A Biblical Perspective of War:

Preface for this paper:
Most of the information and Biblical references were compiled from two basic sources. Charles F. Stanley's message "A Nation At War" and John MacArthur's message "A Biblical Perspective on War – Selected Scriptures." The information has been intermingled and it cannot be determined from this paper who said what. I thought both messages were well done *and because they reflected my views I wanted to put it in writing for the express purpose of passing the information on to my son along with other information concerning the convictions many hold who are conscientious objectors so he could have (as clearly as I could give him) adequate information to begin developing his own personal view.* Also to a couple people who expressed interest in reading this if and when it was completed. Though the material is not in the order as originally presented I believe it has been presented basically in the same context as intended. Outside of these two sources, I have inserted information (mainly additional Scripture references) I wanted included. Note: *Most* Scriptural references are from the New Living Translation for the purpose of clarity.

Reasons men go to war:
- For defense of a nation
- Hatred for another nation or people of a nation
- To rule by domination (dictatorship)
- To liberate those under such domination (dictatorship)
- To protect other nations from being overrun by such dictators
- To expand their territory
- To spread their religion
- Economics

There is no Scripture saying that God is against war. War in itself is not wrong, immoral or ungodly. God uses war to accomplish His purposes and His plan. God favors war for certain specific reasons including punishing the wicked and providing a means to accomplish His will. The ethics of the Old Testament by no means give a blanket approval for all wars or all means of war. Government is ordained of God to promote good and restrain evil.

Ecclesiastes 3:1-8 *A Time for Everything*
1 There is a time for everything, a season for every activity under heaven.
2 A time to be born and a time to die. A time to plant and a time to harvest.
3 A time to kill and a time to heal. A time to tear down and a time to rebuild.
4 A time to cry and a time to laugh. A time to grieve and a time to dance.
5 A time to scatter stones and a time to gather stones. A time to embrace and a time to turn away.
6 A time to search and a time to lose. A time to keep and a time to throw away.
7 A time to tear and a time to mend. A time to be quiet and a time to speak up.
8 A time to love and a time to hate. <u>A time for war and a time for peace.</u>

Luke 20:25. And He said to them, "Render therefore to Caesar the things that are Caesar's, and to God the things that are God's." Christ recognized that all citizens have duties to the secular state *as well as* duties to God.

Romans 13:1-4 *Submission to the Authorities*

Everyone 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. Consequently, he who rebels against the authority is rebelling against what God has instituted, and those who do so will bring judgment on themselves. For 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. For 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.

1 Peter 2:13-16 For the Lord's sake, accept all authority - the king as head of state, and the officials He has appointed. For the king has sent them to punish all who do wrong and to honor those who do right. It is God's will that your good lives should silence those who make foolish accusations against you. You are not slaves; you are free. But your freedom is not an excuse to do evil. You are free to live as God's slaves. The purpose of government is to punishment of evil doers and be a deterrent for would be evil doers.

There is only ***<u>one</u>*** reason to disobey the government. *If you are asked to commit an act or behave in a manner that contrary to the Word of God.* ***Acts 5:27-32*** states, ***Having brought the apostles, they made them appear before the Sanhedrin to be questioned by the high priest. "We gave you strict orders not to teach in this name," he said. "Yet you have filled Jerusalem with your teaching and are determined to make us guilty of this man's blood." Peter and the other apostles replied: "We must obey God rather than men! The God of our fathers raised Jesus from the dead - whom you had killed by hanging Him on a tree. God exalted Him to His own right hand as Prince and Savior that He might give repentance and forgiveness of sins to Israel. We are witnesses of these things, and so is the Holy Spirit, whom God has given to those who obey Him."*** However, if you do disobey, you <u>must</u> be <u>willing</u> to accept the punishment because you have stood for your convictions "on the Word of God." This is known as *"civil disobedience."* You <u>*do not*</u> hire a lawyer to defend yourself! You disobey only on a Biblical conviction and accept the consequences.

The proper response of citizens if called to war by the government is to: ***1)*** Submit to Authority.
2) Disobey - because you feel through Biblical conviction the order is contrary to the Word of God i.e. *civil disobedience.*
3) We should offer to work, help and serve any way we can while our nation is at war.

When we look around the world even into this 21st century at the many countries where dictatorships have no respect for human life let alone human rights, we all thank God to live in this country whose Constitution and Bill of Rights grants us our individual rights and freedoms. How can we *not*, according to the above referenced "submission to authority" *scriptures*, pledge our allegiance to this county and not protect it from our enemies. If non-combative alternatives are available, striving to support the country, in any capacity, to help the government reach its goal of achieving peace is beneficial to all.

