

Scriptural Considerations for Just War Doctrine

IDE Symposium: The Just War Doctrine

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Over a month ago, a Vatican conference, almost as cool as this one, also considered the topic of just war. Their conclusions, however, were not so cool. "There is no 'just war. Too often the 'just war theory' has been used to endorse rather than prevent or limit war. Suggesting that a 'just war' is possible also undermines the moral imperative to develop tools and capacities for nonviolent transformation of conflict." "We need a new framework that is consistent with Gospel nonviolence. We propose that the Catholic Church develop and consider shifting to a Just Peace approach based on Gospel nonviolence."

Perhaps the most damning statement was made by Archbishop John Baptist Odama of Gulu, Uganda. "It is out of date for our world of today. . . We have to sound this with a strong voice. . . Any war is a destruction. There is no justice in destruction. . . It is outdated."¹

There are obvious flaws in these statements. First, the Vatican conference was operating under a logical fallacy: *abusus non tollit usum*, the abuse does not destroy the proper use. Just because the doctrine of just war has been abused, this doesn't mean that war cannot be fought justly or righteously.

Second, the Archbishop's statement reveals that he is a card-carrying member of the cult of progress. Just war is outdated; therefore, just war should be scrapped, thrown into the trashcan of history. How can this be? At the root of this progressivism is the denial of *sola scriptura* and the fanatical belief that the Magisterium is the one who defines binding dogma. As the Catechism of the Roman Catholic Church declares: "The Church's magisterium exercises the authority it holds from Christ to the fullest extent when it defines dogmas, that is, when it proposes, in a form obliging the Christian people to an irrevocable adherence of faith, truths contained in divine Revelation or also when it proposes, in a definitive way, truths having a necessary connection with these."²

And so, with this sleight of hand, the Papists can subordinate Scripture under the dominant source of revelation: the Magisterium. Just like the Scientific Revolution and Charles Darwin made six-day creation obsolete for the Papists, now the proliferation of nuclear arms and increased destructiveness of war have made the "just war" doctrine archaic.

1 <http://ncronline.org/news/vatican/landmark-vatican-conference-rejects-just-war-theory-asks-encyclical-nonviolence>

2 CCC 88.

But, as our Lord, says: **“the Scripture cannot be broken.”**³ The Psalmist says: **“Your Word is a lamp to my feet and a light to my path.”**⁴ Holy Writ stands forever. It does not deceive, because God cannot deceive. It does not cloud the mind; rather it illumines the darkened intellect. In short, the Scriptures are infallible, inerrant, clear. For what purpose? **“For whatever things were written before were written for our learning, that we through the patience and comfort of the Scriptures might have hope.”**⁵ The Scriptures were written so that we might learn the Faith and so that we might learn how to serve God and the neighbor through good works.

And these good works include the doctrine or teaching of Just or righteous war. Rather than having an inductive paper, I will start out with the conclusion reached, not only by me, but also by our Lutheran fathers. Article 16 of the Augsburg Confession speaks of the Christian’s interaction with civil affairs: “It is right for Christians to bear civil office, to sit as judges, to judge matters by the Imperial and other existing laws, to award just punishments, to engage in just wars, to serve as soldiers, to make legal contracts, to hold property, to make oath when required by the magistrates, to marry a wife, to be given in marriage.”⁶

Our Lutheran Fathers take the doctrine of just war for granted. They expect us to read our Bibles and know what they are talking about. And yet, we don’t. Hence, the need for conferences like this one. And so, I will do my best to give biblical evidence for just war from both the Old Testament, the Apocrypha, and the New Testament. I hope that this will, if not lay the foundation, at least clear the forest, so that abler brothers might be able to improve upon the good I do and correct what is lacking.

There are two types of just war found in Holy Writ. The first type of just war is prescriptive. They are those wars explicitly commanded by God. We are most familiar with the wars of the Conquest.

