

Priceless Lessons from Gen W: An Exposition of Numbers

“War In the Mideast and Christian Ethics”

Numbers 21:1–3; 21–35

The Lord’s Day Morning

March 22, 2026

1. Before the Resurrection of Jesus: Holy Wars Are _____.

God, who raises up nations and sets them down as he pleases (Dan. 2:21; 4:35) **created** the “holy nation” of Israel from descendants of Abraham (Ex. 19:6); **promised** this nation a specific land to possess with borders to defend (Gen. 12:1,2; 15:18); **united** “church” and state in a theocracy (Ex. 20–23); **commanded** holy war to possess and then defend the promised land (Nu. 21:3,34); **gives** military orders through his authenticated prophet (Nu. 21:34); **defines** specific mission objectives to 1) purge the promised land of idolatry and injustice by executing God’s sentence (Lev. 18:24–25) and 2) possess the promised land to practice true worship that blesses the world (Ex. 23:27-33); **leads** his people to avoid war through diplomacy to guard mission objectives (Nu. 20:14–21); **authorizes** self-defense against all attacks that compromise the mission (Nu. 21:21–35).

2. After the Resurrection of Jesus: Holy Wars Are _____.

God, who raises up nations and sets them down as he pleases (Mt. 26:3; Acts 4:24–28), **created** a “holy nation” (the church) from Jews *and* Gentiles (1 Peter 2:9); **scattered** this nation in exile with no land to possess or borders to defend (Acts 1:8); **separates** church and state so Christians can live under every form of government (Acts 8:1); **condemns** holy wars since there is no Christian land to possess or border to defend (Mt. 26:52; Jn. 18:36; Ro. 13:1-7); **ceases** to give military orders through authenticated prophets (Mt. 7:15); **defines** a specific mission objective: make disciples of Jesus through preaching and teaching the Word (Mt. 28:18–20); **directs** the church how to practice love of neighbor by engaging in a just war to defend against an aggressor (Ro. 13:1–7; Jas. 2:8; 2 Tim. 2:3; Acts 10:1-2).

3. Until the Return of Jesus: Just Wars Are _____.

1. Just cause. Defensive in nature to stop a violent aggressor. Starting wars is unjust.
2. Just intention: Restore a just peace for friend and foe, not expansion of territory or treasure.
3. Last resort: All diplomacy has been tried and failed.
4. Reasonable Prospect: Don’t engage or continue wars without reasonable hope of success.
5. Formal Declaration. War led by the highest legitimate authority, not private citizens.
6. Proportionate Means: The force is limited in proportion to the offense. No unnecessary suffering.
7. Discrimination: No attacks on non-combatants (civilians and soldiers taken out of combat).