Keep in mind the principal in the following Scripture verses concerning the tribes of Rueben and Gad requesting special land. ***Numbers 32:5-7 "If we have found favor with you, please let us have this land as our property instead of giving us land across the Jordan River." "Do you mean you want to stay back here while your brothers go across and do all the fighting?" Moses asked the***

Reubenites and Gadites. "Are you trying to discourage the rest of the people of Israel from going across to the land the LORD has given them?"
Numbers 32:14-19, 21-23 "***But here you are, a brood of sinners, doing exactly the same thing! You are making the LORD even angrier with Israel. If you turn away from Him like this and He abandons them again in the wilderness, you will be responsible for destroying this entire nation!" But they responded to Moses, "We simply want to build sheepfolds for our flocks and fortified cities for our wives and children. Then we will arm ourselves and lead our fellow Israelites into battle until we have brought them safely to their inheritance. Meanwhile, our families will stay in the fortified cities we build here, so they will be safe from any attacks by the local people. We will not return to our homes until all the people of Israel have received their inheritance of land. But we do not want any of the land on the other side of the Jordan. We would rather live here on the east side where we have received our inheritance." "…and if your troops cross the Jordan until the LORD has driven out His enemies, then you may return when the land is finally subdued before the LORD. You will have discharged your duty to the LORD and to the rest of the people of Israel. And the land on the east side of the Jordan will be your inheritance from the LORD. But if you fail to keep your word, then you will have sinned against the LORD, and you may be sure that your sin will find you out."***

When your brothers go to war to protect your family you are required to go to protect their families. If you don't you are guilty of discouraging those who do go. Don't protest or refuse. Viet Nam was a prime example of discouragement to those who fought and died there because of the opposition at home. Looking at the big picture of communism, we are all still free today because of all the thousands of men as young as 18 and 19 years old who gave their lives, not only in Viet Nam but all over the world.

* New Testament references

Jesus was *not* a pacifist. He did not fight because *He did not come to fight*. He came to lay down His life. The Purpose of His Coming was to:
1) To reveal *God the Father* to man. To give us a spiritual, conscious awareness of God. (*Matt. 11:27; Titus 1:3)*
2) To destroy the works of the devil. The work of the devil seeks to distort *both man's concept of God and man's perception of the nature and character of God (1 John 3:8).*
3) He was manifested to take away our sins *(1 John 3:5*). To be made sin for us *(2 Cor.5:21).* ***Jesus Christ was <u>born to die</u>.*** Born for the express purpose of dying, sacrificing Himself, laying down His life, to die in our place…
4) So we may have life and that more abundantly *(John 10:10).* (God controlled spiritual life / quality of life).

If Jesus was against war, somewhere in the Gospels He would have said so. He respected the soldier and gave them a place of honor. God would never use a dishonorable profession as an illustration of a Christian (i.e. thief, prostitute or murderer). We are told in ***Ephesians 6:13-17*** to put on the full armor of God which is compared to the equipment of a soldier. ***Therefore take up the whole armor of God, that you may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand. Stand therefore, having girded your waist with truth, having put on the breastplate of righteousness, and having shod your feet with the preparation of the gospel of peace; above all, taking the shield of faith with which you will be able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked one. And take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the Word of God;***
The nobility of a soldier is implied. That we should fight spiritual warfare like a good soldier.

2 Timothy 2:*3 states* ***Endure hardship with us like a good soldier of Christ Jesus.*** The imagery of ***Revelation 19:11*** exalts the proper role of the soldier. ***I saw heaven standing open and there before me was a white horse, whose rider is called Faithful and True. With justice He judges and makes war.***
When John the Baptist spoke of repentance in ***Luke 3:14 - "What should we do?" asked some soldiers. John replied, "Don't extort money, and don't accuse people of things you know they didn't do. And be content with your pay."*** *He could have said but did not say* "get out of the army for it is not an honorable profession."
Regarding Cornelius in ***Acts 10:21-23 Peter went down and said to the men, "I'm the one you're looking for. Why have you come?" The men replied, "We have come from Cornelius the centurion. He is a righteous and God-fearing man, who is respected by all the Jewish people. A holy angel told him to have you come to his house so that he could hear what you have to say." Then Peter invited the men into the house to be his guests.*** This was a commendation for a righteous Roman soldier who later, along with others, were baptized. ***Acts 10:47,48 Then Peter said, "Can anyone keep these people from being baptized with water? They have received the Holy Spirit just as we have." So he ordered that they be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ…"***

Jesus, speaking to His disciples in ***Luke 22: 35,36: And He said to them, "When I sent you without money bag, knapsack, and sandals, did you lack anything?" So they said, "Nothing." Then He said to them, "But now, he who has a money bag, let him take it, and likewise a knapsack; and he who has no sword, <u>let him sell his garment and buy one</u>."*** Christ had provided for them before but from this point forward they were to provide for their own support and *protection.*
In the Garden of Gethsemane in ***Matthew 26:51,52 "…suddenly, one of those who were with Jesus stretched out his hand and drew his sword, struck the servant of the high priest, and cut off his ear. But Jesus said to him, "Put your sword in its place, for all who take the sword will perish by the sword."*** (Peter had no right to take the law into his own hands. A reference to ***Genesis 9:6***) Jesus' statement to put the sword away sent an implicit message that he had a right to carry it for *self-protection.*