So, what makes these wars just? In order to cut the Gordian knot of Euthyphro’s dilemma (Are morally good acts willed by God because they are morally good, or are they morally good because they are willed by God?), God through the writers of Holy Writ gives the cause of this divinely sanctioned war: sin. **“There is no peace,” says the Lord, “for the wicked.”**⁷ Because God is Justice, He, in these instances, doles out temporal punishment to the Canaanite nations. When He speaks to Abraham, God says: **“But in the fourth generation [the children of Israel] shall return here, for the iniquity of the Amorites is not yet complete.”**⁸ God’s foreknowledge does not make Him a divine puppeteer. The Amorites are morally and spiritually responsible for their sin.

3 John 10:35 NKJV.

4 Psalm 119:105.

5 Romans 15:4 NKJV.

6 <http://www.bookofconcord.org/augsburgconfession.php#article16>.

7 Isaiah 48:22.

8 Genesis 15:16.

And again, the Lord says through Moses: **“Do not defile yourselves with any of these things; for by all these the nations are defiled, which I am casting out before you. For the land is defiled; therefore I visit the punishment of its iniquity upon it, and the land vomits out its inhabitants. You shall therefore keep My statutes and My judgments, and shall not commit any of these abominations, either any of your own nation or any stranger who dwells among you (for all these abominations the men of the land have done, who were before you, and thus the land is defiled), lest the land vomit you out also when you defile it, as it vomited out the nations that were before you. For whoever commits any of these abominations, the persons who commit them shall be cut off from among their people.”**⁹

The word (טָמֵא) “unclean/defiled” is fairly specific in this context. This is not the ceremonial uncleanness brought on by menstruation, child bearing, or coming in contact with the dead. This is an uncleanness which cuts you off from God and from Israel. This is the defilement brought on by the practice of necromancy, the whoredom of idolatry, and the sacrificing of children to idols. In Deuteronomy, God through Moses reiterates and becomes more specific: **“There shall not be found among you anyone who makes his son or his daughter pass through the fire, or one who practices witchcraft, or a soothsayer, or one who interprets omens, or a sorcerer, or one who conjures spells, or a medium, or a spiritist, or one who calls up the dead. For all who do these things are an abomination to the Lord, and because of these abominations the Lord your God drives them out from before you.”**¹⁰

This is the uncleanness which desecrates the land, like keeping a hanged man upon the tree overnight.¹¹ And the land, sick with sin, will vomit out the inhabitants. Just like gas station sushi, the nations will be disgorged from the land. And Israel is warned that if they defile themselves in this way, they too will be vomited out. In conclusion, here we see both the justice and the longsuffering of God. God is just; He will condemn sinners, not only in the next life, but even in this one. But we also see God’s longsuffering. He stays His hand for 400 years for the sake of the Amorites. Finally, God gave them over to their own bound and depraved will, which always fights against God’s judgment, as we see in Joshua 11:20: **“For it was of the Lord to harden their hearts, that they should come against Israel in battle, that He might utterly destroy them, and that they might receive no mercy, but that He might destroy them, as the Lord had commanded Moses.”**

What form does this prescriptive just war take? Prescriptive war is genocide, and sometimes includes the total annihilation of property and goods. The Lord gave Israel this promise: **“For My Angel will go before you and bring you in to the**

9 Lev. 18:24-29

10 Deut. 18:10-12.

11 Deut. 21:23.

Amorites and the Hittites and the Perizzites and the Canaanites and the Hivites and the Jebusites; and I will cut them off.”¹²

The word (כָּתַד), to “cut off” can mean both to hide, efface, annihilate or destroy. We see what the meaning of this word is when God speaks of the destruction of Jericho: **“Now the city shall be doomed by the Lord to destruction, it and all who are in it. Only Rahab the harlot shall live, she and all who are with her in the house, because she hid the messengers that we sent. And you, by all means abstain from the accursed things, lest you become accursed when you take of the accursed things, and make the camp of Israel a curse, and trouble it. But all the silver and gold, and vessels of bronze and iron, are consecrated to the Lord; they shall come into the treasury of the Lord.”¹³**

