

PART 1: JUST WAR THEORY

Intro: There are four ways of thinking about the morality of violence in Western History:

Holy War – The waging of war, not for political or humanitarian reasons, but to support a “cause of God.” Examples include: the Crusades, the Islamic notion of “Jihad,” and the Spanish wars against the natives of South America in an attempt to convert them to Catholicism.

-This is a view of war that hasn’t really been held in modern times, outside of Islam, and is considered to be illegitimate by most scholars.

Realism – The view that nations at war are going to do what is in the best interest of their nation (not what is most ethical overall). Realism is the view that wars are amoral – meaning, you cannot assess the morality of war using the same criteria that you assess morality in peace time.

-Niccolo Machiavelli held this view.

-Union general, William T. Sherman, assented to this view when he said that “war is hell” (which he meant as “anything goes” as he burned Atlanta).

Pacifism – The idea that all violence, even in self-defense or war, is immoral.

Who held to it?

-Early church fathers

-Anabaptists

-Modern Thinkers include: Leo Tolstoy, Greg Boyd, Shane Claiborne, Stanly Hauerwas, John Howard Yoder, et. al.

There are three types of pacifism

1. Those who hold that you cannot resist an evil person trying to harm you.
2. Those who hold that you cannot use violence to resist but can use non-violent political resistance (Gandhi, Martin Luther King, Jr, et. al.).
3. Those who hold that, in theory you could have a just war, but in today’s society the weapons and ways of waging war are too deadly and, therefore, unjust (this view is sometimes called “Just War Pacifism”).

Pacifism is immoral.

-Jesus commands us to love and it is, *de facto*, unloving to allow people around you to be harmed or killed when you can prevent it. Loving your neighbor includes stopping a mass-shooter from killing all the people you’re commanded to love.

-Jesus commands us to love our enemies. This means that sometimes love looks like preventing them from committing horrible crimes so they do not receive more of God's wrath.

-The Bible defines what is most "loving," and yet allows capital punishment, war, and self-defense. Therefore, these things are not at odds with the Bible's command to love.

Just War Theory – There are justifiable times to go to war but the war must meet certain criteria and must be waged in a humanitarian way. This view does not seek to prevent war but to limit war.

Things to know:

-The Christian version of this argument was started by St. Augustine in his work, *City of God*.

-The theory was expanded by St. Thomas Aquinas.

-Aquinas said just war was an act of love for those whom you are protecting.

-The *Panormia* by Ivo of Chartres and the *Decretum* by Gratian are two famous works systematizing Just War Theory in the middle ages.

-The Reformers held to it.

-It is the position throughout the majority of Christian history.

-Originally it did not apply to civil war or revolutionary war.

-It was adopted as international policy by many modern nations in the 1800s.

"We do not seek peace in order to be at war, but we go to war that we may have peace. Be peaceful, therefore, in warring, so that you may vanquish those whom you war against, and bring them to the prosperity of peace." –St. Augustine

"Anselm [of Lucca 1036-1086] stresses that bloodthirstiness and similar motives for war are unacceptable: only love of one's neighbor can justify the use of force. Hence, the aim of war is not to destroy the enemy, but to turn him away from sin and save his soul at least – even if this involves killing him." – Ernst-Dieter Hehl (church historian)

"If anyone attempted to rule the world by the gospel and to abolish all temporal law and the sword on the plea that all are baptized and Christian, and that, according to the gospel, there shall be among them no law or sword - or the need for either - pray tell me friend, what would he be doing? He would be loosing the ropes and chains of the savage wild beasts and letting them bite and mangle everyone, meanwhile insisting that they were harmless, tame, and gentle creatures; but I would have the proof in my wounds. Just so would the wicked under the name of Christian abuse evangelical freedom, carry on their rascality, and insist that they were Christians subject neither to law nor sword as some are already raving and ranting." –Martin Luther

Preliminary propositions about violence in the Bible:

1. Your view of capital punishment is logically linked to your view of killing in war.

-Capital punishment is when the state kills domestic criminals; warfare is when the state kills foreign criminals.

2. Not all violence is bad. Violence is morally neutral. There is righteous violence and unrighteous violence.

3. The Bible allows for righteous killing but not unrighteous killing

-How can a Christian be pro-life in regards to abortion but support the military or capital punishment? Christians are not “pro-life” we are “pro-legally-innocent-life.”

-The command is not “thou shall not kill.” In Hebrew it says “thou shall not murder.” The Hebrew word used is “ratsakh,” – it’s used 49 times in the Old Testament but never for killing in war.

The Bible also allows for self-defense.

Exodus 22:2 - If a thief is found breaking in and is struck so that he dies, there shall be no bloodguilt for him

4. The Bible commands righteous violence (humans killing other humans) for egregious crimes both before the giving of the Mosaic Law, in the Mosaic Law, and in the New Testament.

Before the giving of the Mosaic Law:

Genesis 9:6 - Whoever sheds the blood of man, *by man shall his blood be shed*, for God made man in his own image.

In the Mosaic Law:

Exodus 21:12 - Whoever strikes a man so that he dies *shall be put to death*.

In the New Testament:

Romans 13:4 - for he [the governing magistrate] is God’s servant for your good. But if you do wrong, be afraid, *for he does not bear the sword in vain. For he is the servant of God, an avenger who carries out God’s wrath on the wrongdoer.*

5. The Bible has multiple commands, in both the Old Testament and the New Testament, about how the government is supposed to use lethal force to oppose evil.

Joshua 6:21 - Then they devoted all in the city to destruction, both men and women, young and old, oxen, sheep, and donkeys, with the edge of the sword.

