

ANGELIC CONFLICT

- most human wars are a part of the Angelic Conflict—the spiritual warfare going on between Satan and God (modern examples are World War II, the ongoing conflict in the Middle East, the Gulf War, and Islamic terrorism)
- the raid on Job's livestock and servants by the Sabeans and Chaldeans was part of the Angelic Conflict (Job 1:6–17)
 - angelic forces protected Elisha and the city of Dothan from the Syrian Army (2 Kings 6:8–23)
 - the last war is between earthly and heavenly armies (Rev 16:13–16; 19:11–21)
- war often seeks to impose a tyrannical government on people to suppress freedom of religion—evangelism, Bible teaching, spiritual growth, worship, and missions (a good example is the Armageddon Campaign)
- evil governments controlled by Satan bring bondage, oppression, and tyranny; godly governments give freedom (2 Cor 3:17)
- war was directed primarily against human enemies in the Old Testament; conversely, war is directed primarily against demons and the people they control in the New Testament (a logical result of positional truth, 2 Cor 10:3–5; Eph 6:10–17)
- God is the "LORD of Hosts"—commander of the armies of heaven (1 Kings 22:19; Luke 2:13) and earth (1 Sam 17:45; Isa 13:4)
 - in spiritual warfare we must pray that God will remove the demons protecting evil leaders such as Adolf Hitler, Saddam Hussein, and Osama bin Laden
 - we must fight to win battles against evil now, but we won't win the war against evil until Christ returns

INDIVIDUAL AND NATIONAL RESPONSIBILITIES

- commands to individuals are not all applicable to the state; and, commands to the state are not all applicable to individuals
 - God has given powers to the state that he has not given to individuals; for example,
 - (1) individuals are not allowed to avenge themselves, but the state must avenge acts of crime against its people (Rom 13:3–4),
 - (2) individuals are commanded to love their enemies (Matt 5:44) but states are never commanded by God to love other nations
 - the state has a unique set of rules to guide its behavior

PACIFISM

- the Sermon on the Mount discusses personal ethics, not national or international ethics
- applying the personal ethics of the Sermon on the Mount to the state results in pacifism: the belief that war is always wrong, be it defensive, preemptive, or aggressive war, and it is never right to participate in war (Anabaptists, Mennonites, Quakers)
 - verses used to support pacifism: (1) "Blessed are the meek (*praus*)" (Matt 5:5), but meekness is not weakness: Moses was "very meek (*praus*), more than any other man on the face of the earth" (Num 12:3 LXX) but he engaged in warfare;
 - (2) "Blessed are the peacemakers" (Matt 5:9), but Caesar was called "the Peacemaker" because he won and maintained peace by using military force; (3) "Do not resist him who is evil" (Matt 5:39) prohibits retaliation for personal insults, not self-defense (Luke 22:36) or foreign attack (1 Sam 23:1–5); (4) "love your enemies" (Matt 5:44) refers to personal, not national enemies;
 - (5) "Thou shalt not kill" (Exod 20:13) prohibits murder, not killing in self-defense (Exod 22:2), capital punishment (Gen 9:6; Exod 21:12; Matt 21:40–41; Rom 13:4), or killing in war (Psa 144:1)
- pacifism is at best morally naïve and at worst morally delinquent: in failing to defend good, pacifists aid evil
 - pacifists refuse service in the armed forces while enjoying all the benefits of armed protection

PRINCIPLES TO REMEMBER

- war is not incompatible with love, justice, righteousness, or truth (Rev 19:11)
- it is not always possible to live in peace with everyone—personally or nationally (Rom 12:18)