

Quotes for the Session on the Law of Nations

Acts 17:26 – *And He has made from one blood every nation of men to dwell on all the face of the earth, and has determined their preappointed times and the boundaries of their dwellings, so that they should seek the Lord...*

Revelation 22:2 - *In the middle of its street, and on either side of the river, was the tree of life, which bore twelve fruits, each tree yielding its fruit every month. The leaves of the tree were for the healing of the nations.*

Psalms 33:12 – *Blessed is the nation whose God is the Lord, the people He has chosen as His own inheritance.*

Proverbs 29:2 – *When the righteous are in authority, the people rejoice. But when a wicked man rules, the people groan.*

Psalms 22:27-28 – *All the ends of the world shall remember and turn to the Lord, and all the families of the nations shall worship before you. For the kingdom is the Lord's, and He rules over the nations.*

Matthew 7:12; 22:39 – *Therefore, whatever you want men to do to you, do also to them, for this is the Law and the Prophets... You shall love your neighbor as yourself.*

Romans 2:14-15; 3:10 – *when Gentiles, who do not have the law, by nature do the things in the law... show the work of the law written in their hearts, their conscience also bearing witness... As it is written: there is none righteous, no, not one (Psalm 14:1-3)*

William Blackstone (Commentaries on the Laws of England, 1765) – *This will of his Maker is called the law of nature...The doctrines thus delivered we call the revealed or divine law, and they are to be found only in the Holy Scriptures... Upon these two foundations, the law of nature and the law of revelation, depend all human laws; that is to say no human laws should be suffered to contradict these.*

Exodus 19:6 - *...you shall be to Me a kingdom of priests and a holy nation.*

1st Peter 2:9,12 - *you are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, a holy nation... that when they speak against you as evildoers, they may, by your good works which they observe, glorify God in the day of visitation.*

2nd Corinthians 5:20 – *Now then, we are ambassadors for Christ, as through God were pleading through us; we implore you on Christ's behalf, be reconciled to God.*

Hugo Grotius quotes on the law of nations...

He knows not how to rule a kingdom, that cannot manage a Province; nor can he wield a Province, that cannot order a City; nor he order a City, that knows not how to regulate a Village; nor he a Village, that cannot guide a Family; nor can that man Govern well a Family that knows not how to Govern himself; neither can any Govern himself unless his reason be Lord, Will and Appetite her Vassals; nor can Reason rule unless herself be ruled by God, and wholly be obedient to Him.

(as quoted in Teaching and Learning: The Principle Approach, FACE, page 69)

If all nations would submit to the law of Christ, and live up to it, there would be no war... – Truth of the Christian Religion, 1639

But whereas many that require Justice in private citizens, make no account of it in a whole Nation or its Ruler...

But so far must we be from admitting the Conceit of some, that the Obligation of all Right ceases in War; that on the contrary, no War out to be so much as undertaken but for the obtaining of Right; nor when undertaken, ought it to be carried o beyond the Bounds of Justice and Fidelity.

It is evident, that no war is considered to be lawful, regular and formal except that which is began and carried on by the sovereign power of each country.

Considering the rights of non-combatants (women, children, innocent civilians), Grotius wrote; ...it had long being a maxim, universally received among the powers of Christendom, that prisoners of war cannot be slaves...

Emerich de Vattel... - The Law of Nations or Principles of the Law of Nations - 1758

We must then apply to nations the rules of the law of nature, I order to discover what are their obligations, and what are their laws; consequently the law of nations is originally no more than the law of nature applied to nations. But as the application of a rule cannot be just and reasonable, if it be not made in a manner suitable to the subject; we are not to believe that the law of nations is precisely, and in every case, the same as the law of nature, the subjects of the only excepted...

The law of nature gives to no person whatever the least kind of right to sell what belongs to him to another who does not want to buy it; nor has any nation that of selling its commodities or merchandise to a people who are unwilling to have them; every man and every nation being perfectly at liberty to buy a thing that is to be sold, or not to buy it, and to buy it of one rather than of another... a right to prohibit the entrance of foreign merchandise, and the people who are interested in this prohibition have no right to complain of it.

James Wilson – Of the Law of Nations; Lectures on Law – 1790-1791

The law of nations is the law of sovereigns. In free states, such as ours, the sovereign or supreme power resides in the people... the law of nations is the law of the people. Let us again beware of being misled by an ambiguity, sometimes, such is the structure of language, unavoidable. When I say that, in free states, the law of nations is the law of the people; I mean not that it is a law made by the people, or by virtue of their delegated authority; as, in free states, all municipal laws are. But when I say that, in free states, the law of nations is the law of the people; I mean that, as the law of nature, in other words, as the will of nature's God, it is indispensably binding upon the people, in whom the sovereign power resides; and who are, consequently, under the most sacred obligations to exercise that power, or to delegate it to such as will exercise it, in a manner agreeable to those rules and maxims, which the law of nature prescribes to every state, for the happiness of each, and for the happiness of all.

Ambrose (339-397) – *Thus holy Moses, feared not to undertake terrible wars for his people's sake, nor was he afraid of the arms of the mightiest kings, nor yet was he frightened at the savagery of barbarian nations. He put to one side the thought of his own safety so as to give freedom to the people.*