

## More Theology of Warfare 2 Samuel 12:26-31

By Phillip G. Kayser at DCC on June 9, 2013

### Introduction

Over the past several weeks we have been looking at many angles of the David/Bathsheba story because it is so rich with application to our families, to marriage, to abortion, and so many other issues facing our nation. But we are going to switch gears today and look once again at principles of war. And lest you think that a theology of war is utterly irrelevant to your life, think again. Based upon the enormous number of passages that deal with war in the Bible, God obviously thinks it is an immensely important topic. And I can assure you that it impacts you every day of your lives.

For example, based on 2009 statistics, if we use the Analytical Perspectives Book of the United States Government (which I downloaded from the president's webpage), then 54% of the spending pie is going to military. If we use the Congressional Budget Office's statistics, then 20% of your tax dollars is going to the military, some years as low as 17%. Either way, you should have an interest in where your tax dollars are going and how well they are being spent. And by the way, the flagrant disagreement between those two reports – 20% versus 54% beautifully illustrate the maxim that statistics lie and liars use statistics. I sometimes wonder if anyone knows for sure what is being spent in Washington. When it took a *partial* audit to reveal for the first time that 16 trillion dollars had been given to foreign banks with no one's knowledge, and when those 16 trillion did not appear on anyone's books, you realize that we have major integrity problems in government.

But the subject I am going to talk about again is relevant not just because it impacts your pocketbook, but also because our country's views on the military impact the lives of families that we love – families in this congregation that we need to be praying for. It is tough to be in the military as the top brass become more and more unbiblical in their views. And I am glad that there are Christians who are still seeking to be salt and light in the military. So it helps to inform our prayer life.

It is relevant thirdly because war always tends to impact liberties – or, more to the point, the *diminishing* of liberties. Founding father, James

Madison, said in 1795,

Of all the enemies to public liberty war is, perhaps, the most to be dreaded because it comprises and develops the germ of every other. War is the parent of armies; from these proceed debts and taxes ... known instruments for bringing the many under the domination of the few.... [And then he lists some other bad things that seem to permanently arise from wars and concludes...] No nation could preserve its freedom in the midst of continual warfare.

And I want you to especially take note of that last phrase, since we have officially been in a perpetual state of war for my entire life and long before that. Madison said, “No nation could preserve its freedom in the midst of continual warfare.” No nation. His fears have certainly come true. Many analysts have demonstrated how many aspects of America’s increasing centralization have arisen during past wars. Let me give you another quote along those lines, this one from Alexis de Tocqueville. In his very famous book on American culture, he said,

All men of military genius are fond of centralization, which increases their strength; and all men of centralizing genius are fond of war, which compels nations to combine all their powers in the hands of the government. Thus the democratic tendency that leads men unceasingly to multiply the privileges of the state and to circumscribe the rights of private persons is much more rapid and constant among those democratic nations that are exposed by their position to great and frequent wars than among all others.”<sup>1</sup>

If you hate centralized government, then de Tocqueville says that you better start thinking about your philosophy of warfare. And by the way, Reagan’s buddy, Robert A. Nisbet, points out that this connection of war and centralization was perfectly illustrated in the presidencies of Jackson (yes, he did some good things on banking, but when it came to war, his views were centralizing views – so Jackson), Lincoln, Teddy Roosevelt, Wilson, FDR, Kennedy, Johnson, Nixon, and his own friend, Ronald Reagan. So if you are interested in liberty, you should be interested in understanding a theology of war. It is an extremely relevant topic.

Fourth, this is a prolife issue. A strong national defense is declared by the law of God to be prolife. Don’t ever allow the abuses of the military that we are going to be looking at today make you believe that the military can’t ever be prolife. It can be. It is designed by God to defend the lives of citizens. On the other hand, an interventionist empire-building culture is said by Scripture to be in love with death, and Psalm 68 says that God destroys a

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<sup>1</sup> Alexis de Tocqueville, *Democracy in America*, p. 299.

people who delight in war. So your views on war make you either pro-life or pro-death. It has grieved me that some of my friends have had such a cavalier attitude about killing innocent non-combatants in other countries. Their thought is, “Who cares? They are ragheads.” No. They were people made in the image of God, and we should always grieve when there is collateral damage. We are not always able to avoid collateral damage (and the Bible is quite clear on that), but it should grieve us when it happens. I had to rebuke a friend of mine down south who said that he could hardly wait to kill a bunch of rag heads. That’s not a Biblical view on war. So this really is a prolife issue or a pro-death issue depending on whether your view on war is Biblical or not.

Fifth, it is my belief that many of America’s wars are not wars for our liberty, but wars designed to enrich the pockets of special interests and international bankers. And down through European history, this has certainly been true. I don’t think anyone questions the fact in Europe, though there are many who turn a blind eye to the economic incentives toward war in America. They are skeptical of that. But since these big corporations that push for war impact your lives, you need to understand the subject.

