Tough Texts Does God Command Genocide?

Steve Brooks // March 26, 2023

Deuteronomy 7:1-2; Ezekiel 18:31-31; Colossians 1:13-14, 21-23

This IS a question you will run into.

Deuteronomy 7:1-2

The Assumption: If God is good and the Bible is God's Word, then everything the Bible teaches is good.

1. CORRECTING the narrative

Reading the Bible "literally" vs "literarily"

a. "Ancient trash talk" — Josh Butler

Joshua 10:40, 20

The Old Testament and nearly all people in the ancient world made themselves clear using hyperbole. It was simply understood as such.

b. "Fortified cities"

Two things were clear when we read this "ancient trash talk" in context: first – that it is referring to military victories, not civilian massacres; and second – that the rhetoric greatly exaggerates the extent of the victory.

2. FLIPPING the narrative

a. "Good guys vs. the bad guys"

Genesis 15:13

Our current assumption: "All cultures are equal and no one culture is superior to or has the right to challenge another." Cannot mean that we never oppose the cultural beliefs or practices of other cultures. Think of Nazism.

b. The Good Guys ARE (or become) the bad guys

Deuteronomy 9:5; Ezekiel 16:45, 18:31

You can conquer nations and lands, but none of us can conquer the human heart, especially our own.

3. CHANGING the narrative

a. Some proposed solutions

- 1) Marcionism
- 2) Moses heard God wrong
- 3) God just changed His mind
- 4) We've evolved
- b. "Drive out"

Genesis 3:22

c. Jesus the "new" Joshua steps into the narrative

Colossians 1:13, 21-22

Let's be honest—sometimes the Bible is hard to read. Sometimes you come across a story that seems like it couldn't possibly be in the Bible. Too often, we hide from these stories rather than dive into them. But if we really believe that the Bible is God's Word to us (we do), and if we really believe that God is always good and just (we do), then nothing that he says in the scriptures can be wrong or evil. Understanding it is another issue, and that's where this series comes in. In our series, *Tough Texts*, we're taking on three of the hardest passages in the Old Testament that raise the biggest questions about God's character, and we're going to see if we can understand what our good God is really trying to say to us. This Sunday, the question being addressed is, *Does God condone genocide?* Our passages are **Genesis 15:13-16; Deuteronomy 7:1-2; Deuteronomy 9:5; Joshua 10:20, 40.**

Use these questions to discuss the message from Sunday, focusing on how you can **grow** as an everyday follower of Jesus and how you can **go** accomplish what Jesus calls you to do.

1. What struck you from Sunday's message? Did you learn anything new?

2. Pastor Steve talked about Josh Butler's term, "ancient trash talk." How have you been taught to read and approach the Bible, and has it changed over time?

3. Have someone read **Ezekiel 16:45-47**. Then read **Ezekiel 18:32**. What are ways that you compare yourself to others that make you look better than you actually are?

4. Who do you see as "bad guys" today? Pastor Steve flipped the script saying, "We are the bad guys; the problem is our hearts." How did that statement sit with you? How can you grow in your relationship with Jesus?

5. How can you enter the hurt and pain of the people around you with the new heart that Jesus brings? How can you **go** to your friends and neighbors in a meaningful way? Spend some time as a group praying for those in your lives who are hurting.

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