

VIOLENCE

One of the most difficult things for us to get a handle on is the violence that we find in the Old Testament. And it is not always man who initiates this violence. God is often seen as the one who initiates these acts. It was God who said to Israel concerning the Canaanites, wipe out everyone: men, women, children, and livestock. Israel was forbidden to take prisoners and was ordered by God to utterly destroy all.

It is with and because of this type of action that critical scholars have said we must look upon texts such as these, and reject them as being the Word of God. But I disagree. All of God's Word was written and authorized by God. We cannot pick and choose what parts we like or dislike. We must come to grips that this is God's Word; whether we understand it or not. God is holy, and will always do that which is just. The problem with violence is not that God has treated someone unfair, but the problem rests in our understanding of why God acted as He did.

The Canaanites were deeply rooted in unrestrained forms of paganism. They were deeply entrenched in idolatry, prostitution of both sexes, infant sacrifice, and many more vices.

The purpose of God toward the Canaanites was threefold. (1) He was using Israel as an instrument of judgment upon this unrepentant people; (2) He wanted His people to see that sin brings judgment; (3) He did not want Israel to be part of such practices as the Canaanites.

Scripture: King James Version: Deuteronomy 7:1-26; 13:12-18; Joshua 1:1-9.

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