

# Is God Evil?

Understanding the God of the  
Bible

Abraham Canfield

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Old Testament = purple

New Testament= red

## Introduction

There are several things to consider with each objection we come across in the Bible. Oftentimes it's a matter of internal context and the historical context of the time. Other times we may read the biblical text and miss the true spirit behind it all. This in turn, tends to result in an emotional rejection of it altogether. That's why it's important that we acknowledge these objections and help explain them to those who may have a hard time understanding.

For starters, it's not too uncommon to share the view that there are two different Gods in the Bible. We see the "often-cruel" God of the Old Testament and the "loving" God of the New Testament, right?

God does not change though, and when one takes the time to really study his Word, God's love and justice *is* seen equally dispersed throughout the entirety of the Bible.

For example, God's judgment and punishment are easily reflected in the New Testament. Jesus does not shy away from the seriousness and urge for all of mankind to repent or perish in hell. In Luke 13:2-5 he says, "And you will perish, too, unless you repent of your sins. Regarding the people's reaction to Jesus, Mark 1:22 says, "And they were astonished at his teaching, for he taught them as one who had authority, and not as the scribes." The anger of God can be seen when Jesus cleanses the temple, driving out the merchants in John 2:13-17.

God's compassion and sorrow from mourning over Jerusalem in the NT (Luke 19:41-42) is reflected in the OT when He mourns over the sins of Moab and the Kirheres in Jeremiah 48:31-32 and cries over His people in Jeremiah 14:17-18.

According to theologian Norman L. Geisler, the word translated as "mercy" in the King James Version of the Bible occurs 261 times in the Bible, and 72% of them appear in the Old Testament. That's a three-to-one ratio. Also according to Geisler, the word "love" occurs 322 times in the Bible, and half in each testament!

Note: For good books on this subject that delve deeper into these issues, see: *Is God a Moral Monster?* by Paul Copan, and *The Case for Faith* by Lee Strobel



"When a man strikes his slave, male or female, with a rod and the slave dies under his hand, he shall be avenged. But if the slave survives a day or two, he is not to be avenged, for the slave is his money." (Exodus 21:20-21)

When examining certain laws and practices in the Old Testament, it's important to understand the historical context of the time and how things were generally laid out in cultures. Slavery was a universal practice in ancient cultures since the beginning (like in Egypt). When it comes to such things as slavery and warfare among other things in ancient times, we have what are called case laws in the Old Testament which are laws put in place for regulating certain situations in a cultural setting less than ideal.

Slavery in ancient Israel was not the slavery that comes to mind today. This is in large part due to the infamous and oppressive African slave trade (which was in fact, abolished by Christians such as Abe Lincoln although it didn't officially end until the end of the Civil War). Laws in the Old Testament that seem confusing and harsh to a modern mind were actually considered an improvement and good for the setting of the time. Most other cultures granted nowhere near the rights of slaves as that of Israel. At the time of Moses and the giving of the law, unlike other cultures, God made sure to impose certain regulations and limits for slavery. He used it to help people pay off their debts and for the poor to survive.

- Verse 6: a piece of equipment used in the survival of a family may not be taken in pledge for a loan.
- Verses 12, 17: if a poor man gives his cloak in pledge, it must be returned at night so he won't be cold; a widow's cloak must not be taken in pledge at all.
- Verses 14-15: a poor hired man must receive his wages daily.
- Verses 19-21: when harvesting wheat, olives, or grapes, some must be left over for the poor to take for themselves.

Exodus 21:16 "Whoever steals a man and sells him, and anyone found in possession of him, shall be

put to death."

[Exodus 20:15](#) "You shall not steal." (see: [1 Timothy 1:9-10](#) when it says the law was made for "menstealers.")

[Deuteronomy 24:7](#) "If a man is found kidnapping a person from among his fellow Israelites, and regards him as mere property and sells him, that kidnapper must die."

### **God condemns oppressive slavery:**

God warns Israel numerous times:

"You must not oppress foreigners. You know what it's like to be a foreigner, for you yourselves were once foreigners in the land of Egypt." ([Exodus 23:9](#) )

"Thou shalt not rule over him with rigour; but shalt fear thy God." ([Leviticus 25:43](#))

See also: [Exodus 22:21](#); [Leviticus 25:46](#); [Leviticus 25:14](#); [Leviticus 25:17](#); [Leviticus 19:33-34](#); [Deuteronomy 27:19](#); [Ephesians 6:8-9](#); [Zechariah 7:10](#); [1 Timothy 1:9-10](#); [Luke 4:18-19](#); [Psalm 146:7](#); [Malachi 3:5](#); [Proverbs 14:31](#); [Isaiah 1:17](#); [Psalm 72:4](#)

Contrary to the surrounding cultures, when we dig deep in the law codes of the Mosaic law we see an underlying pattern that recognizes the dignity not only of the master but the servant as well. Throughout Mosaic law God is continually warning the Israelites of any mistreatment toward one another, including the foreigners.

But what about [Exodus 21:20-21](#)? Let's look at the verse:

"And if a man smite his servant, or his maid, with a rod, and he die under his hand; he shall be surely punished. Notwithstanding, if he continue a day or two, he shall not be punished: for he is his money."

First of all, notice there is no indication that this "servant" is a foreigner so it most likely applies to any general servant. Second, in light of the context of Mosaic law and God's repeated warning not to oppress one another, this verse is to be taken in a disciplinary sense. We have to keep in mind that the bond between master and servant was a mutual agreement and that the servant was being paid for his work. Was the master allowed to abuse his slave? No. But say the servant didn't keep up with *his* part of the deal, and even overstepped his bounds? Was the master allowed to *discipline* his slave? Yes. Just as a mother or father spansks their child for disobeying.

Such an example can be alluded to from Abram's wife Sarai, and Sarai's "harsh" treatment toward her slave Hagar ([Genesis 16:1-6](#)). As the context implies, this was a punishment for Hagar's contempt toward Sarai in regards to her fertility. Though she was to return to Sarai after fleeing, God showed his care for Hagar by blessing her with offspring that would grow into a great nation ([Genesis 16:7-16](#)).

While there is some form of justice compensated for the master as we've seen, slavery still was not to be an oppressive one in Israel. In ancient Near Eastern law codes, it was generally masters rather than slaves who were compensated for regarding the injured slaves. According to the Babylonian code of laws of Mesopotamia in Hammurabi for example, a master was permitted to brand his slave or even cut off his disobedient slave's ear.

This is contrary to the Mosaic law in which excessive damage or harm towards the slave enforced compensation and manumission for the slave:

"When a man strikes the eye of his slave, male or female, and destroys it, he shall let the

slave go free. If he knocks out the tooth of his slave, male or female, he shall let the slave go free because of because of his eye. his tooth." ([Exodus 21:26-27](#))

"When men quarrel and one strikes the other with a stone or with his fist and the man does not die but takes to his bed, then if the man rises again and walks outdoors with his staff, he who struck him shall be clear; only he shall pay for the loss of his time, and shall have him thoroughly healed." ([Exodus 21:18-19](#))

In other words, the suggestion here isn't that servants in Israel were chattel or mere property. The fact is, the servant came to the master's house to get out of debt so any mistreatment toward the servant would ultimately impact the *master's* money bag. Other translations for [Exodus 21:21](#) posit "property" or "money" but the New English Translation renders more accurately the master as only having "suffered the loss" which makes sense in the context of verses 18-19 dealing with compensation for loss and the Hebrew pronoun *hu* not referring to the servant ("he") but instead to the fee ("that") paid to the doctor tending to the wounded servant.

Furthermore, murdering the slave was punishable by death:

"If a man smite his servant, or his maid, with a rod, and he die under his hand; he shall be surely punished." ([Exodus 21:20](#))

(Note: The word used here for "punished" is *naqam* which involves the death penalty.)

**Israel was to be a shelter to runaway foreign slaves facing oppression.** Furthermore, regarding runaway slaves, unlike other cultures of the time which demanded the return of runaway slaves and the death penalty for those helping runaway slaves such as the Babylonian law code of Hammurabi, or the Lipit-Ishtar, Eshnunna, and Hittite laws which exacted fines, foreign slaves who escaped to Israel were offered shelter rather than sent back into their harsh servitude ([Deuteronomy 23:15-16](#)).

The prophet Isaiah for example, followed through with this when it came to the Moabites in [Isaiah 16:3-4](#), "Shelter the outcasts; do not reveal the fugitive; let the outcasts of Moab sojourn among you; be a shelter to them from the destroyer. When the oppressor is no more, and destruction has ceased, and he who tramples underfoot has vanished from the land."

## **Laws regulating fellow Israelite slaves**

**Slavery was a voluntary line of work with a fixed salary.** We have to keep in mind that there were not all kinds of different job opportunities back then like there are today, and farming was the usual way to make a living. So if someone experienced a season of crop failure, he would need some way of being able to survive and provide for his family. [Leviticus 25:35](#) says "If any of your fellow Israelites become poor and are unable to support themselves among you, help them as you would a foreigner and stranger, so they can continue to live among you."

In ancient Jewish culture, a poor man could, by his own will, submit himself to a master to work and make a living. Such an example occurred with Jacob who sold himself to Laban for fourteen years to pay the bridal prices of Leah and Rachel. Slavery was not always against one's will and was most of the time, voluntary. We can see this in passages like [Leviticus 25:39](#), regarding fellow Israelites: "If any of your fellow Israelites become poor and sell themselves to you..."

Unlike modern chattel slavery, no Israelite had to be a lifetime slave:

A Hebrew slave, man or woman, was to go free after six years ([Exodus 21:2](#); [Deut. 15:12](#)) with generous support ([Deuteronomy 15:14](#)).

A Hebrew slave was also to go free at the year of Jubilee every fiftieth year ([Leviticus 25:40-41](#)).

A Hebrew slave had the *choice* to remain in service forever to his master ([Exodus 21:5-6](#); [Deut. 15:16-17](#)).

[Exodus 21:1-6](#) lays out a release term in which case a servant and his spouse may both go free if they came together, but makes an exception for the spouse and child if they were given to the servant by the master. In this case, if the servant was granted a spouse by the master, the spouse (and possibly child) could only go free until their term was fully served or at the year of Jubilee ([Lev. 25:40-42](#)).

**Female slaves were released through marriage or lack of provision by the master.** There were also certain female slaves assigned to a master with the purpose of eventual betrothal ([Exodus 21:7-11](#)), in which case she would turn into a member of the family. In a way, betrothal was manumission (freedom).

Manumission was also granted if her master neglected her supplications and marital rights (v 10-11).

Though there were some release laws in the ancient Near East, the contrasts between Israel's laws and other laws are more striking than the similarities and the right of manumission in other cultures generally belonged exclusively to the slave's owner.

### **Laws regulating foreign slaves**

Laws were different for foreign slaves in the sense that they weren't granted as much freedom as the Israelites. The context of [Leviticus 25:45-46](#) indicates that the foreigners inside and surrounding Israel could be bought and inherited as a lifetime worker. Not all of the foreigners in Israel were slaves though so this is most likely referring to prisoners of war who needed to be assimilated into the society. Structures were needed for Israel's well being in regards to prisoners of war and servanthood was such a way of working to prevent any kind of internal rebellion or counterattack among the surrounding nations.

Regarding the female prisoner, she was to be given time to herself before being given in marriage, nor could she be sold for money ([Deuteronomy 21:10-14](#)). And similar to that of Israelites, if her master no longer desired for her, manumission was granted.

As mentioned, not all residing foreigners were slaves, and further regulations reveal that the *Israelite* could sell himself as a slave to the residing *foreigner*, though the freedom of the Israelite could be bought by himself or his family, or granted in the year of jubilee ([vv.47-55](#)).

Despite the difference with foreign slavery though, it was still much more mild compared to the neighboring nations and Israel was always reminded not to oppress or exploit them. In fact, they were even allowed to join in on the numerous holidays and festivals (such as Passover) that the Israelites celebrated--as a part of the family ([Exodus 12:44-44](#); [Deuteronomy 16:11](#); [Deuteronomy 16:14](#)) This also included the Sabbath which was the day of rest ([Exodus 20:8-11](#)). A slave privately owned by a priest could also partake of the food given as an offering to the priest ([Leviticus 22:11](#))-something a free hired man could not do.

### **All people and races are equally valued to God**

Ruth the Moabite is a good example of an alien who came to reside in Israel and embrace their God and covenant ([Ruth 1:16](#)). Gentiles like Ruth, Rahab or Uriah the Hittite who were willing to embrace Israel's God and culture could become more easily incorporated into its mainstream life, even if they couldn't own land.

Unlike resident aliens however, there were the foreigners who did not abide by Israel's covenant relationship with God. These foreigners were similar to illegal immigrants. While it's important to extend kindness and personal concern for illegal immigrants to the U.S., it's also important to maintain order and preserve the privilege and dignity of citizenship in the country ([Rom. 13](#)). In other words, priority should be

given to tax-paying citizens over illegals when it comes to such things like health care, drivers' licenses, and insurance among other things.

What about loan discrimination? As we see, loans were given at cost without interest for the Israelite, but interest was charged when it came to the foreigner ([Exod. 22:25; Lev. 25:36-37; Deut. 15:3](#)). However, foreigners generally sought loans for business or investment purposes, not because they were destitute and needed money to relieve their debt, let alone to keep from starving.

While regulations between the two may have been slightly different, God ultimately shows no partiality among Israelites and foreigners, as well as slaves and masters, as all people, whether slave or master, Israelite or foreigner, are equal in value to God. This is further revealed in such regulations where an ox who killed a free man ([Exodus 21:28](#)) or a slave ([Exodus 21:32](#)) was to be stoned.

Masters are reminded:

"Masters, give unto your servants that which is just and equal; knowing that ye also have a Master in heaven." ([Colossians 4:1](#))

"Remember that the Lord will reward each one of us for the good we do, whether we are slaves or free. Masters, treat your slaves in the same way. Don't threaten them; remember, you both have the same Master in heaven, and he has no favorites." ([Ephesians 6:8-9](#))

Despite the rank of the slave, [Job 31:13-15](#) reminds us of the equal value placed on all humans.

"If I have rejected the cause of my manservant or my maidservant, when they brought a complaint against me, what then shall I do when God rises up? When he makes inquiry, what shall I answer him? Did not he who made me in the womb make him? And did not one fashion us in the womb?"

Regarding Christ-followers:

"Where there is neither Greek nor Jew, circumcision nor uncircumcision, Barbarian, Scythian, bond nor free: but Christ is all, and in all." ([Colossians 3:11](#))

"There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither bond nor free, there is neither male nor female: for ye are all one in Christ Jesus." ([Galatians 3:28](#))

God repeatedly reminds and warns the Israelites:

"For the Lord your God is God of gods and Lord of lords, the great God, mighty and awesome, who shows no partiality and accepts no bribes. He defends the cause of the fatherless and the widow, and loves the foreigner residing among you, giving them food and clothing. And you are to love those who are foreigners, for you yourselves were foreigners in Egypt." ([Deuteronomy 10:17-19](#))

"The community is to have the same rules for you and for the foreigner residing among you; this is a lasting ordinance for the generations to come. You and the foreigner shall be the same before the Lord: The same laws and regulations will apply both to you and to the foreigner residing among you." ([Numbers 15:15-16](#))

## **God never intended slavery, but allowed for it to help Israel's economy**

Again, slavery was not condemned because then there would be higher chances of certain people without any way of paying off debts and making a living for themselves. When people think of rap music or heavy metal, many are quick to deem these things immoral based on the tainted history of profanity in the majority of the music, but when we take a closer look at the lyrics and meaning behind some of the material, evidence shows that it's not all bad. This is called stereotyping.



Likewise, people are left with only a bad impression of slavery due to the tainted perception from the African slave trade, and although slavery still is generally not entirely a good thing, things are different when we examine the reasoning and meaning behind this kind of slavery and the kind we see in the Bible.

God is noted to have allowed such things as slavery and warfare among other things in the Bible, but He ultimately never intended for it to be this way. This was in large part due to the historical setting and hard heartedness of the Israelites. Regarding divorce for example ([Deut. 24:1-4](#)), Jesus says in [Matthew 19:8](#), "Because of your hardness of heart Moses allowed you to divorce your wives, but from the beginning it was not so."

When Jesus came, he stated his mission being: "to proclaim liberty to the captives" and "to set at liberty those who are oppressed" ([Luke 4:18](#)). He may not have abolished slavery, but the Gospel is clear that Jesus had a more important issue in mind; not the problem of slavery but the problem of the heart. After all, evil exists with or without slavery and the U.S. is a good example of that. The New Testament reflects matters and puts more perspective on spiritual status rather than social status.