And lastly, the trajectory that America has been on since the Militia Act of 1903 (which changed militias from local control to national control), to the National Defense Act of 1916, to the Overman Act of 1918 (which gave President Wilson expansive powers over every aspect of American life), to numerous Acts since then, there has been a trajectory away from local authority and self-reliance to national authority and total dependence; away from self-protection within neighborhoods to a police state that attempts to remove all gun rights and the right to protect ourselves; away from limited government to expansive government; away from liberty to tyranny. And almost all of those Acts were related directly to war. Virtually everything that you groan over in our nation was in some way connected to war. Emergencies, threats, and wars are almost always excuses of tyrants to take away liberties. They always say that the loss of liberties are temporary, but we never seem to get those liberties back. And I hope to demonstrate that this morning by connecting Psalm 21 (which was a Psalm of David that was written during this time) with our passage. They belong together. You should write Psalm 21 in the margin. In any case, you simply cannot ignore this subject. And if you want a fantastic introduction, read Joel McDurmon’s book, *The Bible & War in America: A Biblical View of An American Obsession*. It is must reading.

## **I. Make sure our own country is right with God and that you are trusting God (12:1-25; Psalm 21)**

Now, as background to our passage let me just mention that the first twenty-five verses of this chapter and Psalm 21 both indicate how important it is for a nation's leadership be in right relationship with God and for the citizens themselves be trusting God rather than the state. Think of it this way: if a Christian leader such as David could be tempted to use the military to get rid of unwanted people like Uriah, and if Christian people in the army like Joab could cover for David's unconstitutional actions, you know it's not a stretch to say that it could happen in pagan America. Those who think that we just need to trust our elected officials to govern wisely need to read history. Whether it is ancient history or modern history, there is not a shred of basis for putting your trust in any aspect of the government, including the military. Over and over militaries have been used to support selfish, tyrannical causes. David said, "**Do not put your trust in princes**" (Ps. 146:3). It's an absolute statement that our founding fathers took seriously. In Psalm 21:8 David said, "**For the king trusts in the LORD.**" So even though I am not going to talk about this first point a great deal, it is foundational principle. Too many Christians blindly believe that if America is in a war, it is automatically a good war and we need to support it and to cheer for it. And that puts far too much trust in man. The more pagan our nation becomes, the tougher it is going to be for Christians to serve faithfully in the military. And we need to be praying that God would protect them and use them as salt and light. And we know from early history how tough it was for Christians to serve in the Roman army, and yet the New Testament makes clear that God called some Christians to do just that.

Now I will admit that our money does still claim, "In God we trust," but our policy says otherwise. Why was it that our country was founded without a standing army and with counties having their own militias? It was partly because they simply did not trust their central government – and that was when the central government was pretty good. And we will look at that more under a later point. But the further away from the God of Scripture that our nation strays, the less we should trust it. Yet evangelicals look first to the national government to solve every issue from schooling, to disaster relief, to roads, to providing jobs, etc. When even Christians have turned Washington, DC into a Messianic savior, you know we are in trouble. When a country is not right with God, you should have the least trust in its services. And this applies even more to the deadly service of the military.

## **II. Make sure that our own country has truly been in danger (10:1-19; Ps. 21:11) and that the attacks are not the result of our own warmongering (10:1-19; Ps. 21:8-12)**

The second principle is a just-war principle that was first articulated by Augustine in the fourth century. In your outline I worded it, “Make sure that our own country has truly been in danger and that the attacks are not the result of our own warmongering.” Historically it has been worded like this: “A just war can only be fought to redress a wrong suffered. For example, self-defense against an armed attack is always considered to be a just cause ... Further, a just war can only be fought with ‘right’ intentions: the only permissible objective of a just war is to redress the injury.”<sup>2</sup> Murray Rothbard summarized the principle this way: “a just war exists when a people tries to ward off the threat of coercive domination by another people, or to overthrow an already-existing domination. A war is unjust, on the other hand, when a people try to impose domination on another people, or try to retain an already existing coercive rule over them.”<sup>3</sup>

Well, on any of those three definitions of this principle, David’s war was a just war. We saw that the war started in chapter 10. The king of Ammon hired king Hadadezer of Syria to annihilate Israel. And though Ammon was motivated by hatred, Hadadezer seems initially to have been totally motivated by economics. This war would give the Syrians new land, open up new trade routes, and provide other economic incentives. It would be like fighting against Iraq to maintain access to oil – not a just war principle. And when David successfully beat off the aggression of Hadadezer, there were a lot of Syrians who were killed. And King Hadadezer was able to mobilize his empire against David a second time by pointing to all the Syrian lives that had been lost in that first battle. “Look how terrible these Israelites are. They have killed a lot of our people.” Never mind that he was the warmonger. Never mind that he started the war and that David was simply defending his country from annihilation. Hadadezer could not claim either phase one or phase two of the war as being just because he was the aggressor. And I think some of America’s wars fit Hadadezer more than they fit David. Obviously Ammon could not claim their war to be a just war, since Ammon’s intent was to destroy Israel.

