords into plowshares.

Just swinging at pitches.

**Re: - posted by moreofHim (), on: 2004/1/2 13:33**

Hey Mike

just wanted to let you know that I don't mean to argue. Just friendly discussion here. :)

About Hitler- this is one that makes you ponder. Though I wonder if still, we aren't to let God be judge.

I actually do believe we are to be doormats- lay down our lives for another if need be. I don't live for my country, my honor, my country's honor, I only live for Jesus and His kingdom- which is coming. The wars that are fought on this earth are of the flesh and not of His kingdom.

I really can't see Jesus being here on earth when He was and helping anyone go to war. That was not Him. He could have done that - to be an example - to show us how to "war" -but He didn't. He chose a better way. An invisible way- a spiritual way.

Also, someone once asked me the same thing about Saddam Hussein (as a Hitler type) "shouldn't we do something about

t this man? He is nuts- killing his own people, etc..." I thought about it and responded "what do you expect- look at their country and their "god". They do not serve God- what do expect to happen. It's all consequences. Is it our job to rescue a nation or people from, perhaps judgement, from not serving the true and living God? Hmmm

I don't know. I really don't.

I just cannot actually see Jesus going to war (physically)killing people. I just don't see it.

Physical war -fighting is the way of man. His ways are not our ways.

Just more thoughts. :)

**Re: - posted by lyndon, on: 2004/1/2 13:53**

A question for Moreofhim

Do you have an anabaptist background?

Also a couple of points to ponder. If we break war down, from two ideology's or countries battling each other. We get individuals shooting at and killing other individuals, it's really easy to justify war if you keep looking at IT from 'the big picture'. But once you start looking at it from a 'one on one' perspective, I believe you will find it harder to justify.

Lyndon

**Re: - posted by moreofHim (), on: 2004/1/2 14:42**

Hi Lyndon,

Quote:

-----Do you have an anabaptist background?  
-----

No, not that I'm aware of. :)

I actually grew up as a very conservative Republican/Baptist (my Dad). When I was younger, I was eager to agree with all of their views. Isn't that funny how "conservative republican = baptist (fundamentalist)or similar " these days.

As I've matured in the Lord the last couple of years. (Become broken, surrendered all, let Him break strongholds in my life, etc...)Everything has changed in the way I "see" things. I look past this world (for I am not of it anymore) I honestly got a "new" look at the scriptures. I started reading scripture and getting an interpretation from the Holy Spirit- as opposed to man's. I see that all I believed before was not based on the Holy Spirit but by man's teaching and traditions. It's like the veil was lifted.

The Lord Himself directs me, convicts me, opens my eyes to "see" and to "hear" what I never saw or heard before. I don't rely on much of man's teaching- although I still read alot and learn as the Spirit directs (if my discernment meter doesn't go off) :)

I really think that those who have been broken (over and over), humbled, and surrendered all to the Lord- on purpose - but knowing that it will hurt- I feel that they do not follow man's teaching and ways because they realize that if they were still following man's ways- they wouldn't be broken or brought to the place of surrendering all- even their rights. They wouldn't be experiencing this wonderful slavery to Christ.

**Re: blessed are the peacemakers - posted by 5nva (), on: 2004/1/2 14:57**

I can't say that I have this all figured out or that I am convinced either way. This is something I question also. I wanted to share some things that have come to mind about war.

In Luke 14:31 Jesus does show us that He is aware that war is real when He mentions a king going out to do battle. I realize this verse is not talking about war but rather being a disciple. But I think it is worth knowing that Jesus understood war was a reality.

Also the strong's defines peacemakers in the sermon on the mount as those who love peace. As followers of Christ we will love peace and hate war and death. To love peace doesn't seem to exclude the possibility of war and the results of it.

Also when Jesus said to love your enemy was He saying do not go to war with your enemy or could He have been saying in your wars with your enemies love them. As a Christian could we not be in a war and show love to our enemy. When we have prisoners we could treat them with love and respect and compassion. Our own country, unlike most, even treats prisoners very well in most cases and most of those involved are most likely not Christians.

Has anyone seen the movie Sargent York. A true story of Alvin C York who was a drunk and got saved. He was drafted to WWI but had the inner struggle of going because of this same issue. He decided not to go against the draft and ended up fighting the Germans and killing a lot of them single handed and taking many German prisoners because of his actions. When asked why he ended up killing those Germans, he said he shot them because there were people dying all around him so he killed a dozen or so men to save maybe hundreds. I am not condoning killing to save others but just giving an example for thought.