In [Luke 22:25-27](#) Jesus explains,

"In this world the kings and great men lord it over their people, yet they are called 'friends of the people.' But among you it will be different. Those who are the greatest among you should take the lowest rank, and the leader should be like a servant. Who is more important, the one who sits at the table or the one who serves? The one who sits at the table, of course. But not here! For I am among you as one who serves."

## **What about nations that prohibited slavery?**

For this particular instance, the Achaemenid (Persian) Empire may be brought into the picture. However, the claim that the Persian empire outlawed slavery is not quite true, as we have written contracts of slave sales among the Persepolis Archives, as well as Babylonian records, the 4th century Samaria Papyri, and Egyptian and Greek records of the time attesting to foreign slave trading. Though it may not have been common in Persia and though records aren't as flourishing on the subject, this is due in part to the fact that debt slavery was no longer as common of a practice.<sup>1</sup> There's no evidence that the empire was altogether against all kinds of slavery. Though the Cyrus Cylinder inscription is often interpreted this way, the inscription was merely a statement of approval for the captives of Babylon to return to their homes.

As far as ancient people groups that did not partake in slavery, they were rare, and this wasn't because it was prohibited but simply due to a lack of financial means in order to establish the social system in the first place.

## **Contrasting the spiritual realm**

God uses many terms and things in His created world to foreshadow the spiritual realm. Such examples are how He uses farmers and seeds to demonstrate the spread of His kingdom, weddings to demonstrate the return of Jesus, armor in worldly battles to demonstrate spiritual warfare, and types of people like teachers, judges, doctors, fathers, farmers, shepherds, and kings to describe His character. God used slavery to demonstrate the spiritual realm:

"I tell you the truth, everyone who sins is a slave of sin." ([John 8:34](#))

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<sup>1</sup> M. A. Dandamaev, BARDA and BARDADĀRĪ in *Encyclopædia Iranica*



## Gouge out an eye?

At face value, the punishments "an eye for an eye" and "a tooth for a tooth" may seem rather barbaric ([Exod. 21:23-25](#)) but the context reveals this not to be taken in a literal sense, as to that of "life for a life." This is seen in the following verses ([y 26-27](#)) which only prompt proper compensation for a lost eye or tooth.

The point being made here is: the punishment should fit the crime. Punishments were to be proportional and couldn't exceed that standard. Jesus himself affirms this when the language had been misapplied by his contemporaries outside the law courts as a pretext for personal vengeance ([Matt. 5:38-39](#)). If anything, he took this language no more literally than he did the language of plucking out eyes and cutting off hands if they lead one to sin ([Matt. 5:29-30](#)).

## Hand amputation?

Now when we get to [Deuteronomy 25:11-12](#), we have what appears to be a penalty involving the cutting off of a hand. This punishment was to be a result of the aggressive wrestling tactic "genital seizing," if you will.

However, it's more likely this punishment had to do with depilation of the pubic area rather than mutilation. The commonly used word for "hand" ([yad](#)) is used for verse 11 ("puts out her *hand* and seizes him), but it's not used in verse 12 for what's "cut off." The word used instead ([kaph](#)) refers to the "palm" of a body part or a small rounded concave object like a dish or bowl. This is seen in certain places in the Old Testament where the word *kaph* is used for the pelvic area (e.g., [Gen. 32:25; 32:32](#)). (see: the Hebrew for [Deut. 25:11](#) and [Deut. 25:12](#))

In addition, the Hebrew verb used here for "cut off" ([qatsats](#)) has a milder connotation than the stronger, intensified form for "cut off" ([piel](#)) and appears in some passages that imply clipping or shaving (e.g. [Jer. 9:26; 25:23; 49:32](#)). Furthermore, the punishment of depilation of the pubic area would make much more sense especially had the victim faced no real harm and considering the context of the "eye for an eye" standard for punishment fitting the crime.

Even if this passage *did* mean her hand was to be amputated, we know that such occurrences of something like this even happening are typically rare. Furthermore, the reproductive organs were sacred for populating one's family, and men who were castrated were forbidden entrance into the worship assembly ([Deuteronomy 23:1](#)).

## Forty lashes?

At first glance, a punishment of forty lashes may seem harsh and overdone ([Deut. 25:1-3](#)), but as the text implies, this was the maximum penalty and the judge could determine a lesser amount, depending on the crime

Furthermore, Israel's punishments were tame compared to the more brutal law codes and ruthlessness of other ancient Near Eastern cultures. For example, *one hundred* strokes was considered a mild punishment in Egyptian law codes with the maximum nearing *two hundred*! The code of Hammurabi and Egyptian codes insisted that the tongue, breast, hand, or ear be cut off, or even the accused being dragged around a field by cattle. When it came to theft, the Code of Hammurabi invoked the death penalty while the Old Testament demanded only double compensation for the loss ([Exod. 22:4](#)). This contrast is one of the many reminders that persons mattered more than material things in Israel's legislation than in other ancient Near Eastern cultures.

## Torture and mutilation?

Regarding King David, [2 Samuel 12:31](#) reads, "And he brought forth the people that were therein, and put them under saws, and under harrows of iron, and under axes of iron, and made them pass

through the brick-kiln: and thus did he unto all the cities of the children of Ammon. So David and all the people returned unto Jerusalem."

This is the King James Version. The New International Version (and other versions) clarifies the original Hebrew language and says David "brought out the people who were there, consigning them to labor with saws and with iron picks and axes, and he made them work at brick-making." It's referring to labor, not torture, and it's quite humane compared to the cruelties his enemies had unleashed. Also, this is another case where the Bible records something but doesn't necessarily condone it.

## **More laws that Israel improved upon**

### **Laws regarding guilt and innocence**

Further precepts in the Mosaic law reveal an underlying concern for human life and justice more than that of other ancient Near Eastern law codes. For example, ancient Near Eastern cultures such as Babylon, Assyria and Sumer imposed "guilty until proven innocent" when evidence was inconclusive with the accused. The accused was then generally thrown into a bitumen well filled with petroleum (considered to be the abode of a god, such as *Id*) and left to fight the liquid and its toxic fumes. Innocence was determined whether he survived and guilt was determined whether he perished from the god's "judgment" (although most survived fortunately). The Mosaic law however regarded the accused, starting with the assumption that he was "innocent until proven guilty" with guilt determined by two or three witnesses ([Deut. 17:6, 19:15](#)), much like our society today.

### **Laws regarding responsibility and fault**

If an ox was in the habit of goring but the owner took no precautions to prevent this and the ox killed a person, codes such as Hammurabi or Eshnunna only insisted a fine be paid and the ox was to live, but Mosaic law imposed the death penalty on the ox while its meat couldn't be eaten; and in some scenarios, to the owner of the ox as a maximum penalty ([Exod. 21:28-36](#) cf. [Gen. 9:4-6](#)) unless it wasn't premeditated, in which case a monetary fine was paid ([Exod. 21:30](#)). Likewise, Hammurabi insisted that if a homebuilder was careless and his construction collapsed and killed a minor, then the builder's own child would be killed. By contrast, killing a child for the parents' offenses (or a parent for his child's offenses) wasn't permitted in Israel ([Deut. 24:16](#)).

Another improved aspect of the Mosaic law recognized the distinction between intentional and unintentional killings, or killings that happened by pure accident. Israel provided cities of refuge for those who had accidentally killed another ([Exod. 21:12-13](#)), a way of preventing ongoing blood feuds. Common practice in other ancient Near Eastern nations however was exacting vengeance on murder regardless.

## **In conclusion**

Overall, and as pointed out by Old Testament scholars, there were around sixteen crimes that called for the death penalty in the Old Testament. Only in the case of premeditated murder did the text say that the officials in Israel were forbidden to take a "ransom" or a "substitute." This has been widely interpreted that in all the other fifteen cases the judges could commute the crimes deserving of capital punishment by designating a "ransom" or "substitute." In that case, the death penalty served to mark the seriousness of the crime and that Israel's legislation wasn't as unfair or inferior as some may think, especially compared to the surrounding cultures.

# The Egyptian Firstborn



"Moses and Aaron did all these wonders before Pharaoh, and the Lord hardened Pharaoh's heart, and he did not let the people of Israel go out of his land." ([Exodus 11:10](#))

"So Moses said, 'Thus says the Lord: 'About midnight I will go out in the midst of Egypt, and every firstborn in the land of Egypt shall die, from the firstborn of Pharaoh who sits on his throne, even to the firstborn of the slave girl who is behind the hand mill, and all the firstborn of the cattle.'"  
([Exodus 11:4-5](#))



Notice it says "firstborn." Firstborn doesn't necessarily always mean children, it just means the eldest of the offspring, so many of these firstborn could have been in their twenties or even thirties, brutally oppressing the Hebrews. How so? Let's have a look...

## The brutality of the Egyptians

[Exodus 5](#) lays out an example that gives us an idea of some of the unfairness in treatment toward the Hebrew slaves. In the passage, Pharaoh lays out an order to make Hebrew labor more extensive by no longer providing straw to make bricks. On top of this, Hebrews are to be beaten if the desired amount of work is not accomplished as if straw *were* continually provided. The only provocation for working the Hebrews harder is traced back to Moses's command to free his people. Of course, to be fair, Pharaoh had no knowledge of God (yet) but the urge to create a less-than-ideal work environment *intentionally* (rather than just simply ignoring Moses) is uncalled for and really reveals the true nature of the Egyptians. [Exodus 5:14-15](#) reads:

"And the foremen of the people of Israel, whom Pharaoh's taskmasters had set over them, were beaten and were asked, 'Why have you not done all your task of making bricks today and yesterday, as in the past?' Then the foremen of the people of Israel came and cried to Pharaoh, 'Why do you treat your servants like this? No straw is given to your servants, yet they say to us, 'Make bricks!' And behold, your servants are beaten; but the fault is in your own people.'"

What's interesting here is how skeptics attack the Bible with slavery, and at the same time consider it "immoral" of God to punish the strong, oppressive slavery imposed by Pharaoh and the Egyptians.

**The Egyptians killed babies and infants.** Furthermore, even if God *did* kill many children in this case, let's have a look again at the Egyptians. The Egyptians were killing babies and infants long before the exodus of Israel; throwing Hebrew baby boys into a river to drown doesn't exactly look like a clean slate ([Exodus 1](#)).

## God hardened Pharaoh's heart?

I can see why this would be a rash thing to do to the Egyptians if they were a caring, compassionate, kind people, but this was not the case. Some may say that Pharaoh never had the choice because God hardened his heart, but Pharaoh and the Egyptians had *400 years* to repent ([Genesis 15:13-16](#)), and God is just for punishing evil:

"And now, behold, the cry of the people of Israel has come to Me, and I have also seen the

oppression with which the Egyptians oppress them." ([Exodus 3:9](#))

"In the same way, even though God has the right to show his anger and his power, he is very patient with those on whom his anger falls..." ([Romans 9:22](#))

Let's consider a scenario here: Say my friend hates being told what to do. One day, he sits at my table, and without consideration, puts his feet *on the table*. I tell him to take his feet off of the table. My friend gets mad at me and hardens his heart towards me at that moment. In a sense, I *also* hardened his heart by doing something he didn't like, aka: telling him what to do. My friend was still clearly in the wrong though at the same time.

Now let's have a look at Pharaoh and God hardening *his* heart. The Bible several times says that *Pharaoh hardened his own heart* ([Exodus 8:15, 32; 9:34-35](#)). This was after Moses kept telling him to free his people. So just like the previous scenario, God *did* harden Pharaoh's heart, only it was through the provocation of Moses. And just as one might harden their heart towards God after hearing his message to be set *free* from *sin*.

We can see other instances where an action is clearly done by the person but attributed to God in the sense of his divine sovereignty in allowing the action to pass. For example, the Egyptians increase the burden upon the Israelite slaves ([Exodus 5:10-11](#)) yet Moses asks regarding the Israelites why God has "done evil to this people" ([Exodus 5:22](#)); as well as Saul killing himself by falling on his sword ([1 Chronicles 10:4](#)) and it is said that "the Lord put him to death" ([1 Chronicles 10:14](#)).

Even though some of these instances are meant to happen as a part of his will, we have to keep in mind that God is all-knowing of all outcomes and can bring about the greater good from even the most unexpected ways (as that of Israel's deliverance). And even when someone's heart is hardened, it doesn't necessarily mean they will never be saved. As we know, the apostle Paul himself was *very* hard-hearted towards Jesus at first. He is then later seen serving and *suffering* for Jesus as a devoted follower.

## **God made himself visible through plagues and miracles, and Pharaoh *still* refused to believe**

When a nonbeliever is consistently rebellious like Pharaoh, God may eventually give him over to his sinful desires ([Romans 1:24-26](#)). Notice all that God does beforehand and Pharaoh's reaction to all of it. God revealed Himself plain and clear through the many plagues to Pharaoh, so Pharaoh had no excuse and could've easily chosen to let God's people go, but even after all these plagues, he still refused.

God provided warning to the Egyptians through Moses and Aaron before each judgment, leaving them the choice to obey Him, take shelter, or face the consequences. God loved the Egyptians and always provides a way out for all who truly repent. The "mixed multitude" in [Exodus 12:38](#) even indicates that some left Egypt with Israel in the Exodus.

Killing the firstborn of Egypt wasn't exactly a priority here with God, but clearly, a last resort, as it was the last of the judgments. Based on this, we can infer that God didn't want it to come to this, and He does not take pleasure in the destruction of even the wicked ([Ezekiel 33:11; Lamentations 3:32-33](#)), but He also knew it was just what it would take to finally open Pharaoh's eyes. It also shows all the more how hard-hearted people tend to be in accepting the truth and accepting God.

Keep in mind that God is the Creator and He creates everything, including the firstborn. It's an unfortunate thing for any person to die, but if He brings life into them, then He certainly has authority to take it away because everything created ultimately belongs to the Creator.



# Genocide?



"In those towns that the Lord your God is giving you as a special possession, destroy every living thing. You must completely destroy the Hittites, Amorites, Canaanites, Perizzites, Hivites, and Jebusites, just as the Lord your God has commanded you." ([Deuteronomy 20:16-17](#))

"This is what the LORD of Hosts says: 'I witnessed what the Amalekites did to the Israelites when they hindered them on their way up from Egypt. Now go and attack the Amalekites and completely destroy all that belongs to them. Do not spare them, but put to death men and women, children and infants, oxen and sheep, camels and donkeys.'" ([1 Samuel 15:3](#))

"Now therefore kill every male among the little ones, and kill every woman that hath known man by lying with him. But all the women children, that have not known a man by lying with him, keep alive for yourselves." ([Numbers 31:17-18](#))

"And the Lord said, I will destroy man whom I have created from the face of the earth; both man, and beast, and the creeping thing, and the fowls of the air; for it repenteth me that I have made them." ([Genesis 6:7](#))



Imagine a world of peace and perfection where everybody is peaceful, kind, and generous toward each other. And then, all of a sudden without warning, God sends hailstones and gigantic floods and tornadoes and destruction upon this world. Does this sound fair and loving? No, and this is not what happened. [Genesis 6:5](#) says: "And God saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every imagination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually."

All throughout the Old Testament we see God speaking through the prophets and warning coming judgement and destruction upon the nations for their sins. Rather than suddenly destroying them, he warns people because he is long-suffering and patient for all to repent ([2 Peter 3:9](#); [Romans 9:22](#)).

As in the case with Nineveh, he was quick to relent upon their repentance, after warning them through the prophet Jonah ([Jonah 3](#)). He waited decades before sending the flood, while speaking through Noah ([1 Peter 3:20](#)). He was willing to spare the whole city of Sodom and Gomorrah if just ten people were righteous ([Genesis 18:32](#)). He was willing to spare the city of Jerusalem from Babylonian destruction if just one person was righteous ([Jeremiah 5:1](#)). He waited 400 years for Egypt and Canaan to repent ([Genesis 15:13-16](#)). He waited many years, patiently, before giving His people into the hands of the foreign nations ([Nehemiah 9:30-31](#); [Isaiah 42:14](#)) while warning the people through the prophets to repent and turn to God.