Psalm 21:11 says that the Ammonites had devised a plot or a conspiracy that they were not able to fulfill. And since we’ve already looked

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<sup>2</sup> <https://www.mtholyoke.edu/acad/intrel/pol116/justwar.htm>

<sup>3</sup> <http://www.lewrockwell.com/rothbard/rothbard20.html>

at that intended genocide in chapter 10, I won't spend much time on it. But I bring it up because even though Joab was now taking the war into the country of Ammon, as General Douglas MacArthur wanted to do with China, it would still be considered a defensive war according to Deuteronomy 20. When Ammon sought to invade Israel, it was perfectly justifiable for David to not stop the war until the king was dead and Ammon was no longer a threat. But most of the countries we have invaded in my lifetime would not fit into the Bible's description of a just war theory on this principle.

### **III. Make sure that the leader of the country and the military leaders are loyal citizens (12:26-27)**

Point III. I think I have demonstrated in a previous sermon that our current commander in chief is not a natural born citizen like both constitution and Bible say that he should be. Joab and David were. Verses 26-27:

**2Samuel 12:26** Now Joab fought against Rabbah of the people of Ammon, and took the royal city.

**2Samuel 12:27** And Joab sent messengers to David, and said, "I have fought against Rabbah, and I have taken the city's water *supply*."

Whatever Joab's other faults, you cannot fault him for having divided loyalties. And even with all of David's sin in chapters 11-12, David too was loyal to his country. Both Joab and David met the criteria of Deuteronomy 17 that the top commanders must be brothers; in other words they must be natural-born citizens. And Deuteronomy 20 adds that all officers and chaplains had to at least be committed to the Scriptures. But there were three other provisions in Deuteronomy 17 that David only partially filled. Deuteronomy 17 forbade kings from multiplying horses, wives, and money. Why did he link those three? All three were things that could potentially divide a king's loyalties between Israel and other countries or other interests.

The horses are obvious. They were used for far ranging warfare and were generally used for empire building. David obeyed that provision, and did not engage in empire building like his son Solomon did. Second, wives were multiplied often with the purpose of building alliances with other countries, and this too would divide the loyalties of the king. Is he going to be more loyal to his country or to the country of his wife? David began to fail on this one with one of his wives, Maacah, the daughter of the king of Geshur. But Solomon was a massive fail on this one. And then, massive amounts of money could make a king begin to think globally and

independently of his own country. As Cicero worded it, “The sinews of war are infinite money.”<sup>4</sup> And later we will see that David was a success in that he distributed the war reparations appropriately, rather than hoarding them for himself. But the point of all this is that it is tough to fight under a commander in chief who has divided loyalties. And you will have to look at the sermon I preached on that subject to see all the reasons why.

#### **IV. Make sure to attack the true source of the trouble (12:26; Ps. 21:8-12)**

The fourth principle is to make sure that you attack the true source of the trouble rather than constantly responding to attacks on the periphery. Obviously there were lots of cities involved in this war, and David dealt with those cities in verse 31. But David was not intent on simply holding the line at his border. Some people misinterpret defensive warfare as if it mandates keeping your armies inside your borders. That’s nuts. Deuteronomy 20 clearly says that Israel was allowed to engage in war with cities “**very far from you**” (v. 15). They didn’t even have to be on the border of Israel, like Ammon was. So David was being totally Biblical when he gave Joab full authority in chapter 11:1 to go deep into enemy territory. In fact, let me go ahead and read chapter 11:1 again that gives the authorization for what Joab is doing here:

**2Samuel 11:1 It happened in the spring of the year, at the time when kings go out to battle, that David sent Joab and his servants with him, and all Israel; and they destroyed the people of Ammon and besieged Rabbah. But David remained at Jerusalem.**

Well, that war has been going on for almost two years now, if this whole chapter is in sequence, which I believe it is. Joab has been commissioned to go deep into enemy territory. And General Douglas MacArthur rightly said that this is the only way to deal with aggressor nations. You can’t perpetually be holding the line at your border, or holding some artificial line like we did in Korea or Vietnam. He wanted to drop bombs on China, because China was the real troublemaker behind the scenes.

If David had taken a stance of only defending his borders, he still would have had the Syrian empire to deal with. They backed off in chapter 10 because David took the battle to them. And because he was willing to go deep into enemy territory after the source of the problem, the war was over

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<sup>4</sup> Quoted by John Brewer in *The Sinews of Power: War, Money, and the English State, 1688–1783* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1988), p. v.

fairly quickly. That's how you deal with ants, right? You go after the queen ant in the ant-nest. In many wars we have done very little to actually destroy the ant queen. We just make all the ants angry because we keep messing around with the nest.

And you will have to keep in mind the distinctions I made in a previous sermon between preemptive warfare, which the Bible allows for, and preventative warfare, which the Bible does not allow for. Just war theory keeps those distinctions clearly in mind. You can argue whether we should have been in Korea or Vietnam. I personally don't think we had any business there whatsoever. But if we were going to fight those wars, the president should have authorized us to go after the Chinese who were behind all the warfare. That strategy of MacArthur's would have saved an enormous number of American lives.

