

“God and National Security”
The Bible and Culture - NLPC Summer 2018 - Week 10

- General Biblical principles (hopefully obvious):
 - Governments are allowed to protect their own citizens (Rom. 13, 1 Peter 2:13-14).
 - ▶ Governments are allowed to punish evil doers within their borders.
 - ▶ It seems to follow that governments are allowed to defend with force the people within their borders from outside evil doers.
 - ▶ The nation of Israel was routinely permitted to attack those who first attacked them.
 - Serving in one’s military is permissible for Christians.
 - ▶ There are military figures who come to Christ in the NT and who are never required to leave their posts.
 - ▶ In fact, the first Gentile convert to Christianity was a Roman centurion. (Acts 10)
 - All matters of national security are up to God’s ultimate control:
 - ▶ He raises nations up; he tares them down.
 - ▶ Any battle is ultimately decided by the Lord, not by an army’s tactics or capabilities (1 Sam. 17:47).
 - ▶ In any of our discussions of national security, Christians must avoid the idolatry of putting all their hopes for safety in their government.
 - ▶ On the other hand, God’s sovereignty over all things does not mean a nation shouldn’t plan for the best defense it can muster.
- Trickier questions for believers to answer:
 - How large of a military is truly necessary?
 - ▶ Should a Christian vote for a candidate who would take 50% of their income to fund a massive national defense?
 - ▶ Why? Why not?

- Is a standing military even necessary at all?
 - ▶ Some of our founders opposed a standing national military in favor of a state-based one.
 - ▶ Incidentally, Israel’s military was initially mostly called/volunteer rather than standing.
 - ❖ In fact, the creation of a standing military was considered a negative consequence of having a worldly king:

1 Samuel 8:10–12 - ¹⁰ So Samuel told all the words of the Lord to the people who were asking for a king from him. ¹¹ He said, “These will be the ways of the king who will reign over you: he will take your sons and appoint them to his chariots and to be his horsemen and to run before his chariots. ¹² And he will appoint for himself commanders of thousands and commanders of fifties, and some to plow his ground and to reap his harvest, and to make his implements of war and the equipment of his chariots.
 - ❖ Might there be a key difference between a standing military that’s volunteer vs. one that is forced (drafted)?
- What security methods might be allowed in the name of security?
 - ▶ Total data collection / universal surveillance?
 - ❖ Does the 8th commandment imply a right to some privacy?
 - ❖ Is the home sphere sacred at any level?
 - ▶ “But if you’ve got nothing to hide, it shouldn’t matter, right?”
 - ▶ Does government’s push for growing surveillance indicate its stepping into God’s purview?
- What about torture in the name of national security?
 - ▶ Most Christians since the Reformation would probably have been opposed to torture as part of just war theory.
 - ▶ What if you knew the guy knew of the location of a nuclear weapon that was about to go off?

- What about our interactions with other nations?
 - ▶ Is one nation obligated to right the wrongs in another nation?
 - ▶ What about one government intervening in another nation in order to defend Christians?
 - ▶ What about treaties and alliances?