

The Bible Tells Me So

SERMON NOTES

Week 2 January 16, 2022

“Violence and God in the Bible”

Deuteronomy 13:6, 8-9;

Exodus 15:3, 16-17, 32:27-28; Romans 12:2



- I. **Troubling Things About Violence in the Old Testament**
 - A. When and how the _____ penalty was prescribed.
 - B. The way God directly _____ his people when they do wrong.
 - C. How _____ is conducted.
- II. **Rationale for Violence in the Old Testament**
 - A. The people killed were very _____ people.
 - B. It was a _____ set of circumstances.
 - C. It reflects more about the understanding of the people at that time than God’s self-_____ to us.
- III. **How to Move Forward**
 - A. We recognize the Old Testament is incomplete without _____.
 - B. We should not ignore the difficult passages because God still _____ to us through them.
 - C. Let God transform our presuppositions instead of making our presuppositions transform our image of _____.

Things I Would Like to Remember About This Message



ASBURY DAILY STUDY GUIDE *January 17-22, 2022*

INTRODUCTION

Our Atheist and Agnostic friends love to point out how violent God is in the Bible. And there are some disturbing passages that we can't overlook. So how do we make sense of the violence found in the Old Testament, particularly the times where God commands the killing of entire cities? These stand in stark contrast to Jesus' teaching that we are to love our enemies.

Monday: Exodus 34:5-10

God told Moses that he would punish the guilty, but he also said that he was compassionate and gracious, abounding in love and forgiving. In what ways have you experienced God's love and forgiveness? The people saw God as a warrior. Can God be both warrior and compassionate and loving? Do we, as humans, tend to have more than one side to our character?

Tuesday: Isaiah 58:1-8, Micah 6:6-8

As we read the Old Testament prophets, one dimension of their writings is the images they contained of the coming Christ. As you read these passages, where are you able to see such an image? What was the problem with the Hebrew sacrifices and rituals? What did God really want them to do? Instead of being just, merciful and humble, in what ways were the Hebrews offending God? In what ways might our own lifestyles be offensive to God?

Wednesday: Isaiah 52:7-53:9

Does realizing that the Old Testament book of Isaiah, written 600-700 years before Christ, held this powerful image about redemptive suffering make Jesus more real and credible to you? Did God defeat evil in the world by escalating violence? How did God do it? What does this tell you about the nature of God? How would God have us address evil when we meet it in ourselves or in others?

Thursday: Matthew 5:38-48

When Jesus came, he raised the bar to a higher standard than what was in the Law of Moses. Instead of the proportional standard of retaliation (which was hard enough for the ancient Hebrews to accept), Jesus challenged the people even more. How do these standards apply to our everyday lives in our workplace and family setting? Think of some of the people you really don't care for. How can you act more kindly toward them?

Friday: 1 Peter 3:8-17

Here in 1 Peter we read that, if we do as Jesus asks, if we return evil with good, if we earnestly seek peace, we will "inherit a blessing." How do you think we will be rewarded? We also hear that it is better "to suffer for doing good than for doing evil". How might we suffer from doing evil to those who do evil to us?

MOVING FORWARD

There is no easy explanation to the violence prescribed to God in the Bible. However, we need to remember that all scripture should be measured with the words of Jesus. Jesus was God's unmitigated Word. One explanation for the violence of God in the Old Testament is that it reflects more about the understanding of the people at that time than God's self-revelation to us.

*Answers to the sermon notes: IA) death, B) punishes C) war. IIA) horrible, B) unique
II C) revelation. III A) Jesus, B) speaks, C) God.*