The (חֲרָם), accursed thing/devoted thing is defined as follows: “something hostile to theocracy, and therefore (in the strictest application) to be either destroyed, or, in the case of certain objects (e.g. silver and gold, vessels of brass and iron Jos 6:19, 24), set apart to sacred uses; especially a. of a Canaan. city, as Jericho, incl. all inhabitants (except Rahab’s family) and spoil.”¹⁴ Everything is destroyed in Jericho; the gold and silver are devoted to the Lord’s Treasury.¹⁵ Not only is Jericho leveled, but a curse is set against anyone who would rebuild the city. Later, Hiel of Bethel bears this curse. He needed to destroy his eldest and his youngest son in order to rebuild Jericho’s gates.¹⁶

King Saul is also to wage a war of annihilation against the Amalekites. The Lord says: **“Now go and attack Amalek, and utterly destroy all that they have, and do not spare them. But kill both man and woman, infant and nursing child, ox and sheep, camel and donkey.”¹⁷** Everything is to be destroyed. Every animal and man, woman and child are to be exterminated.

However, total war is not always commanded by God. Ai’s possessions are not (חֲרָם). The city of Ai is to be destroyed¹⁸, but its goods are preserved for the people of Israel. God says to Joshua: **“And you shall do to Ai and its king as you did to Jericho and its king. Only its spoil and its cattle you shall take as booty for yourselves. Lay an ambush for the city behind it.”¹⁹**

12 Exodus 23:23

13 Joshua 6:17-19

14 Brown, F., Driver, S. R., & Briggs, C. A. (1977). Enhanced Brown-Driver-Briggs Hebrew and English Lexicon (356). Oxford: Clarendon Press.

15 Joshua 6:24-25

16 Joshua 6:26; 1 Kings 16:34.

17 1 Samuel 15:3.

18 Joshua 8:28: “So Joshua burned Ai and made it a heap forever, a desolation to this day.”

19 Joshua 8:2.

One even sees a distinction between the conquest of southern and northern Canaan. This particularly has to do with Jabin of Hazor. He was “A Canaanitic king. . . he appears as overlord of the Canaanitic kings of the region of Mt. Naphtali, with his capital at Hazor, and as conquered by Joshua at the “waters of Merom.”²⁰ Hazor is north of the sea of Galilee, close to Dan. Hazor, its people and its property, is completely consumed by fire (שָׂרַף) and devoted to destruction (חָרַם), while the rest of the cities upon mounds (תְּלָל) are spared; only the people are exterminated.²¹ Why the difference? It was to fulfill what God promised in Deuteronomy 6:10-11: **“So it shall be, when the Lord your God brings you into the land of which He swore to your fathers, to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, to give you large and beautiful cities which you did not build, houses full of all good things, which you did not fill, hewn-out wells which you did not dig, vineyards and olive trees which you did not plant—when you have eaten and are full.”**

Prescriptive war is only unjust when it is left incomplete. God punishes the children of Israel for not exterminating the remaining Canaanite nations in Judges 2:1-4: **“Then the Angel of the Lord came up from Gilgal to Bochim, and said: ‘I led you up from Egypt and brought you to the land of which I swore to your fathers; and I said, ‘I will never break My covenant with you. 2 And you shall make no covenant with the inhabitants of this land; you shall tear down their altars.’ But you have not obeyed My voice. Why have you done this? 3 Therefore I also said, ‘I will not drive them out before you; but they shall be thorns in your side, and their gods shall be a snare to you.’” 4 So it was, when the Angel of the Lord spoke these words to all the children of Israel, that the people lifted up their voices and wept.”**