And that's exactly what Psalm 21 authorized David to do by God's inspiration. Let me read verses 8-12 of that Psalm. David said,

**Psalms 21:8 Your hand will find all Your enemies; Your right hand will find those who hate You.**

**Psalms 21:9 You shall make them as a fiery oven in the time of Your anger; The LORD shall swallow them up in His wrath, And the fire shall devour them.**

**Psalms 21:10 Their offspring You shall destroy from the earth, And their descendants from among the sons of men.**

**Psalms 21:11 For they intended evil against You; They devised a plot *which* they are not able *to perform*.**

**Psalms 21:12 Therefore You will make them turn their back; You will make ready *Your arrows* on Your string toward their faces.**

Modern Americans don't seem to like either point II or point IV. Point II indicates that Christians should hate war and try to avoid it if at all possible. That's a just war principle. We've seen in the previous chapters that David did not glorify war. He hated it. Some of the best Generals in American history have hated war. Psalm 68:30 says that *God scatters people who love war*. So *we* shouldn't love war and *we* shouldn't love violence. That's point II. But on the other hand, you would be totally misreading those passages if you interpret them to mean that God never allows us to engage in an offensive war. The best defense is sometimes an aggressive offense that makes sure that the enemy doesn't have another chance to attack us.



## **V. Make sure to be strategic and to use the best means of bringing surrender (12:27)**

Point V is closely related to that and says to make sure to be strategic and to use the best means of bringing surrender. And sometimes that will be a devastating means. I'm not one of those who believes that nuclear warfare automatically violates just-war theory. There are many who do believe that. But when rightly used, it could perfectly fit into just war theory. Anyway, verse 27 says,

**2Samuel 12:27 And Joab sent messengers to David, and said, "I have fought against Rabbah, and I have taken the city's water *supply*.**

Without water, the city could not last more than a couple days. So if David was to be on the scene, he needed to be there quickly. Capturing the water supply put a quick end to the war because all the people would start dying from lack of water. And people object saying, "Yeah, but everybody's suffering in the city, including innocents. That's not just." Actually, Deuteronomy 20 says that it is. There are some people who use the same logic to oppose the use of the bombs on Hiroshima and Nagasaki. And that one's a little bit more sticky. I think there is room for disagreement on that situation. But interestingly, there are some Japanese who disagree with these objections. I read one Japanese historian who documented that if America hadn't dropped those bombs, they would have fought to the last man, and far, far, more Japanese lives would have been lost. And I won't debate here whether we should have dropped them on that city or elsewhere. I just want to point out that just war principles speak of using the least amount of force needed to win the victory, but that least amount of force, if it is strategic, can sometimes be tough. In Judges this sometimes meant assassination of the leader. That can sometimes be a very effective way of getting rid of the threat of an aggressor nation immediately. In other places in Scripture (like here) it often meant not just destroying the army on your border, but going after the capital city. The bottom line is that it is Biblical to be efficient rather than dragging wars out forever as has sometimes been done because of political restrictions. But I can certainly understand the disagreements that people have on this point.

## **VI. Make sure that this is truly in the interests of the whole nation (12:28-29)**

Sixth, make sure that this war is truly in the interests of the whole nation. This was certainly implied in point II. But verses 28-29 allow the

people as a whole the opportunity to join or to vote against the war with their feet.

**2Samuel 12:28 Now therefore, gather the rest of the people together and encamp against the city and take it, lest I take the city and it be called after my name.”**

**2Samuel 12:29 So David gathered all the people together and went to Rabbah, fought against it, and took it.**

We have already seen in a previous sermon that David followed Biblical law in the “how” of gathering all the people. David got the consent of the tribal leaders in this war. With the devastation that had happened from the Moabite/Syrian/Ammonite coalition in chapter 8, and with the danger to their existence that happened from the Ammonite/Syrian coalition in chapter 10, all Israel was on board. They were clearly OK with this war. But every time David called all Israel together, he had to get the approval of the leaders of each tribe and the leaders of each of the local militias. The Bible allowed individual militias to opt out. And more to the point, Numbers specified that soldiers could not be mixed into one gigantic blended national army. Instead it indicates that each militia was supposed to fight under its own *family’s* standard (that would be the county level) and those counties were all to fight under their own *tribe’s* standard (that would be the state level). This was a check and balance that kept the war machine from becoming simply a machine to serve the interests of the king. So there is a lot that is implied in that phrase “the rest of the people” in verse 28, and “all the people” in verse 29.

All the way up through the War Between the States, America did something similar. But Lincoln and those who followed after him used the draft and used more and more amalgamation to disintegrate the loyalties of soldiers to their local administrations. And that centralization of the military has been so successful that states now have zero say in modern wars. The Constitution says that they should have a say, but they really don’t. It’s not a good sign when that happens. A return to the decentralized military of Numbers 1-2 and of pre-civil-war-America is one of several steps that need to be taken to reign in the misuse of the military by the national government.

