

The Doctrine of Just War

History, Principles, and Support

1. What is “just war,” and what is the background?
 - a. The need to resolve tensions in a broken world of nations.
 - b. A doctrinal formulation governing the use of military force.
2. What is the history of the doctrine?
 - a. The early church and pacifism (1st – 3rd centuries).
 - b. The Edict of Milan (313 AD) and the Edict of Thessalonica (380 AD).
 - c. Augustine (354-430) – war as love, peace as the goal.
 - d. Gratian (1140) – laid the groundwork for just war, leading to Catholic canon law.
 - e. Thomas Aquinas (1225-1274) – a formal framework.
 - i. Legitimate authority.
 - ii. Just cause.
 - iii. Right intention.
 - f. Hugo Grotius (1583-1645) – a natural law formation for international law.
 - g. World wars, nuclear weapons, the Vatican, and current Protestant thinking.
 - i. Papal proclamations.
 - ii. Christian realism.
 - iii. “Neighbor Killers”
3. What are the just-war principles?
 - a. *Jus ad Bellum* – Justice in the decision to go to war:
 - i. Just cause.
 - ii. Legitimate authority.
 - iii. Right intention.
 - iv. Last resort.
 - v. Reasonable chance of success.

- vi. Proportionality in outcomes – good results should outweigh current harms.
- b. *Jus in Bello* – Justice in the conduct of war:
 - i. Discrimination – combatants only.
 - ii. Proportionality – the means must be proportionate to the ends.
 - iii. Military necessity
- 4. What is the Scriptural support?
 - a. Israel and the conquest of the nations (Deuteronomy 20)
 - b. Exodus 22:2
 - c. Psalm 82:1-4
 - d. Romans 13:1-4
 - e. John the Baptist and Jesus' response to soldiers
- 5. What are the objections?
 - a. Matthew 5:38-47
 - b. Romans 12:17-21