## **The campaigns were a form of judgment upon the Canaanites for their sin.**

The Canaanite campaigns in the Bible were for an ordained time, and the main purpose of this was to bring forth judgment on a nation falling further and further in sin ([Deut. 9:4-6](#); [Deut. 7:1](#)). Yes, the land (and only this land) was to be given to Israel as the fulfillment of God's promise to Abraham, but this could not have happened until Canaan lost their privilege to the land *first*. Based on [Genesis 15:16](#), the Canaanite people reached their limit in regards to evil by the time of the Exodus, indicating they were only getting worse and most likely on the brink of self-destruction. Regarding the other surrounding peoples, Israel was not to attack but to offer terms of peace so that they may pass through, unless that tribe attacked first ([Deut. 2:2-23](#); [20:10-18](#)).

Some may question a God who, in this case, makes such a command as to "show no mercy" ([Deut. 7:2](#)). The thing is, God was merciful. He was merciful with Canaan for more than 400 years

([Genesis 15:13-16](#))! Since they only increased in evil and would not repent, and because God is just and does not overlook evil, judgment became inevitable unfortunately.

God may have commanded the killing of certain peoples. However, people are killed for evil by law in our society today. We call this Death Row. And for God to have commanded such a thing regarding Canaan shows just how evil they must have been.

Despite this, descriptions of Joshua's victories are certainly more wholesome compared to the other Near Eastern empires of that time. Unlike Joshua's brief, four-verse description of the hanging of the five kings and their burial in the cave ([Joshua 10:24-27](#)), the Assyrians boasted in the mounding piles of human heads, gouged out eyes and cut-off ears and limbs of their enemies while displaying their heads all around the city (Neo-Assyrian annals of Ashurnasirpal II: 883-859 BC).

### **The Canaanites were on the brink of destruction.**

This was not some peaceful land where everybody is kind to their neighbors and simply "trying to live life." This was a nation so evil, they were on the brink of destruction. We're talking extreme sexual profanity, burning children alive in idolistic rituals, and a bloodlust all rooted in the sadistic god Anath who took pleasure in the slaughter and decapitation of the enemies of her brother (and husband) Baal.

### **The command was more so to drive the people out rather than completely kill everyone off.**

There is significant textual and archaeological evidence which reveals that God's true intention was not to completely annihilate Canaan. Old Testament scholars have noticed that, when referring to the Canaanites, much of the context refers more to "driving them out" and "dispossessing" rather than "utterly destroying" ([Num. 21:32; Deut. 9:1; 11:23; 18:14; 19:1. etc.](#)). This makes sense, given Canaan was warned of the coming judgment through Israel's deliverance from Egypt ([Josh. 2:8-11, 9:9-10](#)) and if God had wanted them all dead, he wouldn't have made way for them to evacuate ahead of time.

In [Exodus 23:27-30](#), God explains that the process of "driving them out" would be a gradual one and would take time. This is contrary to wiping out, destroying, and annihilating, of which terms are used significantly fewer times in the Bible and most likely traced back to a hyperbolic literary device commonly used in the ancient Near East expressing exaggeration with casualties of war. This same literary device can be seen with God's warning to "destroy" Israel for disobedience ([Deut. 28:63](#)) or when Babylon "destroyed" the city of Jerusalem in which case all cooperative Jews were spared and rather, exiled from the land ([Jer. 38:2, 17](#)).

Also considering the small size of the land compared to the surrounding nations, it's likely that not as many people were killed as some may think. In fact, archaeological and historical evidence reveals that many of the cities in Canaan, such as Jericho and Ai, were mainly government and military strongholds (which makes sense since the Israelites were able to march all around Jericho seven times and fight all in one day [[Joshua 6](#)] and the term for utter destruction, or *herem*, was typically used in combatant settings in the Bible and didn't always necessarily include women and children) and that most civilian life resided in the countryside. This goes to show that utter annihilation wasn't intended with God and that escape from the land was encouraged.

This is further confirmed by the numerous later appearances of the Canaanites shown in the Old Testament. [Judges 1:27-36](#) lists off all the areas where Canaanite residents remained and were instead, consigned to labor for and by Israel (see also: [Joshua 17:12-13](#)).

### **The Canaanites were warned ahead of time.**

As mentioned before, Canaan was warned ahead of time of the coming judgment through Israel's deliverance from Egypt ([Josh. 2:8-11, 9:9-10](#)) so in light of all this, fleeing Canaanites would escape and only the resistant were at risk.



**God never takes pleasure in the death of anyone, and still extended his mercy toward some of the Canaanites during the campaign.**

The God of the Bible takes no pleasure in the death of anyone, including the wicked ([Ezekiel 18:32, 33:11, etc.](#)). God's compassion and desire for man to be saved can be seen through the extending of His mercy toward anyone of Canaan who might yet repent, such as a Canaanite named Rahab and her household for helping to provide for the Israelite spies ([Joshua 6:22-25](#); see also: [Joshua chapter 2](#); Rahab was even in the ancestral line of Christ: [Matthew 1:5](#)) and the Gibeonites (a people group of Canaan) who surrendered with a peace treaty ([Joshua 9](#)) and whom God later defended against other attackers ([Joshua 10](#)).

God's displeasure with death is further revealed in Mosaic law where post-battle soldiers were commanded to stay outside the camp for seven days and purify themselves ([Numbers 31:19](#)). King David fought in many battles and conquered many nations, but in [1 Chronicles 22:7-8](#) David says to Solomon, "My son, I wanted to build a Temple to honor the name of the Lord my God... But the Lord said to me, 'You have killed many men in the battles you have fought. And since you have shed so much blood in my sight, you will not be the one to build a Temple to honor my name.'"

**The Canaanites were not ignorant about God; they had full knowledge of God through the Israelites and their deliverance ([Joshua 2:8-11; 9:9-10](#)).**

Furthermore, they had revelation through nature and moral conscience, just like everyone else ([Romans 1:19-20, 2:15](#)). Moral codes have shown to share a similar underlying pattern among cultures down through the ages consisting of honoring parents, being faithful in marriage, not stealing, not murdering, not lying, and so on. This goes to demonstrate that we don't necessarily need a special revelation from God to know what's right from wrong because it exists in our conscience, leaving us rightly accountable.

**The campaigns prevented spread of pagan practices harmful to Israel's society.**

Further reasons for the call to fight was to prevent Israel from intermarrying with the daughters of those foreign nations and leading them into idolatry ([Deuteronomy 7:3-4, 20:18](#)). Idolatry wasn't simply an abstract theology or personal interest carried out in the privacy of one's home as some may think. It was a worldview that profoundly influenced society, especially in Canaan. This was seen by the influence of the Canaanite gods, such as Anath, which promoted heavy sexual profanity, bloodlust and violence. The late archaeologist William Albright describes the Canaanite deity Anath's massacre in the following gory scene:

"The blood was so deep that she waded in it up to her knees--nay, up to her neck. Under her feet were human heads, above her human hands flew like locusts. In her sensuous delight she decorated herself with suspended heads while she attached hands to her girdle."

Her joy at the butchery is described in even more sadistic language: "Her liver swelled with laughter, her heart was full of joy, the liver of Anath (was full of) exultation." Afterwards, Anath "was satisfied" and washed her hands in human gore before proceeding to other occupations.<sup>2</sup> Top this off with burning their children alive as sacrifices to these gods ([Deuteronomy 12:31, Psalm 106:37-38](#)), and you've got a pretty serious situation going on.

This is further confirmed with God's concern towards the destruction of Canaanite religion more than people with His repeated emphasis in taking down the Asherah poles and idols of worship ([Exo. 34:12-13; Deut. 7:3-5, 12:2-3, etc.](#)). As we see however, this was not fully carried through and Israel was rebuked for disobeying on account of this ([Judges 2:1-3](#)). Thus, it resulted in the Judges era where the Israelites repeatedly fell into Canaanite idolatry and wickedness-the very thing God sought to prevent and

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<sup>2</sup> Albright, Archaeology and the Religion of Israel, 7

protect people from in the first place with His command.

### **Fighting other nations, forced labor and sexual slavery?**

Regarding the other surrounding nations, Israel was *not* to attack them but to offer terms of peace so that they may pass through, unless that nation attacked *first* ([Deut. 2:2-23; 20:10-18](#)). This happened to be the case several times unfortunately, resulting in numerous defensive battles against such tribes as the Amalekites ([Exod. 17:8](#)), Amorites ([Num. 21:21-32; Deut. 2:26-30](#)) and the Midianites ([Num. 31:2-3; cf. 25; 31:16](#)).

If they made peace? The land was then subject to labor for the Israelites ([Deut. 20:11](#)). To our modern understanding, a people group forced into labor after choosing peace may sound unjust, though we have to keep in mind that a traveling group of people in exile as the Israelites would need sustenance to maintain their campaign. In tactics of warfare, an army passing through a non-threatening land was at times, provided for with food and supplies by the citizens. This could be achieved peaceably, especially given the general command from God not to harm the foreigners ([Exodus 23:9](#)). This was also to further prevent the Israelites from falling prey to idolistic influence, which dominated the cultures of these nations, as “passing through” was no short amount of time but guaranteed many days worth of habitation in these regions. In the long run, this was actually an act of mercy in ancient times, as well as sharing knowledge of the true God among these people so that they may find salvation.

Regarding Peor, the Midianite women had seduced the Israelite men into orgiastic adultery in addition to Baal worship. In light of this, Moses' command in [Numbers 31:17-18](#) to kill everyone but preserve the virgins sought to put an end to any further adultery and preserve purity among the Israelites. However, notice this was a command from Moses rather than God as the context reveals the Israelite army originally carrying out the command from [Deut. 20:14](#) to only kill the men while preserving all women and children. Even regarding whatever captives were taken, they were to be set apart and given time to lament ([Deuteronomy 21:10-14](#)).

Though none of this paints a particularly ideal or pretty picture, it was the beginning of the divine founding and establishing of a nation, and in order for plans to be successfully carried out, certain precautions had to be in place for Israel's cultural structure and well-being, as well as God's purpose of salvation for the world through the coming Messiah in Israel. Many more God-sanctioned battles took place beyond the time of Joshua but many of these were defensive ones, including Joshua's battle to defend Gibeon ([Josh. 10-11](#)). While certain offensive battles took place during the Judges era and under King David and beyond, these are not necessarily commended as ideal or exemplary.

Furthermore, fighting in order to survive wasn't just an adventure; it was a way of life in the ancient Near East. Such circumstances weren't ideal by far, but that was the reality.

### **The Bible implies children go to heaven.**

Indeed, we are left with verses in the Bible that can be understandably difficult to wrestle with, especially when the topic in question is resorted even to children--as notably the case with King Saul and the Amalekites ([1 Samuel 15](#)). However--even if children were killed--according to the Bible, every child who dies before the age of accountability goes to heaven to spend eternity in the presence of God, so from an eternal standpoint, this can, in a way, be seen as an act of mercy. After all, if they had continued to live in that horrible society past the age of accountability, they undoubtedly would have become corrupted and thereby, lost forever.

Children are innocent:

- [Isaiah 7:16](#) talks about an age before a child is morally accountable, before the child “knows enough to reject the wrong and choose the right.”
- King David spoke of going to be with his son who died at birth in [2 Samuel 12:22-23](#).
- Jesus says in [Mark 10:14](#), “Let the little children come to me, and do not hinder them, for

the kingdom of God belongs to such as these."

- [Deuteronomy 1:39](#) makes reference to children being innocent.

Some may say this is inconsistent when it comes to abortion, but we have to keep in mind that -- while we do have certain rights--this doesn't defeat that God owns each and every one of us because He's the author of life, which means that each and every term here on earth is for Him alone to decide. The real inconsistency lies with those who believe it's ok for people to kill their unborn child but wrong for God to do so.

Abortion and child sacrifice are wrong:

- [Deuteronomy 18:10](#) "There shall not be found among you anyone who burns his son or his daughter as an offering..."
- [Jeremiah 1:5](#) "Before I formed you in the womb I knew you, and before you were born I consecrated you; I appointed you a prophet to the nations."
- [Exodus 20:13](#) "You shall not kill."

### **Difference between the Canaan campaign and the Holocaust?**

We have to keep in mind that we're not dealing with a Being who simply follows His preferences and does whatever He wants on a whim; we're dealing with a *benevolent* Being beyond our understanding--full *foreknowledge* and perfect wisdom of each and every outcome. Someone who has these qualities would surely know what's best, despite our limited understanding. This is why such cases are justified and others, where matters are taken in the hands of *men* like the Holocaust and Cambodian massacre, condemned. And as we've covered, the Canaan campaigns were not a call for complete extermination either as that of the Holocaust.

A good question to ask might be, What would have happened had Israel never intervened in Canaan? [Genesis 15:16](#) for example mentions a "limit" of sin among the Canaanites that would bring judgment if exceeded. Therefore we must consider that it's likely that by the time of the Exodus the Canaanite nation was on the brink of self-destruction and beyond any point of return. Fortunately though, based on the character and promises of God on the basis of scripture, we can trust that God made the hard, but right, decision.

### **God's salvation extends to the Canaanites**

God's salvation extends to all peoples, including the Canaanites. God promised Abraham in [Genesis 22:18](#) regarding the coming Messiah, "In your seed all the nations of the earth shall be blessed." The remnant of Canaanites, such as the Jebusites, who became absorbed into the fold of Israel, were certainly a part of this promise who partook in God's redeeming salvation ([1 Chron. 21:15, 18, 28](#)). We further see remnants of Canaanites appearing in Israel during the time of the Messiah receiving the Gospel ([Matt. 15:21-28](#)). This theme is further expounded upon in [Psalm 87:4-6](#) and [Isaiah 19:23-25](#) incorporating enemy nations such as Egypt, Babylon and Philistia into God's redeeming plan of salvation..

### **God uses warfare to portray the spiritual realm**

"For we do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this age, against spiritual hosts of wickedness in the heavenly places. Therefore take up the whole armor of God, that you may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand. Stand therefore, having girded your waist with truth, having put on the breastplate of righteousness, and having shod your feet with the preparation of the gospel of peace; above all, taking the shield of faith with which you will be able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked one. And take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God." (Ephesians 6:12-17)

Lastly, we must consider God's sovereignty since He is the one who created and brought life to all of those people, then He certainly has the right to take away those lives.

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"How then can man be in the right before God? How can he who is born of woman be pure?"  
(Job 25:4)

"And man was not made for woman, but woman was made for man. For this reason, and because the angels are watching, a woman should wear a covering on her head to show she is under authority." (1 Corinthians 11:9-10)

**(1 Corinthians 14:34-35)**

**(1 Timothy 2:11-14)**

[illegible]

Women in other ancient Near Eastern cultures were commonly considered the property of a man. Middle Assyrian laws punished not a rapist but the rapist's wife and even allowed her to be gang-raped. In other ancient Near Eastern laws, men were permitted to freely whip their wives, pull out their hair, mutilate their ears, or strike them. In ancient Greece, women were commonly seen as mere sex objects, born and raised into prostitution for the pleasure of men. In pre-Islamic Arabia, common practice regarding the birth of a female was seen as a curse and entailed burying her alive! This is contrary to the Bible which prohibits this behavior toward women and portrays some female figures as playing central roles.

Men's authority over women in the physical realm symbolizes Christ's authority over believers in the spiritual realm (see [Ephesians 5:22-33](#)).

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[5:23; Genesis 3:16](#)), but at the same time, they both become one ([Ephesians 5:31; Genesis 2:24](#)) and are both equally valuable to God ([Genesis 1:26-27; Galatians 3:28; 1 Corinthians 11:11-12](#)). And this also can be shown with the Trinity, pertaining to the Son's human nature, Jesus says "The Father is greater than I" ([John 14:28](#)) and in another place says "The Father and I are one" ([John 10:30](#)).

Some may point out the law in [Leviticus 27:1-7](#) which refers to a woman being worth half of a man regarding dedication to God in the temple. However, this was in regards to the value of *efficiency*, not of persons because all people are equally valued to God. Notice an adult male was paid for with fifty shekels and an infant male--much less agile, five shekels. The context is referring to the labor and upkeep in God's temple when a parent would dedicate their child to God. Given men are more agile than women, their efficiency would be more valuable.

Man and woman are equally valued to God:

[Galatians 3:28](#) "There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither bond nor free, there is neither male nor female: for ye are all one in Christ Jesus."

[1 Corinthians 11:11-12](#) "But among the Lord's people, women are not independent of men, and men are not independent of women. For although the first woman came from man, every other man was born from a woman, and everything comes from God."

[Joel 2:29](#) "Even on the male and female servants in those days I will pour out my Spirit."

