

## So What About 3.0

### Part 3: What about OT Violence?

[Hold up Bible] Have you ever read all that's in here?

There's things like... God is love, love your neighbor as yourself, turn the other cheek... but then there's some very different stuff...

**Joshua 6:20-21.** Understandably causes some pretty big problems for a lot of people.

**Discovering the violence the Old Testament documents often keeps people from discovering the life Jesus offers.**

How can the same God that seems to be all about love and forgiveness condone, even command, such horrible violence/genocide?

Fair question.

Question either scares some people choose to ignore it and move on. Others can't see anyway to reconcile it so they either reject the entire idea of God and Jesus.

I think both are big mistakes....

See there are some things we just won't ever have a perfect answer for... I won't pretend we have a perfect answer for the violence we see.

BUT if we allow ourselves to ask difficult questions and explore the tensions they create we can discover a clearer picture of what we are actually after... God himself.

**If we ask the difficult questions about God we step closer to discovering the truth about God.**

AND... in his love and mercy he gives us plenty of time to do so.

Let's take a little bit of time to ask and explore... Come on neighbor...

Often stepping back and looking at the bigger story can bring clarity... Use the horrific Jericho story to help discover an incredibly important truth about God.

**GOD:** Context- 650 yrs before Jericho... God promised Abraham he would be the father of a great nation

Out of his descendants would come the One to rescue humanity from the mess of sin

His descendants (Israelites- named after A's grandson Jacob/Israel) would inherit the land of Canaan (Israel/Palestine)... called the Promised Land b/c it was promised by God to Abraham.

BUT was going to take a while- **Gen 15:13-16**

Descendants end up moving to Egypt. Pharaoh scared, enslaved, More than 300 yrs.

God sent Moses to deliver the Israelites and gave him Laws that created not just a family, but a nation.

When Moses' time was done, God commanded Joshua (M's 2nd in command) to lead new nation into promised land

One problem...

The Promised Land wasn't empty... other nations had been busy growing, building cities, cultivating the land, and creating their own distinct cultures.

God commands his nation to go conquer/destroy these cultures...

Seems wrong... picture of genocide/native americans

But there is a little detail that might help...

In God's promise to Abraham... there was this little detail- **Gen 15:16**.

These cultures were anything but peace-loving utopias.

Little regard for human life/dignity... child sacrifice, incest, bestiality, institutionalized sexual abuse of women...

The cultures were so evil that God decided it was best to erase them completely...

Important point... The cultures were unredeemable.... Not the people...

The mission God gave the Israelites wasn't just to occupy the land, but to cleanse it... **Deut 20:16-18**

They were to stay completely separate from the other cultures, not to marry into them, not participate in what they did.

**Very important**... Command to specific people at a specific time (Applies ZERO to us now)... New Covenant changed everything

This new nation was fragile... they had just come out of 100's of years immersed in the religion of Egypt... so God took extreme measures to ensure that his nation, created to save humanity, would survive.

So God used the nation of Israel to judge these cultures and prepare the way for Israel to thrive...

Still the cultures are created and lived in by PEOPLE...

BUT- The Phrase "full measure" shows that God was actually giving the people time and opportunity to change their ways.

“Had not yet”... God was waiting to judge the cultures.

But... How would they know what they were doing was evil?

Was God just sitting up in heaven being like, “ Yeah you just get worse and worse and I’m going to get you... Im not going to tell you... but you’re going to get it!”

Doubtful... We see elsewhere that God doesn’t work that way...

Have some pretty strong evidence that before God judges, he warns – Sodom/Jonah/Jesus warning Jews/Revelation (whatever view shows a lot of time of warning)

This may all seem cruel and unfair, but stop for a moment and understand that it does show something important...

**God is slow to judge and quick to forgive**

100’s of years to change...

B/c of what we do know about God, it’s very safe to assume he warned these cultures (a bit of proof in a minute) and they chose not to listen.

So as the Israelites prepare to enter the Promised Land, Joshua sends spies to investigate the first city they will encounter... Jericho.

They go to Jericho and find a place to stay inside the city at the house of a prostitute named Rahab. What doing there?

The king found out the spies were there and demanded that Rahab give them up...

She hid them on the roof and said, “Uh, They went that way.”

Now let’s keep asking questions... **One of the most important questions we can ask of BW’s is WHY?**

**WHY** would Rahab risk her life to save spies that had come to conquer her people?

This is where things get interesting... BW’s (especially the histories) usually tell us the bare minimum of WHAT happened... and often have to slow down to find WHY...

**Joshua 2:8-11.** **WHY** does Rahab know so much? It’s been the talk of the town literally...

The Canaanites somehow had heard of God’s promise to Abraham... they had been warned in some way

They understood why the Israelites were there

They had all heard of the miracles and the victories God had given them... and they were terrified.

And it seems God had given them a choice... repent from evil culture or stubbornly refuse and resist.

Rahab chose to respond differently than the rest of her people (**Heb 11:31**)

She made a different choice than the people in her culture.

**Since God loves us, he lets us choose how we will respond to him.**

Rahab chose to accept that Israel's God was the One true God, that her people and culture had missed it, and instead of fighting she chose to surrender and ask for protection. **Joshua 2:12-13.**

Spies agree and tell her to hang a scarlet cord from her window

But check this out... God gave very strange orders for the attack on Jericho...

For 6 days they were to march once around the city...

On the 7th day they were to march 7 times and then blow their trumpets and shout... and then the walls would come down.

Makes a fun story to act out in Sunday School BUT... **WHY?** Not a normal form of warfare... super weird.

"Well it was to show the Israelites that it was God who brought the victory, not get confident in their own power, etc..."