The last thing that comes to mind is King David, a man after God's own heart. David was a mighty warrior, killed many people.

God's ways are not our ways and His thoughts are not our thoughts.

Sincerely in Christ,

Mike

**Re: Scriptures, Hitler, on: 2004/1/2 15:07**

RE: "I know this has been touched on before, but if there is anything out of whack in God's revelation to us in scripture, how could we trust any of it?"

I've heard this line of reasoning before, here and elsewhere, but it doesn't make much sense to me. History books have lots of errors, but if they say that the Civil War was fought in 1865, would you distrust it? No, because there are many other sources that corroborate it. The Gospels corroborate the teachings of Jesus among each other. Moreover, other historical sources confirm He lived. When you read or hear Truth, it rings clear in your soul. We are given the ability to discern for a reason. I'm not saying that the Scriptures are not important, because they are important. This said, I do hold Jesus' words as the test for the rest. (And I'm not all that fond of the way Paul interpreted Jesus. But this is a matter for another discussion.)

Regarding Hitler. He was allowed to come to power to show the folly of war, in particular, world war one, which was fought for no discernable reason I can find. Armies lined up and threatened each other and it just happened. The sanctions put on Germany brought about the conditions necessary for Hitler to rise to power. This is the lesson of Hitler, if you put your faith in military might, that is what you will get.

I'm glad that I didn't have to make the choice to fight or not in WWII. Not a small number of Quakers joined the armed forces during that time, and those who chose to fight, instead of serve as ambulance drivers and medics etc. were summarily kicked out of their Meetings. It was a very divisive time. That said, I think even if Hitler had won the war in Europe, the Third Reich would by now have gone the way of the Soviet Union, and crumbled of its own weight. Fascism could never serve mankind well because it doesn't allow for the freedom required by a productive world economy. (Also, another argument I often make is that there are really no countries that can threaten the U.S. Canada and Mexico are the only countries on contiguous land, and they would never invade. Who else is there that could conquer the U.S.?)

Jake

**Re: blessed are the peacemakers - posted by InTheLight (), on: 2004/1/2 15:12**

I have some questions for everyone to consider.

Is it possible that not going to war in certain situations is an evil act?

Can inaction in the face of evil actually be the morally culpable position thereby making the anti-war position the wrong one?

Do you believe Jesus would approve if you stood by and did nothing when you saw innocent people being massacred when you had the power to stop it?

Does God have anything to say in the Bible about protecting the innocent?

In Christ,

Ron

**Re: - posted by 5nva (), on: 2004/1/2 15:22**

Ron:

This is a great point and again needs to be considered.

I am reading a book from voice of the martyrs called Hearts of Fire about women suffering for Christ. In it are several true stories told of Christian suffering. In one of the accounts muslims came to take over a Christian village and the women and children fled while the men and husbands stayed behind to fight off the muslims. They lost the battle and many were killed but many of the women and children were spared because of their actions.

This is just another example that we should all consider. One thing I am learning is to not think we know when we really can't say for certain that we do. We need to be slower to speak and quicker to hear, listen and think asking God to reveal all truth not man just like Chanin said in her post.

Mike

**Re: - posted by crsschk (), on: 2004/1/2 15:25**

Hi Chanin,

Quote:

-----Just friendly discussion here. :)  
-----

Oh, absolutely!

I agree the answers are not all that clear cut.

But I also think that a lot of times we may forget that while Jesus is gentle towards the humble, being God, His righteousness still burns with indignation against all sin and its resulting evil.

No one spoke more about hell and weeping and nashing of teeth than Jesus. He didn't have much patience with the willfully arrogant and He didn't paint a very pretty picture of the time's preceding His return (Wars, rumors of wars, earthquakes, famine, etc.) of tribulation and persecution.

"Therefore you are witnesses against yourselves that you are sons of those who murdered the prophets. Fill up, then, the measure of your fathers' guilt. Serpents, brood of vipers! How can you escape the condemnation of hell? Therefore, in deed, I send you prophets, wise men, and scribes: some of them you will kill and crucify, and some of them you will scourge in your synagogues and persecute from city to city, **that on you may come all the righteous blood shed on the**

**earth**, from the blood of righteous Abel to the blood of Zechariah, son of Berechiah, whom you murdered between the temple and the altar. Assuredly, **I say to you**, all these things will come upon this generation."

Matt 23:31-36

"Fall on us and hide us from the face of Him who sits on the throne and from the **wrath of the lamb!** For the great day of His wrath has come, and who is able to stand?"

