

# RATIO CHRISTI

Welcome to Ratio Christi



at Texas A&M

# Welcome!

Ratio Christi, meaning “reason for Christ” in Latin, serves to defend the Christian faith in honest dialogue with both our skeptical & believing friends.

**Weekly Meetings: Thursday @ 7:30pm**

**in person + via ZOOM**

RC-TAMU.org



RATIO CHRISTI

# Secular Students Alliance

The Secular Student Alliance seeks to provide a support network for the atheists, agnostics, and otherwise secular peoples of Texas A&M University.

SSA brings together people from a wide range of religious and ideological backgrounds in order to foster deeper levels of understanding through discussion and dialogue.

**Weekly Meetings: Wednesdays @ 8:30pm, ZOOM**

[facebook.com/groups/TAMUSecularStudentAlliance](https://facebook.com/groups/TAMUSecularStudentAlliance)



# Fall 2020: Confronting Old Testament Controversy

## How well do you know your Old Testament?

This fall Ratio Christi at Texas A&M is *Confronting Old Testament Controversy*.

Despite being the majority of the Bible, the Old Testament remains a difficult and sometime perplexing group of writings. With ancient laws, long histories, and confusing prophecies, we are often left wondering... ***what do we do with the Old Testament?*** Each week we will look at the toughest questions surrounding the Hebrew Bible:

- Is the God of the Old Testament evil?
- Did the Exodus really happen? If so, when?
- Were the Israelites polytheists?
- Did Moses write the Torah?

Join us each **Thursday at 7:30pm** to learn a little bit more about the old testament.

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# Recap of the semester so far

## 1. Week 1: Text of the Tanakh

- The text of the Hebrew Bible (Tanakh) consists primarily of the Greek LXX and Hebrew MT. Inspiration is a process, not an event.

## 2. Week 2: Interpreting Genesis 1-11

- Genre widely considered Proto-History: historical events and personages are cloaked in the mythological language of exalted prose.

## 3. Week 3: Integrating Genesis with science

- Only the Literal Calendar Day view and "Fixity of the Species" views are in any serious conflict with ancient universe and common ancestry. Darwinism is dead: Evolution is way more than random mutation + natural selection

## 4. Week 4: Historical Adam & Eve

- There is a range of views; genetic bottleneck at 500 kya, genealogical bottleneck at 10 kya. Secondary theology more influential than raw data.

# The Question of Israelite Origins

Did the Israelites Exit Egypt?

Did the Israelites Conquer Canaan?

Did God Command Genocide?

1. The exodus from Egypt is a central historical touchpoint in the theology of ancient Israel.
2. There is no direct evidence of the exodus. While unnerving, we must resist the urge to resort to sensationalistic apologetics.
3. There is strong *a priori* reason to take the broad outline at face value (Kuzari principle).
4. What little of the broad outlines of the story that can be corroborated by the archaeological data fits nicely in the overall scheme.
5. The Egyptian influence on the text is inexorable - "There's little evidence of Israel in Egypt, but much evidence of Egypt in Israel".



6. The Bible gives a variegated portrait of the origins of Israel; responsible interpreters should not minimize "dissenting voices".
7. The archaeological data are mixed at best, but show elements concomitant with the various factors at play in the biblical text.
8. Various theories have been suggested, none of which are comprehensive.
9. In sum, an exodus from Egypt followed by military skirmishes related by Ancient Conquest Accounts.
10. Additional Canaanite factions aligned with Israel (and vice versa) to produce a mixed population.

