

Genocide of the Canaanites.

Deuteronomy 7:1-5

“When the Lord your God brings you into the land that you are entering to take possession of it, and clears away many nations before you, the Hittites, the Girgashites, the Amorites, the Canaanites, the Perizzites, the Hivites, and the Jebusites, seven nations more numerous and mightier than you, ² and when the Lord your God gives them over to you, and you defeat them, then you must devote them to complete destruction.^[a] You shall make no covenant with them and show no mercy to them. ³ You shall not intermarry with them, giving your daughters to their sons or taking their daughters for your sons, ⁴ for they would turn away your sons from following me, to serve other gods. Then the anger of the Lord would be kindled against you, and he would destroy you quickly. ⁵ But thus shall you deal with them: you shall break down their altars and dash in pieces their pillars and chop down their Asherim and burn their carved images with fire.”

Deuteronomy 20:16-18

But in the cities of these peoples that the Lord your God is giving you for an inheritance, you shall save alive nothing that breathes, ¹⁷ but you shall devote them to complete destruction,^[a] the Hittites and the Amorites, the Canaanites and the Perizzites, the Hivites and the Jebusites, as the Lord your God has commanded, ¹⁸ that they may not teach you to do according to all their abominable practices that they have done for their gods, and so you sin against the Lord your God.

People read these passages and place them at the base of their challenge of Christianity, or more directly, their challenge toward a God we call “Loving”.

“Was God’s command to exterminate a cultural group immoral or not?”

This is the challenge.

Psalm 86:15

But you, O Lord, are a God merciful and gracious,
slow to anger and abounding in steadfast love and faithfulness.

That’s more like it. Let’s camp here. Focus here, and just kind of glance over the OT passages that are hard to comprehend. That is not what we are here to do! In today’s world people do not open the newspaper up and read a whole pages’ work of one story, we read the headline and draw the conclusion of what happened. We assume total truth from the headline. Statements like “The God of the Bible condones genocide- Deuteronomy chapter 7 and chapter 20”.

That brief statement seems to be close to those passages, right? Not at all. This is where we take a stark turn. Brevity turns viral. Brevity is dangerous. But that is the world we live in. People want stark, brief, statements they can hang their hats on and feel good about. We respond with **“But you, O Lord, are a God merciful and gracious, slow to anger and abounding in steadfast love and faithfulness.”**

Let’s also remember another aspect of God- He is Just- **“The Rock, his work is perfect, for all his ways are justice. A God of faithfulness and without iniquity.” Deuteronomy 32:4.**

Definition of Genocide- The deliberate and systematic extermination of a national, racial, political, or cultural group. The aim here is to just kill a people group. You don't have to have a reason! This is senseless mass destruction of people of all ages.

Read Page 29, Highlighted section.

- What was the reason behind Abraham becoming the father of Israel stated in Genesis 12:1-3.
 - o “Now the Lord said^[a] to Abram, “Go from your country^[b] and your kindred and your father's house to the land that I will show you. ²And I will make of you a great nation, and I will bless you and make your name great, **so that you will be a blessing.** ³I will bless those who bless you, and him who dishonors you I will curse, and in you all the families of the earth shall be blessed.”
- Who would Abraham, and the nation of Israel, be a blessing to? Anyone who would accept it!
- Can you remember the name of a young Canaanite woman who hid Israel's spies in her roof in Joshua chapter 2!? Rahab! Canaanites had heard of the God of Israel, some (like Rahab) believed. **Israel was to be a blessing to all who would accept. EVEN Canaanites. But they denied God.** For centuries denied God and became completely corrupt.
- “These people practiced child sacrifice worshipping false gods. For example, when a new house was built, they sacrificed a child and built the dead body into the walls of the house to bring good luck to the family. They sacrificed their firstborn babies to Molech by placing them in the red-hot hands of the idol. If one of the parents even so much as expressed *any* grief, the sacrifice was invalidated. God warned these people to stop this behavior for several centuries, but they didn't listen. In fact, they began to influence the nation of Israel, some of whom copied these practices in a valley near Jerusalem called Gehenna. On the one hand, skeptics complain that God doesn't do anything to stop evil, and on the other hand they complain when God *does* stop evil. Why wouldn't a good God want to stop and punish this form of child murder?” J Warner Wallace.
- God is loving. **“But you, O Lord, are a God merciful and gracious, slow to anger and abounding in steadfast love and faithfulness.” Psalm 86:15.**
- God is Just. **“The Rock, his work is perfect, for all his ways are justice. A God of faithfulness and without iniquity.” Deuteronomy 32:4.**

