

Questions You Always Wanted to Ask...

Friday April 17th, 2009

Deuteronomy 7:1-6

*“¹ When the LORD your God brings you into the land you are entering to possess and drives out before you many nations—the Hittites, Girgashites, Amorites, Canaanites, Perizzites, Hivites and Jebusites, seven nations larger and stronger than you- ² and when the LORD your God has delivered them over to you and you have defeated them, then **you must destroy them totally**. Make no treaty with them, and **show them no mercy**. ³ Do not intermarry with them. Do not give your daughters to their sons or take their daughters for your sons, ⁴ for they will turn your sons away from following me to serve other gods, and the LORD's anger will burn against you and will quickly destroy you. ⁵ This is what you are to do to them: Break down their altars, smash their sacred stones, cut down their Asherah poles and burn their idols in the fire. ⁶ For you are a people holy to the LORD your God. The LORD your God has chosen you out of all the peoples on the face of the earth to be his people, his treasured possession.”*

Deuteronomy 20:16

*“¹⁶ However, in the cities of the nations the LORD your God is giving you as an inheritance, **do not leave alive anything that breathes.** ¹⁷ **Completely destroy them**—the Hittites, Amorites, Canaanites, Perizzites, Hivites and Jebusites—as the LORD your God has commanded you. ¹⁸ Otherwise, they will teach you to follow all the detestable things they do in worshiping their gods, and you will sin against the LORD your God.”*

Matthew 5:42-45

“⁴³You have heard that it was said, 'Love your neighbor and hate your enemy.' ⁴⁴But I tell you: Love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you, ⁴⁵that you may be sons of your Father in heaven. He causes his sun to rise on the evil and the good, and sends rain on the righteous and the unrighteous.”

Question

How can the God who commanded the total extermination of the Canaanite people (including babies) by Israel, be reconciled with the God of love found in the New Testament?

The Easy Way Out...

- Misinterpretation – *It was all a mistake!*
 - Accounts of the extermination of the Canaanites seen as a record of how the Israelites misunderstood God.
 - Problems with this stance:
 - » Ignores biblical passages that explicitly describe God as initiating, enabling and participating in the extermination of the Canaanite people.
 - » Implies that these passages are nothing but Israelite war propaganda and not the inspired word of God.

The Hard Way...

- Three Premises:
 - The OT and NT are both scripture in that they are both the inspired, inerrant, infallible, authoritative word of God – we can trust them.
 - God doesn't change
 - Jesus is God.

What the Text Says...

God called for the extermination of the Canaanites as:

1. Judgment on the Canaanites because of their wickedness

Deuteronomy 9:4-6

“⁴ After the LORD your God has driven them out before you, do not say to yourself, “The LORD has brought me here to take possession of this land because of my righteousness.” No, it is on account of the wickedness of these nations that the LORD is going to drive them out before you. ⁵ It is not because of your righteousness or your integrity that you are going in to take possession of their land; but on account of the wickedness of these nations, the LORD your God will drive them out before you, to accomplish what he swore to your fathers, to Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. ⁶ Understand, then, that it is not because of your righteousness that the LORD your God is giving you this good land to possess, for you are a stiff-necked people”

What the Text Says...

God called for the extermination of the Canaanites as:

2. A divinely known necessity to preserve God's people and their faith.

Deuteronomy 7:3-6

*³ Do not intermarry with them. Do not give your daughters to their sons or take their daughters for your sons, ⁴ **for they will turn your sons away from following me to serve other gods, and the LORD's anger will burn against you and will quickly destroy you.** ⁵ This is what you are to do to them: Break down their altars, smash their sacred stones, cut down their Asherah poles and burn their idols in the fire. ⁶ For you are a people holy to the LORD your God. The LORD your God has chosen you out of all the peoples on the face of the earth to be his people, his treasured possession.*

What the Text Says...

Deuteronomy 20:1-18

*“¹⁶ However, in the cities of the nations the LORD your God is giving you as an inheritance, do not leave alive anything that breathes. ¹⁷ Completely destroy them—the Hittites, Amorites, Canaanites, Perizzites, Hivites and Jebusites—as the LORD your God has commanded you. ¹⁸ **Otherwise, they will teach you to follow all the detestable things they do in worshiping their gods, and you will sin against the LORD your God.**”*

Summary...

- In the OT we see that God:
 1. Is concerned over the holiness of His chosen people and their relationship/standing before Him.
 2. Shows His power over evil/sin.
 3. Judges and punishes sin.

Enter Jesus...

1. Concerned with our relationship/standing before God

Matthew 4:17 "From that time on Jesus began to preach, "Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is near."

Mark 9:42-49 ⁴²"And if anyone causes one of these little ones who believe in me to sin, it would be better for him to be thrown into the sea with a large millstone tied around his neck. ⁴³If your hand causes you to sin, cut it off. It is better for you to enter life maimed than with two hands to go into hell, where the fire never goes out. ⁴⁵And if your foot causes you to sin, cut it off. It is better for you to enter life crippled than to have two feet and be thrown into hell. ⁴⁷And if your eye causes you to sin, pluck it out. It is better for you to enter the kingdom of God with one eye than to have two eyes and be thrown into hell, ⁴⁸where " 'their worm does not die, and the fire is not quenched.'⁴⁹Everyone will be salted with fire.

Enter Jesus...

2. Shows His victory over evil/sin.

1 Cor 15:55-6

“⁵⁵Where, O death, is your victory?

Where, O death, is your sting?”⁵⁶The sting of death is sin, and the power of sin is the law. ⁵⁷But thanks be to God! He gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ.

3. Judges and Punishes Sin

Matt 15:31-32, 46 "When the Son of Man comes in his glory, and all the angels with him, then he will sit on the throne of his glory. All the nations will be gathered before him, and he will separate people one from another as a shepherd separates the sheep from the goats . . . Then they will go away into eternal punishment, but the righteous into eternal life."

Enter Jesus...

2 Peter 3:9-10

⁹The Lord is not slow in keeping his promise, as some understand slowness. He is patient with you, not wanting anyone to perish, but everyone to come to repentance.

¹⁰But the day of the Lord will come like a thief. The heavens will disappear with a roar; the elements will be destroyed by fire, and the earth and everything in it will be laid bare

So what...?

Know Jesus, know God

Ephesians 3:14-19

¹⁴For this reason I kneel before the Father, ¹⁵from whom his whole family in heaven and on earth derives its name. ¹⁶I pray that out of his glorious riches he may strengthen you with power through his Spirit in your inner being, ¹⁷so that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith. And I pray that you, being rooted and established in love, ¹⁸may have power, together with all the saints, to grasp how wide and long and high and deep is the love of Christ, ¹⁹and to know this love that surpasses knowledge—that you may be filled to the measure of all the fullness of God.

References

- *“Show Them No Mercy: 4 Views on God and Canaanite Genocide,”* 2003 Stanley N. Gundry (editor).
- Strange but True: Absence of Mercy. Sermon 2002 Bruxy Cavey