In ***John 18:36 Jesus answered, "My kingdom is not of this world. If My kingdom were of this world, My servants would fight, so that I should not be delivered to the Jews; but now My kingdom is not from here."*** (implying with swords)

In the Old Testament in ***Nehemiah 4:11-23*** while rebuilding the walls of Jerusalem he called the people to continue building the wall and fight if necessary until its completion. ***Also our enemies said, "Before they know it or see us, we will be right there among them and will kill them and put an end to the work." Then the Jews who lived near them came and told us ten times over, "Wherever you turn, they will attack us." Therefore I stationed some of the people behind the lowest points of the wall at the exposed places, posting them by families, with their swords, spears and bows. After I looked things over, I stood up and said to the nobles, the officials and the rest of the people, "Don't be afraid of them. Remember the Lord, who is great and awesome, and fight for your brothers, your sons and your daughters, your wives and your homes." When our enemies heard that we were aware of their plot and that God had frustrated it, we all returned to the wall, each to his own work. From that day on, half of my men did the work, while the other half were equipped with spears, shields, bows and armor. The officers posted themselves behind all the people of Judah who were building the wall. Those who carried materials did their work with one hand and held a weapon in the other, and each of the builders wore his sword at his side as he worked. But the man who sounded the trumpet stayed with me. Then I said to the nobles, the officials and the rest of the people, "The work is extensive and***

spread out, and we are widely separated from each other along the wall. Wherever you hear the sound of the trumpet, join us there. Our God will fight for us!" So we continued the work with half the men holding spears, from the first light of dawn till the stars came out. At that time I also said to the people, "Have every man and his helper stay inside Jerusalem at night, so they can serve us as guards by night and workmen by day." Neither I nor my brothers nor my men nor the guards with me took off our clothes; each had his weapon, even when he went for water. A just cause warrants defense and protection.

Stopping Hitler was a just war. He was going to commit genocide and would have killed whoever he had to in order to achieve his evil intentions. Where would we be today if we did not go to war against the Nazis and Japanese in World War II? Many thousands laid down their lives so you could sit there and enjoy your freedoms. America and many other nations rose up in the noble expression of government to punish the evildoer and protect the innocent.

God has preserved His Word through generation after generation from those who would try to destroy it by any means possible. There are those who would destroy our faith and try to force us to believe their faith. This country is a bastion for the truth of the true gospel of God. Though there are many young and old in this country who do not know God, we are not to sacrifice our whole nation to a peoples who are vicious and dominating, wishing to make us like them, wanting to control us, enslave us and destroy us - having us let go of all this country was built on and has achieved by the grace of God. The responsibility of the government and those in authority is to protect and avenge those who would attack us and destroy those who would destroy us.

How can one justify protest marches when so many young men and women have died and are dying to protect your freedom? You only protest because those thousands died to give you that right. What if years from now this country is overtaken and your grandchildren ask why you did not fight to protect our country and our freedom, what are you going to say? "In those days we didn't fight – we protested the war!" And will they say "You wouldn't even defend your/our own country?!" Our opinions are not the priority. The unity of our country is the priority. Opposition for the wrong reasons brings disharmony where harmony and a united front is needed. Those who died should not have died in vain. Along with opposition from outside our borders, we cannot allow groups within this country to take God out of our country or it will make God have to be true to Himself and make a judgment on us – having foreign armies come in and punish us as an immoral, pagan country with no awareness of God. We cannot let that happen. What about our children's future? Will it get better? Regarding the "end times" that many feel we are in, ***Matthew 24:6*** states ***And you will hear of wars and rumors of wars. See that you are not troubled; for all these things must come to pass, but the end is not yet.*** We must be prepared for what is ahead.

September 11, 2001 was a declaration of war against the United States. This war has been called an unconventional or asymmetrical war or conflict, not against a particular nation or coalition of nations but a deadly armed sustained conflict with an enemy. Our response has the goal to destroy the enemy's ability to harm us or others again. A government that seeks to provide justice, peace and protection is an agency of God. They are a minister of God for good. The terrorists struck a blow against an institution of God. The sword is an instrument of death. Government is the avenger with the power to kill, that killing is a "severe mercy," *otherwise evil people will dominate.* Defense of a country and to liberate others enslaved by dictators and godless men who destroy and kill their people are grounds for war. War is a "severe mercy." A moral, just war is a defensive, protective last resort after all attempts at reconciliation and mediation have failed. A moral war is national, *not personal vengeance.* A moral war is limited and seeks to restore the peace and assure the aggressor cannot do it again. God is a warrior because He is a God of peace.