Rev.6:16,17

"These will make war with the Lamb, and the Lamb will overcome them, for He is Lord of lords and King of kings; and those who are with Him are called, chosen, and faithful."

Rev. 17:14

I also think of His response to those whom he had contact with in the military, I don't find Him rebuking them and we have to remember that it is God who appoints leaders of nations according to His Sovereign will.

I don't like war, and I don't think the vast majority of those who are called to defend our country are anxious to go off to war either. These brave souls have answered a very difficult call, to lay down their lives for others, something that our Lord said showed no greater love, and where would that be more likely to happen? If it wasn't for them we very well may not be having these conversations.

There is the way things are and the way things should be as our Lord taught us. I don't think we can simply apply all things to "love your enemies" in a simple manner. If we were all living under the precepts of the sermon on the mount, if all the hatred of the human heart was stripped away there would be no more war, there would be no more enemies. But we are not there yet.

I don't have a problem with our Lord destroying His enemies, "until they are made His footstool".

And I don't see Jesus as being particularly pacifist as God clothed in human flesh and as risen Lord. He who could have called down legions of angels to destroy His persecutors, yet withheld.

He who wiped out the earth by flood in His indignation and will judge again with fire is still the same God, who changes not. We are at present in His mercy and grace but we must not forget that He is Holy, fearsome and righteous.

It should inspire an awe of reverence that the Judge of all creation has yet to unleash the fullness of His wrath on all ungodliness.

**Re: - posted by sermonindex (), on: 2004/1/2 15:48**

Quote:  
-----I'm not saying that the Scriptures are not important, because they are important. This said, I do hold Jesus' words as the test for the rest. (And I'm not all that fond of the way Paul interpreted Jesus. But this is a matter for another discussion.)  
-----

Jake, I am very glad that the Lord has led you to come to this site and participate and also to take away knowledge and hopefully and experience of God through the forums and sermons. With that said, I would also like to make it clear that 95%+ of the people using this website believe that the Bible (scriptures), Old and New Testaments are inspired by God. That is the foundation of all the discussions on these forums.

I am saying this in love but a lot of your statements are in error because I am holding them against the light and truth of the Bible. If you disagree with me it probably isn't me you are disagreeing with but the Scriptures themselves. I think it is helpful for you to keep in mind. Please take this in the kindest way possible, I am not trying to hurt or malign but to clarify. ; -)

Re:, on: 2004/1/2 16:45

Wrtbooks,

No Offense taken.

On this subject we differ, but not to the extent you think. I do believe that the Old and New Testaments are inspired by God. But man is flawed and his cultures have impinged upon those translating and interpreting the Scriptures. I take a big picture point of view.

Old Testament, tells the story of Gods people and prophesy of the coming Saviour.

New Testament, tells the story of Jesus' life, love for mankind, teachings, death on the cross (for the Forgiveness of Sin) and resurrection. It continues with the development of the Christian Church as brought about by Paul (largely.)

Under this big picture there are details that we can take or leave because (and here is the important part) they cannot change the big picture!! Parts of the Bible, literally interpreted, have been completely proven false. A young earth is a false teaching that is leading people astray from the big picture! Check out [www.netscape.co.uk/news/cnn/space/1.html](http://www.netscape.co.uk/news/cnn/space/1.html)

Nobody qualified as a scientist questions these kinds of findings.

Test all things with knowledge, and those that fall away, so be it. Those that remain will be your treasure.

Jake

Re: - posted by Agent001 (), on: 2004/1/6 11:36

I came across this quote recently: *"If your opponent has a conscience, then follow Ghandi and non-violence. But if your enemy has no conscience like Hitler, then follow Bonhoeffer."* (Martin Luther King Jr.)

First of all, I do believe that in light of Jesus' sermon on the mount, Christians should become an important force in committing themselves to peace-making, to reconciliation, and to holding the principle of non-retaliation. This is a high ethical ideal that the Lord has set for the citizens of his kingdom.

However, we live in a corrupted and imperfect world in which evil and suffering often prevails. As a result, Christians are often placed in a difficult position where difficult ethical choices were presented to them.

A well known example was that of Dietrich Bonhoeffer's. Living in Germany before and during the rule of the Nazis, he faced a tough moral decision. At first, his conviction was of pacifism; he was preparing to visit Ghandi in India to study pacifism. However, he eventually opted to return to Germany to participate in the resistance.