[Exodus 20:12](#) "Honour thy father and thy mother."

[Proverbs 6:20](#) "Keep your father's commandment, and forsake not your mother's teaching."

[Matthew 23:8](#) "But you are not to be called rabbi, for you have one teacher, and you are all brothers." (Note: "Brothers" in general fits into other contexts as pertaining to both man and woman [e.g. [Deut. 15:12](#)])

**Woman came from the first man.** Anyone who is a Christian would agree with this because anyone who is a Christian believes that woman came from man. It is written in [Genesis 2:23](#), "And the rib that the Lord God had taken from the man he made into a woman and brought her to the man. Then the man said, 'This at last is bone of my bones and flesh of my flesh; she shall be called Woman, because she was taken out of Man.'" (see also: [1 Corinthians 11:8](#))

**This doesn't warrant the husband to abuse his authority in any way:**

[Ephesians 5:22-31](#) "... Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ also loved the church and gave Himself for her... So husbands ought to love their own wives as their own bodies; he who loves his wife loves himself. For no one ever hated his own flesh, but nourishes and cherishes it, just as the Lord does the church...For this reason a man shall leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh."

[Colossians 3:19](#) "Husbands, love your wives, and do not be harsh with them."

[1 Timothy 3:3-5](#) "not a drunkard, not violent but gentle, not quarrelsome, not a lover of money. He must manage his own household well, with all dignity keeping his children submissive, for if someone does not know how to manage his own household, how will he care for God's church?"

[1 Peter 3:7](#) "Likewise, husbands, live with your wives in an understanding way, showing honor to the woman as the weaker vessel, since they are heirs with you of the grace of life, so that your prayers may not be hindered."

[Exodus 21:10-11](#) "If a man who has married a slave wife takes another wife for himself, he must not



neglect the rights of the first wife to food, clothing, and sexual intimacy. If he fails in any of these three obligations, she may leave as a free woman without making any payment."

**Matthew 5:28** "But I say to you that everyone who looks at a woman with lustful intent has already committed adultery with her in his heart."

#### What about menstrual impurity?

Women suffered menstrual impurity ([Leviticus 15:19-30](#)), but it was not only women, as men did as well ([Leviticus 15:32-33](#)). Men suffered discharge impurities regarding nocturnal emission as noted in [Leviticus 15:13-15](#) and [Deuteronomy 23:10-11](#). Procedures for purifying oneself were under the sacrificial system--or levitical priesthood--which was in place prior to Christ's fulfillment on the cross and entailed bathing in water, washing clothes, and providing an offering to the Lord at the temple.

#### Man, woman and animal punished in the Garden

Regarding original sin, Eve was deceived ([1 Timothy 2:14](#)), but Adam was *not* deceived and had foreknowledge that his actions were wrong, and *still* went through with it ([Romans 5:19](#); [1 Corinthians 15:21-22](#), [45](#)). All in all, it would be wrong to say Eve alone was punished when the text reveals that both were ([Genesis 3](#)). We all know that the parents in a family represent that family as a whole, and likewise, Adam and Eve are the parents of mankind.

#### Some prophets in the Bible were women:

- Miriam ([Exodus 15:20](#))
- Deborah, also a Judge ([Judges 4:4](#))
- Huldah ([2 Kings 22:14](#); [2 Chronicles 34:22](#))
- Noadiah ([Nehemiah 6:14](#))
- Isaiah's wife, the "prophetess" ([Isaiah 8:3](#))

#### There were (and still are) rulers that were women:

**Romans 13:1** says "Let everyone be subject to the governing authorities, for there is no authority except that which God has established. The authorities that exist have been established by God."

The Bible elsewhere recounts several female rulers of the time:

- Queen of Sheba ([1 Kings 10:1-13](#))
- Candace, queen of Ethiopia ([Acts 8:27](#))
- Berenice became one of the most powerful women in the Roman Empire. When she was 16, she had married her uncle, Herod V, who was king of Chalcis. Berenice retained the title "queen" after her husband's death when she was just twenty years old. Rome then gave the kingdom of Chalcis to her brother Herod Agrippa II, which he ruled together with Berenice. Inscriptions survive which mention the brother and sister together, but with Berenice's name first. She later became a patron of Vespasian and successfully helped him to become emperor of Rome. At that time she was the lover and consort of Vespasian's son Titus.

There were powerful women in Bible times. Some women, such as Deborah and Esther, were placed in powerful positions by God, and he worked through them for his purposes. Other women were not so godly, but nowhere in the Bible is there the slightest indication or implication that God does not approve of women as leaders, rulers, or monarchs simply because they are female.

## Non-religious racism

Nontheistic Darwinists especially are quick to point their finger and accuse the Bible of "inequality" and "racism", but let's have a look at *their* worldview.

**Caucasian are superior to other races?** Darwin believed that humans with superior genes would outlive those with "weaker" ones. As Darwin himself wrote in *The Descent of Man*,

"At some future period, not very distant as measured by centuries, the civilized races of man will almost certainly exterminate and replace the savage races throughout the world. At the same time the anthropomorphous apes...will no doubt be exterminated. The break between man and his nearest allies will then be wider, for it will intervene between man in a more civilized state, as we may hope, even than the Caucasian, and some ape as low as a baboon, instead of as now between the negro or Australian [Aborigine] and the gorilla."<sup>4</sup>

Darwin viewed the "Caucasian" (white-skinned Europeans) as the dominant "race" in his evolutionary worldview. To many evolutionists at the time, mankind had evolved from ape-like creatures that had more hair, dark skin, dark eyes, etc. Therefore, more "evolved" meant less body hair, blond hair, blue eyes, etc. This is also stated in the high school biology textbook of the 1925 Scopes Trial, classifying Caucasians among all other races as the "highest type of all."<sup>5</sup>

**A pig is more valuable than the life of a newborn?** In more recent times, Princeton professor and Darwinist Peter Singer has used Darwinism to assert that "the life of a newborn is of less value than the life of a pig, a dog, or a chimpanzee."<sup>6</sup>

**Retarded people are worthless to society?** Speaking of retarded people, James Rachels writes: "What are we to say about them? The natural conclusion, according to the doctrine we are considering [Darwinism], would be that their status is that of mere animals. And perhaps we should go on to conclude that they may be used as non-human animals are used-perhaps as laboratory subjects, or as food?"<sup>7</sup>

**Rape is just a "way of life"?** According to Darwinist authors Randy Thornhill and Craig Palmer, rape is "a natural, biological phenomenon that is a product of the human evolutionary heritage," just like "the leopard's spots and the giraffe's elongated neck."<sup>8</sup>

So how exactly does evolution explain mercy, charity, and caring? If evolution is true, the driving force of nature is "survival of the fittest." Those less able to compete are destined to die. Any attempt to rescue these "less competitive" people would be to work against the most fundamental force of nature. In fact, men are generally more agile than women (aka: men are more fit for survival; women are generally more fragile and vulnerable in society). So according to their worldview, nontheistic Darwinists shouldn't have any problems here.

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<sup>4</sup> Charles Darwin, *The Descent of Man* (New York: A.L. Burt, 1874, 2nd ed.) p. 178

<sup>5</sup> George William Hunter, *Essentials of Biology: Presented in Problems* [New York, Cincinnati, Chicago: American Book, 1911], 320

<sup>6</sup> Peter Singer, *Practical Ethics*, 1st ed. [Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1979], 122-123

<sup>7</sup> James Rachels, *Created from Animals: The Moral Implications of Darwinism* [New York: Oxford University Press, 1990], 186

<sup>8</sup> Randy Thornhill and Craig Palmer, *A Natural History of Rape: Biological Bases of Sexual Coercion* [Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 2001]





Therefore, this leads us to reason that the passage in verses 28-29 is not referring to rape, but consensual sex.

"But I say to you that everyone who looks at a woman with lustful intent has already committed adultery with her in his heart." ([Matthew 5:28](#))

"Don't you realize that your bodies are actually parts of Christ? Should a man take his body, which is part of Christ, and join it to a prostitute? Never! And don't you realize that if a man joins himself to a prostitute, he becomes one body with her? For the Scriptures say, "The two are united into one." ([1 Corinthians 6:15-16](#))

### **This verse is actually a *blessing* to women**

Let's consider the culture of that time. Virginity was very important before marriage and security for the girl was a much higher expectation back then. Apostle Paul stresses in the New Testament that it is better for a couple to marry than to burn with lust ([1 Corinthians 7:9](#)) because when they have sex, they become one with each other in God's eyes ([1 Corinthians 6:15-16](#)). Fathers had ultimate authority over their daughter's husbands, hence: "give her father fifty shekels of silver" if the father agrees to the marriage.

It's not too uncommon these days for some women to complain about being played by a guy they originally liked, or used as a sex object for men to enjoy, then leave and move onto the next one. This law in Deuteronomy was actually to *prevent* this sort of thing, saying if a single man and single woman both decide to join in sex with each other, the man must not leave her.

### **Gill's commentary on Deuteronomy 22:28-29:**

If a man find a damsel that is a virgin, which is not betrothed,.... That is, meets with one in a field, which is not espoused to a man; and the man is supposed to be an unmarried man, as appears by what follows: and lay hold on her, and lie with her, she yielding to it, and so is not expressive of a rape, as Deuteronomy 22:25 where a different word from this is there used; which signifies taking strong hold of her, and ravishing her by force; yet this, though owing to his first violent seizure of her, and so different from what was obtained by enticing words, professions of love, and promises of marriage, and the like, as in Exodus 22:16 but not without her consent: and they be found; in the field together, and in the fact; or however there are witnesses of it, or they themselves have confessed, it, and perhaps betrayed by her pregnancy.

# Polygamy & Incest?



Polygamy was never commanded by God; it was only tolerated. From the beginning, God set the pattern by creating a monogamous marriage relationship with one man and one woman, Adam and Eve ([Genesis 1:27](#)). This is elaborated in [Genesis 2:24](#):

"A man will leave his father and mother and be united to his wife [singular], and they will become one flesh."

Furthermore, Christ reaffirmed God's original intention in [Matthew 19:3-9](#), noting that God created one "male and [one] female" and joined them in marriage.

Following from this God-established example, this was the general practice ([Genesis 4:1](#)) until corrupted with sin. Indeed, other men God highly praised in the Bible had multiple wives (and/or concubines), such as Abraham, David and Solomon. However, having multiple wives had a tendency to take a believer's focus away from God more. This was further expounded upon with the case of Solomon in [1 Kings chapter 11](#), where his many wives are noted to have turned his heart away from God and into idolatry.

## Polygamy was discouraged.

The law of Moses in [Deuteronomy 17:17](#) "And he shall not acquire many wives for himself, lest his heart turn away."

[Leviticus 18:18](#) "You shall not take a woman as a rival wife to her sister" (Note: "a woman to her sister" and "man to his brother" are used twenty times in the Hebrew scriptures and they never refer to a literal sister or brother; rather, they are idioms for "one in addition of another." Furthermore, the word sarah is used here for "to make a rival wife" and is used in other contexts not referring to biological siblings; e.g. [1 Samuel 1:6](#)).

[1 Corinthians 7:2](#) "But because there is so much sexual immorality, each man should have his own wife, and each woman should have her own husband."

[Song of Solomon 6:3](#) "I am my beloved's and my beloved is mine."

[1 Timothy 3:2](#) "A bishop then must be blameless, the husband of one wife..."

[1 Timothy 3:12](#) "Let the deacons be the husbands of one wife, ruling their children and their own houses well." (Some of these may be referring to the bishop and deacons, but these kinds of people were church leaders. As we know, leaders are generally the ones given more privileges than the followers, not the other way around. So this indeed further demonstrates God's intended monogamous wedlock for man.)

## Incest?

[Genesis 20:11-12](#) "Abraham replied, "... Besides, she really is my sister, the daughter of my father- though not the daughter of my mother- and she became my wife."

In the beginning, God commanded mankind to "increase and multiply" ([Genesis 9:7](#)). Due to the extravagantly smaller population in the beginning, populating through family members was made necessary. The gene pool was much purer and free from genetic mutations back then, but by the time the Law was given, the genetic errors had culminated and grew within man due to the curse of the Fall ([Leviticus 18:6](#)).

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has same-sex sexual partners.... We scanned the entire human genome and found a handful--five to be precise--of locations that are clearly associated with whether a person reports engaging in same-sex sexual behavior,' said Andrea Ganna, a biologist at the Institute of Molecular Medicine in Finland who co-led the research. He said these have 'a very small effect' and, combined, explain 'considerably less than 1% of the variance in the self-reported same-sex sexual behavior. This means that non-genetic factors--such as environment, upbringing, personality, nurture--are far more significant in influencing a person's choice of sexual partner."

**Traced from lack of affection with same-sex parent?** In a study from 1994, 117 gay men were surveyed in which 86 percent said they spent little or no time with their fathers during childhood; 50 percent believed their fathers didn't love them; 45 percent said their fathers belittled or humiliated them; and only 18 percent said their relationships with their fathers were affectionate or warm."<sup>12</sup> In another study by D.G. Brown in 1963 of 40 homosexual males, not a single one reported having had an affectionate relationship with his father."<sup>13</sup> Director of Psychosexual Education and Therapy for BCM International, Dr. Elizabeth Moberly, has taken note that "the homosexual--whether man or woman--has suffered some deficit in the relationship with the parent of the same sex; and that there is a corresponding drive to make good this deficit--through the medium of same-sex or 'homosexual' relationships."<sup>14</sup>

**Traced from sexual child abuse?** A study from 2001 concludes that another one of these non-genetic factors linked to homosexuality is most likely traced back to child molestation. In 2001, the journal Archives of Sexual Behavior published a study entitled Comparative data of childhood and adolescence molestation in heterosexual and homosexual persons in which (out of 942 participants) 46% of the homosexual men in contrast to 7% of the heterosexual men reported homosexual molestation; while 22% of lesbian women in contrast to 1% of heterosexual women reported homosexual molestation. According to a JAMA review of literature on the sexual abuse of boys, only 10%-33% of male abuse victims ever tell anyone about that abuse"<sup>15</sup> while 38% of adult women ages 18-31 who were sexually abused when young (between ages 10 months to 12 years) did not remember that they were sexually abused when young."<sup>16</sup>

## **Why God doesn't intend for marriage to be this way**

**There is no offspring reproduction.** As God commands man in [Genesis 9:7](#) "As for you, be fruitful and increase in number; multiply on the earth and increase upon it." Scientifically speaking, same sex marriage cannot reproduce offspring to carry on the seed and heritage of the family name. Would your favorite role models exist had their parents been in a gay marriage? Would you exist had your parents been in a gay marriage? The fact does not escape that the foundation of civilization rests upon natural marriage between husband and wife.

**Marriage is sacred in God's eyes**, and represents our union with Him as believers ([Ephesians 5](#)).

**When man was alone God made a woman, not another man.** Women are more sensitive to the Holy Spirit and more vulnerable to spiritual seduction. Men are less sensitive to the spirit because of the fall. Men

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<sup>12</sup> Chad W. Thompson, *Loving Homosexuals as Jesus Would* [Grand Rapids: Brazos 2004), 113-15

<sup>13</sup> referenced in an essay by behavioral scientist Georg Rekers, "The Development of a Homosexual Orientation," in *Homosexuality and American Public Life*, ed. Christopher Wolfe [Dallas: Spence, 1999], 66

<sup>14</sup> Elizabeth R. Moberly, *Homosexuality: A New Christian Ethic* (Cambridge: Clark, 2001), 2

<sup>15</sup> W.C. Holmes and G.B. Slap, "Sexual Abuse of Boys," *JAMA*, Dec. 2, 1998, p. 1859

<sup>16</sup> Jennifer A. Hurley (editor), *Child Abuse: Opposing Viewpoints* (San Diego: Greenhaven Press, 1999), pp. 113-14

depend on women for their spiritual sensitivity and women depend on men for their protection. That's why Satan is perverting sexuality and gender to destroy the union of man and woman to hinder this dependency. In [Matthew 19:4-5](#) Jesus says,

"And he answered and said unto them, Have ye not read, that he which made them at the beginning made them male and female, And said, For this cause shall a man leave father and mother, and shall cleave to his wife: and they twain shall be one flesh?"

**Impact on physical and mental health.** According to the Center for Disease Control, 66% of HIV diagnoses from 2018 were attributed to male-to-male sexual contact. Homosexual partnerships are two to three times more prone to violence, mental illness, substance abuse, and suicidal tendencies. On top of this, studies have shown that homosexual behavior decreases life span by 8 to 20 years.<sup>17</sup> Smoking, on average, reduces life span by seven years. Since we discourage smoking, why are we thinking of endorsing homosexuality?