King Saul also wages an unjust war because He disobeys God’s command to completely destroy Agag and the Amalekites. Samuel condemns Saul, saying: **“For rebellion is as the sin of witchcraft, And stubbornness is as iniquity and idolatry. Because you have rejected the word of the Lord, He also has rejected you from being king.”²²**

Is this first type, the prescriptive form of just war, still applicable today? Yes and no. Holy Scripture is always relevant for faith and life. This type of just warfare reveals to us the deep, thorough corruption in man’s nature; the severity of God’s judgment against sin; and the necessity of not adding anything to nor taking anything away from God’s Word. But this first type of just war is not relevant in how we conduct just wars today. God does not explicitly and immediately command our kings and magistrates to exterminate entire populations. As Dr. Luther says: “It is not enough simply to look and see whether this is God's word, whether God has said it; rather we must look and see to whom it has been spoken, whether it fits us.”²³ Let us not be like Thomas Müntzer, who, in a sermon of July, 1524 at Allstedt, demanded that the princes wipe out all the godless, including godless rulers,

20 Vol. 6: The new Schaff-Herzog encyclopedia of religious knowledge.

21 Joshua 11:12-14.

22 1 Sam. 15:23.

23 <http://www.wordofhisgrace.org/LutherMoses.htm#8>.

princes, and monks.²⁴ Even then as now, “Misery and tribulation have come out of this sort of thing. The peasants have arisen, not knowing the difference, and have been led into this error by those insane factious spirits.”²⁵

Now, there is a second type of just war in the Old Testament. This type of just war can be categorized as descriptive. Article XXI of the Augsburg Confession gives us a solid framework for this sort of investigation: “Of the Worship of Saints they teach that the memory of saints may be set before us, that we may follow their faith and good works, according to our calling, as the Emperor may follow the example of David in making war to drive away the Turk from his country. For both are kings.” And the Apology makes the same case. When Melancthon speaks of the three honors given to the saints, he says: “The third honor is the imitation, first, of faith, then of the other virtues, which every one should imitate according to his calling.” In short, we can extrapolate faith and good works from the events portrayed by Holy Writ. While we do not slavishly imitate the saints, we certainly emulate.

So, what aspects of Old Testament warfare may we emulate justly? First, there is the notion of fighting defensive wars. King Saul fought a war with Nahash the Ammonite on behalf of the citizens of Jabesh Gilead, a town east of the river Jordan in the region of Gilead.²⁶ The battle between David and Goliath was also a defensive war for the Israelites.²⁷ David is also sent by God to save the people of Keilah from the plundering Philistines. This is an interesting case, since the people of Keilah are willing to betray their savior David into the hands of Saul.²⁸ David also wages a war of retribution against the Amalekites when they plunder Ziklag, David’s

24 “That our learned divines, however, should come along and, in their godless prevaricating manner, say in reference to Daniel (2:34) that the Antichrist ought to be destroyed without [human] hands is as much as to say he [Antichrist] is already inwardly collapsed, as was the [Canaanite] people when the Chosen were bent on entering the Promised Land, as Joshua (ch. 5:1) writes. He [Joshua] notwithstanding did not spare them [the Canaanites] the sharpness of the sword. Look at Ps. 44:5 and I Chron. 14:11. There you will find the solution in this way. They did not conquer the land by the sword but rather through the power of God. But the sword was the means, as eating and drinking is for us a means of living. In just this way the sword is necessary to wipe out the godless (Rom.