Skeptics go back to Deuteronomy 20:16-18, and focus on the command to destroy **every single Canaanite**. But from the full context we see that God is not ordering some kind of indiscriminate massacre so His favored people could move in. This was his **Judgment**.

- **Not because of your righteousness or the uprightness of your heart are you going in to possess their land, but because of the wickedness of these nations the Lord your God is driving them out from before you, and that he may confirm the word that the Lord swore to your fathers, to Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob. Deuteronomy 9:5.**

“What we see here is that the time for the fulfillment of God's land promised to Abraham converged with the time when God was ready to execute judgment upon that land's inhabitants.”

Let's not call it Genocide, lets just say God's command in Deuteronomy 7 and chapter 20. Are his commands immoral?

- "God said his command was an act of Judgment on a guilty people. This is in a completely different category than an unmerited massacre of innocent life, as is always the case when humans command genocide." N. Crain
- Skeptics would point on the source of the command doesn't matter.
 - o The source of the command makes all the difference in the world! It's the difference between a perfectly good God who can never choose to do evil and sinful humans who can choose to do evil at any time; between a God who has the ability to judge fairly and humans who have no ability to judge fairly because they lack the necessary perspective to do so." N Crain.
- Genesis 15:12-16.
 - o **¹² As the sun was going down, a deep sleep fell on Abram. And behold, dreadful and great darkness fell upon him. ¹³ Then the Lord said to Abram, "Know for certain that your offspring will be sojourners in a land that is not theirs and will be servants there, and they will be afflicted for four hundred years. ¹⁴ But I will bring judgment on the nation that they serve, and afterward they shall come out with great possessions. ¹⁵ As for you, you shall go to your fathers in peace; you shall be buried in a good old age. ¹⁶ And they shall come back here in the fourth generation, for the iniquity of the Amorites is not yet complete."**
 - o In other words, God wasn't willing to execute Judgment until their sinfulness had a reached a very specific limit.

Conclusion:

"God's command to destroy the Canaanites was given in a unique historical and theological context; the time for the fulfillment of God's land promised to Abraham was converged with the time when God was ready to execute judgment upon that lands inhabitants. While this even is undoubtedly difficult to understand we have to acknowledge that God commanding "Genocide" is in no way morally comparable to humans commanding genocide. God uniquely has the authority to judge people and the ability to do so fairly. That makes all the moral difference in the world. The Canaanite "Genocide" was an execution of this judgment- not an immoral massacre." N. Crain

How can a LOVING God send people to HELL?

Hell is a heavy topic that should not be lightened. There is a place called Hell, and people do go there for eternity. That is why this topic should be well known by people who claim to be Christ followers. When you die you will either end up in Hell for eternity, or Heaven for eternity. The challenge that gets brought up is if we claim the God we love and follow is so loving, why would he send people there for eternity.

We need to KNOW the truth about Hell, the scripture to back up our belief about Hell, and how people end up there. What really helps to understand more about Hell, is to know more about Heaven. For the sake of time, we are going to try and stick with the challenge, and further study can be applied.