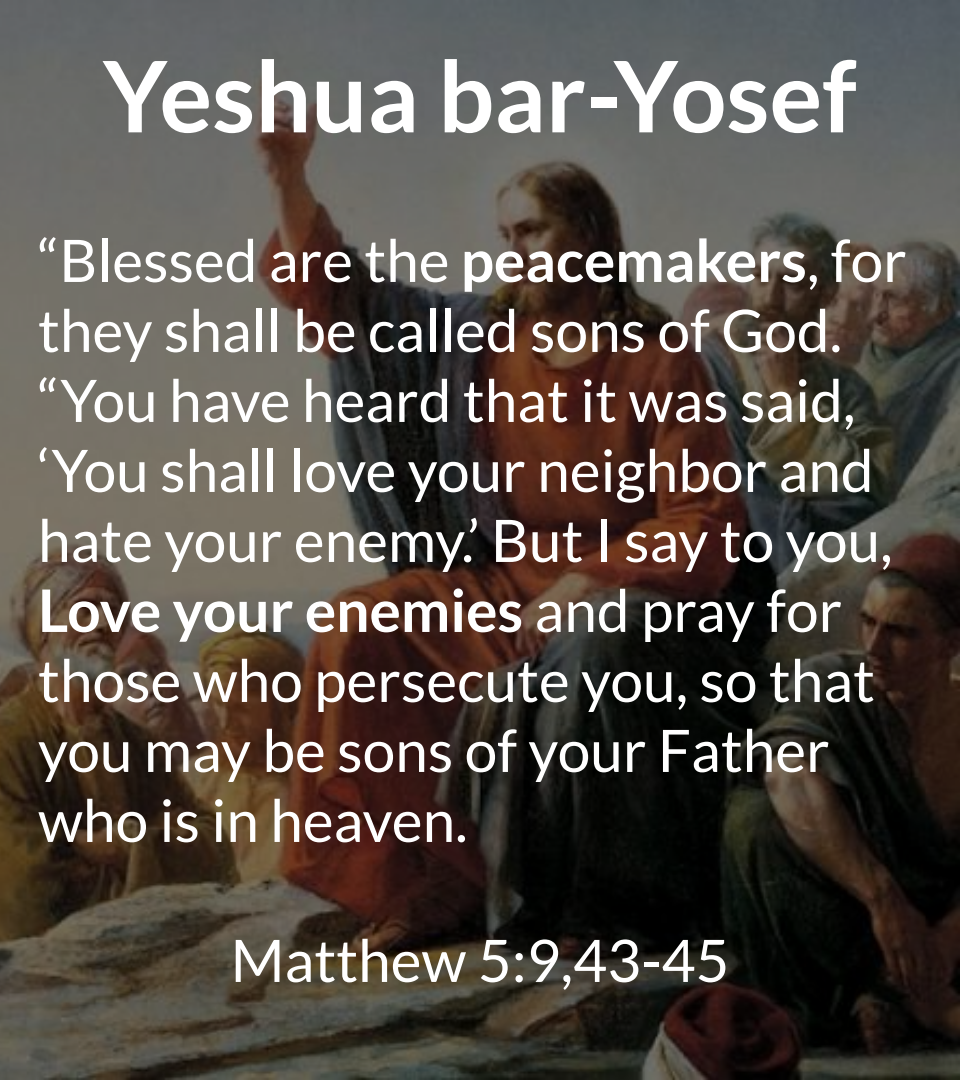
# The Question of Israelite Origins

Did the Israelites Exit Egypt?

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**Did God Command Genocide?**

# Yeshua bar-Yosef



“Blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be called sons of God. “You have heard that it was said, ‘You shall love your neighbor and hate your enemy.’ But I say to you, **Love your enemies** and pray for those who persecute you, so that you may be sons of your Father who is in heaven.

Matthew 5:9,43-45

# Yeshua bar-Nun



'So Joshua struck the whole land, the hill country and the Negeb and the lowland and the slopes, and all their kings. **He left none remaining, but devoted to destruction all that breathed, just as the Lord God of Israel commanded.** '

Joshua 10:40

- (1) God exists and is morally perfect.
- (2) So God would not command one nation to exterminate the people of another unless He had a morally sufficient reason for doing so.
- (3) According to various OT texts, God sometimes commanded the Israelites to exterminate the people of other nations.
- (4) It is highly unlikely that God had a morally sufficient reason for issuing these alleged commands.
- (5) So it is highly unlikely that everything every book of the OT says about God is true.

- (1) God is the most perfect being there could be.
- (2) Yahweh is God.
- (3) Yahweh ordered people to commit genocide.
- (4) Genocide is always a moral atrocity.
- (5) A perfect being would not order people to commit a moral atrocity.
- (6) Therefore, a perfect being would not order people to commit genocide. (4, 5)
- (7) Therefore, Yahweh did not order people to commit genocide. (1, 2, 6)

**Crucial Moral Principle (CMP):** It is morally wrong to deliberately and mercilessly slaughter men, women, and children who are innocent of any serious wrongdoing.

1. Any act that God commands us to perform is morally permissible.
2. God is the author of the Bible.
3. It is morally impermissible for anyone to commit acts that violate the CMP.
4. The divine author of the Bible uses the text to perform the speech act of commanding us to perform acts that violate the CMP.

1. Divine violence is more than just the conquest account.
  - a. Additional unnerving passages can be found outside of Deut-Joshua-Judges and the circumstances/context may not be the same.
2. All of scripture is divinely inspired and inerrant\*. (More on this next slide)
3. Jesus is the purest and clearest revelation of God.
  - a. 'Long ago, at many times and in many ways, God spoke to our fathers by the prophets, but in these last days he has spoken to us by his Son, whom he appointed the heir of all things, through whom also he created the world. He is the radiance of the glory of God and the exact imprint of his nature, and he upholds the universe by the word of his power. - Hebrews 1:1-4
4. It's okay to not know and to not like these passages\*.

# What does it mean that the Bible is inspired?

“**Inspiration:** The process by which God worked through the human authors of the Bible... and refers to God as the ultimate source of the Scriptures.”

“**Organic inspiration:** The process by which God guided the human authors of Scripture, working in and through their particular styles and life experiences, so that what they produced was exactly what He wanted them to produce. **The text is truly the work of the human authors**—God did not typically dictate to them as to a stenographer—and yet the Lord stands behind it as the ultimate source.”



R.C. Sproul

**-Ligonier Ministries**

**NOTE:** Islamic inspiration is based on a “dictation” model, Christianity has historically not taken this view



# Reminder: Inerrancy

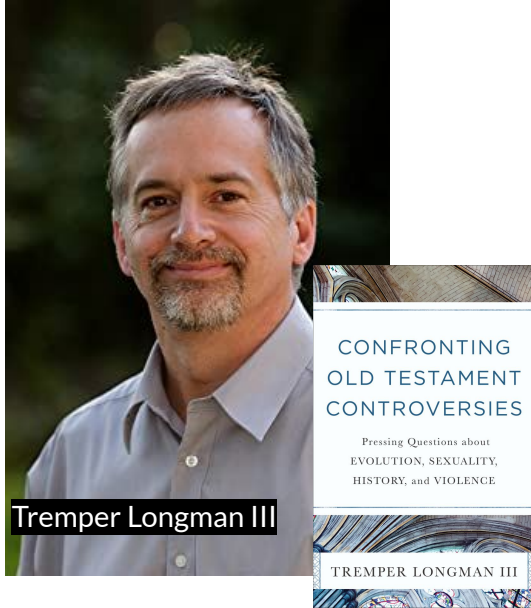
## Inerrancy:

- Being wholly and verbally God-given, **Scripture is without error or fault in all its teaching**, no less in what it states about God's acts in creation, about the events of world history, and about its own literary origins under God, than in its witness to God's saving grace in individual lives.
- We affirm that **God in His Work of inspiration utilized the distinctive personalities and literary styles of the writers** whom He had chosen and prepared.
- We deny that Biblical infallibility and inerrancy are limited to spiritual, religious, or redemptive themes, exclusive of assertions in the fields of history and science. We further deny that scientific hypotheses about earth history may properly be used to overturn the teaching of Scripture on creation and the flood.