## **VII. Make sure that it isn’t simply the professional soldiers who are armed and ready for battle (12:28)**

The seventh principle that our founding fathers held to and that you see in verse 28 is to make sure that it isn’t simply the professional soldiers who are armed and ready for battle. The Bible assumes that there always

will be *some* professional soldiers. But I want you to notice in verse 28 that David doesn't have to arm and train the people. They are already armed and trained. He simply has to gather them. And so, just like in our constitution, there is a balance between national interests and local interests. National interests say that there should be the ability to quickly mobilize a large army. Local interests say that this army is made up of local militias and they are already armed, thank you. The king or president does have a role as commander in chief. But the militias had a say-so as well. And I should remind you from a previous sermon that the militias in America were set up quite differently in the early years than they are now. The whole people is the militia in a Biblical state, and the whole people was the militia in constitutional America – all males 20 years old and above in the Bible, and all males 18 years old and above in America. If America would return to having no standing army, and have local militias that drill from time to time under local leaders and ready themselves for combat, it would be a check and balance against the wishes of Marxists in America who want to disarm the people and who want the professionals to police the nation. And that may not be too far off if Obama gets his way.

Karl W. Eikenberry, a retired lieutenant general who commanded the U.S. forces in Afghanistan from 2005 to 2007, recognizes the problems with the current way of doing things. I have my own issues with Eikenberry, but I think he is correct that the military could be headed toward very dangerous waters. In a New York Times opinion piece, he pointed to three developments since 1973 that are problems. (And actually, I would say that these problems started a lot earlier – but we'll go with his 1973.) The first problem that he describes is the move away “from the tradition of the citizen-soldier ... [to] a large, professional ... force.” And it's the same difference we have seen here – between all the people being armed and ready to constitute the army and the professional army that Saul had, that was so unbiblical. Now, I don't agree with every aspect of his solution, because he wants a mandatory draft. But he is correct that there is a growing distance between military and people. Eikenberry goes on to say,

In 1776, Samuel Adams warned of the dangers inherent in such an arrangement: ‘A standing Army, however necessary it may be at some times, is always dangerous to the Liberties of the People. *Soldiers are apt to consider themselves as a Body distinct from the rest of the Citizens.*’

That's the key phrase. And he rightly points out: that's a problem.

The second development that Lieutenant General Eikenberry is nervous about is how easy it is for the president to use drones without

accountability and with very few need-to-know people. You no longer have to have a military presence with all of its checks and balances that are involved in that. You just need a handful of experts in a room and you can be off and running.

The third development he mentions is that the military's function is being expanded far beyond the traditional battlefield functions, training functions, and administrative functions that they used to have so that commanders are now leading non-military functions such as rebuilding a nation's infrastructure, ensuring women's rights in other nations, and other things that have no relationship to the military. And he pointed out that these could easily be expanded to using the military to police our own nation. He went on to say,

“Here are the makings of a self-perpetuating military caste, sharply segregated from the larger society and with its enlisted ranks disproportionately recruited from the disadvantaged. History suggests that such scenarios don't end well... The modern force presents presidents with a moral hazard, making it easier for them to resort to arms with little concern for the economic consequences or political accountability.”<sup>5</sup>

It's hard for me in the little time I have to describe the importance of citizens once again regaining an interest in what happens in the military. But Lieutenant General Eikenberry gave two quotes from founding fathers that I think sum it up rather well: First, a quote from Adams: “Where there is a necessity of the military power, a wise and prudent people will always have a watchful and a jealous eye over it; for the maxims and rules of the army are essentially different from the genius of free people, and the laws of a free government.” And next a quote from George Washington: “When we assumed the Soldier, we did not lay aside the Citizen.” So the phrase “all the people” is really important, and noting that they were already armed and locally trained is important. It was one check and balance in Israel's wars. To reiterate point VII – “make sure that it isn't simply the professional soldiers who are armed and ready for battle.”

## **VIII. Make the country pay reparations (12:30-31)**

### ***A. Spoil (v. 30)***

But point VIII is yet another principle of war that our nation has been violating. We engage in unconstitutional wars, and then we engage in

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<sup>5</sup> [http://www.nytimes.com/2013/05/27/opinion/americans-and-their-military-drifting-apart.html?pagewanted=all&\\_r=0](http://www.nytimes.com/2013/05/27/opinion/americans-and-their-military-drifting-apart.html?pagewanted=all&_r=0)

building back up what we have destroyed, and after that we stay there to police the nation. All three phases of our military presence are enormously costly. And who gets to pay for it? We do. In Biblical wars, the *enemy* paid for it all – that is, if you won the war. Israel’s citizens didn’t have taxation that *could* pay for endless wars. Instead, verse 30 speaks of spoil and verse 31 speaks of ongoing indentured servitude until the war debt was paid off. First of all, the spoil. Verse 30 says,

**2Samuel 12:30 Then he took their king’s crown from his head. Its weight was a talent of gold, with precious stones. And it was set on David’s head. Also he brought out the spoil of the city in great abundance.**

In a previous sermon I dealt with this point and showed how David followed the law of God to a t when it came to distribution of spoil. And that passage said that this was his permanent policy. And Psalm 21 refers to this crown and to the other spoil. War cost him, so he got some remuneration. War cost the soldiers so they got an extra portion of plunder. And it cost the country, so some of that money went to help pay for damages that had been inflicted by the enemy. Notice that this is not redistribution of Israel’s wealth. This is not socialism. This was war reparations for damages done; it was a kind of restitution.