- And the smoke of their torment goes up forever and ever, and they have no rest, day or night, these worshipers of the beast and its image, and whoever receives the mark of its name.”
Revelation 14:11.
- Then he will say to those on his left, ‘Depart from me, you cursed, into the eternal fire prepared for the devil and his angels. **Matthew 25:41.**
- They will suffer the punishment of eternal destruction, away from the presence of the Lord and from the glory of his might. **2 Thessalonians 1:9.**
- For the wages of sin is death, but the free gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.
Romans 6:23.

Does anyone struggle to think about Heaven or Hell? Of Course! Why do you think that is?

- It has a sense of finality. We don't like that feeling of things/life being final.
 - Do we fear what others would think about us if the topic of Hell gets brought up, and it gets out that I believe certain people may end up there!? Forever!?
 - How do we bring up Hell with our kids? That is for next book, for now, let's dive into the Challenge statement.
 - Tell the story of Kelsey West, getting baptized, and grew up Catholic. Very religious family, they ALL were saved because they Claimed to be Catholic. It was evident they were using that religion as their ticket into Heaven. Kelsey, came to know Christ outside of that, wanted to get baptized, but would do you think her family would think about that? “So you are saved *NOW*? What about us?
1. There is a problem between mankind and God. What is it!? Sin! We choose sin and prefer that over God. That is mankind's state before coming to know Christ, sinful. This challenge against Christianity that God is not loving if he sends people to Hell for eternity ignores the weight and seriousness of our current state as people. Sinners!
 - a. **Romans 1:21-23.** For although they knew God they did not honor him as God or give thanks to him, but they became futile in their thinking and their foolish hearts were darkened, Claiming to be wise they became fools, and **exchanged the glory of the immortal God for images resembling mortal man and birds and animals and creeping things.**
 - b. “To see why that's such a problem we need to better understand what sin is. The bible tells us that God is perfectly good, and that he has written his moral laws on the human heart (Psalm 18:30, 1 John 1:5, Romans 2:14-15) Sin is a transgression against those laws.”

- c. So, we have God's moral laws written our hearts, but Romans 1:18 tells us we suppress that! We suppress the truth so much we don't want it, and we don't recognize it being good.

"We look at his glory. We look at his power We look at his wisdom. We look at his beneficence. And we don't say "Thank you", and we don't say "You are great", We say, "I am going to trade you for something that I really want.". That is why Hell exists, because it is an infinite sin." **J. Piper.**

- We have an option to be with God infinitely, but mankind chooses self infinitely.

"When people can't imagine God punishing anyone because he is perfectly loving, they are forgetting that he is likewise perfectly just." Page 34, N. Crain.

- We can't take one attribute about God and subtract others, if we do that then we do not have a complete picture of who God is, and leave us asking this challenge statement!

God's love and his justness. "His justness and lovingness go hand in hand. Just as an earthly judge wouldn't be loving for setting free those who break human laws, God as a heavenly judge wouldn't be loving for setting free those who break divine laws." **N. Crain**

It is quite absurd if you think about it.

When someone brings this challenge about a loving God sending people to Hell, their view of a "Loving" God indicates that there should not be punishment at all. Which, according to most of the world's justice systems, would be outrageous.

2. So, who should be the people to be punished in Hell, then?

Rapists, murderers, terrorists, but what about the "Garden-variety" sinners. The people who just lie too much, but live a pretty normal, "help others", kind of life?

Be sure to not let this question trip you up. Romans 3:23 plainly says who these people should be.

- **"For all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God."**

When we answer this question, we need to include ourselves in it! ALL people have broken God's moral laws. All people are separated from God without Christ. Then go back to Romans 6:23, we deserve death. We choose images of the creation rather than the infinite creator.

We choose other stuff over God every day. If we have Christ, that means his righteousness covers us. We still choose ourselves, but with the HS we can grow to choose God more.

3. What should the nature of this punishment be?

The Challengers with this statement typically start with their own human standard of what they think it should be, if any at all. That is the issue. An infinite God, who created time, matter and space, AND wrote his moral law on our hearts, has a different standard than we do.