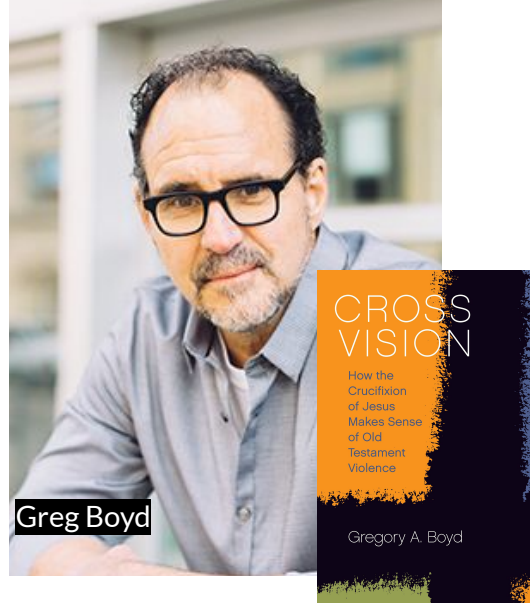
Job is the paradigm example of a *righteous* man upon whom great calamity is visited, yet never understands why.



# Sources and Recommendations



Tremper Longman III  
"Confronting Old Testament Controversies" (2019), Baker



Greg A. Boyd  
"Cross Vision" (2017), Fortress



Paul Copan "Did God really command genocide?: Coming to terms with the justice of God". (2014), Baker Books.

# Recent Research on Divine Violence in the OT

Seibert, E. A. (2016). Recent Research on Divine Violence in the Old Testament (with Special Attention to Christian Theological Perspectives). *Currents in Biblical Research*, 15(1), 8-40.

Many readers of the Bible are troubled by passages in the Hebrew Bible/Old Testament that portray God behaving violently and commanding others to do likewise. This article offers a survey of various ways contemporary scholars—particularly Christian scholars—have attempted to respond to the moral and theological challenges these troubling texts inevitably raise for modern readers. The contributions considered here are mostly from the past twenty years. Seven different approaches are examined, with special attention given to attempts to defend or critique God’s violent behavior. Brief evaluation of the relative merits of these approaches is offered along the way. A range of theological perspectives is included, and scholars from a number of different academic disciplines are represented. **The article’s conviction is that regardless of how these texts are interpreted, readers should not use them to harm others or to justify future acts of violence.**



Eric Seibert, Messiah College

# Seibert's Survey of 7 (14) Views

1. Defending God's Violent Behaviour
  - 1.1. The Just Cause Approach
  - 1.2. The Greater Good Approach
  - 1.3. Progressive Revelation
  - 1.4. It's Not as Bad as It Seems
  - 1.5. Trusting God While Acknowledging Unanswered Questions
2. Balancing God's Violent Behaviour with God's Other Behaviour
3. Critiquing God's Violent Behaviour
  - 3.1. Reader-Response Approach
  - 3.2. Christocentric Approach
  - 3.3. Feminist Approach
4. Accepting and Rejecting God's Violent Behaviour
5. Reinterpreting God's Violent Behaviour Symbolically
6. Protesting God's Violent Behaviour
7. Celebrating God's Violent Behaviour

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## **It's Not As Bad As It Seems (NAB)**

The conquest account is not nearly as unnerving as a face value reading would suggest.

## **God Accommodates Revelation**

God in choosing to reveal himself to an ancient people had to accommodate to where they were.



## **God Had Good Reasons**

The commands were well justified given God's overall plan and the moral depravity of the Canaanites.

## **Jesus Changes Everything**

The Incarnation and resurrection of God turns the entire OT on its head, including the conquest accounts.

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***What Actually Happened* is Not As Bad  
As It Seems.**

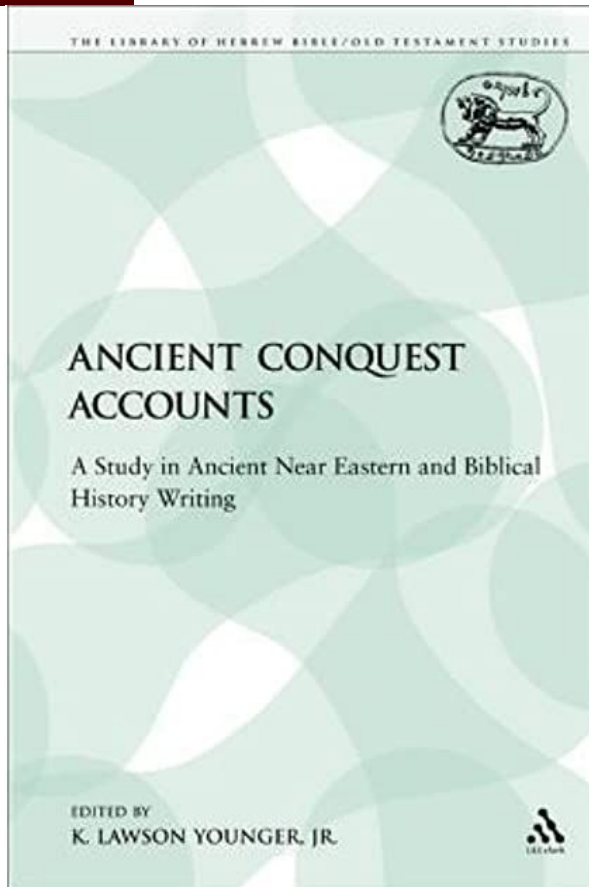
# What does the Bible actually say? - Joshua's Account