God may allow war for no other reason than to show us the reality of death, the effects of sin and to give us a temporary taste of eternal judgment. God has a purpose for war, just like everything else but we may not know what it is. Maybe we are instruments of God to crush this wicked force that threatens justice and goodness in the world and threatens Israel. It probably will be true that we will be that instrument, but after we have done that there is no guarantee that we are not next. Was 9/11 a judgment on America for abortion, materialism and secularism?

We need to remember that those who died that day were no worse than those whose alarm did not go off that morning keeping them from where they would have normally been. The visible providence of God is no respecter of persons (***2 Chronicles 19:7 Wherefore now let the fear of the LORD be upon you; take heed and do it: for there is no iniquity with the LORD our God, nor respect of persons…***) It does not discriminate between believers and unbelievers, plane crashes, boat sinking's, train accidents, car collisions, heart disease, cancer etc. It doesn't discriminate between a sinner and a saint or a sinner and a sinner. There are complex divine elements at work.

However America is not guaranteed to win any war. We are not the people of God. We are a nation under a sovereign God but not willingly obedient. There is no covenant to preserve us. However we know our continued support of Israel is in our best interests. As ***Genesis 12:2,3*** states ***"I will make you a great nation; I will bless you and make your name great; And you shall be a blessing. I will bless those who bless you, and I will curse him who curses you; And in you all the families of the earth shall be blessed."*** Our military has many believers, ranging from support to Special Forces, who feel their Christian responsibility is to the will of God, which is their duty, and to the teaching of the Bible. *We Christians* are a *chosen people* and have the assurance we will survive everything into the glory of the kingdom. We know those who threaten us are wicked, evil, godless and an idolatrous people. *But so are we.* This war may be between two idolatrous nations but ours is a just engagement – the enemy's is not. War starts when peace is interrupted and ends when peace is restored. A just war is fought only until peace is restored. It is not a war of aggression or dominance. It is a war of defense. A nation needs a strong military. The just and righteous go into action to restore and secure the peace.

Francis Schaeffer stated "*To refuse to do all I can for those under the power of oppression is nothing less than a failure of Christian love. It is a failure to love my neighbor as myself."* America understands that. We have gone all over the globe to help such as those.

Exodus 20:13 You shall not murder. To murder is to kill because of **1**) hatred **2**) vengeance **3**) animosity **4**) a desire to destroy that person. Some will say "war is murder." In war killing is not murder. A soldier is under the control of his government – in obedience to the purpose for which he is on the battlefield. When fighting for your nation it is not murder. Being subject to our government we defend our nation, freeing others enslaved to dictators, or whatever cause the government feels is a just cause. It is the government's responsibility to defend against enemies who would try to destroy us.

Luke 6:27-31 "But I say to you who hear: Love your enemies, do good to those who hate you, bless those who curse you, and pray for those who spitefully use you. To him who strikes you on the one cheek, offer the other also. And from him who takes away your cloak, do not withhold your tunic either. Give to everyone who asks of you. And from him who takes away your goods do not ask them back. Do to others as you would have them do to you."
Matthew 5:21,22 "You have heard that it was said to those of old, "You shall not murder, and whoever murders will be in danger of the judgment." 'But I say to you that whoever is angry with his brother without a cause shall be in danger of the judgment.'" Jesus was saying that to us

as *individuals*. It is not true of a whole nation. There was judgment for both premeditated murder ***(Exodus 21:12)*** and unintentional killing ***(Exodus 21:13*** "cities of refuge" **– *Numbers 35:6-24***) ***Genesis 9:5 Surely for your lifeblood I will demand a reckoning; from the hand of every beast I will require it, and from the hand of man. From the hand of every man's brother I will require the life of man.*** Capital punishment was invoked upon every animal or man who took human life *unlawfully*. (***John 19:11; Acts 25:11; Romans 13:4***)

Nonviolence and pacifism as a personal belief is a commendable philosophy. Even George Washington in 1776 acknowledged and exempted from service those with scruples against war. In a country, as with this country's civil rights, it can and has produced its desired effects. However they should be looked at in a realistic perspective on a national level. Although it has been said that if everyone had the "love your neighbor as yourself" attitude, we wouldn't have a problem, *there will **always** be aggressors who will crush those who will not stand in defense*. Pacifism cannot bring an enduring peace when evil men abound.

As with 10 of the 12 spies who refused to go into the land, the entire generation that supported them died in the wilderness – never to enter the Promised Land. When you don't go to war when you should, you will suffer the consequences. Joshua and Caleb were willing to go and were blessed by God.
God Himself instituted capital punishment for the crime of murder. In the Mosaic Laws, for 30 other crimes God prescribed the death penalty. ***Numbers 35:33*** states ***"Do not pollute the land where you are. Bloodshed pollutes the land, and atonement cannot be made for the land on which blood has been shed, except by the blood of the one who shed it."***

There is a place for just retribution and there are crimes including murder that require retaliation and retribution in the form of death. It is also true that not only has God established justice on an individual level through human government but He has also established war as a means of judgment on a national level.