13:4). That this might now take place, however, in an orderly and proper fashion, our cherished fathers, the princes, should do it, who with us confess Christ. If, however, they do not do it, the sword will be taken from them (Dan. 7:26 f.). For they confess him all right with words and deny him with the deed (Titus 1:16). They [the princes], accordingly, should proffer peace to the enemies (Deut. 2:26–30). If the latter wish to be spiritual [in the outmoded sense] and do not give testimony of the knowledge (kunst) of God (cf. I Peter 3:9, 12), they should be gotten out of the way (I Cor. 5:13). But I pray for them with the devout David where they are not against God’s revelation. Where, however, they pursue the opposition, may they be slain without any mercy as Hezekiah (II Kings 18:22), Josiah (ch. 23:5), Cyrus (cf. II Chron. 36:22 f.), Daniel (ch. 6:27), Elijah (I Kings 18:40) destroyed the priests of Baal, otherwise the Christian church (kirche) cannot come back again to its origin.”

http://germanhistorydocs.ghi-dc.org/pdf/eng/Doc.41-ENG-ThomasM%C3%BCntzer_eng.pdf.
25 <http://www.wordofhisgrace.org/LutherMoses.htm#8>.

26 1 Samuel 11.

27 1 Samuel 17:9.

28 1 Samuel 23.

gift city from Achish the king of Gath.²⁹ David also wages a defensive war against Hanun the son of Nahash, who after disgracing David's servants, hired Syrian mercenaries.³⁰ David also fights a defensive war against the Philistines at Baal-Perizzim.³¹ Even the wicked king Ahab wages a defensive war against the Syrian king Ben-Hadad, which is good in the eyes of God.³² The Israelite king Jehoash also reclaimed the cities which Ben-hadad had taken from Jehoahaz, his father.³³ Jonathon's attack of the garrison at Geba is also defensive, since Geba is identified with Jeba, north-northeast of Samaria.³⁴

The notion of defensive war is also testified to by the disastrous results of offensive wars. King Amaziah's offensive war against the Edomites in the Salt Valley may have been successful, but his victory leads him into idolatry and eventual destruction.³⁵ Amaziah's downfall occurs when he fights in another offensive war against the evil Israel king, Jehoash. Jehoash captures Amaziah, tears down part of Jerusalem's wall, and plunders all the gold and silver from the Temple and from the king's treasury.³⁶ King Josiah, one of Judah's righteous kings, also is slain in a war of offense. Josiah attacks Pharaoh Neco and is killed in battle.³⁷

Here are a few counterexamples to the notion that defensive war is the only viable emulation. David's capture of Jerusalem from the Jebusites is surely one.³⁸ Also, David's plunder of the Geshurites, the Girzites, and the Amalekites is another.³⁹ However, these do not stand up to close scrutiny. The Jubusites are one of the nations which God promised to expel from the land of Canaan. The Geshurites, the Girzites, and the Amalekites also belong to this category: "**For those nations were the inhabitants of the land from of old, as you go to Shur, even as far as the land of Egypt.**"⁴⁰

The second old Testament emulation to which we should strive is the treatment of defeated nations. First, the fight is between armies, not against civilian populations. King David executed many in the Moabite army, but he doesn't exterminate the Moabite civilian population.⁴¹ We also see this in David's treatment of Hadadezer the son of Rehob, king of Zobah. David "**hamstrung all the chariot horses, except that he spared enough of them for one hundred chariots.**"⁴² Second, defeated nations must remunerate, but they are not destroyed. David also conscripted the Ammonites for forced labor, and he placed garrisons in Syria.⁴³

29 1 Samuel 30.

30 2 Samuel 10.

31 2 Samuel 5:17-20.

32 1 Kings 20.

33 2 Kings 13:24-25.

34 1 Samuel 13:3

35 2 Kings 14:7.

36 2 Kings 14:11-14.

37 2 Kings 23:29-30.

38 2 Samuel 5.

39 2 Sam. 27:8.

40 2 Sam. 27:8.

41 2 Sam. 8:2.

42 2 Samuel 8:4.

43 2 Samuel 8:6; 2 Sam. 12:26-31.

Solomon raised forced labor from the descendents of the Amorites, Hittites, Perizzites, Hivites, and Jebusites.⁴⁴ Third, there is discrimination. Armies are slain, but not civilians. David employed severer measures in one instance. He destroyed the Edomite dynasty.⁴⁵ The reduction in military, tribute and forced labor seem to be harsh measures to us. But it sure beats wholesale slaughter.