"So Joshua defeated the whole land, the hill country and the Negeb and the lowland and the slopes, and all their kings; **he left no one remaining, but utterly destroyed all that breathed, as the LORD God of Israel commanded...** **Joshua took all these kings and their land at one time,** because the LORD God of Israel fought for Israel - Jos 10:40-42 (NRSV)

"When Joshua and the Israelites had finished inflicting a very great slaughter on them, **until they were wiped out,** and when **the survivors** had entered into the fortified towns, all the people returned safe to Joshua in the camp at Makkedah; no one dared to speak against any of the Israelites." - Josh 10:20-21 (NRSV)

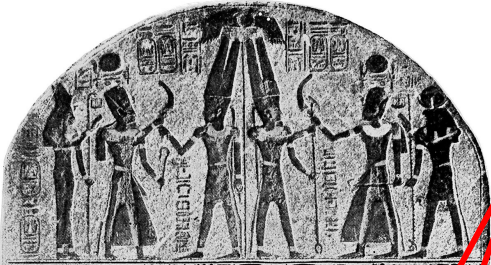
"He took **all their kings, struck them down, and put them to death.** **Joshua made war a long time** with all those kings. There was not a town that made peace with the Israelites, except the Hivites, the inhabitants of Gibeon; all were taken in battle. For it was the Lord's doing to harden their hearts so that they would come against Israel in battle, **in order that they might be utterly destroyed,** and might receive no mercy, but be exterminated, just as the Lord had commanded Moses. " - Josh 11:17-20 (NRSV)

"Now Joshua was old and advanced in years; and the LORD said to him, "You are old and advanced in years, **and very much of the land still remains to be possessed.**" - Josh 13:1 (NRSV)



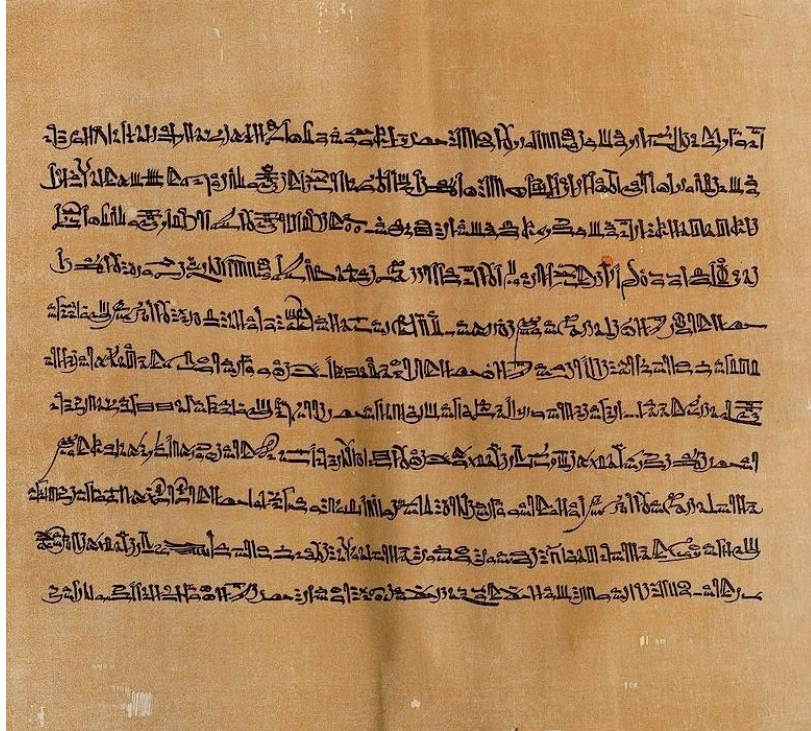
1. Repetitive language
2. Language of annihilation
3. Hyperbole
4. Common narrative structure
5. Unique focus on the human military leader

# Annihilation Language - Merneptah Stele (1208 BC)



The princes are prostrate, saying: "Mercy!"  
 Not one raises his head among the Nine Bows.  
 Desolation is for Tehenu; Hatti is pacified;  
 Plundered is the Canaan with every evil;  
 Carried off is Ashkelon; seized upon is Gezer;  
 Yanoam is made as that which does not exist;  
Israel is laid waste, his seed is not;  
 All lands together, they are pacified;  
 Everyone who was restless, he has been bound by the King of  
 Upper and Lower Egypt

# Annihilation Language - Papyrus Harris I



I slew the Denyen in their islands, while the Tjeker and the Philistines were made ashes. The Sherden and the Weshesh of the Sea were made nonexistent, captured all together and brought in captivity to Egypt like the sands of the shore. I settled them in strongholds, bound in my name. Their military classes were as numerous as hundred-thousands. I assigned portions for them all with clothing and provisions from the treasuries and granaries every year.

Papyrus Harris I (Wikimedia)

*account from Ramesses III ca. 1150 BC*

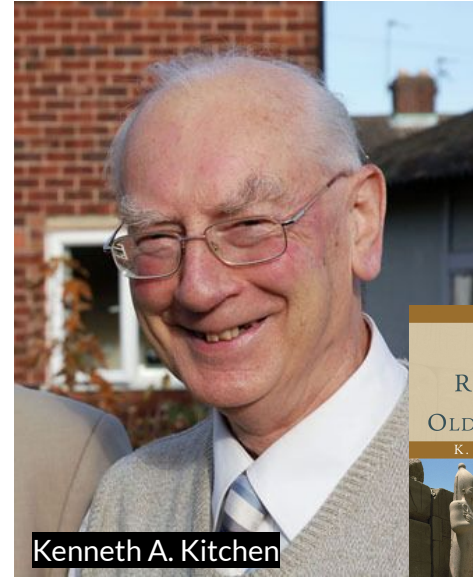
# What does the Bible actually say? - Joshua's Account

"Its narratives describe an entry (from over Jordan), **full destruction of two minor centers (Jericho, Ai; burned)**, then defeat of local kings and raids through south Canaan. Towns are attacked, taken, and damaged, kings and subjects killed and then left behind, not held on to.

