

The Bible on War and Peace

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The Greek scriptures condemn all war except defensive war. All of us have been wronged at times, thus all of us have to forgive others at times. The same is more true of nations. The King James Version uses the word “peace” 429 times and the New International Version uses it only 230 times. Conversely, the word “love” is used in the King James Bible 310 times and the New Living Translation used the word 801 times. The KJV uses the word “forgive” 95 times, the English Standard Version uses it 109 times. These ideals are clearly central Biblical themes no matter which translation is used. Some examples are below:

Isaiah 2:4. And he shall judge among the nations, and shall rebuke many people: and they shall beat their swords into plowshares, and their spears into pruninghooks: nation shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war any more.

Isaiah 9:6. For to us a child is born, to us a son is given, and the government will be on his shoulders. And he will be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace.

Psalms 11:5. The Lord examines the righteous, but the wicked, those who engage in violence,
he hates with a passion.

Psalms 34:14. Depart from evil and do good; seek, inquire for, and crave peace and pursue (go after) it!

Micah 4:3. Then they shall hammer their swords into plowshares And their spears into pruning hooks [so that the implements of war may become the tools of agriculture]; Nation shall not lift up sword against nation, Nor shall they ever again train for war.

Proverbs 15:1. A soft answer turns away wrath, but a harsh word stirs up anger. You can catch more flies with honey than with vinegar.

Deuteronomy 32:35. Vengeance and payback are mine for the time will come when your enemy's foot slips; for the day of their calamity is coming, their doom is rushing upon them.

Matthew 5:9. Blessed are the peacemakers for they will be called children of God.

Matthew 5:21-23. You have heard that it was said to the people long ago, 'You shall not murder, and anyone who murders will be subject to judgment from God.' But I tell you that anyone who is even angry with a brother or sister will be subject to judgment. Again, anyone who says to a brother or sister, contempt is answerable to the court. And anyone who says, 'You fool!' will be in danger of the fire of hell.

Matthew 5:23-24. If you are offering your gift at the altar and when there remember that your brother has something against you, leave your gift there before the altar and go. First be reconciled to your brother, and then come and offer your gift.

Matthew 5:44. You have heard that it was said, 'Love your neighbor and hate your enemy. But I tell you, love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you.

And if you greet only your own people, what are you doing more than others? Do not even pagans do that? Be perfect, therefore, as your heavenly Father is perfect.

Matthew 6:14. For if you forgive other people when they sin against you, your heavenly father will also forgive you.

Matthew 18:21-35. Then Peter came to Jesus and asked, "Lord, how many times shall I forgive my brother or sister who sins against me? Up to

seven times?” Jesus answered, “I tell you, not seven times, but seventy-seven times. ... This is how my heavenly Father will treat each of you unless you forgive your brother or sister from your heart.”

Mark 11:25. And when you stand praying, if you hold anything against anyone, forgive them, so that your father in heaven may forgive you your sins.

Romans 12:17-21. Repay no one evil for evil. Have regard for good things in the sight of all men. If it is possible, as much as depends on you, live peaceably with all men. Beloved, do not avenge yourselves, but *rather* give place to wrath; for it is written, “Vengeance *is* Mine, I will repay,” says the Lord. Therefore “If your enemy is hungry, feed him; If he is thirsty, give him a drink; For in so doing you will heap coals of fire on his head.” Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good.

1 Peter 4:8. Above all, keep loving one another earnestly, since love covers a multitude of sins.

The best example is the 10 commandments, one which says “Thou shall not kill” which is the central goal of war. Wars are won by killing the enemy and destroying property.

The words “Christian” and “peace,” “love” and “forgiveness” are synonymous, such as in the phrase “he is not behaving very Christian.” Unfortunately, secularization of society has also occurred in the churches, and thus these central Biblical themes need to be stressed even more.

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