***B. Indentured servitude until the debt is paid off (v. 31)***

And the second part of that restitution is in point B – indentured servitude. Verse 31 follows the principles laid out in Deuteronomy 20, which allowed enemies to be put into indentured servitude until fourfold restoration was exacted.

**2Samuel 12:31 And he brought out the people who were in it, and put them to work with saws and iron picks and iron axes, and made them cross over to the brick works. So he did to all the cities of the people of Ammon.**

Where is the flow of money in this forced labor? It’s not from Israel to the enemy; its from the enemy to Israel. But we have done the exact opposite in America. In our recent wars we pay for the war, we pay for the nation rebuilding, and we pay for an ongoing presence in that nation. We citizens pay for everything. There is no restitution to America (if America truly has been hurt – and in most of our wars, I am skeptical). Instead, the flow of money is to the enemy country, and especially to the huge corporations that are making a killing from all three stages of every recent war. This is what is known as the military-industrial complex – which you need to become familiar with. It’s a massive money making venture for private corporations, and their connection to the iron triangle in Washington DC almost

guarantees that America will continue to be in a state of perpetual war. Business demands it. The whole way the iron triangle is set up demands it. There is huge motivation for them to promote endless war. So this principle is simply insisting that we make the enemy pay, not the citizens.

### **IX. Make sure you press for full victory (12:31b; Ps. 21:8)**

Principle IX is to make sure you press for full victory. Verse 31 was not just satisfied with defeating one city and showing what they could do. It's not just flexing your muscles. It says, "**So he did to all the cities of the people of Ammon.**" He made sure that Ammon would not be a threat again. It was a full victory that David pressed for. You don't just teach the enemy a lesson. You don't just hold an imaginary line forever. MacArthur said, "There is no substitute for victory."

### **X. Don't become a perpetual war machine with a standing army (v. 31c)**

The tenth point is, "Don't become a perpetual war machine with a standing army." Verse 31 ends by saying, "**Then David and all the people returned to Jerusalem.**" And what happened then? Well, after debriefings, division of plunder, and other administrative functions, they went back to their farms. You keep reading in chapters 13-14 and you will see that even Joab went back to his farming. There was no standing army. The book of Numbers did not allow for a standing army.

And this principle was built right into our constitution. While the Navy was a standing Navy (and it had to be by the very nature of how a Navy functions – this was true in the ancient world as well), the army was not, because it was feared that (unlike the Navy) the army could be used to police the king's own nation. The Navy wasn't as much of a threat to your own nation, but the army could be. And we saw in 1 Samuel that tyrant Saul did exactly that. He had more spies among his own people than he did in foreign lands, and his army was used for both local policing and for non-military functions, both of which were considered tyrannical in 1 Samuel 8. So Article I, Section 8, Clause 12 of our constitution says,

The Congress shall have Power To ...raise and support Armies, but no Appropriation of Money to that Use shall be for a longer Term than two Years ....

Now obviously this has had different interpretations, but historically this occasional raising of an army and the two-year limit on funding, has been interpreted to mean no standing army. In *The Heritage Guide to the Constitution*, edited by Edwin Meese III (former Attorney General under

Ronald Reagan), the first comments under this section of the constitution say this:

For most Americans after the Revolution, a standing army was one of the most dangerous threats to liberty. In thinking about the potential dangers of a standing army, the Founding generation had before them the precedents of Rome and England. In the first case, Julius Caesar marched his provincial army into Rome, overthrowing the power of the Senate, destroying the republic, and laying the foundation of empire. In the second, Cromwell used the army to abolish Parliament and to rule as dictator. In addition, in the period leading up to the Revolution, the British Crown had forced the American colonists to quarter and otherwise support its troops, which the colonists saw as nothing more than an army of occupation.<sup>6</sup>

They hated the idea of a standing army. But we in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century have swum for so long and so continuously in the waters of a war state that it seems natural and our founding father's fears simply do not compute in our heads. They seem too paranoid. We trust the government. Americans tend to think, "Of course they are not going to do something like that! What's wrong with you? Are you a conspiratorialist?" And my answer is, "No. I'm a constitutionalist, and anyone who has studied the constitution knows that it flows out of a healthy distrust of civil government and a full belief in the depravity of man." Even the non-Christians among our founding fathers believed in the depravity of man. In answering the question of why our founding fathers had so many checks and balances and why they didn't trust the central government, Federalist Paper 55 says, "depravity in mankind ... requires a certain degree of circumspection and distrust." There you have it. Once the war was over, the army needs to go back to Jerusalem and disband. Why? Because we don't trust a permanent army.