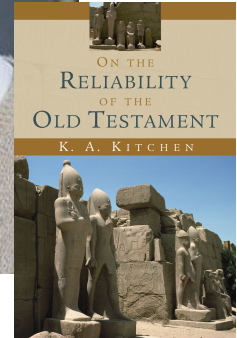
The same in north Canaan: strategic **Hazor is fully destroyed (burned), but no others**. The rest are treated like the southern towns, and again left, not held. Israel stayed based in Gilgal, then took over an inland strip from there up to Shechem and Tirzah. **These preliminary successes were celebrated with war rhetoric appropriate to the time, which should not be twisted to mean what it does not.**" (Kitchen, 2003)

**Summary:** Of all 40+ sites, only **three** are explicitly said to have been burned: Jericho, Hazor, and 'Ai.

Albright's overzealous interpretation demanded what the archaeological record simply could not deliver. 34



Kenneth A. Kitchen



## OBJECTION: Failed genocide is attempted genocide

The Israelites committed genocide on the indigenous Canaanites at God's command. Therefore, either (a) the OT is erroneous or (b) God doesn't exist.

Response: The indigenous Canaanites were not annihilated but small-scale military raids were described in those terms according to the genre convention.

The Israelites certainly *didn't* commit genocide (the archaeological and biblical data say as much). But they were *supposed* to because God *commanded* genocide.

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**What Was *Supposed to Happen* is Not  
As Bad As It Seems.**



# What does the Bible say? - Deuteronomy

"When the Lord your God brings you into the land that you are entering to take possession of it, and clears away many nations before you, the...seven nations more numerous and mightier than you, and when the Lord your God gives them over to you, and you defeat them, **then you must devote them to complete destruction**. You shall make no covenant with them and **show no mercy to them**. **You shall not intermarry with them**, giving your daughters to their sons or taking their daughters for your sons ' - Deuteronomy 7:1-3

'In the cities of these peoples that the Lord your God is giving you for an inheritance, **you shall save alive nothing that breathes, but you shall devote them to complete destruction**, the Hittites [etc]... as the Lord your God has commanded, **that they may not teach you to do according to all their abominable practices that they have done for their gods, and so you sin against the Lord your God.** ' - Deuteronomy 20:16-18

# What is(n't) *herem*?

You must **devote them to complete destruction** (*herem*). You shall make no covenant with them and **show no mercy to them**. **You shall not intermarry with them** - Deut. 7:2ff.

"When Joshua and the Israelites had finished inflicting a very great slaughter on them, **until they were wiped out**, and when **the survivors** had entered into the fortified towns, all the people returned safe to Joshua in the camp at Makkedah; no one dared to speak against any of the Israelites." - Josh 10:20-21 (NRSV)

"So Joshua defeated the whole land, the hill country and the Negeb and the lowland and the slopes, and all their kings; **he left no one remaining, but utterly destroyed all that breathed**, **as the LORD God of Israel commanded** - Josh 10:40-42 (NRSV)

1. God commanded Joshua to conduct *herem* warfare.
2. Joshua succeeded at fulfilling the *herem* command.
3. Joshua did not complete an ethnic annihilation of the indigenous Canaanites (i.e. genocide).
4. Therefore, God did not command genocide.

# How Did the Israelites Really Fail?

Manasseh did not drive out the inhabitants of Beth-shean and its villages... When Israel grew strong, they put the Canaanites to forced labor, but did not in fact drive them out.

And Ephraim did not drive out the Canaanites who lived in Gezer...

Zebulun did not drive out the inhabitants of Kitron...

Asher did not drive out the inhabitants of Acco, or the inhabitants of Sidon, or of Ahlab, or of Achzib, or of Helbah, or of Aphik, or of Rehob...

Naphtali did not drive out the inhabitants of Beth-shemesh, or the inhabitants of Beth-anath...

- Judges 1

I will send my terror ahead of you and throw into confusion every nation you encounter. I will make all your enemies turn their backs and run. I will send the hornet ahead of you to drive the Hivites, Canaanites and Hittites out of your way. But I will not drive them out in a single year, because the land would become desolate and the wild animals too numerous for you. **Little by little I will drive them out before you, until you have increased enough to take possession of the land.** I will establish your borders from the Red Sea to the Mediterranean Sea, and from the desert to the Euphrates River. **I will give into your hands the people who live in the land, and you will drive them out before you.** Exodus 23:27–31

"The LORD your **God will clear away these nations before you little by little**; you will not be able to make a quick end of them, otherwise the wild animals would become too numerous for you." – Dt 7:22 (NRSV)



African spurred tortoise (Wikimedia)

Two categories of words: **dispossession (33 instances)** versus **destruction (11 instances)**.

- **Dispossession** words would indicate that the population “ran away”—migrated out of the Land prior to any encounter with the Israelites
- **Destruction** words would indicate the consequences for those who stayed behind.
- Deut. 12:29ff. “The LORD your God will cut off before you the nations you are about to invade and dispossess. But when you have driven them out and settled in their land, and after they have been destroyed before you, be careful not to be ensnared by inquiring about their gods, saying, “How do these nations serve their gods?” We will do the same.”