He *"concluded in the depths of his soul that to withdraw from those who were participating in the political and military resistance would be irresponsible cowardice and flight from reality."* "Not," as his friend Bethge says, *"that he believed that everybody must act as he did, but from where he was standing, he could see no possibility of retreat into any sinless, righteous, pious refuge. The sin of respectable people reveals itself in flight from responsibility. He saw that sin falling upon him and he took his stand."* He eventually was martyred in the hands of the Gestapo.

I believe that Christians living in an imperfect and complex world are sometimes forced to make a choice between imperfect options. They can only rely on the guidance of the Spirit to choose the lesser evil. Some might argue that Rahab did just that by lying in order to protect the Israelite spies in light of the greater purpose of God.

Other scriptural texts worth pondering upon:

*Then some soldiers asked him , "And what should we do?"*

*He replied, "Don't extort money and don't accuse people falsely--be content with your pay." (Luke 3:14)*

Curiously, John the Baptist made no mention of leaving the military profession -- one that pacifists strongly refuse to part

icipate in.

Also: *1Everyone must submit himself to the governing authorities, for there is no authority except that which God has established. The authorities that exist have been established by God. 2Consequently, he who rebels against the authority is rebelling against what God has instituted, and those who do so will bring judgment on themselves. 3For rulers hold no terror for those who do right, but for those who do wrong. Do you want to be free from fear of the one in authority? Then do what is right and he will commend you. 4For 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.* (Romans 13:1-4)

I think it is of significance to note that even in this world, the civil government, in its role of maintaining justice and order, is considered an agent of God. When rightly and justly administered, even violent punishments ("the sword") are considered to be derived from God's authority. Some might extend its application to make a case for "just wars".

My position is to embrace the principle of non-violence and non-retaliation as a general rule, but also at the same time, acknowledge that there are exceptions when circumstance forces us to choose the lesser evil. This also means accepting that different individuals might take different stands based on their unique circumstances and leading of the Holy Spirit.

Just my two pennies. :)

**Re: - posted by crsschk (), on: 2004/1/6 11:47**

Agent001

Well said.

**Re: - posted by moreofHim (), on: 2004/1/6 11:51**

Mike, Hey- I was gonna say that!:) Yes, very good points, Agent001. I think it probably would be up to the believer being led by the Spirit. I cannot say what I would do in all situations because I know I must always obey God. If He wants me to fight- I'll fight- if He wants me to lay down my life- then so be it.

I'm really good at Tae Bo- so I COULD fight if I had too. :-D Just kidding (but I am good at tae bo :-D )

**Re: Agent 001, on: 2004/1/6 13:10**

Agent 001, Thanks for your excellent input on this difficult question. Question regarding Romans 13:1-4. Was Hitler God's agent? Wasn't Bonhoeffer rebelling against an established authority?

Jake

**Re: - posted by Agent001 (), on: 2004/1/7 10:05**

Jake:

Just as slaves obey their masters *in the Lord*, and children obey their parents *in the Lord*, I think we as citizens obey governing authorities *in the Lord* as well.

When the parents become abusive, my advice to the children is to run! After all, the abusive parents are abusing their God-given honour and authority. Likewise, we should endeavour to peace-making and submission to authority as best as possible, but I believe there are situations where civil disobedience is appropriate.

I think Martin Luther King Jr. was acting in that spirit when he reacted against racial bias in society by civil disobedience using peaceful means.

**Re: - posted by crsschk (), on: 2004/1/7 10:16**

Quote:

-----I'm really good at Tae Bo- so I COULD fight if I had too. Just kidding (but I am good at tae bo )  
-----

So that sheep avatar is.... :-D

**Re: - posted by moreofHim (), on: 2004/1/7 10:31**

Can't a sheep do Tae Bo? What a vision! :-D

Actually, even though the Lord has grown me into a more humble, loving disciple- I also have the benefit of being strong (inside and out) This has come from "discipline" (inside and out). My fitness training days were not in vain, so I've figured out.

Oh that reminds me that Jesus is the Lion/Lamb, the Lamb/Lion. (from John Piper's Seeking and Savouring Christ) He was both. I guess we can be both too, since Christ lives in us. Powerful but humble. Mighty yet meek. Brave yet willing to give everything.

**Re: - posted by crsschk (), on: 2004/1/7 10:40**

Quote:

-----Oh that reminds me that Jesus is the Lion/Lamb, the Lamb/Lion. (from John Piper's Seeking and Savouring Christ) He was both. I guess we can be both too, since Christ lives in us. Powerful but humble. Mighty yet meek. Brave yet willing to give everything.  
-----

Knew you would get the correlation. :-D