

“What is a Christian Perspective on War?”

Is there anywhere in the Bible where God or Jesus speaks or justifies the Christian needing to go to war? I know we are to obey those who are in control of the government, unless the demands go against biblical principles. I also have read the various passages concerning loving our enemies and blessing those who persecute us. But what of war? What about the issues of defending our homes for the cause of freedom, right to worship, or when others infringe on the rights of those living in other countries?

There are essentially three Christian views concerning war:

Activism – it is always right to participate in war.

Pacifism – it is never right to participate in war.

Selectivism – it is right to participate in some wars.

Most Christians generally hold to the third position. This led to the development of what has come to be known as the just war criteria.

A just war would include the following elements:

- Just cause (defensive war)
- Just intention (just peace)
- Last resort (negotiations)
- Formal declaration
- Limited objectives
- Proportionate means
- Noncombatant immunity

There are a number of books that have been written on this

subject of war and the Christian. Here is a short list of books that you might find helpful.

- Clouse, Robert. *War: Four Christian Views*. Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, revised 1991.
- Holmes, Arthur, ed. *War: Christian Ethics*. Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Book House, revised 1991.
- Payne, Keith and Payne, Karl. *A Just Defense*. Portland, OR: Multnomah Press, 1987.
- Schaeffer, Francis; Bukovsky, Vladimir; and Hitchcock, James. *Who Is For Peace?* Nashville, TN: Thomas Nelson, 1983.

Kerby Anderson

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