The point here being, natural wedlock between husband and wife is what God intended and for our well being. Natural wedlock has actually been shown to be healthier, protect women and children, lower welfare costs to society, encourage an adequate replacement birth rate (resulting in enough productive young people to contribute to society and provide social security to the elderly), and improve overall civilization.

Activists are quick to judge the opposition to homosexuality as "unloving," but studies reveal that opposition can certainly be seen as an act of love and concern. We have to keep in mind that parents are especially cautious with their kids and may prohibit certain things for their child. For example, parents generally prohibit drugs or too much junk food or staying out late at night. Parents are sometimes strict with who their child hangs out with or goes out with. Do we consider this as unloving? Maybe as children we do, but I would hope not after maturity because we realize the hazards these things can bring in the long run and we realize that parents prohibit these things only because they care about their child and their safety. Likewise, as our Father in heaven, God cares about us.

**Impact on children's physical and mental health.** Furthermore, children from same-sex parenting likewise suffer and are more likely at risk for poverty, suicide, committing crime, becoming pregnant out of wedlock, poor academic and social skills, and poor physical and emotional health upon reaching adulthood. According to the American College of Pediatricians, "Given the current body of evidence...it is inappropriate, potentially hazardous to children, and dangerously irresponsible to change the age-old prohibition on same-sex parenting, whether by adoption, foster care, or reproductive manipulation. This position is rooted in the best available science." Any homosexual household showing contrary results would only be the exception rather than the rule.

**For more common objections to this subject and how to answer them, click this link:**

[Answering LGBT activist objections](#) (This is pulled from a good book on the subject, called: *Correct, not Politically Correct* Expanded and Updated edition by Frank Turek)

## **More on these scientific studies**

The 2019 "gay gene" study: <https://news.yahoo.com/no-gay-gene-study-finds-180220669.html>

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<sup>17</sup> *International Journal of Epidemiology*, Vol. 26, Issue 3, Jun 1997, pp. 657-661



The 2001 study regarding child molestation as a contributing factor:

[https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/11501300/?from\\_single\\_result-Comparative+data+of+childhood+and+adolescence+molestation+in+heterosexual+and+homosexual+persons&expanded\\_search\\_query=Comparative+data+of+childhood+and+adolescence+molestation+in+heterosexual+and+homosexual+persons](https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/11501300/?from_single_result-Comparative+data+of+childhood+and+adolescence+molestation+in+heterosexual+and+homosexual+persons&expanded_search_query=Comparative+data+of+childhood+and+adolescence+molestation+in+heterosexual+and+homosexual+persons)

CDC Surveillance Report regarding HIV cases from 2018 (p. 14):

<https://www.cdc.gov/hiv/pdf/library/reports/surveillance/cdc-hiv-surveillance-report-2018-updated-vol-31.pdf>

Modelling the impact of HIV disease on mortality in gay and bisexual men:

<https://academic.oup.com/ije/article/26/3/657/742184>

Lesbian sexual activity risks according to the Gay and Lesbian Medical Association:

<http://www.gima.org/index.cfm?fuseaction=Page.viewPage&pageID=691>

The American College of Pediatricians on harmful effects of homosexual parenting:

<https://www.acpeds.org/the-college-speaks/position-statements/parenting-issues/homosexual-parenting-is-it-time-for-change?highlight=homosexual>

For a deeper look at the impact of growing up in a homosexual household, see Dawn Stefanowicz's testimony: <http://dawnstefanowicz.org/>

The American College of Pediatricians on harmful effects of gender dysphoria:

<https://www.acpeds.org/gender-dysphoria-in-children-summary-points>



## Pro-life “anti-libertarianism”



The debate when it comes to abortion is whether or not one perceives of it as murder. Among many it is asserted that the woman has the right to choose whether she wants to go through with the pregnancy, or to terminate it.

We all know how controversial this topic can be. People have their rights and their liberty, just as many assert that the woman has the right to do what she wishes with her body. Though what if another body is added to the equation, only it's *inside* her body? Further, what if it's a girl's body inside a girl's body? Are we still keeping to that same standard when it comes to the girl's body *inside*?

"Well they're not even born yet, let alone a fetus," one might say. However, this is irrelevant when we consider the fact that the life of the child begins at conception. They may have no physical comprehension of life at the time, but neither is there any when they're *born*. There's really no difference.

Life beginning at conception is considered as fact by educated doctors and not in dispute among reputable medical textbooks. The American College of Pediatricians 2004 Policy Statement is just one of the many examples that reaffirms this attestation.<sup>18</sup>

According to researchers James Studnicki, Sharon J. MacKinnon, and John W. Fisher, "There is no credible scientific opposition to the fact that a genetically distinct human life begins at conception and that an induced abortion is death."<sup>19</sup>

Using estimates from the Guttmacher Institute, Studnicki, Mackinnon, and Fisher calculated 1,152,000 deaths from abortion in the United States in 2009, making it by far the leading cause of death, responsible for approximately 32.1% of all recorded deaths that year.

Therefore, the studies conclude that abortion does as a matter of scientific fact result in a human death—regardless of the fact that most statistics exclude these deaths.

The Bible is affirmed by this scientific fact:

As God says to the prophet Jeremiah,

"Before I formed thee in the belly I knew thee; and before thou camest forth out of the womb I sanctified thee, and I ordained thee a prophet unto the nations." ([Jeremiah 1:5](#))

As King David said of God,

"For you formed my inward parts; you knitted me together in my mother's womb. I praise you, for I am fearfully and wonderfully made. Wonderful are your works; my soul knows it very well. My frame was not hidden from you, when I was being made in secret, intricately woven in the depths of the earth. Your eyes saw my unformed substance; in your book were written, every one of them, the days that were formed for me, when as yet there was none of them." ([Psalm 139:13-16](#))

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<sup>18</sup> For more, see: <https://www.justthefacts.org/get-the-facts/when-life-begins/>

<sup>19</sup> "Induced Abortion, Mortality, and the Conduct of Science," *Open Journal of Preventive Medicine* [June 2016], 170 [http://file.scirp.org/pdf/OJPM\\_2016061708580294.pdf](http://file.scirp.org/pdf/OJPM_2016061708580294.pdf)

## What exactly happens during abortion?

For further confirmation that abortion is considered death, consider the three known processes that are carried out when an abortion happens. Many of us today are quick to dismiss abortion as simply a convenient way of avoiding birth and childcare, but what exactly happens during an abortion? What is the process that is carried out inside the womb when this happens?

**Suction curettage (5-13 weeks into pregnancy)** The most common procedure is called suction curettage. This procedure is generally carried out within 5-13 weeks of pregnancy. During suction curettage, a tube is inserted into the cervix, in which the baby is then torn into fetal parts, or pieces, through suction.

**Dilation and evacuation (late-term)** Another procedure is called dilation and evacuation. This procedure is performed as a late-term abortion (within 20 weeks of pregnancy) and is more dangerous for the woman and not as common. During this procedure, the tube suctions out the amniotic fluid surrounding the baby. A sopher clamp is then inserted into the womb and used to grasp an arm or leg. The arm or leg is then tom from it's limb, in which, one by one, the rest of the limbs are removed, along with the spine, and the heart and lungs. Getting the head out is usually the most difficult part of the procedure since it has to be crushed...but we won't get into detail with that here.

**Other modern procedures** Although there are other procedures, such as taking a mifepristone pill to cut off nutrients to the baby, or getting a digoxin injection, these are likewise not as common.

**Abortion in ancient times** This practice was heavily performed in ancient times as well, only through the process of child sacrifice. As God warns Israel, "There shall not be found among you anyone who burns his son or his daughter as an offering" ([Deuteronomy 18:10](#)).

## What if she was pregnant through assault?

But what about those who have been assaulted...those who face this situation where it was out of her control? Maybe think of it this way: No one is ever promised an easy life without trial. God, however, has a way of bringing good out of misfortune, and the child may actually end up being *just* that good that comes from it, because having a baby unexpectedly is not necessarily a bad thing. For one, it teaches us to be more responsible and accountable for our actions. Second, the relationship with the child could create a lasting impact for the good of one's life.

For a good visual representation of these abortion processes, see:

<https://thelifeinstitute.net/learning-centre/help-centre/what-the-most-common-abortion-methods>



"...to go into hell, where the fire never goes out." (Mark 9:43)

"Enter by the narrow gate. For the gate is wide and the way is easy that leads to destruction, and those who enter by it are many. For the gate is narrow and the way is hard that leads to life, and those who find it are few." (Matthew 7:13-14)

"So the law becomes slack and justice never prevails. The wicked surround the righteous--therefore judgment comes forth perverted."

**Not everything in the temporal world receives justice, and God is just.**

God's justice in the world is usually seen through civil court of law established to uphold the peace. However, how does one receive justice in the world for his wrongdoings if *he himself* is the law? If there is no hell and God only punishes us while we're here on earth, then how does God punish someone who commits a murder suicide? The perpetrator doesn't even get the chance to pay for his crime in this case because he kills himself before the penalty for his crime can be carried out. How did God punish Hitler's murder suicide, killing millions of Jews and saving himself for last?

Imagine a world where someone steals from you, rapes and murders your sibling, does you wrong, never shows remorse, and then just knowing that this person will never get what he deserves. It's one of the reasons we hear people say "go to hell", although this is not a good thing to say since the Bible teaches us to be forgiving of each other.

blood, sterilized, forced to strip naked, lie in corpse-filled ditches, and inhale the toxic fumes let off being locked in gas chambers;

Over 50 million Soviets and Ukrainian peasants were killed and starved to death under the communist rule of Lenin, Stalin and Khrushchev; 26 to 30 million "counterrevolutionaries" buried alive and dying in the prison system under Chinese communism; 300,000 Chinese people used for bayonet practice and decapitation contests, forced incest, live burial, castration, and the carving of organs while women were raped, disemboweled, tortured and nailed to walls by the Japanese army in Nanking; 1.2 million Armenians bludgeoned to death by the Ottoman Turks in the Armenian Genocide between 1915-1923; 800,000 Tutsis chopped up with machetes by the Hutus in Rwanda in 1994; 28 percent of the Cambodian population decimated by Pol Pot to remove foreign influence and return to an agrarian culture; Kurds, Kuwaitis, and Iraqis tortured and sprayed with nerve gas under Saddam Hussein; 136,000 people disappeared under the Franco regime in Spain, in addition to another 12,000 to 30,000 children who were kidnapped; etc. The list goes on.

In light of what we see from the world down through the ages, we have to think that if God is truly just, how can there *not* be a hell?

### **God has made a way out**

Some may question how God can be loving and make the path to heaven so narrow, but look around you at the world. It's not God who makes the path narrow, it's us. Attack and rejection of God's Word is not uncommon among people, including many "churches"! But this doesn't negate the fact that God has offered mankind a way out.

Consider the analogy of a parent and their child. The child disobeys the parent and is now deserving of punishment. Instead of repenting, the child gets mad and blames the whole mess on the parent since the parent brought him into the world and gave him rules to follow. Would your child be in the right? You wouldn't accept that. Yet when it comes to God, many of us likewise blame God for the mess we're in. Only God has actually paid the punishment for us in our place, just as a parent might take on the punishment of their child themselves to protect them. Yet in all this, the sinners still say no to God and then proceed to blame Him for the situation they are in! Interestingly enough though, individuals who say God is cruel want justice when they are wronged, for example, if someone steals from them, attacks them, or offends them in any way.

"Since indeed God considers it just to repay with affliction those who afflict you, and to grant relief to you who are afflicted as well as to us, when the Lord Jesus is revealed from heaven with His mighty angels in flaming fire..." ([2 Thessalonians 1:6-8](#))

### **What did Jesus ultimately save us from on the cross?**

If it was just a metaphor, Jesus would not have been so serious in (hyperbolically) warning for us to cut off our hands or our eyes to resist temptation ([Matthew 5:29-30](#)). He wouldn't have been so serious to have gone to such an extraordinary effort of being tortured and crucified so that we may be saved from it in the first place!

Yes, he saves us from our sin, but where does sin lead you in the end without the cross? And that's just it. Even though we are deserving, by His grace He has still offered a way out. Indeed, God is longsuffering for all to repent ([2 Peter 3:9](#)) and takes no pleasure in the death of the wicked ([Ezekiel 33:11](#)).

## **"How could a loving God create certain people while knowing full well they will eventually end up in hell?"**

It could be that God's goal is maybe aimed more at getting as many people as possible to heaven, rather than keeping as many people out of hell as possible. It may be, sadly enough, that He's going to have to allow some more people who will choose to go to hell to be created in order to get a larger number of people who choose to go to heaven.

Similarly--although you don't have clear and perfect foreknowledge like God--as a parent you are always willing to take a risk in having a child of your own knowing full well that they may disobey you, forsake you, or end up in serious trouble. That's not necessarily the reason you have the kid, though. You generally want the kid so you can be a loving parent to them.

## **"How is it just for a temporal deed to merit infinite punishment?"**

The issue here is the questioner assumes the punishment time must equal the time it took to perform the bad deed. However, when we look at reality, this is inconsistent. People are in prison much longer than it took to commit their crimes. A person who murders another person in just two seconds may get the punishment of a life sentence in a regular court of law! Such is it with sin in God's eyes that merits afterlife in prison. It's not so much about the time frame, but understanding the characteristics of the finite realm and the infinite realm, and time is nonexistent in the infinite realm.

## **God will judge us according to what we've done:**

**The Bible infers of certain degrees of punishment in hell:**

- [Matthew 10:14-15 and 11:20-24](#) Jesus denounces cities where most of his miracles were performed, saying they will be worse off than other cities on the day of judgment.
- [Matthew 23:14, Mark 12:40; Luke 20:47](#) Jesus rebukes some Pharisees, telling them they will have "greater condemnation".
- [James 3:1 and Luke 12:47-48](#) say one is judged more harshly according to what he knows.
- [John 19:11](#) Jesus indicates a "greater sin" of the Sanhedrin.
- Laws in the Old Testament reveal that some crimes were more serious than others. For example, a person was to be put to death on account of murder ([Exodus 21:12; Leviticus 24:17](#)) while a person was only to pay a fine or some sort of recompense for theft ([Exodus 22:1-15](#)).

**God judges and repays us according to what we've done:**

- [Jeremiah 17:10](#) "I the LORD search the heart and test the mind, to give every man according to his ways, according to the fruit of his deeds."
- [2 Corinthians 5:10](#) "For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, so that each one may receive what is due for what he has done in the body, whether good or evil."
- [Matthew 7:1](#) "The standard you use in judging is the standard by which you will be judged."
- [Romans 2:6](#) "He will render to each one according to his works"
- [Psalm 33:14-15](#) "From his throne he observes all who live on the earth. He made their hearts, so he understands everything they do."
- [Matthew 12:36](#) "But I tell you that everyone will have to give account on the day of judgment for every empty word they have spoken."
- [Hebrews 9:27](#) "And inasmuch as it is apportioned to men to die once, and after this, judgment."



(Genesis 22:2)

"He who did not spare his own Son, but gave him up for us all..." (Romans 8:32)

"Then slaughter the ram, and splatter its blood against all sides of the altar. Cut the ram into pieces, and wash off the internal organs and the legs. Set them alongside the head and the other pieces of the body, then burn the entire animal on the altar. This is a burnt offering to the Lord; it is a pleasing aroma, a special gift presented to the Lord." (Exodus 29:16-18)

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## 37

location where *Jesus was sacrificed!*

After the almost-sacrifice, Abraham then sends out a servant to find a bride for his son Isaac ([Genesis 15:2](#)). This servant's name is Eliezer, which means "God is the helper." This in turn, foreshadows the sending of the "Helper," or Holy Spirit to the believers after the Son's sacrifice ([John 15:26](#); [Acts 2](#)) in which the Bible numerous times portrays the joining of God to the believers as spiritual matrimony ([Isaiah 54:5](#); [John 3:28-29](#); [Revelation 19:7-9](#); [Ephesians 5:22-33](#)).

God promised that Abraham would become a father of nations through Isaac and God does not break promises, so Abraham most likely submitted with the assumption that God would raise Isaac back from the dead. This is seen in [Genesis 22:5](#) when he tells his men, "Abide ye here with the ass; and I and the lad will go yonder and worship, and **come again to you**" (see also: [Hebrews 11:17-19](#)).

