

WAR... WHAT IS IT GOOD FOR? Ben Kinchlow

Most Boomers will recognize that title as an antiwar anthem popularized by Edwin Starr during the Vietnam era. "Absolutely nothing..." was the writer's answer. His position was that war has absolutely no substantive value and that few, if any, *truly intelligent* people support war.

Let me be unambiguous; I am not in favor of war for the sake of war. Wars should only be fought as a last resort and never for conquests, oppression, or religious reasons. I also want to make clear my deep grief for the loss of any human life, as every person is valuable beyond compare. However, there are times when war is a necessity.

Let us personalize the issue. An individual has repeatedly stated publicly that he is going to "wipe you and your family off the face of the earth." Suddenly you learn he is on the way to your house armed with a gun. You also have a weapon, purchased specifically for self-defense. The individual storms into your yard where your children are playing, all the while shouting threats. You have called 911. Question: do you wait to see if (1) he really means it, (2) your neighbors will intervene, (3) the cops will arrive in time, or (4) do you perceive this as a bonafide threat to you and your family and launch a pre-emptive strike?

I do not profess to have all the facts or answers; however, I do submit the following for your consideration:

Recently, the world was "shocked" to learn that Iran, which has threatened repeatedly and publicly to "wipe Israel off the map," is, despite Western hopes to the contrary, rapidly developing nuclear weapons. In our *man-coming-to-your-house* scenario, the threat was imaginary. For Israel, the threat is *real*. They have called 911 (appealed to the UN), waited for their neighbors (the US and EU) to intervene, and now Iran is on the verge of having nuclear warheads and missiles capable of reaching *Israel first*. Does Israel now wait to see *if they really mean it?* ("Oh wow, they really **did** mean it!")

It is my conviction that all of the above positions demonstrate a lack of knowledge of a fundamental truth: God is not a cosmic cop. God is THE SOVEREIGN and man is a Sovereign. (A sovereign is autonomous, free from all outside controlling influences, enjoys full legal equality with other sovereigns, and governs its own properly defined territory.) As a Sovereign, man is endowed with what I call *decisionability*, the power to exercise free will, the power of self-determination. Man is authorized to make independent decisions completely free from *any* outside influence or control, including God's. In other words, man can do and believe whatever he chooses, including not believing the Bible or even that there *is* a God.

The aforementioned *decisionability* is composed of these two concepts: the power to act and the delegated authority to act. Man, by design, is free to choose - good or evil. Saddam Hussein, Adolph Hitler, Josef Stalin, and Mao Zedong are prime examples of this power and authority to choose evil. Could God have stopped them? Yes. Then why did he not? Because God is not a cosmic cop. He does not, will not, prevent any act of man's free will. To do so would violate man's sovereignty and God's integrity. The *why* of this is crucial. Man is a Sovereign designed in God's image and intended by God to be secure in his own person, free from fear and oppression. God himself insists on this security and any attack on a sovereign unit (a state or individual) is an act of war.

All control or restraint must come from *within* or be imposed from *without*. And thus we come again to the question: “War, what is it good for?”

God, ordaining a measured, appropriate, equivalent response to any attack on any other sovereign, established these initial parameters: “... **life for life, eye for eye, tooth for tooth, hand for hand, foot for foot, burn for burn, wound for wound, lash for lash.**” (Exodus 21:23–25)

These parameters were instituted when God established a sovereign state, Israel, in a world that was essentially a lawless conglomeration of kingdoms. These constraints were instituted to ensure that individuals and nations could live in freedom without fear of assault on their persons or borders. An attack on citizens is not merely a game of cops and robbers; it is an act of aggression against another Sovereign State, which violates the sovereignty of said State. In the case of both the individual and the nation, the aggressor must be prepared to accept the consequences, as his action presupposes a measured, appropriate, equivalent response.

The only moral equivalent for taking a human life is the taking of the life of a “life taker” by a properly constituted authority; capital punishment for an individual, war for a nation.

Reduced to an irreducible minimum, we can say it thusly; don’t do to anyone what you don’t want someone to do to you, or more familiarly; “**Do unto others as you would have them do unto you.**”

Don’t want a war? Don’t start one.