1 Chon 5:18 - The Reubenites, the Gadites, and the half-tribe of Manasseh had valiant men who carried shield and sword, and drew the bow, expert in war, 44,760, able to go to war.

Deuteronomy 7:2 - and when the LORD your God gives them over to you, and you defeat them, then you must devote them to complete destruction. You shall make no covenant with them and show no mercy to them.

1 Peter 2:13–14 - Be subject for the Lord's sake to every human institution, whether it be to the emperor as supreme, or to governors as sent by him to punish those who do evil and to praise those who do good.

Romans 13:1–4 - Let every person be subject to the governing authorities. For there is no authority except from God, and those that exist have been instituted by God. Therefore whoever resists the authorities resists what God has appointed, and those who resist will incur judgment. For rulers are not a terror to good conduct, but to bad. Would you have no fear of the one who is in authority? Then do what is good, and you will receive his approval, for he is God's servant for your good. But if you do wrong, be afraid, for he does not bear the sword in vain. For he is the servant of God, an avenger who carries out God's wrath on the wrongdoer.

What about Jesus' command to turn the other cheek?

Matthew 5:38–45 - ³⁸ “You have heard that it was said, ‘An eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth.’ ³⁹ But I say to you, Do not resist the one who is evil. But if anyone slaps you on the right cheek, turn to him the other also. ⁴⁰ And if anyone would sue you and take your tunic, let him have your cloak as well. ⁴¹ And if anyone forces you to go one mile, go with him two miles. ⁴² Give to the one who begs from you, and do not refuse the one who would borrow from you. ⁴³ “You have heard that it was said, ‘You shall love your neighbor and hate your enemy.’ ⁴⁴ But I say to you, Love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you, ⁴⁵ so that you may be sons of your Father who is in heaven. For he makes his sun rise on the evil and on the good, and sends rain on the just and on the unjust.

-Is this passage saying a governmental agent should not stop an evil person from committing a violent crime or is it telling Christians how to act regarding issues of personal offence, retaliation, or being persecuted for your faith?

Luther's Two Kingdoms Theology

- Your role in the church vs. your role in the state
 - An example of a Christian police officer
 - “Whether Soldiers Too Can Be Saved”
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PART 2: JUST WAR CRITERIA

***Jus Ad Bellum* (Right to War) – What moral requirements must be met before you can go to war?**

Just cause – Is the reason for going to war a morally right cause?

Competent authority – Has the war been declared, not simply by a renegade band within a nation, but by a recognized, competent authority within the nation?

Comparative justice – Is it clear that the actions of the enemy are morally wrong and the motives and actions of your own nation are morally right?

Right intention – Is the purpose of going to war to protect justice and righteousness or is it to rob, pillage, or destroy another nation?

Last resort – Have all other reasonable means of resolving the conflict been exhausted?

Probability of success – Is there a reasonable expectation that the war can be won?

Proportionality of projected results – Will the good results of a victory be significantly greater than the harm and loss involved?

Right spirit – Is the war undertaken with great reluctance and sorrow rather than with a “delight in war?”

***Jus In Bello* (Right in War) – What moral requirements must you keep while you are fighting in war?**

Proportionality in the use of force – Will no greater destruction be caused than is needed to win the war?

Discrimination between combatants and noncombatants – Insofar as it is feasible to the successful pursuit of a war, is adequate care being taken to prevent harm to noncombatants?

Avoidance of evil means – Will captured or defeated enemies be treated with justice and compassion? What about coercive methods (“torture”)?

Good faith – Is there a genuine desire for restoration of peace and to eventually live in harmony with the attacking nation?

***Jus Post Bellum* (Right after War) – What moral requirements must you keep after the war has ended?**

Discrimination – In trials after the war, are you discriminating between leaders, combatants, and non-combatants? (as non-combatants usually should not be punished after the war)

Respect – Are you honoring the people, rights, and traditions of the defeated culture?

Proportionality and publicity – Are the penalties and restitution imposed on the defeated nation fair? Has peace been publicly proclaimed?

Punishment – Are you fairly punishing all combatants, on both sides, who acted immorally for the nature of their crimes?

Rehabilitation – Are you seeking to help the conquered people rebuild and re-educate their society?

Follow up care and education – Are the mental needs of soldiers (PTSD, etc.) being addressed, and are military leaders learning lessons from the war?

Other Questions about Just War Theory

1. Is it a war crime if you accidentally kill civilians?

-If civilians are accidentally hurt that does not invalidate Just War Theory
- only if they are intentionally targeted.

2. Are guerillas or rebel groups a legitimate fighting force?

They can be as long as they are:

Under responsible command
Controlling some territory
Carrying weapons openly

(Note: Using I.E.D.'s is not just according to Just War Theory)

3. Is preemptive war legitimate within Just War Theory?

Yes. Assuming that you have correctly assessed the situation.

4. Is preventative war legitimate within Just War Theory?

No. Example: Launching a war to prevent someone from becoming president who might later become a threat.

5. Are there times when extreme violent measures, such as area bombing and using banned weapons, are allowed in war?

Michael Walzer (one of the most famous modern just war theorists – author of *Just and Unjust Wars*) says there are times in a “supreme emergency” that area bombing and using banned weapons may be allowed. Example: when it looked like the Germans were going to win WWII, area bombing was allowed. But once it was clear that the Axis powers were not going to win, then it became unjust.

6. Does violence just beget more violence?

7. Shouldn't you just “pray” instead?

8. Can Just War Theory be applied in the case of revolution or civil war?