

## ANSWERING THE QUESTIONS OTHERS MOST OFTEN ASK US

### **Part I: Answering The Five Questions Most Asked By Unbelievers**

#### **A. Answering The Question Of The Old Testament's God Being "Wrathful"**

##### **I. Introduction**

- A. Though many people have many questions about Christianity, I have noticed over the years ten questions outsiders *most often* ask **our Church people**, and 1 Peter 3:15 calls us to **answer** them.
- B. We thus answer these questions, and I am partly indebted to Josh McDowell, A Ready Defense, 1991, p. 405-424.]

##### **II. Answering The Question Of The Old Testament's God Being "Wrathful."**

- A. This question often implies that the God in the Old Testament is wrathful and violent versus the gracious God of the New Testament, but God in **both** testaments is at times *both compassionate* (Deut. 7:9; Eph. 2:4-7) *and wrathful* (Deut. 7:10; Heb. 12:28-29)! The same God exists in both testaments!
- B. Yet, *opposite religious terrorists of today, God expresses wrath only to punish great, destructive sin:*
  1. God destroyed the world by the violent flood in judgment for its own great violence, Gen. 6:13-21. Yet, He did so only after Noah preached to its people for 120 years as he built the ark, 1 Peter 3:20; Gen. 6:3.
  2. Before destroying Sodom and Gomorrah (Gen. 19:24-25), God sent His angels to the area to see how evil it was (Gen. 18:20-21), and all the men of Sodom attempted forcibly to have homosexual relations with them (Ryrie Study Bible, KJV, 1978, fn. to Gen. 19:5), a grave sin that also violated the Ancient Near Eastern custom of treating visitors hospitably, Gen. 19:1-10. God thus used fire and brimstone to destroy the sinners involved and to exemplify His hatred of this particular sin, Jude 7.
  3. Some critics charge the Old Testament God's call for Israel to destroy the Canaanites left Israel no better than religious terrorists who brutalize people today. We answer this charge (as follows):
    - a. First, Genesis 15:1-14, 17-21 reveals that though God promised Abraham and his seed the land of Canaan, Genesis 15:15-16 shows God had Abraham die and later possess the land in his resurrection since the "iniquity of the Amorites," a term for Canaanites as a whole (Ibid., fn. to Genesis 15:13-16), was "not yet full"! God *graciously* gave the Canaanites **another 400 years to repent before He destroyed them.**
    - b. As Israel was about to enter Canaan, God planned to use her to destroy the Canaanites for defiling the land (Lev. 18:24-25) with sins like incest (Lev. 18:6), pederasty (Lev. 18:10), infant sacrifice (Lev. 18:21), homosexuality (Lev. 18:22) and bestiality (Lev. 18:23), vices that destroy society. William F. Albright, Professor of Semitic Languages (1929-1958 at John Hopkins University, sometime director of the American Schools of Oriental Research and "considered by many to be the foremost biblical archaeologist in the world" until his death in 1971 (Ibid., McDowell, p. 142), wrote of the Canaanites: "At its worst . . . the erotic aspects of their cult must have sunk to extremely sordid depths of social degradation," Arch. and the Religion of Israel, 1942, p. 77 as cited in Merrill F. Unger, Archaeology and the O. T., 1973, p. 75.
    - c. Third, when Israel began to prepare to fight the Canaanites, the Preincarnate Christ appeared to Israel's commander, Joshua, to tell him that God was not siding with Israel or with the Canaanites, but that He as Commander of the Lord's spiritual armies behind Israel was using Israel's army to destroy the Canaanites in divine punishment, that Israel was to yield to God's leading in how she did battle, Joshua 5:13-15 NIV.
    - d. Fourth, in engaging the Canaanites in battle, Israel was to kill everything that breathed, for all life forms were so corrupted by the vile Leviticus 18 practices that leaving any of them alive could lead to Israel's being influenced unto their detestable, socially destructive practices, Bible Know. Com., O. T., p. 299-300.
    - e. Fifth, if other nations besides the Canaanites approached Israel to fight her, Israel was first to offer to be at peace with them, but if they refused, Israel was to kill only the enemy soldiers in battle, Deut. 20:10-15.
    - f. Sixth, Israel was not to be needlessly destructive in war: she was to spare fruit trees as sources of food for man (Deut. 20:19-20), meaning that Israel was to wage war in self control and consideration for human welfare as a necessary check to losing self control in her destruction of her enemies.

***Lesson:*** *The Bible's God is righteous, loving and fair, so if man practices socially destructive sins and refuses to repent, God punishes him with just judgment, and He at times uses human agents to administer such judgment.*

***Application:*** *(1) May we believe in Christ to be saved from God's eternal wrath unto eternal life, John 3:16. (2) As believers, may we love and obey the Lord, realizing He IS a "Consuming Fire" Whom we must respect and heed, lest we face His impartial discipline! (Deuteronomy 10:17-18)*