With that in mind we go to the bible to see what the nature of this punishment is, and also see the urgency to avoid it at all costs!

Mark 9:47-49.

And if your eye causes you to sin, tear it out. It is better for you to enter the kingdom of God with one eye than with two eyes to be thrown into hell, ⁴⁸ 'where their worm does not die and the fire is not quenched.

Matthew 22:13

Then the king said to the attendants, 'Bind him hand and foot and cast him into the outer darkness. In that place there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth. This is in reference to the parable of the wedding feast.

Matthew 13:41-42.

The Son of Man will send his angels, and they will gather out of his kingdom all causes of sin and all law-breakers, ⁴² and throw them into the fiery furnace. In that place there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.

People who reject the idea of Hell often ignore the fact we can avoid it if we accept Jesus' sacrifice on the cross as payment for our sins. Understanding why Hell exists leads right into the Gospel of Jesus dying on the cross, and why he needed to do that. That will be chapter 20!

How can God judge people who have never even heard about Jesus?

Sending someone to Hell for not ever hearing about Jesus seems pretty unfair. If Jesus is the only way, and clearly there are people in the world who have never heard his name, then are we saying those people will end up in Hell for eternity?

This is not an easy topic.

Why do you think people ask this question? What are they challenging?

- God's fairness?
- Generally they are challenging that Jesus is the ONLY way to salvation.

"If God exists, He must be fair. Therefore there must be multiple paths to salvation, since not everyone will hear about Jesus."

It is the mountaintop example: there is one peak with multiple ways to get to the top. Is that true?

What are some ways people generally think they can get to the top?

- Catholicism
- Oprah
- Being a good person

"Who is right? Religions differ in their claims of where we came from, why we are here, the problem of evil, the nature of reality, where we are eventually headed, and much more." N. Crain

They all CAN'T be right. If you are in the camp of "Multiple ways get you salvation" then you are ignoring the fact that there is a bottom line truth. There is a starting point of the Universe. Something caused it. There is ONE truth. What is it? And is that ONE way to Heaven ONLY Jesus?

YES!

John 3:18

Whoever believes in him is not condemned, but whoever does not believe is condemned already, because he has not believed in the name of the only Son of God.

John 14:6

Jesus said to him, "I am the way, and the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me.

Romans 10:9

because, if you confess with your mouth that Jesus is Lord and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved.

1 John 5:11-12

And this is the testimony, that God gave us eternal life, and this life is in his Son. ¹² Whoever has the Son has life; whoever does not have the Son of God does not have life.

From these verses, what is the ONLY for salvation, redemption back to God, spending eternity in Heaven and not Hell? Jesus!

The book goes over 2 kinds of Revelation: General and Special.

- **General Revelation:** is what he has revealed of himself through the natural world and our moral conscience.
 - o **Romans 1:19-20.** “For his invisible attributes, namely, his eternal power and divine nature, have been clearly perceived, ever since the creation of the world, in the things that have been made. So they are without excuse.”
 - o **Who is they?** Men who knew God, but did not acknowledge him as God, did not give him thanks, or praise him. God has revealed himself sufficiently to point all men to himself, but we have preferred other things to God. We deny God.
- “The bible states there are no people who are ignorant of Gods existence and moral requirements” N. Crain “So when we talk about those who have “Never heard” it is important to acknowledge that there is a sense in which every has at least “Heard” of God.” N. Crain.
 - o **How have they heard of God? Remember Romans 1:19-20.**
 - **They are without excuse!**
- **Special Revelation.**
 - o It is not possible to simply look at the splendor of creation and our moral conscience to deduce the specific truths that an all-powerful creator had a son who lived on earth, was fully human and fully God, died for the forgiveness of our sins, and was resurrected. For us to learn about these truths, God had to reveal Himself in **supernatural** ways, such as through the Bible and Jesus. **This is Called his special revelation.**

Old Testament: Abraham was made righteous because of his belief in God’s promises even if he didn’t live to see them all fulfilled. That is how salvation worked for those who lived in the Old Testament times.