Romans 12:19 Beloved, do not avenge yourselves, but rather give place to wrath; for it is written, "Vengeance is Mine, I will repay," says the Lord. (Deuteronomy 32:35) We are commanded not to take *personal* vengeance against someone but to leave vengeance to God and *God's ordained institutions.*
God desires a stable civilization and desires men to live at peace with one another. War is a righteous last resort and comes after warnings and warnings and more warnings that are not heeded. ***Romans 12:18 If it is possible, as far as it depends on you, live at peace with everyone.***
Psalms 37,52 & 75 along with describing the blessings of the righteous, states that the wicked will be cut-off without escape. God is involved in war and uses it to punish sinners, wicked people and wicked nations. God himself engages in war for His own purpose. There are times when God uses rulers and nations in His providence to bring death and destruction to people because it is His will to do that. We don't know why God does it in some circumstances and does not in other circumstances. *We trust that God always does what is right.* Yet we know *for sure there are no people on the face of the earth who don't deserve to die.* ***Romans 3:23*** *states* ***"for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God…" Romans 6:23)***states **"*For the wages of sin is death."*** and ***Ezekiel 18:4*** states ***"Behold, all souls are Mine; The soul of the father as well as the soul of the son is Mine; The soul who sins shall die."*** Dying is not an aberration. One out of one die. Everyone will die, whether by accident, disease, a criminal act or war. It's our payment for Adam's sin.

In ***Romans 3:10-18*** Paul quotes Old Testament Scriptures describing man without God - ***As it is written: "There is no one righteous, not even one; there is no one who understands, no one who seeks God. All have turned away, they have together become worthless; there is no one who does good, not even one." "Their throats are open graves; their tongues practice deceit." "The poison of vipers is on their lips." "Their mouths are full of cursing and bitterness." "Their feet are swift to shed blood; ruin and misery mark their ways, and the way of peace they do not know." "There is no fear of God before their eyes." (Psalm 5:9, 10:7, 14:1-3, 36:1, 53:1-3, 140:3; Proverbs 1:16; Isaiah 59:7,8)***

James 4:1,2, states ***"What is causing the quarrels and fights among you? Isn't it the whole army of evil desires at war within you? You want what you don't have, so you scheme and kill to get it. You are jealous for what others have, and you can't possess it, so you fight and quarrel to take it away from them. And yet the reason you don't have what you want is that you don't ask God for it."***

In ***Joshua 10:40*** - In the conquest of Canaan, God set Joshua and all of Israel to go to war against an idolatrous people and ***"…Joshua subdued the whole region, including the hill country, the Negev, the western foothills and the mountain slopes, together with all their kings. He left no survivors. He totally destroyed all who breathed, <u>just as the LORD , the God of Israel, had commanded</u>."***

God lifted up, magnified, and showed His approval upon men who were involved in war. Joshua led the Israelites into the Promised Land, Gideon was called a man of valor (***Judges 6:12***), and David, who was a general and a king, were such examples. In ***Psalm 18:34*** David says ***"He teaches my hands to make war, So that my arms can bend a bow of bronze."*** (to kill in fulfillment of divine purpose). David saw himself as a soldier for God. ***Psalm 144:1 Praise be to the LORD my Rock, who trains my hands for war, my fingers for battle.***

1 Samuel 18:7 As they danced, they sang: "Saul has slain his thousands, and David his tens of thousands." Of this same David God, through the Prophet Samuel, says in ***1 Samuel 13:14 "…the LORD has sought out a man after His own heart and appointed him leader of His people…" 1 Samuel 25:28 "Please forgive the trespass of your maidservant. For the LORD will certainly make for my lord an enduring house, because my lord fights the battles of the LORD, and evil is not found in you throughout your days."*** Abigail, wife of Nabal, (future wife of David), speaking to David.

In ***Exodus Chapter 14*** God drowned the Egyptian army. It was time for their punishment and time to protect His people. ***Exodus 14:14*** says ***"The LORD will fight for you, and you shall hold your peace."*** In the Song of Moses in ***Exodus 15:3*** it states ***"The LORD is a warrior; the LORD is His name."***

Exodus 32:25-29 A command from God through Moses: ***Moses saw that the people were running wild and that Aaron had let them get out of control and so become a laughingstock to their enemies. So he stood at the entrance to the camp and said, "Whoever is for the LORD, come to me." And all the Levites rallied to him. Then he said to them, "This is what the LORD, the God of Israel, says: 'Each man strap a sword to his side. Go back and forth through the camp from one end to the other, each killing his brother and friend and neighbor.' The Levites did as Moses commanded, and that day about three thousand of the people died. Then Moses said, "You have been set apart to the LORD today, for you were against your own sons and brothers, and He has blessed you this day."***

The Lord states to Joshua one of God's principals governing warfare prior to conquering the Promised Land by military force: That we trust in God.
Joshua 1:6,9, 6:21 - Be strong and courageous, for you will lead my people to possess all the land I swore to give their ancestors. I command you - be strong and courageous! Do not be afraid or discouraged. For the LORD your God is with you wherever you go." And they utterly destroyed all that was in the city, both man and woman, young and old, ox and sheep and donkey, with the edge of the sword.
Deuteronomy 20:3,4 "…Do not be fainthearted or afraid; do not be terrified or give way to panic before them. For the LORD your God is the One who goes with you to fight for you against your enemies to give you victory."