And the destruction of civilian populations is roundly condemned by Holy Writ. Menahem the son of Gadi assassinated Shallum the son of Jabesh, king of Israel. This Menahem became king after Shallum and waged total war against Tiphshah. 2 Kings 15:16 says: "**Because they did not surrender, therefore he attacked it. All the women there who were with child he ripped open.**" This sin is roundly condemned in Amos chapter 1, where the nations are condemned for their wicked actions: "**For three transgressions of the people of Ammon, and for four, I will not turn away its punishment, Because they ripped open the women with child in Gilead, That they might enlarge their territory.**"⁴⁶

The third aspect worth thinking about is the alliances with other pagan nations. David served Achish of Gath.⁴⁷ Jehoshaphat of Judah, a good and righteous king, allied himself with the wicked Ahab. Ahab is killed and the allies lose.⁴⁸ Jehoshaphat and Ahab's son, Jehoram, also ally. And this time, the allies win for the sake of righteous Jehoshaphat.⁴⁹ Asa king of Judah allied himself with Ben-Hadad, the son of Tabrimmon, the son of Hezion, king of Syria. Asa gave Ben-hadad all the silver and gold that was left in the treasuries of the house of the Lord and the treasuries of the king's house in order to betray Bashan, the king of Israel. This is a victory of sorts, since Bashan stopped building the great fortress of Ramah.⁵⁰

The final thing worth thinking about is the failure of rebellion against suzerains. We already know about the evil kings and how their rebellions turned out. Hoshea the son of Elah became king of Israel in Samaria and ceased paying tribute to Shalmaneser king of Assyria, who then beseigned and deported the entire northern kingdom to Halah and by the Habor, the River of Gozan, and in the cities of the Medes.⁵¹ Both Jehoiakim and Zedekiah rebel against Nebuchadnezzar, causing the first and second deportations.⁵² King Hezekiah, a good and righteous king also must have rebelled against the king of Assyria, because he declares: "**I have done wrong; turn away from me; whatever you impose on me I will pay,**"⁵³ and "**the Rabshakeh said to them.. You speak of having plans and power for war; but they are mere words. And in whom do you trust, that you rebel against me?**"⁵⁴ One counterexample may be Ehud. He doesn't really count, since

44 1 Kings 9:20-22.

45 1 Kings 11:14-17.

46 Amos 1:13.

47 1 Samuel 27:3.

48 1 Kings 22

49 2 Kings 3.

50 1 Kings 15:9-24.

51 2 Kings 17.

52 2 Kings 24.

53 2 Kings 18:14.

54 2 Kings 18:18, 20.

he was raised up immediately by God as a judge.⁵⁵ All in all, rebellion doesn't work for good kings or for wicked ones.

Well, we finished with the Old Testament. Now, I had many requests to deal with 1 Maccabees. This deuterocanonical book best depicts Antiochus, the quintessential evil ruler, who attempts to lead the church into ruin. **“And the king sent letters by the hands of messengers to Jerusalem, and to all the cities of Juda: that they should follow the law of the nations of the earth, And should forbid holocausts and sacrifices, and atonements to be made in the temple of God. And should prohibit the sabbath, and the festival days, to be celebrated. And he commanded the holy places to be profaned, and the holy people of Israel. And he commanded altars to be built, and temples, and idols, and swine's flesh to be immolated, and unclean beasts. And that they should leave their children uncircumcised, and let their souls be defiled with all uncleannesses, and abominations, to the end that they should forget the law, and should change all the justifications of God. And that whosoever would not do according to the word of king Antiochus should be put to death.”**⁵⁶

Mathathias, the priest, kills a Jew for sacrificing to idols, **“And shewed zeal for the law, as Phinees did by Zamri the son of Salomi.”**⁵⁷ And Judas Maccabee finally expelled the Seleucids from the land and set up the Hasmonean dynasty.