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***What Could Have Happened is Not As  
Bad As It Seems.***

# What is *herem*?

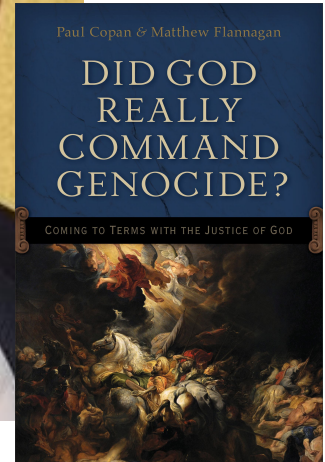
"The *hērem* was not designed by God to eliminate the Canaanite culture per se but to eliminate the Canaanite religious influence. While it may be readily recognized that it is difficult in many instances to separate the two, there is nonetheless a distinction. The Israelite *hērem* commandments had close links to the issues of idolatry and the breaking of the second commandment (Exod. 22:20 ...; Deut. 7:26; 13:16–18 ...). That this is the case in [the first introduction] of Judges (1:1–2:5) is reinforced by Yahweh's confrontation of the nation in 2:1–5, where it is their failure on the religious front that is of primary concern.

In other words, the *hērem* was not concerned with the eradication of Canaanite clothing fashions, pottery styles, music, diet, and other types of particular cultural preferences. But it was deeply concerned with the eradication of the Canaanite religion: its gods/idols, altars, rituals, divinatory practices, uses of magic, and so on..." - K. Lawson Younger

# Loyalty to YHWH Provides Salvation

"So the Canaanites are not in general portrayed as innocent. They are trespassing on land belonging to Israel and have engaged in practices such as human sacrifice for centuries without repentance. Their numerical and cultural dominance meant Israel could not live in the land alongside them without being absorbed into a culture engaging in abhorrent practices; **yet the text suggests that Canaanites who turned from these practices could be spared.**"

Copan, P., & Flannagan, M. (2014). Did God really command genocide?: Coming to terms with the justice of God. Baker Books. pg. 51





- Rahab
  - By faith the prostitute Rahab, because she welcomed the spies, was not killed with those who were disobedient. - Heb 11:31 (ESV)
- Caleb the Kenizzite
  - “Because my servant Caleb has a different spirit and follows me wholeheartedly, I will bring him into the land he went to, and his descendants will inherit it” (Num. 14:24)
- City of Shechem (?)
  - “All Israel with their elders and officers and their judges were standing on both sides of the ark . . . the stranger [ger] as well as the native” (v. 33 NASB). At Shechem, those who heard the Law being read included not only “the assembly of Israel” but also “the strangers who were living among them” (vv. 33, 35).
- Shamgar ben Anat
- Uriah the Hittite

# Summary: It's Not As Bad As It Seems

- The *herem* declaration is about eradicating Canaanite identity from the land, not destroying the persons entirely.
  - Canaanite isn't an ethnic term
  - Cities outside of the land are not to be destroyed
- There is some suggestion of non-military action to aid in this
  - "I will drive them out before you"
  - "The land vomited them out"
- Because *herem* is focused on religious practice, conversion to YHWH loyalty provided salvation
- So, no, *herem* warfare is not "genocide". **But, why did God command it?**

## **It's Not As Bad As It Seems**

The conquest account is not nearly as unnerving as a face value reading would suggest.

## **God Accommodates Revelation**

God in choosing to reveal himself to an ancient people had to accommodate to where they were.



## **God Had Good Reasons**

The commands were well justified given God's overall plan and the moral depravity of the Canaanites.

## **Jesus Changes Everything**

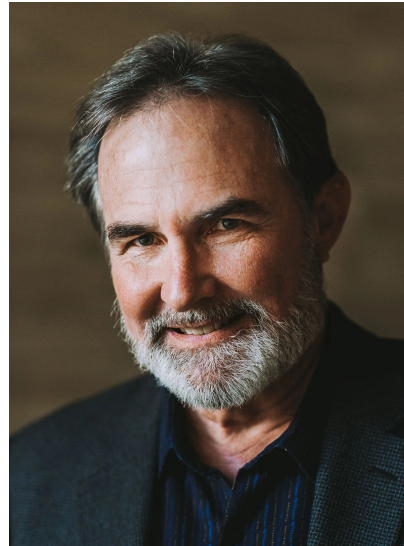
The Incarnation and resurrection of God turns the entire OT on its head, including the conquest accounts.

# God Had Good Reasons - Righteous Judgement

Not because of your righteousness or the uprightness of your heart are you going in to possess their land, but because of the wickedness of these nations the Lord your God is driving them out from before you, and that he may confirm the word that the Lord swore to your fathers, to Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob. - Deut. 9:5 (ESV)

## Core Sins of the Canaanite peoples

- Idolatry
- Child Sacrifice
- Sexual Deviancy
  - Incest
  - Adultery
  - Bestiality



Skeptics challenge God's fairness for ordering Israel to destroy the Canaanites, but a close look at the horror of Canaanite sinfulness, the corruptive and seductive power of their sin as seen in the Canaanization of Israel, and God's subsequently instituting Israel's own destruction because of Israel's committing Canaanite sin reveals that God was just in His ordering the Canaanite destruction. But Western culture's embrace of "Canaanite sin" inoculates it against the seriousness of that sin and so renders it incapable of responding to Canaanite sin with the appropriate moral outrage.

- Clay Jones

As the sun was going down, a deep sleep fell on Abram. And behold, dreadful and great darkness fell upon him. Then the Lord said to Abram, “Know for certain that your offspring will be sojourners in a land that is not theirs and will be servants there, and they will be afflicted for four hundred years. But I will bring judgment on the nation that they serve, and afterward they shall come out with great possessions. **As for you, you shall go to your fathers in peace; you shall be buried in a good old age. And they shall come back here in the fourth generation, for the iniquity of the Amorites is not yet complete.**” - Genesis 15:12ff. (ESV)

Do not make yourselves unclean by any of these things, for by all these the nations I am driving out before you have become unclean, and **the land became unclean, so that I punished its iniquity, and the land vomited out its inhabitants.** But you shall keep my statutes and my rules and do none of these abominations, either the native or the stranger who sojourns among you (for the people of the land, who were before you, did all of these abominations, so that the land became unclean), lest the land vomit you out when you make it unclean, as it vomited out the nation that was before you - Leviticus 18:24-28 (ESV)

**Summary:** The Canaanites had defiled the land such that their judgment was to be cast out and those that remained were to be driven out. The Israelites were likewise subjected to that same punishment for the same crimes (e.g. exile, loss of 10 tribes).