But nowadays Americans don't understand why an army must disband, and why localities should be the ones officering and training the militias. That's not efficient. We are all about trust and efficiency. But our founding fathers knew from experience that it was dangerous to allow war to go on too long because it was dangerous to allow an army to become a professional, centralized, permanent army. A standing army was almost universally detested by both the Anti-Federalists and the Federalists. During the Virginia ratifying convention, George Mason exclaimed, "What havoc, desolation, and destruction, have been perpetrated by standing armies!" And

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<sup>6</sup> Spalding, Matthew; Edwin Meese; David F. Forte (2005-11-07). The Heritage Guide to the Constitution (Kindle Locations 4484-4489). Regnery Publishing, Inc.. Kindle Edition.

actually, I have a boatload of quotes that showed that our founding fathers feared a standing army.

After their experience with Saul, Israel did not trust a standing army. And after their experience with Britain, our founding fathers did not trust a standing army. Now, the Anti-Federalists would have preferred that the defense of the nation remain 100% with the state militias.<sup>7</sup> They didn't get their way. But at least the constitution provided for checks and balances and a time limit on the army. It wasn't supposed to function for longer than two years after a Congressionally called for war was over.

But after World War I, we started the process of slowly turning our nation into a permanent war machine. You'll get just a tiny hint of the philosophical change that happened when you think of these figures: Prior to the Civil War, the army never exceeded 16,000 soldiers during peace time, and after the Civil War, it was immediately reduced down to 25,000, much to Sherman's disgust. I think Sherman wanted a large standing army. But it stayed small. That was no longer true after World War I. Once the war was done, there was no downsizing like David did. The size of the army remained at 298,000 active soldiers with 400,000 reserves in the National Guard. That's a rather startling change. It shows a complete reversal of our old constitutional policies. And when the Welfare State was added to the Warfare State, even more freedoms were replaced with central planning.

A slogan that was popularized by George Soule in the 1920's was, "We planned for war, why not in peace?" It was a cry to replace local sovereignty with national central planning by elitist experts. Now think about that – if your planning during peace is as extensive as it was during war, you've got total control. And I would say that they have largely succeeded in making that transition complete. Everything is planned out in DC. But where did it start? It started with a standing army that did not disband as soon as the conflict was over. And it wasn't just here in America. British historian, A. J. P. Taylor says that the same thing happened after World War I in Britain. He said,

Until August 1914 a sensible, law-abiding Englishman could pass through life and hardly notice the existence of the state beyond the post office and the policeman... [Wouldn't that be wonderful? He goes on...] He could travel abroad or leave his country forever without a passport or any sort of official permission. He could exchange his money without restriction or limit. He could buy goods

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<sup>7</sup> Spalding, Matthew; Edwin Meese; David F. Forte (2005-11-07). The Heritage Guide to the Constitution (Kindle Locations 4504-4506). Regnery Publishing, Inc.. Kindle Edition.



from any country in the world on the same terms as he bought goods at home. For that matter a foreigner could spend his life in the country without permit and without informing the police... All this was changed by the impact of the Great War... The state established a hold over its citizens which though relaxed in peace time, was never to be removed and which the Second World War was again to increase. The history of the English people and the English State merged for the first time.<sup>8</sup>

If this all seems foreign to you, you need to read history more. And when you read more history, you will start realizing what you are missing. You will start longing for more liberties - the liberties that our ancestors had. After reading a few of our American founding fathers you will realize that we have come a long, long way from the freedoms protected in our Constitution and Bill of Rights (which is more properly called the Bill of Restrictions to the Federal Government). And it will perhaps motivate you to pray for our country and to pray for our military men.

Let me give you a couple more quotes to illustrate this last point. James Burgh said in 1774,

“a standing army in times of peace, [is] one of the most hurtful, and most dangerous of abuses.”<sup>9</sup>

If you have been brainwashed by our modern press you are probably skeptical of that statement, but it was a universal viewpoint in early America. Let me repeat that quote from 1774: “a standing army in times of peace, [is] one of the most hurtful, and most dangerous of abuses.” Sam Adams said that a standing army “is always dangerous to the Liberties of the People.” Let me read the full quote, which I think illustrates points VI, VII, and X so well. In a 1776 letter to James Warren, Sam Adams said,

A standing Army, however necessary it may be at some times, is always dangerous to the Liberties of the People. Soldiers are apt to consider themselves as a Body distinct from the rest of the Citizens. They have their Arms always in their hands. Their Rules and their Discipline is severe. They soon become attachd [sic] to their officers and disposd [sic] to yield implicit Obedience to their

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<sup>8</sup> As quoted in Joel McDurmon (2012-10-02T13:41:14+00:00). *The Bible & War in America: A biblical view of an American obsession and steps to recover liberty* (Kindle Locations 1301-1307). Kindle Edition. He himself quoted from Robert A. Nisbet, *The Present Age: Progress and Anarchy in Modern America* (Indianapolis, IN: Liberty Press, 1988), p. 44.

<sup>9</sup> Spalding, Matthew; Edwin Meese; David F. Forte (2005-11-07). *The Heritage Guide to the Constitution* (Kindle Locations 4499-4500). Regnery Publishing, Inc.. Kindle Edition.

