

Is the God of the Old Testament the same God revealed in Jesus Christ? Is He a distant and angry God? – notes from John Simkins talk July 2008

Four propositions about O.T. times

- 1 God is consistently revealed as both merciful and a righteous judge – an impartial Judge
- 2 The O.T. is a journey of discovery that God and ‘the causes of things’ are very distinct from the fickleness and fatalism of other ‘gods’
- 3 God, because He chose to give the human race
 - **the choice (freedom) to love and obey Him and**
 - **responsibility (stewardship) for the Earth**
cannot instantly change a community culture to match up to His best.
- 4 The call and shaping of the nation of Israel is of central importance to world history. The laws and regulations were given to it not only for personal salvation but - -
 - as a national constitution intended to be a model and safeguard for the world and
 - to provide a context in which the Christ could be safely born.

Too many killings!?

- Is God a pacifist?
- Is He ‘tough on sin and the causes of sin’!?
- Does He order everything that happens?
- Can He press buttons and stop bad things without losing the end game?

An example of battle:

The conquest of Canaan and the destruction of the Amorite nations

The ‘Controversy of the Lord’

(Hebrew ‘rib’ Pleading / Strife / Contention / Debate)

‘A noise will come to the ends of the earth— For the Lord has a controversy with the nations; He will plead His case with all flesh. He will give those who are wicked to the sword,’ says the Lord.”

Jeremiah 25 verse 31

The ‘Battle of the Lord’

Until the exile (about 500 years BC) against idolatry and its effects

After the exile against religious and national pride and hypocrisy

The destruction of the Canaanites

The instructions for war in Deuteronomy 20:

- Battles outside the ‘inherited land’:
 - Offer terms of peace
 - If refused and battle inevitable, preserve women and children and livestock
- Battles for the cities in the inheritance:
 - Utter destruction

The battle against idolatry

‘Otherwise, **they will teach you to follow all the detestable things they do in worshipping their gods, and you will sin against the LORD your God.’**

Deuteronomy 20 Verse

18:

Make no treaty with them, and show them no mercy. Do not intermarry. Do not give your daughters to their sons or take their daughters for your sons, 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. Break down their altars, smash their sacred stones, cut down their Asherah poles and burn their idols in the fire. 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 7 verses 1 - 6

The battle against idolatry

Ahab, sold himself to do evil in the eyes of the LORD, urged on by Jezebel his wife. He behaved in the vilest manner by going after idols, like the Amorites the LORD drove out before Israel - - you have provoked me to anger and have **caused Israel to sin.**' 1 Kings 21 verses 20 - 26

'Vileness' and 'detestable' practices:

- Shedding of innocent blood
- Ritual child abuse and murder
- Temple prostitution
- Dishonesty, corruption

The waiting and pleading of God:

- 'In the fourth generation your descendants will come back here, for the sin of the Amorites has not yet reached its full measure.' Gen. 15 v. 16
- I have stretched out My hands all day long to a rebellious people, who walk in a way that is not good, according to their own thoughts; a people who provoke Me to anger continually to My face. Isaiah 65

The Impartiality and Mercy of God:

Read the small print such as Leviticus 19

The Old testament is a window on the world

How do you view life and the news?

Things we might learn from the Old Testament - about history

- Everything is not caused by God.
- God is actively engaged with 'history' and the affairs of nations.
- The destination is sure but the journey is not a route map it is relationship.
- Shepherds of people and nations are very accountable.

Things we might learn from the Old Testament – about God

- God does not change but He does change His mind!
- He does not give up in second best situations.
- He is a God motivated by justice and mercy.
- Judgement and reward is not only at the end of the ages.

Things we might learn from the Old Testament - about human responsibility

- The earth is affected by what is done in it
- The purposes of God may be delayed by sin and unbelief
- God cannot suddenly change cultures and mindsets.
- We need to live for tomorrow as well as today. Our understanding of the meaning of life must include eternity.

What Jesus Said

"Do not think that I have come to abolish the Law or the Prophets; I have not come to abolish them but to fulfil them. I tell you the

truth, until heaven and earth disappear, not the smallest letter, not the least stroke of a pen, will by any means disappear from the Law until everything is accomplished.

Matthew 5 verses 17 - 18

"You have heard that it was said to the people long ago - - - - but I tell you!"

Matthew 5 verse 21 -

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