### **Jephthah's daughter**

Regarding Jephthah's daughter, God never commanded Jephthah to sacrifice his daughter. This whole story was based on a foolish vow made by Jephthah that he would sacrifice "whatever came out the front door to greet him" (assuming it would be one of his farm animals) on his way back from battle with the Ammonites if he gained the victory ([Judges 11:30-40](#)). However, scripture never says that he really offered her up as a burnt offering.

That's because he most likely dedicated her in service to God in temple ([Leviticus 27:1-7](#)). For example, the apostle Paul indicated that human beings are to be offered to God as a "living sacrifice" ([Romans 12:1](#)), not a dead one. So this particular case with Jephthah could possibly mean that his daughter was offered as a living sacrifice by serving in the Lord's temple and remaining a virgin. This view is supported by [Judges 11:38](#) where she is noted to have "bemoaned her virginity."

### **God's Son**

**The cross was for our salvation.** Regarding the sacrifice of Jesus on the cross ([Isaiah 53:10](#)), the verses indicate God's satisfaction with the penalty for sin finally being paid for by the work of the Son on the cross. This does not imply in any way that God the Father enjoyed the torture of His Son. If it did, why did the Father have to turn His face away? ([Matthew 27:46](#))

The Bible says God doesn't enjoy afflicting *anyone* ([Lamentations 3:31-33](#)). The whole point of the crucifixion was not only for our atonement, but to show just how much God loves us and all that He is willing to go through for us to save us. To sacrifice His own begotten child! If the Father did not love His Son, then He wouldn't really love us that much.

"For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life." ([John 3:16](#))

The Father's love toward the Son is reflected in the authority the Son is granted:

"The Father loves the Son and has placed all things in His hands." ([John 3:35](#))

"...For the Father judges no one, but has given all judgment to the Son, that all may honor the Son, just as they honor the Father...For as the Father has life in himself, so he has granted the Son also to have life in himself. And he has given him authority to execute judgment, because he is



the Son of Man." ([John 5:19-29](#))

Jesus could've easily avoided getting crucified.

[Matthew 26:53-54](#) "Do you think that I cannot appeal to my Father, and he will at once send me more than twelve legions of angels? But how then should the Scriptures be fulfilled, that it must be so?"

[John 10:17-18](#) "Therefore doth my Father love me, because I lay down my life, that I might take it again. No man taketh it from me, but I lay it down of myself. I have power to lay it down, and I have power to take it again. This commandment have I received of my Father."

[Mark 10:45](#) "For even the Son of Man came not to be served but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many."

As the Trinity God, Jesus submitted through his own power and will.

[John 1:14](#) "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God...And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us..."

[Ephesians 5:2](#) "...as Christ also hath loved us, and hath **given himself for us** an offering and a sacrifice to God for a sweetsmelling savour."

[Zechariah 12:10](#) "I will pour out on the house of David and on the inhabitants of Jerusalem, the Spirit of grace and of supplication, so that they will look on Me whom they have pierced; and they will mourn for Him, as one mourns for an only son, and they will weep bitterly over Him like the bitter weeping over a firstborn."

## Animal Sacrifice

God never intended for death and slaughter. When God created the world, man and animals were all vegetarians ([Genesis 1:29-30](#)). Death came about through man's sin in the garden, which ushered in the need for atonement. God used animals in our place under the sacrificial system, and it pointed toward Christ and his fulfillment of the system on the cross. The system was established when God clothed man with animal skins in [Genesis 3:21](#), and was adopted and common in many ancient religious cultures during that time period.

Most people shouldn't really have a problem with this considering most people eat meat from animals who were slaughtered and butchered in their diet all the time; which of course begs the question: If we're all living in an evolutionary framework in which all living organisms are considered animals and where many animals eat other animals to survive, why should humans be the only exception?

Aside from all this, the Bible says God provides for the animals ([Genesis 1:30](#); [Psalms 147:9](#); [Matthew 6:26](#)) and still encourages proper treatment towards them as God's creation:

"Whoever is righteous has regard for the life of his beast..." ([Proverbs 12:10](#))



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"I told you that you would die in your sins. for unless you believe that I am he you will die in your sins." (John 8:24)

"And there is salvation in no one else, for there is no other name under heaven given among men by which we must be saved." (Acts 4:12)



After your child flies the plane away with the bomb, a series of things happen: a rescue helicopter then arrives to the island and a ship also comes ashore, well intact. In other words, sacrificing your child's life—who was your only flesh and blood—was pretty much for nothing, now that there are other ways of being saved from the island. Would you really have agreed for your biological child to die unless there were already other ways everyone could have been saved?

## **The claim that all religions are true is not logical.**

Other religions will say that they're tolerant, but this is sugarcoating. What they really mean is they allow you to practice your religion so long as it buys into their notion of truth, which is syncretistic. We all know this claim is refuted by simple logic and that everyone is exclusive in their beliefs. Theistic worldviews especially should come to the conclusion that only one truth can exist, because logic derives from God. If truth is subjective and in reality, doesn't exist, then is that true?

In fact, if you think about it, any worldview claims exclusivity, for a religion that claims "We believe all religions are correct" excludes anyone who claims exclusivity! Since this claim would indeed be exclusive, this claim is self-defeating.

What makes Christianity different among most religions is that it contains verifiable claims. We all know that where the evidence leads in any case is most likely to be true, and the evidence does just that with Christianity when one sincerely takes the time to study. If religious truth could not be determined by the evidence, then we would never be able to solve a criminal case without eyewitnesses! Thus, one simply cannot base their beliefs on logic and then claim that multiple, contradictory ways lead to God.

Some of us may have well-placed intentions by accepting all religions, and this is understandable; but one cannot truly claim this on the grounds of morale either because then you would have to hate lies...especially lies that lead people to *eternal* (rather than just temporal) consequences.

Jesus didn't say He is a good way to finding salvation in God. He said He is the *only* way. It's not easy for some of us to swallow, but how exactly can "repent or perish" or "there is no other name under heaven by which we can be saved" be taken figuratively? If verses like [John 14:6, 8:24, 6:53, and Acts 4:12](#) are false, then why should we believe anything in the Bible? In that case, it would just be "pick-and-choose." But we already know that truth is not determined just based on how good or appealing something sounds.

"No one can serve two masters, for either he will hate the one and love the other, or he will be devoted to the one and despise the other..." ([Matthew 6:24](#))

## **Well what about the people who never hear of Jesus?**

While it's within God's power to make His Name known to everyone, God being all-knowing and knowing our hearts, knows who will truly want Him and come to Him and those who won't, and the ones who truly want Him will surely hear of Him ([John 8:47](#)).

Regarding those who may not hear of Him, the Bible says that God will judge more mercifully towards those who have little knowledge of the truth or don't know it ([Luke 12:47-48; John 12:47-48; Romans 2:12-15; James 3:1](#)). However, the universe and everything around us testifies to a Creator, as well as the longing for hope; and even if someone has no knowledge of the Gospel, this doesn't defeat the fact that we all have a moral conscience of what's right and wrong. [Romans 2:15](#) says,

"They show that the work of the law is written on their hearts, while their conscience also bears witness, and their conflicting thoughts accuse or even excuse them."

One thing to keep in mind is that as the Creator, He knows and understands our hearts because He made them ([Psalm 33:14-15](#)) and as the Judge of the world, we can be rest assured that the Judge will do that which is just ([Genesis 18:25; Acts 17:31](#)). We can see this based on His judging and

rewarding people according to their deeds based on that moral conscience ([Jeremiah 17:10](#); [Matthew 7:1](#); [Romans 2:6](#)).

Also, none of this defeats the fact that the Gospel has indeed reached a significant amount of the world. Say you warned your child not to wander too far from the house but they disobeyed because they wanted to and found themselves in trouble, despite your clear warning. Who's fault would it be? You would most likely punish your child.

Likewise, God is warning us of the Truth, trying to bring us home. There are convenient ways of reaching the world through the media and the internet among many other ways to ensure His truth is heard among people of all different beliefs around the world. So is it God's fault then if people don't heed *His* call?

Many of us believe in a god who is all-loving, yet for some reason, doesn't care whether anyone is able to know the truth. But what if I said that's not the true god?

The Bible says, "Seek the Lord with all your heart and you will find him."

[Deuteronomy 4:29](#). [1 Chronicles 28:9](#). [Isaiah 55:6](#); [Jeremiah 29:12-13](#); [Matthew 7:7-8](#)

The Bible says "You will know the truth, and the truth will set you free" ([John 8:32](#)).

### **What about people *before* Jesus?**

See: [Before Christ: What Happened?](#)

### **Evidence for Christianity**

see: [Evidence of the Resurrection](#)

[Reality Confirms the Bible](#)

[illegible]

"...there is no one who does good, not even one." (Psalm 14:3)

"When I tell righteous people that they will live, but then they sin, expecting their past righteousness to save them, then none of their righteous acts will be remembered. I will destroy them for their sins." (Ezekiel 33:13)

"Lay your hand on the animal's head, and the Lord will accept its death in your place to purify you, making you right with him." (Leviticus 1:4)

## Original sin confirmed in scientific studies on psychology

Further perspective can be seen from a famous study that was conducted at Yale University from 1960 to 1963 by Stanley Milgram known as the Eichmann Experiment. The object of the experiment was to see how many ordinary people would impose serious levels of abuse, or dangerous levels of shocks, to an individual if instructed to do so by an authority figure (the shocks of course were not real, but made to look that way for the individual under testing). This was an attempt to understand how it was possible for so many people to participate in the torture and execution of so many in the Holocaust.

The study was finalized by David Mantell in 1970 in which it was revealed that 85 percent of people, while under authority, were willing to administer the maximum shock level to another individual.<sup>20</sup> We would have thought that a population seeking to move toward a "more civilized" state would have been more reluctant to shock a helpless person with 450 volts. That unfortunately, is not how man has been shown to be.

## Would you have sinned like Adam?

The inherent fact of this sin-nature and imperfection in humans is traced back to man's Fall in the Garden of Eden. If you were born in Saudi Arabia you'd probably be a Muslim; and if you were born in America, you would probably be a Christian; and if you were born in Russia you'd probably be an atheist. Likewise, if you were Adam or Eve, you probably would have sinned. We can't say we would have never disobeyed like Adam and Eve did in the garden. After all, we are human. We get deceived, we disobey. How different would this be? Especially given it was the first deceit to ever take place.

Jesus goes in depth with this idea in his accusation of hypocrisy against the Pharisees in [Matthew 23:29-35](#). According to Jesus, the Pharisees claim--had they been alive at the time--that they would never have persecuted the prophets as the Israelites did in times past. But he reveals their hypocrisy in the foretelling of their persecuting the *coming apostles* and early church--and based on this, attributes the blame to the Pharisees for the deaths of the past prophets as well, even though they were not alive at the time and was not something they did directly. This is likewise the case with Adam and Eve and original sin.

"For since by man came death, by man came also the resurrection of the dead. For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive." ([1 Corinthians 15:21-22](#))

Notice "by man came death." The name Adam means "man," which can also be taken to mean mankind in general. We all know that the parents in a family represent that family as a whole, and likewise, Adam and Eve are the parents of mankind.

## Evidence of original sin right in front of us in our everyday lives

We are all born with the symptoms of original sin because we're all replicated from the first man; man cannot reproduce a better version of himself. Evidence shows in our separation from and disobedient nature to God ([Romans 3:11](#)), the fact that (not just Adam and Eve but) we *all* work hard to make a living ([Genesis 3:17-19](#)), we *all* wear clothes ([Genesis 3:6-11](#)). childbirth is painful for *all* women (not just Eve) ([Genesis 3:16](#)), and we *all* die ([Genesis 2:16-17, 3:19](#)).

Think about this: Does anyone ever have to be taught how to follow selfish desires and addictions? Does anyone ever have to be taught how to lie, how to steal, to complain, to curse, to get

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<sup>20</sup> D.M. Mantell, "The Potential for Violence in Germany," *Journal of Social Issues* 27:110-11

revenge, or how to look upon someone with lust? And on top of this, be *taught* how to apologize? As the father of our Constitution, James Madison once said, "If men were angels no government would be necessary."

Take the movie Underworld for example. The main character, Selene's family is allegedly killed by werewolves, so she makes it her sole mission to destroy all werewolves. But was it *all* werewolves who killed her family? No, just a select few (allegedly), yet blame is attributed to werewolves as a whole.

Expounding on this and if you think about it, just like Selene, we impose blame through stereotyping all the time. There may have been a very attractive person for example who wronged you or cheated on you in the past, so now you show disdain to all attractive people, despite the fact none of these other people wronged you. White people of today still take blame for the Atlantic slave trade regarding Africans, despite the fact none of them today were directly involved. And this is considered a reasonable approach.

In fact, people who reject Christianity may have been wronged by a "Christian," and now all of a sudden, *all* Christians are "the same way." Some of these are people who reject the reality of original sin, yet they follow and apply the *same standard* without even realizing it! (This isn't implying all Christians really *are* the same though, but regardless, this way of thinking relates to the reality of original sin.)

As Christian philosopher Alvin Plantinga put it, "The doctrine of original sin has been verified in the wars, cruelty, and general hatefulness that have characterized human history from its very inception to the present."<sup>21</sup>

Atheist Michael Ruse agrees, "I think Christianity is spot on about original sin--how could one think otherwise, when the world's most civilized and advanced people (the people of Beethoven, Goethe, Kant) embraced that slime-ball Hitler and participated in the Holocaust?"<sup>22</sup>

### **Though we are born with original sin, we will not be judged by it.**

The Bible states we will be judged for our *own* sins:

[Deuteronomy 24:16](#) "The fathers shall not be put to death for the children, neither shall the children be put to death for the fathers: every man shall be put to death for his own sin."

[Ezekiel 18:20](#) "The soul that sinneth, it shall die. The son shall not bear the iniquity of the father, neither shall the father bear the iniquity of the son: the righteousness of the righteous shall be upon him, and the wickedness of the wicked shall be upon him."

[Galatians 6:5](#) "For we are each responsible for our own conduct."

[Romans 2:6](#) "He will render to each one according to his works."

For a good thought provoking book that goes more in depth with the concept of original sin and its evident nature in our world, see: "Why Does God Allow Evil?" by Clay Jones

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<sup>21</sup> Alvin Plantinga, *Warranted Christian Belief* (Oxford University, 2000), 207

<sup>22</sup> Michael Ruse, "Darwinism and Christianity Redux: A Response to My Critics," *Philosophia Christi* 4 [2002], 192

"O Lord, how long shall I cry for help, and you will not hear? Or cry to you "Violence!" and you will not save? Why do you make me see iniquity, and why do you idly look at wrong? Destruction and violence are before me; strife and contention arise." (**Habakkuk 1:2-3**)

Yet the question is still asked today: If God is all-powerful and knows everything that's going to happen and is all-loving, why would he allow so much evil to happen?

### What about evil that God *does* prevent?

Consider the case where God does prevent a bad thing from happening, though. How would anyone be able to know God prevented a particular thing if it had never happened in the first place? Some of us may even be surprised by all the bad things He actually has prevented that we don't even know about because in that case... they wouldn't have happened!

**God can use evil to bring about the greater good.**

I lost my step-dad to cancer when I was 15. It was a heavy weight to bear in my life and I struggled around my peers and in my daily activities. I still remember the tears I shed looking back through the older pictures. I like to think of it this way though: This caused my mom and I to move north to a different location since she couldn't keep up with the bills on her own. I met new people and encountered new circumstances that I may have possibly never known had my step-dad not passed away then...people that introduced me to new things and new joys in life.

Some may ask why there is so much suffering in the world, but I like to think God also uses even the suffering that does happen to bring about the greater good. Joseph was a good example of this. If he hadn't been sold into slavery by his evil brothers and undergone the suffering in prison all those years, Egypt would not have been saved from the famine. In [Genesis 50:19-20](#) regarding his brothers, "Joseph said to them, ... But as for you, you meant evil against me; but God meant it for good, in order to bring it about as it is this day, to save many people alive."



Think about it.

Think about the nails...the blood... the sweat... and the tears on the cross. Just what came about through all of this?

...the Resurrection and the promise of eternal life!

Some of us don't realize the very answer to this question that's been asked generation after generation lies in our hope and *salvation*.

