

STRANGE BUT TRUE

Episode 8: *Absence Of Mercy*

INTRODUCTION – Following Jesus,

John 5:39-40

REFLECTION QUESTION:

Is there a difference between following Jesus and following the Bible?

THE PROBLEM – God & Human Genocide

Deuteronomy 7:1-2; 13:12-15; 20:16-17

Numbers 21:3

Joshua 6:21; 8:24-25; 10:28, 30, 32, 35, 37, 39-42; 11:11-20
1 Samuel 15:3, 18

THE EXPLANATIONS

GOD CALLED FOR THE EXTERMINATION OF THE CANAANITES...

1. As judgement on the Canaanites because of their wickedness (**Genesis 15:6; Deuteronomy 9:4-6**).
2. As a divinely known necessity to preserve the people and faith of Yahweh (**Exodus 23:33; Deuteronomy 7:3-6, 16; 20: 16-18**).

THE PROBLEMS WITH THE EXPLANATIONS...

1. Why should babies be punished as "wicked"?
2. When coming into contact with Canaanites, why is Israel's faith assumed to be the weaker of the two, so much so that the only way to avoid it becoming corrupted is to exterminate the competition?

THE ANSWERS TO THE PROBLEMS WITH THE EXPLANATIONS...

1. The children are not necessarily being "punished" but are being removed for different reasons. There is only a problem if we see this life as all there is. In eternity, they may receive full blessing. Since the children raised in such a depraved culture would probably join in that depravity, many children may have actually been rescued from eternal judgement.
2. The Old Covenant is a weak covenant (**Romans 8:3**) given to spiritually immature people (**Galatians 3:23-4:7**) as a temporary compromise (**Matthew 19:8**). The story of Israel is the story of progressive spiritual maturation.

THE CHANGE BROUGHT BY THE NEW "JOSHUA"...

1. The New Covenant moves us from death to life (**2 Corinthians 3:4-11; 1 Timothy 2:4; 2 Peter 3:9**).
2. God's people are no longer the warriors but the _____-makers (**Matthew 5:9; 38-48; Romans 12:17-21; 1 Peter 2:21-23**).
3. The war continues, but is _____ (John 18:36; **1 Corinthians 9:26; 2 Corinthians 10:3-5; Ephesians 6:10-20; 1 Timothy 1:18; 6:12; 2 Timothy 2:4; 4:7**).

LOOKING DEEPER – Reading Below The Lines

LIFE LESSON QUESTION:

What "holy war" *should* you be fighting?

2 Corinthians 10:3-5

CONCLUSION – What Is God Really Like?

John 14:8-10; 2 Corinthians 4:4, 6; Colossians 1:15; 2:9

RECOMMENDED READING:

The Goodness of God, by John Wenham; *Show Them No Mercy: 4 Views on God and Canaanite Genocide*, Stanley N. Gundry (editor).

HOME CHURCH QUESTIONS

WARMING UP...

1. After briefly reviewing this week's message, share one new thing you learned or one thing that most challenged, convicted, or encouraged you.
2. *SHARPEN YOUR RESPONSE*: How would you answer someone who asked you why we consider Yahweh "good" and Hitler "bad" when both have called for the extermination of a race of people?

LOOK TO THE BOOK...

3. Read **2 Corinthians 3**, where Paul discusses the differences between the Old and New Covenants. a) What verse stands out to you the most? Why? b) What significant lessons can we draw out of **vv. 1-3**? (Note that "you" is plural and "letter" is singular.) What is Paul driving at by pointing out that this human letter is written on the heart rather than on "tablets of stone"? (If you can, use other Bible passages to support your answer.) c) List and discuss as many other changes between the Old and New Covenants as you can find here.

SO WHAT?...

4. Are there any ways that you are tempted to live a more Old Testament life in your relationship with God and others?
5. Take a few moments (3-4 minutes) to meditate on **2 Corinthians 3:17**. (If you like, after meditating share any new insights or old reminders that have come to mind.)
6. Pray for each other in light of #4 above.

Bruxy Cavey @ THE MEETING HOUSE – Sunday, August 29 / September 5, 2004