

War and Peace, part 3 - Why Just War?

Study Notes for message on 21st February 2021

Romans 13 verses 1 to 7

We considered whether it is okay to kill Christians or non-Christians, and said no to either. Yet, most Christians, since Constantine, believed in the 'Just War' theory. We gave six 'Just War' principles:

1. Submit to a higher authority such as government.
2. Seek justice for the oppressed.
3. Act out of love, not selfish ambition.
4. Practice patience, don't run headlong into battle.
5. Be reasonable about whether it's wise to go to war.
6. Respect all people as made in the image of God.

Can you see reasons and examples for the above principles? Can you argue against any of them?

Old Testament battles tend to be 'Holy War' not 'Just War'.

Look at an Old Testament 'Holy War' (e.g.: Genesis 19; Exodus 7 - 12; Numbers 31; Deuteronomy 2 - 3; Joshua 6, or any other battle). Describe how 'Holy War' is acted out in your reading?

We said that no country can be truly Christian. **Why, then, have countries called themselves Christians? What can they point to that makes them think so?**

The church became more an institution than a gathering of saints, with two levels - Clergy and lay. **Is it ever right for different levels of Christians to have a different ethical code?**

In Romans 12 and 13 we saw the role of the Christian and that of the State, saying that repaying evil is for the State, not the Church.

Do you agree? If not, why not?

Ultimately, God is in charge, and can use any government or ruler for his own purposes. **How, then, should Christians act?**