



"The web of our life is of a mingled yarn, good and ill together."
—William Shakespeare

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A Time for War

However one reads the [book of Ecclesiastes](#), it must be admitted that Solomon's conclusions are spot-on in terms of human reality. Ecclesiastes is an anomaly of sorts among the books of the Bible in that, though inspired, it is written from a secular, carnal viewpoint. Nonetheless, its conclusions about human life apart from [God](#) are true, and Solomon's God-given understanding allows him to figure out many spiritual principles as well.

So it is with his list of activities in [Ecclesiastes 3:1-8](#). He begins, "To everything there is a season, a time for every purpose under heaven," and concludes with, "A time of war, and a time of [peace](#)." We may think these truths are self-evident, but most people do not live their lives as if they were. Most do not accept that life is a journey of peaks and valleys, highs and lows, starts and stops, pros and cons, doing and being done to. Yet, the events of life run this meandering course.

Neither are governments and politicians guided by this principle. Most attempt to take a direct path to their objectives, and it is a rare occasion when such an effort works. More often than not, they suffer ambush and redirection by scores of problems and countermeasures. Often, they become so bogged down in the details of their problems that they see no other way

out but to continue their course with new vigor—reinventing the wheel but with feeling.

In our time, no greater example of this exists than the present Israeli-Palestinian conflict. Interested parties, mostly [busybodies](#) from other parts of [the world](#), have for 54 years seen peace as the only and overriding objective. However, the only times of peace in Israel have resulted from Israel soundly beating the Palestinians and their Arab allies on the battlefield! It may sound illogical, but in human affairs in the real world, sometimes war equals peace.

Certainly, engaging in war falls under the sixth commandment. Christians are forbidden to kill, even in self-defense. Yet, God allowed ancient Israel to go war, and when [Christ](#) returns to set up His government, His first act will be to wage war against the nations. In both cases, war was and will be the means to bring peace and further God's purpose.

The wars of ancient Israel, particularly those in the wilderness and then in the Promised Land under [Moses](#) and Joshua, were wars of conquest to enable Israel to live in the land God had given to Abraham's descendants. This was not God's first choice of means; He had promised to drive out the Canaanites incrementally by hornets and confusion ([Exodus 23:27-31](#); [Deuteronomy 7:20-23](#)). However, even though Israel saw God fight for them at the Red Sea—where Moses said, "The LORD will fight for you" ([Exodus 14:14](#))—the nation almost immediately chose war when Amalek attacked them from the rear ([Exodus 17:8-16](#); [Deuteronomy 25:17-19](#)). From then on, Israel was regularly at war, sometimes with God's sanction and sometimes without it. One could say that the [Old Testament](#) is at least partially a history of Israel's wars.

Paul says that a Christian's battles are not "against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this age, against spiritual hosts of wickedness in the heavenly places" ([Ephesians 6:12](#)). However, a time is coming when the armies of heaven, with Christ at their head, will make war on the nations ([Revelation 19:11-16](#)). This is a necessary step to bring peace, righteousness, and prosperity to the earth because there is no other workable solution to the world's evil (see Psalm 2; 110; [Ezekiel 20:33-38](#); [I Corinthians 15:24-25](#)).

If we use the Bible as a guide for the present Middle East conflict, then, total war may be the best answer, as it was for Israel entering the Promised Land (see God's instruction concerning warfare in Deuteronomy 20). This may seem harsh and barbaric, but among carnal human beings, it is the only way to bring about peace. Otherwise, it will continue to follow the pattern of constant irritations, tense truces, acts of terror, occasional uprisings, and periodic open wars. The history of ancient Israel proves this (see [Judges 1:27—3:6](#)). This is realpolitik. Though it is not politically correct and rubs against the grain of our sensibilities, among godless humanity might—at times—does make right, and it will enforce a kind of peace and security that most people can live with.

Certainly, a course of action like this brings its own problems, but that is a subject for another essay. . . .

- Richard T. Ritenbaugh

From the Archives: Featured Sermon

[Trumpets Means War!](#)

by Richard T. Ritenbaugh

God (sometimes referred to as the Lord of Hosts) will marshal an army of resurrected saints who will wage a just war. Trumpets represent a cry of alarm and a call to action. The only time warmaking is just is when God decides, indicating that man's conscience has become so defiled, seared, and perverted that no other solution is possible. God also wages war to defeat His people's enemies (such as the Amalakites) and to put down the Satan-inspired end-time rebellion (Revelation 19:15; Joel 2:1-11).

From the Archives: Featured Article

[The Sixth Commandment \(Part 2\): War! \(1997\)](#)

by John W. Ritenbaugh

A reason lies behind the devastating wars that have plagued mankind since the beginning. John Ritenbaugh gives the uncomplicated solution: Men have broken the sixth commandment!

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