# Helpful Parallel: Denazification

## Canaanite *herem*

Individual Canaanites were **killed** in the context of capital punishment and military engagement

Canaanites were physically **driven** from the land

Canaanite iconography and artefacts were destroyed

Canaanites **converted** (e.g. Rahab)



Decapitated basalt statue found in the final destruction layer of Late Bronze Age Hazor. Ben-Tor, A. (2006). The sad fate of statues and the mutilated statues of Hazor. *Confronting the past: archaeological and historical essays on ancient Israel in honor of William G. Dever*, 3-16.

## Denazification following WWII

Individual Nazis were **killed** in the context of capital punishment (e.g. Nuremberg) and military engagement

Nazis **driven** from Germany to friendlier lands (e.g. Argentina)

Nazi statues, memorials, flags, etc burned and swastikas banned

Nazis **converted** (e.g. Wernher von Braun)



- Minimizing the bad parts can lead to stretching the text far past hermeneutic plausibility.
- Trying to justify the conquest to our standards reinforces the (wrong) idea that the OT is a moral handbook with 21st century ideals.
- Overstating the "everyone is a sinner" justification can unintentionally justify any violent action.





# Summary Thus Far...

- The *herem* declaration is about removing/driving the *Canaanites* out of the land, not destroying them entirely.
- There is some suggestion of non-military action to aid in this
- So, no, *herem* warfare is not "genocide". The inhabitants were dreadfully evil and in an act of judgement, God revoked their privilege to the land (Acts 17) to fulfil his promise to Abraham.
- **But, why are these depictions so violent and celebrated as such?**

## **It's Not As Bad As It Seems**

The conquest account is not nearly as unnerving as a face value reading would suggest.

## **God Accommodates Revelation**

God in choosing to reveal himself to an ancient people had to accommodate to where they were.



## **God Had Good Reasons**

The commands were well justified given God's overall plan and the moral depravity of the Canaanites.

## **Jesus Changes Everything**

The Incarnation and resurrection of God turns the entire OT on its head, including the conquest accounts.

# Are There False Depictions of God in the Bible?

- God, an incorporeal spirit, is depicted with a corporeal body "walking about in the cool of the day" (Gen 2-3)
- God, who is all-knowing, is depicted as if he does not know if Abraham will trust him (Gen 22).
- God, who some consider to be outside of time, is depicted as being in time (e.g. changing his mind, cf. Jer 18:8).
- Many classical theists affirm the biblical depictions of God are largely analogical, especially insofar as they run contrary to the classical doctrines of God (e.g. impassibility, immutability, simplicity).
- We debate which passages point to the *actual* God and which are the *textual* God (recall truth *simpliciter* vs truth-in-a-story).

"The people of Israel found themselves in a culture in the ancient Near East that accepted holy war as the way to deal with national enemies. . . . God did not tell the people of early Israel to stop going to war any more than God told them to stop speaking Hebrew." (1987: 70)

Just as God *is depicted* as temporal/passible/mutable/etc to be understood by such creatures, God *is depicted* as violent to a violent-minded ancient people.

Thus, the limited military skirmishes are drummed up into massive conquests and credited to God for his glory.

# Summary Thus Far...

- The *herem* declaration is about removing/driving the *Canaanites* out of the land, not destroying them entirely.
- There is some suggestion of non-military action to aid in this
- So, no, *herem* warfare is not "genocide". The inhabitants were dreadfully evil and in an act of judgement, God revoked their privilege to the land (Acts 17) to fulfil his promise to Abraham.
- Just as God *is depicted* as temporal/passible/mutable/etc to be understood by such creatures, God *is depicted* as violent to a violent-minded ancient people.
- **But, can we know how God really is?**

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## **God Had Good Reasons**

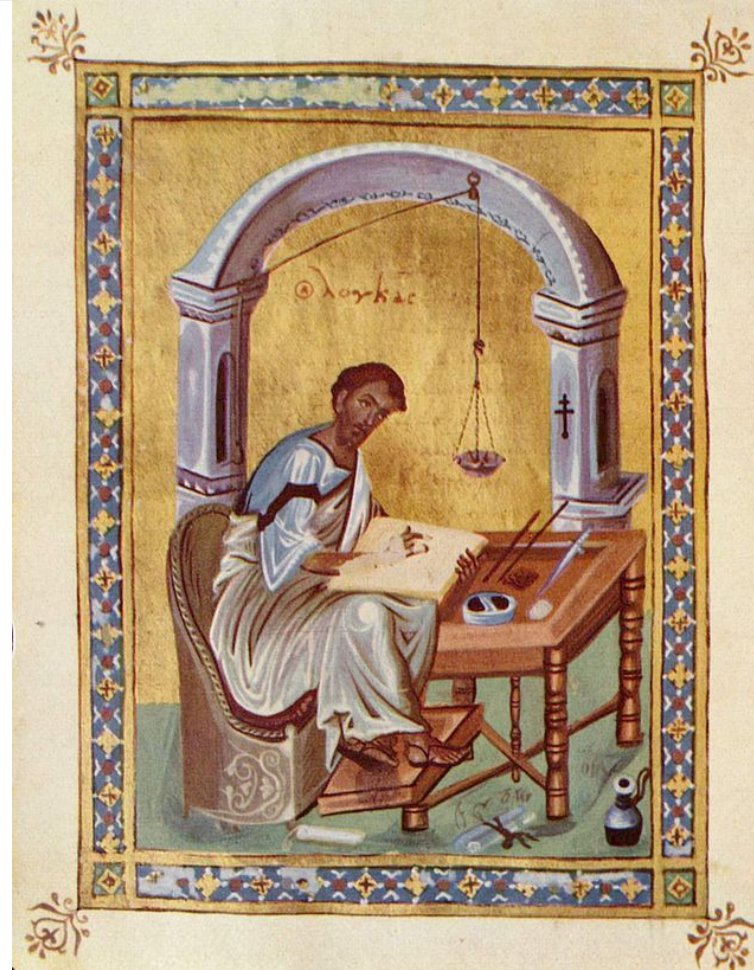
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# The Specter of Marcion