Another principal was*; Do not allow* into the conflict those who have other matters on their minds or are afraid for they are useless in battle and will influence others to lose courage.
Deut.20:5-8 "The officers shall say to the army: 'Has anyone built a new house and not dedicated it? Let him go home, or he may die in battle and someone else may dedicate it. Has anyone planted a vineyard and not begun to enjoy it? Let him go home, or he may die in battle and someone else enjoy it. Has anyone become pledged to a woman and not married her? Let him go home, or he may die in battle and someone else marry her.' Then the officers shall add, 'Is any man afraid or fainthearted? Let him go home so that his brothers will not become disheartened too.'"

Make every offer of peace. If peace is refused, war is a righteous last resort after multiple warnings are not heeded. ***Deut.20:10-15 "When you march up to attack a city, make its people an offer of peace. If they accept and open their gates, all the people in it shall be subject to forced labor and shall work for you. If they refuse to make peace and they engage you in battle, lay siege to that city. When the LORD your God delivers it into your hand, put to the sword all the men in it. As for the women, the children, the livestock and everything else in the city, you may take these as plunder for yourselves. And you may use the plunder the LORD your God gives you from your enemies. This is how you are to treat all the cities that are at a distance from you and do not belong to the nations nearby.***

In the case of the Israelites conquering Canaan, they were commanded to kill all the men, women and children; everything that breathes, in order to destroy their influence towards idolatry.
Deut 20:16-18 "However, in the cities of the nations the LORD your God is giving you as an inheritance, do not leave alive anything that breathes. Completely destroy them - the Hittites, Amorites, Canaanites, Perizzites, Hivites and Jebusites - as the LORD your God has commanded you. Otherwise, they will teach you to follow all the detestable things they do in worshiping their gods and you will sin against the LORD your God." The enemy was to be eliminated so their idolatrous practices would not defile the people of Israel through whom the Messiah would come.

Numbers 33:55 But if ye will not drive out the inhabitants of the land from before you; then it shall come to pass, that those which ye let remain of them shall be pricks in your eyes, and thorns in your sides, and shall vex you in the land wherein ye dwell. (which did come to pass)

Deut. 9:4 "Do not think in your heart, after the LORD your God has cast them out before you, saying, 'Because of my righteousness the LORD has brought me in to possess this land'; but it is because of the wickedness of these nations that the LORD is driving them out from before you."

Numbers 21:1-3 The king of Arad, the Canaanite, who dwelt in the South, heard that Israel was coming on the road to Atharim. Then he fought against Israel and took some of them prisoners. So Israel made a vow to the LORD, and said, "If You will indeed deliver this people into my hand, then I will utterly destroy their cities." And the LORD listened to the voice of Israel and delivered up the Canaanites, and they utterly destroyed them and their cities. So the name of that place was called Hormah. (Utter Destruction)

Obadiah v1,2 We have heard a message from the LORD that an ambassador was sent to the nations to say, "Get ready, everyone! Let's assemble our armies and attack Edom!" The LORD says, "I will cut you down to size among the nations, Edom; you will be small and despised."

Numbers 21:14 mentions the "Book of the Wars of the Lord" which were victory songs of the Divine judgment and triumph of the Lord over the idolatrous people of Canaan.

Psalm 68:21 But God will smash the heads of His enemies, crushing the skulls of those who love their guilty ways.

1 Kings 18:40 And Elijah said to them, "Seize the prophets of Baal! Do not let one of them escape!" So they seized them; and Elijah brought them down to the Brook Kishon and executed them there.

Amos 3:6 …***If there is calamity in a city, will not the LORD have done it?*** (allowed it) God is not responsible for evil. Yet all that occurs He allows. He allows men their evil ways when it serves His purpose and sovereignly selects calamity for His purpose even though they are generated by wicked and evil men.

Isaiah 46:9,10 Remember the former things, those of long ago; I am God, and there is no other; I am God, and there is none like Me. I make known the end from the beginning, from ancient times, what is still to come. I say: My purpose will stand, and I will do all that I please.