"And we know that for those who love God all things work together for good, for those who are called according to his purpose." ([Romans 8:28](#))

"For though He wounds, He also bandages. He strikes, but His hands also heal." ([Job 5:18](#))

"Look among the nations, and see; wonder and be astounded. For I am doing a work in your days that you would not believe if told." ([Habakkuk 1:5](#))

### **God can use evil and suffering to bring about spiritual growth.**

After wide-ranging research into the topic of suffering, spiritual author Philip Yancey wrote, "As I visited people whose pain far exceeded my own...I was surprised by its effects. Suffering seemed as likely to reinforce faith as to sow agnosticism."<sup>23</sup>

Scottish theologian James S. Stewart admitted: "It is the spectators, the people who are outside, looking at the tragedy, from whose ranks the skeptics come; it is not those who are actually in the arena and who know suffering from the inside. Indeed, the fact is that it is the world's greatest sufferers who have produced the most shining examples of unconquerable faith."<sup>24</sup>

That's not to say that some may *lose* faith on account of evil and suffering in their life, but nonetheless, it has shown to bring about a spiritual growth in many other people.

**When you're suffering:** [Romans 5:3-5](#) "Not only that, but we rejoice in our sufferings, knowing that suffering produces endurance, and endurance produces character, and character produces hope, and hope does not put us to shame, because God's love has been poured into our hearts through the Holy Spirit who has been given to us."

**When someone else is suffering:** [Isaiah 58:7](#) "Share your food with the hungry, and give shelter to the homeless. Give clothes to those who need them, and do not hide from relatives who need your help."

**God's discipline and punishment:** Children who always get what they want from their parents and don't learn from their mistakes are often considered a spoiled brat. Likewise, as our Father in heaven, He is more focused on our character than our comfort.

- [Hebrews 12:7](#) reminds us, "It is for discipline that you have to endure. God is treating you as sons. For what son is there whom his father does not discipline?"

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<sup>23</sup> *Where is God When it Hurts?*, 255-256

<sup>24</sup> Warren W. Wiersbe, *Classic Sermons on Suffering* (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Kregel Publications, 1984), 92

- [Proverbs 13:24](#) says, "Whoever spares the rod hates his son, but he who loves him is diligent to discipline him."
- In [Revelation 3:19](#) God says "Those whom I love I rebuke and discipline. So be earnest and repent."
- [Hebrews 12:11](#): "No discipline seems pleasant at the time, but painful. Later on, however, it produces a harvest of righteousness and peace for those who have been trained by it."

**Helps us to appreciate the good more, when it happens.** Suffering helps draw us to God and seek dependence on Him. You generally want to be remembered for the good you've done for your spouse or friend, but how can that be done when they take you for granted? Likewise, if we receive only good things, how would we ever feel the need for God? When trial strikes, it's never easy but it helps us to appreciate the good in our lives when it happens and sometimes God has to get our attention the hard way.

- [John 16:33](#) "In the world you will have tribulation. But take heart; I [Jesus] have overcome the world."
- [Psalm 94:18-19](#) "I cried out, "I am slipping!" but your unfailing love, O Lord, supported me. When doubts filled my mind, your comfort gave me renewed hope and cheer."
- [2 Corinthians 1:3-4](#) "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of mercies and God of all comfort, who comforts us in all our affliction, so that we may be able to comfort those who are in any affliction, with the comfort with which we ourselves are comforted by God."
- [2 Corinthians 12:9](#) "But he said to me, "My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness." Therefore I will boast all the more gladly of my weaknesses, so that the power of Christ may rest upon me."
- [1 Peter 5:7-10](#) "Cast all your anxiety on him because he cares for you...And after you have suffered a little while, the God of all grace, who has called you to his eternal glory in Christ, will himself restore, confirm, strengthen, and establish you."

### **Suffering rooted in sacrifice produces the strongest love.**

God's Love is incomparable and stronger than any human love, because "love is of God" and "God is love" ([1 John 4:7-8](#)). We show love to each other with good deeds and giving and helping each other, just as God provides for us sunlight each day and food and supplications. But how much more is love when instead of just doing good to someone... one is willing to suffer for another? Doesn't that say even more?

Yet this is just what God went through as Christ on earth and on the cross.

"Greater love has no one than this, that someone lay down his life for his friends."

([John 15:13](#))

That's not to say that suffering alone brings about the strongest love, because it's rooted in *sacrifice*, and sacrifice is ultimately what brings out the strongest love whether suffering is involved or not. For a God who is Love itself would be sacrificial in essence and before suffering even came about from man's sin in the Garden. (Note: having a sacrificial essence independent of creation only makes sense with a Trinity God.)

## God gives us free will.

We can't neglect the fact that following God is a life choice, and never forced upon us. This is similar to the way you would act toward the one you love. If you truly loved someone, you wouldn't force yourself on them because then that would be selfish. Love is a choice and commitment between both of the two parties involved in the relationship.

"Choose this day whom you will serve...But as for me and my house, we will serve the Lord."  
([Joshua 24:25](#))

Our free will is not negated by our evil actions. When a tool or object (like your phone for example) isn't working the way you like or disobeys your command, it's usually a natural reaction to blame the object rather than the factory worker. Likewise, when a person does evil, it's usually a natural reaction to blame the person rather than the Creator.

**Does this mean there is no free will in heaven?** Well, free-will is ultimately the choice to accept or reject God. When you go to heaven, this means you already chose Him beforehand! So free-will technically, no longer applies.

## Evil doesn't disprove God's existence.

By complaining of evil in the world, you would have to have a standard of what is good. But where does this standard come from apart from a Creator? Whenever there is a law, there is always a law giver. Since there is clearly a moral law in the world, then there must be a Law Giver, aka: God.

Biology can't tell us where evil comes from. However, the Bible tells us why there is evil and just where it came from: the Fall in the garden. Before the Fall, everything was perfect, and therefore there was no knowledge of what is "good" since there was no evil. After all, Adam and Eve didn't eat from the tree of knowledge of evil; they ate from the tree of knowledge of *both* good and evil.

Regarding evil [Jeremiah 17:9](#) says, "The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked: who can know it?" In [Mark 7:21-22](#), Jesus says, "For from within the hearts of men come evil thoughts, sexual immorality, theft, murder, adultery, greed, wickedness, deceit, debauchery, envy, slander, arrogance, and foolishness." This is why we not only see God as our Creator, but also as our *Savior and Redeemer*.

Think of it another way: There are many people who have long hair. Does this mean barbers don't exist because there are many people with long hair? Likewise, there are many people who are evil in the world, but this still doesn't mean God doesn't exist. Just like some people don't seek a barber to get their haircut, the problem is... people don't seek God!

## Hope and justice in the afterlife

The thing with this question is it presupposes no afterlife. But when God is brought into the picture, then the afterlife must therefore, be brought into the picture as well. Evil, suffering and death is unfortunate, but in a world today without these things you gotta admit... what would the Resurrection mean to anyone? In that case you could say, "Well we're all perfectly fine in this world already, why should there be a next life?"

Hope is not ultimately intended to be placed in this fallen world which is already passing away and deteriorating; hope is intended for the next world with our Creator which is eternal, and where there is no *more* evil and suffering. That's not to say we may go around and start trashing, littering, polluting and

destroying the world around us if we like. Indeed the Bible encourages us to be stewards of God's creation, keeping a clean and healthy environment ([Genesis 1:26-31](#); [Numbers 35:33-34](#); [Psalm 24:1](#); [Revelation 11:18](#)).

All unrepentant evil will be judged and brought to justice in the afterlife.

- [2 Corinthians 5:10](#) "For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, so that each one may receive what is due for what he has done in the body, whether good or evil."
- [Romans 2:6](#) "He will render to each one according to his works"
- [Matthew 12:36](#) "But I tell you that everyone will have to give account on the day of judgment for every empty word they have spoken."
- [Hebrews 9:27](#) "And inasmuch as it is apportioned to men to die once, and after this, judgment."

There another place to look to, where there is no more evil and suffering.

- [Matthew 6:33](#) "But seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things will be added unto you."
- [1 Corinthians 15:16-19](#) "And if there is no resurrection of the dead, then Christ has not been raised. And if Christ has not been raised, then your faith is useless and you are still guilty of your sins...And if our hope in Christ is only for this life, we are more to be pitied than anyone in the world."
- [Romans 8:18](#) "The sufferings of this present time are not worth comparing with the glory that is to be revealed to us."
- [Revelation 21:4-5](#) "He will wipe away every tear from their eyes, and there will be no more death or mourning or crying or pain, for the former things have passed away." And the One seated on the throne said. "Behold, I make all things new."

## Animal suffering?

When God created the world, man and animals were all vegetarians ([Genesis 1:29-30](#)). Death and suffering came about through man's sin in the garden. Though animal suffering is unfortunate, we must remember that they coexist with us as a byproduct in a fallen world where bad things can happen any time, any place.

However, [Genesis 1:30](#) says animals have the "breath of life" just as humans do, and that animals likewise have spirits that live on after death ([Ecclesiastes 3:19-21](#); [1 Corinthians 15:35-49](#)).

Passages in Isaiah infer that animals will be in heaven and will no longer hunt each other, just as it was intended in the beginning:

"The wolf and the lamb shall graze together; the lion shall eat straw like the ox, and dust shall be the serpent's food. They shall not hurt or destroy in all my holy mountain," says the LORD." ([Isaiah 65:25](#); [11:6-9](#))

Because animals have spirits, they also have minds and the ability to display certain moral virtues as well, and can learn these traits through suffering--similar to how humans do, just not at the same level as humans. For example, animals can do good by protecting their family and providing for their little ones.

Aside from all this, the Bible says God cares and provides for the animals ([Genesis 1:30](#); [Psalms 147:9](#); [Matthew 6:26](#)) and still encourages proper treatment towards them as God's creation:

"Whoever is righteous has regard for the life of his beast..." ([Proverbs 12:10](#))

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"But the other criminal protested, 'Don't you fear God even when you have been sentenced to die? We deserve to die for our crimes, but this man hasn't done anything wrong.' Then he said, 'Jesus, remember me when you come into your Kingdom.' And Jesus replied, 'I assure you, today you will be with me in paradise.'" (Luke 23:39-43)

"Her sins--and they are many--have been forgiven, so she has shown me much love. But a person who is forgiven little shows only little love."

Just like when someone wrongs you, it always costs you something either financially or emotionally. You can choose to get revenge and make the person pay... or you can pay for it yourself. Paying this debt yourself instead of seeking revenge is what forgiveness is, just as God paid our debt on the cross for breaking His covenant.

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"But the Spirit of the Lord departed from Saul, and an evil spirit from the Lord troubled him."  
(1 Samuel 16:14)

In this verse, the word here translated "evil" is from a Hebrew word that means "adversity, affliction, calamity, distress, misery." Notice how the other major English Bible translations render the word: "disaster" (NIV, HCSB), "calamity" (NKJV, NAS, ESV), and "woe" (NRSV).

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## Bashing Babies on Rocks?

"Blessed shall he be who takes your little ones and dashes them against the rock!" ([Psalm 137:9](#))

In the verse we see the Psalmist wishing a rather questionable form of violence. The argument follows: If this is supposed to be the inspired words of God, then what kind of a loving God would condone such a harsh thing towards innocent babies?

The short answer: He *doesn't*. The long answer:

### **Just because it's in the Bible, it doesn't mean God commanded it**

This verse is from a psalm, and the psalms are known to use poetic expression to extrapolate the author's emotion. In this passage, the historical context tells us that the author, an Israelite, is undergoing captivity and subjugation from a foreign nation, Babylon. This takes place during the first siege and destruction of Jerusalem where Israel is taken captive by the merciless nation of Babylon. Having had their families killed and their homeland ransacked and left in ruin, you can imagine how one would feel towards their enemy.

Warfare in ancient times was brutal, and the Bible indicates that the nations of the time showed no mercy with killing, even with children ([Isaiah 13:16](#); [Hosea 13:16](#); [Nahum 3:10](#)). The psalmist is alluding to and using this same harsh terminology towards the Edomites (a tribe of Babylon)--given it was a common subjugation atrocity in ancient times--to express his feelings of vengeance. Though God *did* command the killing of many Canaanites, there are certainly more humane ways of ending a people's life (more on this in chapter: [Genocide?](#)) Furthermore, and though still wrong, it wasn't looked at in the sense of harming an innocent, but more so in the sense of eradicating the growth of a people, since growth of a people group was found in the offspring.

We all know that even as a God-follower, nobody is perfect, and we all still have hateful thoughts. No where in the Bible does it say that God necessarily condones this behavior. As Jesus says,

"For out of the heart come evil thoughts, murder, adultery, sexual immorality, theft, false witness, slander." ([Matthew 15:19](#))

Similar to the psalmist who lost everything, Job himself says,

"Therefore I will not restrain my mouth; I will speak in the anguish of my spirit; I will complain in the bitterness of my soul." ([Job 7:11](#))

Just because one is changed through the Holy Spirit, it doesn't necessarily mean they won't still have impure thoughts from time to time, because we're human and we have feelings.

In conclusion, Jesus reminds us regarding children:

"See that you do not despise one of these little ones. For I tell you that in heaven their angels always see the face of my Father who is in heaven." ([Matthew 18:10](#))

"And they were bringing children to him that he might touch them, and the disciples rebuked them. But when Jesus saw it, he was indignant and said to them, "Let the children come to me; do not hinder them, for to such belongs the kingdom of God. Truly, I say to you, whoever does not receive the kingdom of God like a child shall not enter it." And he took them in his arms and blessed them, laying his hands on them." ([Mark 10:13-16](#))



# God Doesn't Want Everyone to be Saved?



"So then it depends not on human will or exertion, but on God, who has mercy. For the Scripture says to Pharaoh, 'For this very purpose I [God] have raised you up, that I might show my power in you, and that my name might be proclaimed in all the earth.' So then he [God] has mercy on whomever he wills, and he hardens whomever he wills. You will say to me [Paul] then, 'Why does he still find fault? For who can resist his will?' But who are you, O man, to answer back to God?...What if God, desiring to show his wrath and to make known his power, has endured with much patience vessels of wrath prepared for destruction, in order to make known the riches of his glory for vessels of mercy..." ([Romans 9:16-23](#))



The passage is sometimes read in the sense that certain people, or the "vessels of wrath" whom God himself "hardens" are never meant to be God-willingly saved and that only a certain few people, or "vessels of mercy" are meant to be saved. In other words, God doesn't want all of his creation to be saved, only a select few.

It's true God doesn't owe us anything, and while it's within God's right to withhold salvation to anyone he wishes as the Creator, (or even to offer it to anyone at *all*) the Bible at the same time does say that God is loving, gracious and merciful towards all ([Psalms 145:8-9](#)). With this in mind, the misinterpretation in this passage is simply refuted by examining the whole context of the passage and aligning it with many other verses in the bible that outright contradict this view.

So what is the context behind [Romans 9](#)?

## Paul is refuting the Jewish belief that God's salvation is only for his chosen people

As God's chosen people, many Jews held a certain pride about themselves. Paul, a Jew himself, is addressing some of his fellow brethren who seemed to have an issue with salvation being given to all men of all races, given they were supposed to be the "chosen ones." Paul is addressing them, basically saying that God, as the Creator of all peoples, is free to offer salvation to *all* of his creation as he pleases:

"even us whom he has called, not from the Jews only but also from the Gentiles? As indeed he says in Hosea, 'Those who were not my people I will call 'my people'..." (vv. 24-25)

From the chapter, we see that some Jews were offended that they wouldn't be given salvation for the sole reason that they were the chosen race (offspring of Abraham):

"Not all who are descended from Israel belong to Israel, and not all are children of Abraham because they are his offspring...This means that it is not the children of the flesh who are the children of God, but the children of the promise are counted as offspring." (vv. 6-8)

And hence, God "has mercy on whom he wills" whether it be Jew *or* Gentile, and God "hardens whom he wills," whether it be Gentile *or* Jew.

## God "hardens whom he wills"?

Just as Paul's audience was asking, how is it one's fault for having a hard heart if it was God who hardened it in the first place? Let's consider a scenario here: Say my friend hates being told what to do. One day, he sits at my table, and without consideration, puts his feet *on the table*. I tell him to take his feet off of the table. My friend gets mad at me and hardens his heart towards me at that moment. In a sense, I

also hardened his heart by doing something he didn't like, aka: telling him what to do. My friend was still clearly in the wrong though at the same time.