Is 1 Maccabees a good, prescriptive example for waging just war against a godless tyrant? I think using 1 Maccabees is problematic, since the Old Testament ceremonial and political laws are abrogated by Christ, the substance.⁵⁸ The Israelite nation is a different beast, a hybrid. Luther says: “These are two kingdoms: the temporal, which governs with the sword and is visible; and the spiritual, which governs solely with grace and with the forgiveness of sins. Between these two kingdoms still another has been placed in the middle, half spiritual and half temporal. It is constituted by the Jews, with commandments and outward ceremonies which prescribe their conduct toward God and men.”⁵⁹ We see the faithfulness to the ceremonial law in the Jews' absolute fidelity to the third commandment: **“Let us all die in our innocency: and heaven and earth shall be witnesses for us, that you put us to death wrongfully. So they gave them battle on the sabbath: and they were slain with their wives, and their children, and their cattle, to the number of a thousand persons.”**⁶⁰ And so, 1 Maccabees cannot be used prescriptively.

Now to the New Testament. Luke 1 speaks of the necessity of the *Pax Romana* created by Caesar Augustus. Even though carnal peace is not the be all-

55 Judges 3:15.

56 1 Maccabees 1:46-52.

57 1 Maccabees 2:26.

58 Col. 2:17.

59 <http://www.wordofhisgrace.org/LutherMoses.htm#8>.

60 1 Maccabees 2:37-38.

end all, this was the chosen time when God the Father sent the Prince of Peace into the world.

John the Baptist doesn't tell soldiers to give up their occupations, rather: **"Don't extort money and don't accuse people falsely—be content with your pay."**⁶¹ The faithful centurion uses the analogy of soldiery in order to express his trust in Christ. Christ doesn't tell him to "go and sin no more," ergo, being a soldier is not a sin.⁶² Cornelius remained a centurion even after his conversion.⁶³ The Gospel was not only guarded but also disseminated by Roman soldiers and magistrates like Felix. They protect Paul from the mob and escort him to Rome for his appeal to Caesar. And Paul in Romans says that those in government are **"They are God's servants, agents of wrath to bring punishment on the wrongdoer."**⁶⁴

But there is a prohibition against self-defense. **"But I tell you not to resist an evil person. But whoever slaps you on your right cheek, turn the other to him also."**⁶⁵ Jesus said, **"He who loves his life will lose it, and he who hates his life in this world will keep it for eternal life."**⁶⁶ And we also have the example of the Apostles, who were beaten, flogged, and, in James' Zebedee's case, murdered.

Now, there is a difference between the exegesis of Eastern Christians and Western Christians. Western Christians, like Tertullian, claim that persecution comes from God and that pastors should stand firm, even to the death. His work, *de fuga*, is a classic work on flight and persecution. Eastern Christians, like Athanasius, believed that it was good for a pastor to flee from persecution, citing Matthew 10:23: **"When they persecute you in this city, flee to another."** This is why Athanasius could, with a good conscience, flee from Arian persecution in Alexandria. So much for a monolithic patristic tradition. However, both East and West agree on this: it is not permissible to take up the sword for the sake of your own life.

However, according to your calling, taking up the sword is not only permissible but necessary and godly. I have already mentioned the Roman soldiers who defended Paul from death on multiple occasions in the book of Acts. Also, the fifth commandment also necessitates force when we are defending our neighbor. Isn't that what "help and support him in every physical need" means?

Concluding thoughts: This paper is by no means meant to be exhaustive, even though it was exhausting to write. The purpose of my paper was extremely modest: I wanted to clear the field. I hope that the following papers can continue to clarify and engage the biblical evidence given for the doctrine of just war.

61 Luke 3:14.

62 Luke 7:1-10.

63 Acts 10.

64 Romans 13:4.

65 Matthew 5:39.

66 John 12:25.