God gives no account to us for His actions and we can claim no right to call Him to account. He owes us no explanations. Calamity and war are within His sovereign, providential purpose. *We, as Christians, trust that God is a just God and always does what is right.*
"As for God, His way is perfect; the word of the LORD is flawless. He is a shield for all who take refuge in Him." (Psalm 18:30) (regardless of *when, where or how* we die, we will then be present with the Lord. And even then not until His purpose for us has been achieved)

Isaiah 16:6, 11-14 *The conquering of Moab by the Assyians*
Is this Moab, the proud land we have heard so much about? Its pride and insolence are all gone now! I will weep for Moab. My sorrow for Kir-hareseth will be very great. On the hilltops the people of Moab will pray in anguish to their idols, but it will do them no good. They will cry to the gods in their temples, but no one will come to save them. The LORD has already said this about Moab in the past. But now the LORD says, "Within three years, without fail, the glory of Moab will be ended, and few of its people will be left alive."

Ezekiel 30:22-26 Babylon's King Nebuchadnezzar – God's instrument against Egypt
Therefore, this is what the Sovereign LORD says: "I am the enemy of Pharaoh, the king of Egypt! I will break both of his arms-the good arm along with the broken one-

and I will make his sword clatter to the ground. I will scatter the Egyptians to many lands throughout the world. I will strengthen the arms of Babylon's king and put my sword in his hand. But I will break the arms of Pharaoh, king of Egypt, and he will lie there mortally wounded, groaning in pain. I will strengthen the arms of the king of Babylon, while the arms of Pharaoh fall useless to his sides. And when I put My sword in the hand of Babylon's king and he brings it against the land of Egypt, Egypt will know that I am the LORD. I will scatter the Egyptians among the nations. Then they will know that I am the LORD."

Isaiah 37:26,27 Sennacherib king of Assyria comes against fortified cities of Judah;
"Have you not heard? Long ago I ordained it. In days of old I planned it; now I have brought it to pass, that you have turned fortified cities into heaps of ruins. Their people, drained of power, are dismayed and put to shame. They are like plants in the field, like tender green shoots, like grass sprouting on the roof, scorched before it grows up. But I know your sitting down and your going out and your coming in and your raging against Me. Because of your raging against Me and because your arrogance has come up to My ears, therefore I will put My hook in your nose and My bridle in your lips, and I will turn you back by the way which you came."

Habakkuk 1:5-11 The imminent invasion of Judah and Jerusalem by the Babylonians
The LORD replied, "Look at the nations and be amazed! Watch and be astounded at what I will do! For I am doing something in your own day, something you wouldn't believe even if someone told you about it. I am raising up the Babylonians to be a new power on the world scene. They are a cruel and violent nation who will march across the world and conquer it. They are notorious for their cruelty. They do as they like, and no one can stop them. Their horses are swifter than leopards. They are a fierce people, more fierce than wolves at dusk. Their horsemen race forward from distant places. Like eagles they swoop down to pounce on their prey. On they come, all of them bent on violence. Their hordes advance like a wind from the desert, sweeping captives ahead of them like sand. They scoff at kings and princes and scorn all their defenses. They simply pile ramps of earth against their walls and capture them! They sweep past like the wind and are gone. But they are deeply guilty, for their own strength is their god."

Jeremiah 5:14:17 The Lord speaking to Jerusalem regarding the imminent invasion of Judah and Jerusalem by the Babylonians because in their idolatry they served foreign gods.
Therefore, this is what the LORD God Almighty says: "Because the people are talking like this, I will give you messages that will burn them up as if they were kindling wood. O Israel, I will bring a distant nation against you," says the LORD. "It is a mighty nation, an ancient nation, a people whose language you do not know, whose speech you cannot understand. Their weapons are deadly; their warriors are mighty. They will eat your harvests and your children's bread, your flocks of sheep and your herds of cattle. Yes, they will eat your grapes and figs. With the sword they will destroy the fortified cities in which you trust."

Some will die in wars of which God determines are within His purpose and His will. He understands the devastation it brings and that women, children and innocents will die yet He authorizes war.

Hosea 13:16 The brutality of the Assyrians upon Israel.
The people of Samaria must bear the consequences of their guilt because they rebelled against their God. They will be killed by an invading army, their little ones dashed to death against the ground, their pregnant women ripped open by swords."

Isaiah 13:15,16,18 The Medes / Persians come against Babylon
Everyone who is found will be thrust through, and everyone who is captured will fall by the sword. Their children also will be dashed to pieces before their eyes; Their houses will be plundered and their wives ravished. Also their bows will dash the young men to pieces, and they will have no pity on the fruit of the womb; Their eye will not spare children.

Nahum 3:10 Assyria's attack on Egypt. ***"Yet she was taken captive and went into exile. Her infants were dashed to pieces at the head of every street. They cast lots for her honorable men, and all her great men were put in chains."***

Psalm 37:9,10 For evildoers shall be cut off; But those who wait on the LORD, they shall inherit the earth. For yet a little while and the wicked shall be no more; Indeed, you will look carefully for his place, but it shall be no more. Sooner or later, without escape, the wicked will be destroyed.