Today: How does this challenge pertain to those who live after Jesus but don't know of him.

According to N. Crain there are 2 typical responses Christians give.

- 1) **Restrictivism:** belief that God does not provide salvation to those who don't hear about Jesus and come to faith in Him before they die.
 - a. Children or anyone with a mental handicap that do not come under the General revelation so no Judgment. (2 Samuel 12:15-23. David clearly believed his deceased baby was in heaven.)
 - b. Old Testament: People in the OT did not have to know Jesus by name but had belief in God sending a future redeemer.
- 2) **Inclusivism:** "Belief that those who haven't heard about Jesus can be saved if they respond to God in faith based on his general revelation. They believe the only reason anyone can ever be saved is because of Jesus sacrifice, but that his sacrifice can apply to people who don't know about it" N. Crain page 42

This is were the chapter ends, and where I pick up.

- I would encourage you to compare "Camp 2" (Inclusivism) with the 4 passages we read at the beginning of this lesson, and ask yourself if they add up.

When people ask this question, most of the time we have the year 2023 in our minds. "there are villages, towns, entire countries today that do not know the name of Jesus, have never heard of it! How is it fair that they get the same judgment as everyone since they have never had the chance to know Jesus?"

This question ignores thousands of years of history. Ever since Adam and Eve walked WITH God in the Garden of Eden, then ate the fruit, there has been an utter denial of God. People, since creation, decided for themselves they did not want God, we did not want anything to do with God.

- God created man to live in glorious world and walked with man, we chose ourselves over him.
 - o He immediately told us he would redeem us back to him in Gen 3:15.
- God spoke directly over to rule over his own desire, but Cain chose self instead.
- Genesis 6 there was increasing corruption on earth, and people deliberately ignoring God for their own desire.
- The list goes on with how many times God provided, and we preferred our own wisdom over his.

There has been centuries worth of cities coming into existence that do not want anything to do with God ever since the beginning. As population grows it creates people groups all over the world. God has pointed people to a redeemer since the beginning. Now that Christ has come, these people

groups need to know Christ. Before they needed to have faith in God for a redeemer, now they need to have faith In JESUS!

SO! What are we to do about that!?

Did you know Paul asks these same questions?

13. For everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved.

¹⁴ How then will they call on him in whom they have not believed? And how are they to believe in him ^uof whom they have never heard?

³ And how are they to hear ^vwithout someone preaching? ¹⁵ And how are they to preach unless they are sent? As it is written, ^w"How beautiful are the feet of those who preach the good news!" ¹⁶ But ^xthey have not all obeyed the gospel. For Isaiah says, ^y"Lord, who has believed what he has heard from us?" ¹⁷ So ^zfaith comes from hearing, and hearing through the word of Christ.

¹⁸ But I ask, have they not heard? Indeed they have, for

^a"Their voice has gone out ^bto all the earth, and their words to the ends of the world."

Have not believed? Have never even heard? Is someone telling these people about Christ? Is anyone sending the ones to go and tell these people about Christ!? God uses people to spread the news of the Gospel. Old testament he used prophets and people. New testament He uses disciples and other believers.

Romans 10 brings EVERYONE into the picture here! We are all called to be active to get the Gospel out! Romans 1, and also here in Romans 10:18 says that God is made known to ALL in the entire world. General revelation. And if you are a believer, you are called to be a part of that. There is urgency because people are perishing that have never heard of Jesus, their destination is Hell.

Romans 10:17. "So, faith comes from hearing, and hearing though the word of Christ."

We need to know Jesus Christ to attain salvation. We need to be obedient to God's call on EVERYONES life to go next door and to the ends of the earth so that Christ name can be made known to all.