Maybe but theres something more... Something that better aligns with what we see about God's love and mercy in Jesus...

**Josh 2:18-19.** There's no limit to how many people...

The people inside of Jericho's walls were people that God loved. "Doesn't want any to perish but all to come to repentance..." {2 Peter 3:9}

God was giving the people of Jericho another chance to surrender... 7 days and then one last LONG day

No doubt the story would have ended very differently if there had been 100's of scarlet cords hanging from the windows instead of just one.

Every individual had an opportunity to change sides.

Unfortunately the people's fear of God kept them from knowing and enjoying the peace of God's love.

**Our fear of God's judgment can keep us from enjoying the peace of God's love.**

On the 7th day the army marches around 7 times, blows their horns, shouts and the walls come down...

And chaos ensues... but in the middle of it they keep their promise... **Josh. 6:22-23**

Killed everyone and thing... Except for Rahab and her family...

Still hard to stomach... if lean toward Xian Universalism might make it a bit better... but still God used his people to bring judgment on other people...

In this we discover a hard truth... **Our choices have consequences.** For both good and bad...

We can choose to run/hide/resist or choose to accept his mercy/love/forgiveness

God HATES sin and rebellion... Hates it b/c it hurts the people he loves... all of us... BUT He loves to forgive and restore us to relationship with him.

The Canaanites' choice resulted in them losing their lives, when God really only wanted to end their evil culture.

- Nineveh

Our choices make all the difference...

Rahab's choice resulted in something better than she imagined...

She is taken out of a horrid culture and identity...

Marries an israelite named Salmon, has a son named Boaz, Boaz marries a widow named Ruth. Have a son named Jesse... has a son named David... David has a great great great etc grandson named Jesus.

Who died and rose again to conquer evil/sin/death. Simply by choosing to trust... like Rahab did.

B/c Rahab made her choice to trust, she became a part of God's ultimate story and purpose for all of humanity.

So here we see the tension that allows us to better know God... **God hates and judges sin, but loves to forgive and rescue sinners.**

**YOU:** What's your choice? JF or not...

Will you let fear of judgment cause you to run away from God or will you allow his mercy, love, forgiveness cause you to run toward?

Will you allow questions about God's judgment of evil cultures in OT keep you from understanding/experiencing His love and mercy for all people?

Just b/c we can't know every detail about God's purpose and working in Ancient tribal warfare... doesn't mean we can't recognize his love and patience and mercy toward us now.

Does this uncertainty about OT change the historical fact of Jesus dying and rising?

Rahab didn't understand everything about God's plan/abraham/ etc... but she chose to trust. And her life was changed forever, and she was rescued.

Same for us.

**We won't always have all the answers but we always have a choice whether or not we will trust God's love**

In any situation we have that choice... whether its theological musings/gut wrenching marriage issues/fear/sorrow

**Read: Romans 5:6-8**

**Ask: Since God loves me, why do I choose to not trust him?**

**WE:** We won't always know the answer to every WHY?

There will always be a tension we feel between God's anger against sin and his unfailing/infinite mercy/love/forgiveness.

But we can choose to trust that even if we don't have the answer there are answers... answers that are steeped in God's perfect love.

**When we ask God "why" we can choose to trust the answer is based on his love for us.**

"Why God" Answer always has "B/c I love you"

Questions

1. Where have you seen God's love this week?
2. What stood out, bothered, confused, was clarified, or left you feeling unsatisfied in this episode?
3. What is easier for you to focus on: God's judgment or God's mercy? Why do you think that is?
4. Read Jonah 3:6-4:3 and 2 Peter 3:9-10. What do you see about God's character in these passages?
5. How can your group pray for you this week?

**Summary**

How do we reconcile the God of love and mercy Jesus showed us and the violence God seems to condone and even command in the Jewish Scriptures?

Episode Breakdown:

00:48 We welcome you


01:48 It's kind of a crazy book...

04:25 Zoom in to zoom out

08:20 God v. People... or cultures?

15:15 Asking WHY (for a friend)

17:30 We get to choose  
20:00 Mind blowing thought...  
23:30 God wants to end evil  
26:10 Run from or to?  
28:15 Try this...  
29:58 Closing stuff & Announcements  
33:25 Bloopers and Qs

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#### SHOW NOTES:

- ▶ Notes & Questions: [https://www.yourcrosscreek.com/media/2022-02-13\\_cg.pdf](https://www.yourcrosscreek.com/media/2022-02-13_cg.pdf)
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#### ▶ Upcoming #SalemOregon Gatherings

February 27th, 4:30pm at 525 Idylwood Dr. S. in South Salem, Oregon.  
Music, Food, Communion, gentle hangout. Stuff for kids. It's a good time.  
Text PARTY to 94000 to receive reminders & news about our in-person events.  
<http://www.yourcrosscreek.com/gathering/>

#### ▶ YOUTH CONNECT

For Middle & High Schoolers. 1st + 3rd Sundays at 5 pm (Next one: Feb 20).  
[www.yourcrosscreek.com/youth/](http://www.yourcrosscreek.com/youth/) for more info

#### ▶ #forSalem FEBRUARY Opportunity: Adopting Avamere

Bring your donated clothing to church on February 27, 2022. Needs: Men & Women's Size M-XL Pants, sweaters and shirts!

#### ▶ Suggested Bible Readings:

The book of Jonah

#### ▶ Recommended Resources:

Is God a Moral Monster?: Making Sense of the Old Testament God by Paul Copan

#### ▶ Music we listened to making this episode

Angels & Airwaves: The Adventure- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JMI8cQjBfqk>  
Jon Foreman: Baptize my Mind- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2Lqn6wtToIE>  
Portugal. The Man: Feel It Still- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qDIMiYaT5Hg>

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