Jeremiah 51:1-6, 11,12, 20 The destruction of Babylon by Cyrus of the Medes and Persians.
This is what the LORD says: "See, I will stir up the spirit of a destroyer against Babylon and the people of Leb Kamai. I will send foreigners to Babylon to winnow her and to devastate her land; they will oppose her on every side in the day of her disaster. Let not the archer string his bow, nor let him put on his armor. Do not spare her young men; completely destroy her army. They will fall down slain in Babylon, fatally wounded in her streets. For Israel and Judah have not been forsaken by their God, the LORD Almighty, though their land is full of guilt before the Holy One of Israel. "Sharpen the arrows, take up the shields! The LORD has stirred up the kings of the Medes, because His purpose is to destroy Babylon. The LORD will take vengeance, vengeance for His temple. Lift up a banner against the walls of Babylon! Station the watchmen, prepare an ambush! The LORD will carry out His purpose, His decree against the people of Babylon." "You are My battle-ax and weapons of war: For with you I will break the nation in pieces; With you I will destroy kingdoms…" God sends in the force.

Habakkuk Chapter 2 condemns those who commit wars of aggression. As ***Psalm 68:30*** says ***"…He has Scattered the nations that delight in war."***

Under God's command and God's direction and for His own purposes to punish sinners, wicked people and wicked nations, God wielded a mighty sword of death. He wielded it against nations that threatened Israel, and threatened other nations. It was God's help with that a sword of punishment and protection that wars were fought against sinful nations, aggressive, evil, and destructive enemies who desired to destroy others. Divine judgment will come for idolatry and wickedness for God's own nation of Israel or any other nation.
Within the city of Jerusalem in A.D. 70 - 1.1 million Jews were killed and in the next few years 985 towns within Israel were sacked and the people scattered (to be regathered in 1948). Not even Israel escapes the judgment of God.
God has assigned to human government the task of protection and punishment. The primary duty of civil government is law enforcement. They have been given the responsibility to provide protection through the police, courts and jails. On the personal level the government has the right to exercise capital punishment and just retribution. On the national level the government has the responsibility to step in and protect its citizens from an aggressive force and preserve life, peace and justice here and in the world.
God has delegated to man a certain sovereignty because the Bible says man is king of the earth. His rulership goes through the agencies God has instituted. War has been divinely delegated to governments who are God's appointed authority for preservation, punishment and protection.

In ***Isaiah 45***, a prophesy given while Israel was experiencing a barrage of humiliations, trouble, constantly attacked and plundered, being defeated and taken captive by their idolatrous enemies, God told Isaiah things were going to get worse. A short time later Jerusalem was taken when the Assyrians conquered the southern kingdom of Judah. Why was this happening to God's people, His covenant people? Because they were in idolatry. When ***Isaiah 45:15*** states ***Truly you are a God who hides Himself, O God and Savior of Israel!*** It was a statement of praise, adoration and worship declaring the acknowledgement that although we cannot see it and do not know His purposes, God is hidden in all events. Though we can't see and we can't know all the depths of what God is doing, this we know – that in the end He is a Savior. In every mysterious operation of God in the world the end is that He might save sinners. ***Ezekiel 18:32 For I take no pleasure in the death of anyone, declares the Sovereign LORD. Repent and live!***

The call to all men and women everywhere throughout the ages has been to acknowledge the God of creation, to live by the laws He has written on our hearts and after the incarnation of Jesus Christ, to believe in Him as God our Savior.

Isaiah 45:22 Look to Me, and be saved, all you ends of the earth! For I am God, and there is no other.

The Bible teaches that to obtain salvation, we must believe the gospel message - which is*;* ***God sent Jesus to this earth to make God known to man and for the purpose of dying, in <u>my</u> place, for <u>my</u> sins, that is - <u>my</u> redemption.*** We must *believe by faith* that Jesus Christ is Lord and Savior, and God as the 2nd Person of the Trinity (Father, <u>Son</u>, Holy Spirit), who came to this world in human flesh, the only sinless man, who died for our sins and was resurrected from the dead to affirm who He was and to give us hope. It is our responsibility to acknowledge and confess sour sins and to repent, turning away from my sins and to ask for forgiveness. Salvation is wholly of God by *grace, (unmerited, undeserved favor),* on the basis of our trust in the redemptive work of Jesus Christ, the merit of His shed blood on the cross, and not on the basis of human merit or works. ***More importantly, understanding that it is the resurrection of Jesus Christ that shows He conquered death and gives us the assurance that all He said is true. The redemption of man being accomplished by His death on the cross and three days later, the greatest event to ever take place on earth, the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead.***

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Note: I was drafted into the army in July 1969 – Served in Viet Nam –HQ 3/506 101 st Airborne Honorably discharged in February 1971. Steven A. Slevcove