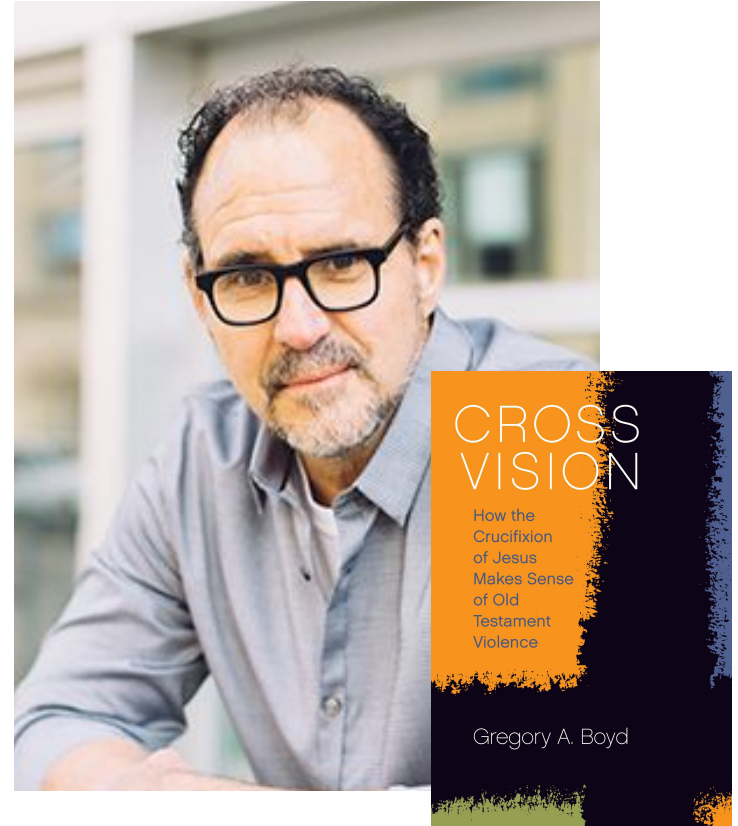
- Marcion of Sinope (ca. 100 AD) was so troubled by the differences between the God of Jesus and the God of Moses that he split the two in twain.
- The god of the OT was a creator demiurge whereas the God of Jesus is the true God.
- Marcion developed a new canon, rejecting the OT and accepting only parts of Luke + 10 Pauline letters.
- How can we acknowledge the supremacy of Christ without succumbing to Marcion's errors?



The first step involves asking: How does the crucified Christ become the supreme revelation of God for us?

“The message of the cross” tells us is that in Christ, God was bearing the sin of the world to reconcile the world to himself. Thus, the cross is simultaneously supremely ugly and supremely beautiful to those who believe. The surface of this event is revoltingly ugly, for it reflects the ugly sin that Jesus bore. But to those who by faith see beyond this surface appearance, the cross also reveals the supreme beauty of a God who, out of love, was willing to bear our sin, suffer our curse, and to thereby take on this revoltingly ugly, sin-mirroring, surface appearance.

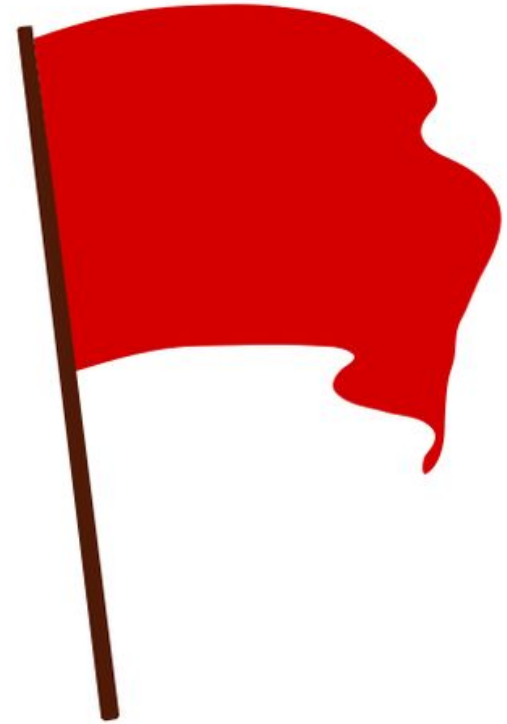
- Greg Boyd





- For we do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the cosmic powers over this present darkness, against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly places. - Eph. 6:12 (ESV)

- Driving a wedge between the Testaments can lead to (practical) Marcionism or constructing a "canon within a canon".
- NT writers did not really see the tensions between Jesus and Joshua that many contemporaries do.
- Selective portraits of Jesus can drive a wedge between Jesus and himself!
  - Crucified Christ vs Jesus of Revelation
- Many of the alleged faulty mechanisms of inspiration involved in the OT are in play in the NT.



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## Bringing it all together

The conquest account is a hagiographic hyperbolic account of a justified expulsion of evil Canaanites from the land. The story is related via unnerving depictions of God as a warrior by an ancient warlike people. With the advent of the Incarnation in Jesus, the violent portraits of God are cast in a different light. The future of the people of God no longer tied to the earth (Jn. 18:36).

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