Now let's have a look at Pharaoh and God hardening *his* heart. The Bible several times says that *Pharaoh* hardened *his own heart* ([Exodus 8:15, 32; 9:34-35](#)). This was after Moses kept telling him to free his people. So just like the previous scenario, God *did* harden Pharaoh's heart, only it was through the provocation of Moses. And just as one might harden their heart towards God after hearing his message to be set *free* from *sin*.

Even though some of these instances are meant to happen as a part of his will, we have to keep in mind that God is all-knowing of all outcomes and can bring about the greater good from even the most unexpected ways (as that of Israel's deliverance). And even when someone's heart is hardened, it doesn't necessarily mean they will never be saved. As we know, the apostle Paul himself was *very* hard-hearted towards Jesus at first. He is then later seen serving and *suffering* for Jesus as a devoted follower.

### Vessels "prepared for destruction"?

Paul references certain people as "vessels prepared for destruction" and "vessels prepared for glory." These are simply terms for the unrepentant and the saved. These terms still do not negate our free will because God is all-knowing and already knows who will *choose* to repent and he already knows who will *choose* to reject his offer of salvation. Paul continues:

"...Gentiles who did not pursue righteousness have attained it, that is, a righteousness that is by faith; but that Israel who pursued a law that would lead to righteousness did not succeed in reaching that law. Why? Because they **did not pursue it by faith**, but as if it were based on works. They have stumbled over the stumbling stone, as it is written, 'Behold, I am laying in Zion a stone of stumbling [Jesus], and a rock of offense; and **whoever believes in him** will not be put to shame.'" (vv. 30-33)

### God's sovereignty doesn't negate our free will

Jesus laments the Israelites:

"O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, the city that kills the prophets and stones those who are sent to it! How often would I have gathered your children together as a hen gathers her brood under her wings, and **you were not willing!**" ([Matthew 23:37](#))

Joshua exhorts his people:

"But if serving the Lord seems undesirable to you, then **choose** for yourselves this day whom you will serve...But as for me and my household, we will serve the Lord." ([Joshua 24:14-15](#))

Moses exhorts the Israelites:

"I call heaven and earth to witness against you today, that I have set before you life and death, blessing and curse. Therefore **choose** life, that you and your offspring may live, loving the Lord your God, obeying his voice and holding fast to him, for he is your life and length of days." ([Deuteronomy 30:19-20](#))

King David encourages Solomon:

"...learn to know the God of your ancestors intimately. Worship and serve him with your whole heart and a willing mind. For the Lord sees every heart and knows every plan and thought. If you seek him, you will find him. But if you forsake him, he will reject you forever." ([1 Chronicles 28:9](#))

### God “desiring to show his wrath” to “make known the riches of his glory”?

Paul is alluding to [Exodus 10:1-2](#) here, but this is basically saying that God desires justice. Evil is most definitely worthy of God's vengeance and judgment, and his glory shines through in this because we all have an innate desire to see justice in the world. And this is seen all throughout the Bible when God brings forth judgment upon the nations.

Still though, the Bible doesn't imply he necessarily *enjoys* afflicting in and of itself:

"But though he cause grief, yet will he have compassion according to the multitude of his mercies. For he **doth not afflict willingly** nor grieve the children of men." ([Lamentations 3:32-33](#))

### Jesus died for the world

"For God so loved **the world**, that he gave his only Son, that **whoever** believes in him should not perish but have eternal life. For God did not send his Son into the world to condemn the world, but in order that **the world** might be saved through him." ([John 3:16-17](#))

"He is the propitiation for our sins, and **not for ours only** but **also for the sins of the whole world**." ([1 John 2:2](#))

"For the bread of God is he which cometh down from heaven, and giveth life unto **the world**." ([John 6:33](#))

"The Lord is not slow to fulfill his promise as some count slowness, but is patient toward you, not wishing that **any** should perish, but that **all** should reach repentance." ([2 Peter 3:9](#))

"The times of ignorance God overlooked, but now he commands **all people everywhere** to repent." ([Acts 17:30](#))

"For I take no pleasure in the death of **anyone**, declares the Sovereign Lord. Repent and live!" ([Ezekiel 18:32](#))

Apostle Paul writes:

"I urge you, first of all, to **pray for all people**. Ask God to help them; intercede on their behalf, and give thanks for them. Pray this way for kings and all who are in authority so that we can live peaceful and quiet lives marked by godliness and dignity. This is good and pleases God our Savior, who wants **everyone to be saved and to understand the truth**. For, there is one God and one Mediator who can reconcile God and humanity-the man Christ Jesus. He gave his life to purchase freedom for **everyone**. This is the message God gave to the world at just the right time." ([1 Timothy 2:1-6](#))

# A Bloody Church History



Popular claims among the secular world is that religion is the greatest source of evil in the world and that more wars have been fought and more blood has been shed in the name of God than for any other cause. History reveals several atrocities in the church when we examine the Crusades, the Inquisitions and the Witch Trials.

However, we also have to keep in mind that these events occurred more than a thousand years after the start of Christianity and each took place within the span of just a few hundred years or less! Furthermore, when we examine the Crusades we see that it ultimately resulted from a previous offensive of Islamic jihadists driving out the Christians and Jews from the holy land -- in other words, the Crusades were not initially started by the Christians.

## Religion vs. Representation

One problem with this claim is that it is not entirely clear what conclusions about religion would be justified from that data, especially regarding Christianity. Just because these things happened in church history, it does not necessarily give them any kind of scriptural warrant. The merging of church and state wasn't intended as Christians are reminded to distinguish between what belongs to the government and what belongs to God ([Matthew 22:15-21](#)). In [John 18:36](#) Jesus assures us, "My kingdom is not of this world. If My kingdom were of this world, My servants would fight." Jesus commanded Peter in [Matthew 26:47-56](#), "Put your sword back in its place, for all who draw the sword will die by the sword" (verse 52).

Likewise, parents can set a good moral example for their children but this does not always guarantee their child will follow through with their teachings, especially with competing influences in the world. Would this make it the parent's fault if their child willingly ignored the parent's wise precepts and chose to go down the wrong path himself?

Since oppression and mayhem are neither religious duties for Christians nor logical applications of the teachings of Christ, this may tell you something about people, but it tells you nothing about the biblical God or the gospel. In fact, many true Christians who actually followed the teachings of Jesus were slain by these false Christians. So if atheists are so quick to point out inconsistencies with religious people to their religion, then why make an exception with these infamous historical events?

Take Jeffrey Dahmer who brutally killed seventeen men and boys, dismembering them, storing their parts and indulging in cannibalism and necrophilia with the statement: "If a person doesn't think that there is a God to be accountable to, then what's the point of trying to modify your behavior to keep it within acceptable ranges?" Since he was an atheist at the time, it could just as well be said that this kind of behavior represents atheism as a whole. "But that's not what atheism really teaches!!" the atheist says? But of course.

## Good things can be corrupted

There are many things in the world--not just religion--that can become corrupted. For example: music, food, money, marriage, etc. These things, when we trace them back to their roots, are good in their essence but can be twisted or used for the wrong purposes. Likewise, when we trace certain religions--like Christianity--back to their roots, we get a clearer picture of its purer, truer form and its original message or purpose.

## Most wars are *not* religious issues

The claim that “more wars have been fought in the name of religion” is nothing short of a false allegation. In their massive three-volume Encyclopedia of Wars, researchers Charles Phillips and Alan Axelrod show that of the 1,763 wars they chronicle over the last five millennia, only 123 were motivated by religion (that's less than 7 percent). In fact two of the greatest military conflagrations in history (World War I with 16.5 million dead, and World War II with 60-80 million dead) had nothing to do with religion.

Historical facts have actually shown that significantly greater evil has resulted from the *denial* of God than from pursuit of God, contrary to secular claims. In the twentieth century alone, Dennis Prager notes, “more innocent people have been murdered, tortured, and enslaved by secular ideologies--Nazism and communism--than by all religions in history.”<sup>25</sup>

Donald McFarlan's Guinness Book of World Records in the category “Judicial,” subheading “Crimes: Mass Killings” report unimaginable proportions resulted not from religion but from institutionalized atheism: more than 66 million Soviets wiped out under the communist leadership of Lenin, Stalin, and Khrushchev, between 32 million and 61 million Chinese killed under communist regimes since 1949; one-third of the 8 million Khmers--2.7 million people killed between 1975 and 1979 under the communist Khmer Rouge.<sup>26</sup>

The purpose behind these wars may not have been “to spread atheism” particularly. However, despite this, atheism in itself perfectly justifies any immoral behavior, regardless of the reason or motive in any killing (although one could use evolution as a driving factor in regards to “superior races”). This is not to say that atheists are immoral people of course. The fact is though, there is no God to be accountable to after death in atheism. There is a civil law to be accountable to on earth, yes. But things are different when it's the *law itself* committing these killings (Lenin, Stalin, etc.).

## What good has religion really done?

Regarding especially Christianity, one could actually say religion has its benefits. For one thing, we get paid holiday vacations!

Scholar Paul Copan sums up the major impact of Christianity on world civilization:<sup>27</sup>

**Eradicating slavery.** As the Christian faith spread into barbarian Europe after the fall of Rome, the practice of slavery dwindled. Slavery virtually died out in Europe by the Middle Ages, when Europe was well Christianized. When slavery reappeared, it was strongly opposed by dedicated believers among the Mennonites and Quakers as well as by Christian leaders such as theologian Richard Baxter, John Wesley, and William Wilberforce.

**Opposing infanticide and rescuing infants from exposure.** This practice, common among the Greeks and Romans, was outlawed in the fourth century, under the influence of Christians.

**Eliminating gladiatorial games.** These brutal games usually involved slaves and criminals. They were outlawed in the late fourth century in the East and the early fifth century in the West.

**Building hospitals and hospices.** Unlike Greeks and Romans, early Christians were concerned about health care, looking after the sick and the dying. Once the Christian faith became official in the empire, this ministry expanded considerably. The Council of Nicea (AD 325) commissioned bishops to establish

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<sup>25</sup> Prager, *Ultimate Issues*, [July-Sept. 1989]

<sup>26</sup> McFarlan, ed., *Guinness Book of Records 1992* [New York: Facts on File, 1991], 92

<sup>27</sup> Copan, *Is God a Moral Monster?* p.218-219

hospice care in every city where a church building existed. The first hospital was built under St. Basil in Caesarea (369). By the Middle Ages, hospitals existed throughout Europe. (Think too of Florence Nightingale, the founding of the Red Cross, and so on.)

**Elevating women's status/rights.** Although feminists claim that the Christian faith puts women down and keeps them under, history shows the opposite. Though women have been routinely oppressed in most cultures, we see something different in Jesus's treatment of women (e.g., the Samaritan woman in [John 4](#) or Mary and Martha in [Luke 10:38-42](#)). Luke's Gospel highlights the prominent place of women in Jesus's life and ministry. Early Christians routinely protected women and children from neglect and abuse.

**Founding Europe and North America's great universities.** The Sorbonne, Oxford, Harvard, Yale, and Princeton are some of the many notable universities established to God's glory. In Europe, many universities sprang forth from medieval monasteries; in America, the earliest and most notable universities began as institutions for training pastors and missionaries.

**Writing extraordinary works of literature.** The remarkable literature of Christians inspired by their faith ranges from Augustine's *City of God* and Eusebius's *Ecclesiastical History* to Dante's *Comedy* and John Milton's *Paradise Lost* to the works of J.R.R. Tolkien, C.S. Lewis, Flannery O'Connor, and Aleksandr Solzhenitsyn. Engaging in/writing about philosophy and theology and the life of reason: Some of the leading representatives include Augustine, Anselm, Thomas Aquinas, Blaise Pascal, Søren Kierkegaard, and Jonathan Edwards. Today, organizations such as the Society of Christian Philosophers and the Evangelical Philosophical Society attest to this ongoing tradition.

**Creating beautiful masterpieces of art, sculpture, and architecture.** Think of Michelangelo, Rembrandt van Rijn, Peter Paul Rubens, or the Byzantine and gothic cathedrals.

**Establishing modern science.** Modern science had its roots in the biblical conviction that the world was created by a rational God. For this reason, it was orderly and predictable, and it could be studied and understood by human minds. We could mention Isaac Newton, Galileo Galilei, Nicholas Copernicus, Johannes Kepler, Michael Faraday, William T. Kelvin, Robert Boyle, Anton Lavoisier, and many others.

**Composing brilliant music.** The works of Johann Sebastian Bach, Georg F. Handel, Felix Mendelssohn, and Franz Joseph Haydn speak for themselves.

**Advocating human rights, democracy, political freedoms, concern for the poor.** The chief movers who established the Universal Declaration on Human Rights of 1948 were primarily church coalitions and individual Christian leaders who worked closely with some Jewish rabbis to create a "new world order of human rights. These themes are rooted in the biblical ideals that all humans are made in God's image, that they have dignity and worth, and that they are equal before the law. We further see this in ministries for the poor and homeless such as World Vision, Reach Beyond, Salvation Army, and more. As a bonus, the Braille reading system finds its roots in Christianity by a blind man named Louis Braille inspired by his faith to help others impaired like himself.

It's difficult to exaggerate the impact that Jesus of Nazareth has had on history and the countless lives impacted by this one man's life and teaching—indeed, the transforming power of his cross and resurrection. The historian Jaroslav Pelikan remarked that by the changing of the calendar (to BC and AD according to "the year of the Lord") and other ways, "everyone is compelled to acknowledge that because of Jesus of Nazareth history will never be the same."<sup>28</sup>

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<sup>28</sup> *Jesus Through the Centuries*, 33



# Is God a Liar?

"And if the prophet is deceived and speaks a word, I, the LORD, have deceived that prophet, and I will stretch out my hand against him and will destroy him from the midst of my people Israel."

(Ezekiel 14:9)

"O LORD, you have deceived me, and I was deceived..." (Jeremiah 20:7)

The Bible says that God can't lie ([Numbers 23:19](#), [Titus 1:2](#), [Hebrews 6:18](#)) and that God is truth ([Psalm 119:160](#), [John 1:14](#), [14:6](#), [16:3](#)). So what does this verse mean?

For more biblical context, we have an example in [1 Kings 22:13-28](#). In the story, God allows a spirit to “entice” King Ahab by being “a lying spirit in the mouth of all his prophets” (vv. 21-22). So God is not lying to anyone directly with his own mouth, but instead, allowing a *spirit* to do the deceiving.

Still, why would God allow this to happen to King Ahab and his prophets?

Well, when we read the whole context, God *did* warn everyone of the truth through the prophet Micaiah. He even goes so far as to tell them all about the lying spirit! (vv. 19-23) And what was the response? Ahab had Micaiah *imprisoned*! (vv. 24-28). King Ahab was in no moral standing with God and was an evil king ([1 Kings 16:30-33, 21:25-26](#)). We clearly see that King Ahab and his false prophets had no concern for truth but only wanted to hear and proclaim what sounded *good* (vv. 13-18).

Think about questions we hear in day to day life. “What’s your name?” “Where is the restroom located?” “How do I use this machine?” These are general, truth-seeking questions that demand an honest answer. What about a child asking their parents, “Will Santa be bringing my presents this Christmas?” Though not a perfect example since this is more an innocent question, some children most likely still won’t believe you regardless if you say no or not because they don’t particularly care about the honest answer, here. They want Santa to exist (similar to a false god [not saying Santa is a false god though]) and furthermore, *they just want their presents!*

So as we see time and time again, God is warning people of the truth and many consistently refuse to believe it. You can only warn a person so many times until the endeavor loses its purpose though, as the bible says that God eventually hands over the resistant nonbeliever to his delusion and love of falsehood ([Romans 1:21-25; 2 Thessalonians 2:9-12](#)). This is not some case of God being directly deceitful, let alone with someone asking a genuine question and seeking the truth, here.

Regarding [Jeremiah 20:7](#), prophet Jeremiah tells God, “O LORD, you have deceived me, and I was deceived.” The original Hebrew word for “deceive” here is “[pathah](#),” which also means: to persuade. The context is in regards to Jeremiah’s original hesitation to speak on behalf of God, and God’s persuasion that prevailed over him to do so. God had promised him that he would be with Jeremiah and that Jeremiah would prevail over his enemies (see: [Jer. 1:6-10](#)). At the time of Jeremiah’s plea here, he had been met with derision, mockery and getting confined in the stocks. In other words, Jeremiah looked to the present state of himself without seeing the whole picture that the fulfillment of his own prophetic words of the coming judgment on Israel would eventually come to pass. In the passage, he described the feelings he felt, but at the same time, does not give up hope in God to carry out his plans (vv.11-12).