Commands. Such a Power should be watchd [sic] with a jealous Eye. I have a good Opinion of the principal officers of our Army. I esteem them as Patriots as well as Soldiers. But if this War continues, as it may for years yet to come, we know not who may succeed them. Men who have been long subject to military Laws and inured to military Customs and Habits, may lose the Spirit and Feeling of Citizens. And even Citizens, having been used to admire the Heroism which the Commanders of their own Army have displayd [sic], and to look up to them as their Saviors may be prevaild [sic] upon to surrender to them those Rights for the protection of which against Invaders they had employd [sic] and paid them. We have seen too much of this Disposition among some of our Countrymen. The Militia is composd [sic] of free Citizens. There is therefore no Danger of their making use of their Power to the destruction of their own Rights, or suffering others to invade them.<sup>10</sup>

And if you are interested in more details of exactly how this relationship between militias and the state and national government works, and what the responsibilities and limits of armed resistance to tyranny look like, you will need to look at the two sermons I preach on the subject in 1 Samuel 23.

## **XI. Give glory to God for victory (Psalm 21)**

The last principle of war that we see illustrated in this passage is that we should be ready to give God the glory for victory – and really, for everything. Armies returned to Jerusalem to give praise to God and to acknowledge God's sovereignty by worshipping at the temple. And Psalm 21 teaches on that so well. David gave glory to God for that crown put on his head, saying, “**You set a crown of pure gold upon his head.**” In fact, ultimately that Psalm points to Jesus who is the King of kings and Lord of lords. Don't ever think that the Gospel of Jesus Christ only purchased peace for individuals. As the hymn, “Joy to the Word” words it, his grace flows “far as the curse is found.” Eventually it is going to be a new heavens and a new earth in which righteousness dwells. The Gospel must not be truncated. It must be applied to all of life.

But anyway, the Psalm shows that this war was not just a war for survival. It was a war to preserve Christian culture, to preserve God's law, and ultimately to fight passionately for God's glory. And so he ends his Psalm by saying, “**Be exalted, O LORD, in Your own strength! We will sing and praise Your power.**”

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<sup>10</sup> <http://www.samuel-adams-heritage.com/documents/samuel-adams-to-james-warren-1776.html>

Ultimately that should be our desire as well. We should praise God's power, not state power. Rather than the rights of America around the world, it should be the crown rights of King Jesus. Amen? Rather than American pride, it should be lifting up the glory of God. Rather than America first, it should be Jesus first. Rather than seeing the Constitution and Treaties as the highest law of the land, we should take our cue from Article VII of the Bill of Rights and from the Declaration of Independence, both of which indicate that God's laws are the highest laws of the land rendering all other contradictory laws null and void. Roe v Wade is null and void not only because judges can't make law, but it is null and void (and should be declared by local magistrates to be null and void) because it violates God's law as the ultimate standard, and violates both the Declaration and the Bill of Rights as secondary standards. Rather than itching to start another war, we should be like David and long for peace and work for peace. But on the other hand, if enemies truly attack us, we should be willing to fight and even to lay down our lives to defend the liberties of our families, and be willing to be as hard on the enemy as God Himself allows us to be in Deuteronomy 20, and make sure they are motivated to never attack us again. That's why God has men as chief executives of a nation and men fighting in the army rather than women. Women are not made by God to be able to fight and to make the military decisions that God wants military leaders to make. It takes a thirst for Biblical justice and vengeance to do what David did in this chapter. Our denomination has taken a strong stand that we shouldn't be having women in combat.

## **Conclusion**

In conclusion I would say, don't ignore what the Bible says about war. It is a critical subject. And I think that this little passage, while not illustrating all of the just war principles, is a beautiful summary of the key ones. May each of us use the information we have gained today to seek to promote liberty in America and to downsize civil government. Amen.

# More Theology of Warfare

## 2 Samuel 12:26-31

By Phillip G. Kayser at DCC on June 9, 2013

### Introduction

- I. Make sure our own country is right with God and that you are trusting God (12:1-25; Psalm 21)
  
- II. Make sure that our own country has truly been in danger (10:1-19; Ps. 21:11) and that the attacks are not the result of our own warmongering (10:1-19; Ps. 21:8-12)
  
- III. Make sure that the leader of the country and the military leaders are loyal citizens (12:26-27)
  
- IV. Make sure to attack the true source of the trouble (12:26; Ps. 21:8-12)
  
- V. Make sure to be strategic and to use the best means of bringing surrender (12:27)
  
- VI. Make sure that this is truly in the interests of the whole nation (12:28-29)
  
- VII. Make sure that it isn't simply the professional soldiers who are armed and ready for battle (12:28)
  
- VIII. Make the country pay reparations (12:30-31)
  - A. Spoil (v. 30)
  - B. Indentured servitude until the debt is paid off (v. 31)
  
- IX. Make sure you press for full victory (12:31b; Ps. 21:8)
  
- X. Don't become a perpetual war machine with a standing army (v. 31c)
  
- XI. Give glory to God for victory (Psalm 21)

### Conclusion