

“I Can't Find a Good Reason to Believe in God and the Bible”

I have been reading some of the questions and answers that have been given about god, angels and the rest. Some of the questions make sense but to me almost none of the answers. Just so you know, I am a non believer in all of that and can find no good reason to believe. I tried going to church, going to meetings, bible study, prayer meetings—for me there are no real answers to anything in this life, just excuses. Maybe I am writing this with hopes of finding some.

When I have read the bible I find the good that everyone talks about and speaks of. It is always the same few things. The reason for me is because there is so little of it. I find plenty of ethnic cleansing, wars of extermination, murder of men women and children ordered by god. If the numbers in the bible are true which I do not believe they are, it is just something to try and frighten people. If the numbers of people ordered murdered by or murdered by god are anywhere near what is real, it makes Hitler, Stalin and Mao look like made-up cartoon characters. Yet we read about them and are appalled, so why not god?

I really believe to read the bible without horror one must undo everything that is tender, sympathizing and benevolent in the heart of man. That is what is the most frightening thing to me about most people who believe. I know I cannot read the bible with an open mind and not be appalled at the majority of the actions of god. I have tried. For me this is not divine love. People are always upset at the amount of violence that is in society, much of it on television—why not by the amount of it in the bible? The treatment of women is one of the most horrible I have ever read...for the most part. In both the old

and new testament. That can easily be pointed out in both the laws of the part of the world at that time and in the laws of god.

I do not at all understand how the two most powerful beings in existence cannot solve their own problems and if they can't do that, how am I to believe either of them can assist me in any way? And because they couldn't get along, the entire human race is damned because of that? Makes no sense to me. That to me is like saying one of my siblings did something wrong so I am going to spank all of you for it. And in the case with god it is not because of the siblings it is because he and satan can't get along.

Because of this and many more things I have read in the bible along with research on the meaning of words and laws of that time...I cannot believe. There are too many other teachings that show a much more kinder way of life for human beings. There are many people I have met in life who know that the violent nature of human beings does not exist in all of us...and that is what we live everyday. I believe that in those in whom it does exist, the bible more so than not gives excuses for it to continue. If the entire book is what it is really about, then entire book should be taught. I would love to attend a class bible class that teaches that. I have not yet found one. I know I would be a tough student...not because I want to be...but because I want to know. I just can't take another bible study that does not go into everything in the book

Thank you for writing Probe Ministries. Although it may be a hard thing to read, I believe that God's command to the Israelites to utterly destroy the Canaanites teaches us a very important lesson about God. God is absolutely holy and will by no means leave the guilty unpunished (see Exodus 34:7; Numbers 14:18; Proverbs 11:21; Nahum 1:3). The Canaanites were guilty of some of the worst crimes imaginable: terrible idolatry, immoral sexual behavior, and child sacrifice, just to name a few. All the way back in Genesis 15:13-16, God revealed to

Abram His plan to give His people the land of Canaan. However, notice that His promise would not be fulfilled for over 400 years. Why? Because, as God said, "the iniquity of the Amorites is not yet complete" (Gen. 15:16). We must not forget, therefore, that God was very patient with the wicked practices of these people. He gave them hundreds of years to repent and turn from their wicked ways. But they chose not to. In the end, God did indeed judge them for their sin – just as He will one day judge the world in righteousness (Acts 17:31; Matt. 25:31-46; Revelation 20:11-15).

Let me also point out that God, as the Sovereign Creator and Judge of all mankind, has the right to give life and to take it away. After giving the Canaanites hundreds of years to repent, God finally judged their sins by waging a holy war against them through His people. This was a Divine judgment upon the Canaanites for their sins. It was also the means by which God would protect His chosen people from being corrupted by the wicked practices of these peoples (see Deuteronomy 12:2-4; 20:16-18). The lesson we are taught, I believe, is that God takes sin very seriously and will, as the perfectly holy and righteous Judge of all mankind, punish all sin without exception. In the end, not one sin will go unpunished. If any sin went unpunished, God would not be perfectly just. But since He is perfectly just, not one sin will go unpunished. This is a sober warning to all mankind that God is very serious about judging sin. It is quite proper for us to react to these stories with a healthy fear of God's judgment. Although God's judgment on the Canaanites was severe, the number of peoples killed is not anywhere close to the numbers murdered by Hitler and Stalin. But even if they were, it's important to put these events in proper perspective. After all, God's judgment on those who reject His Son and the free offer of His friendship, grace, love and forgiveness, results in much more severe consequences than mere physical death (see Revelation 20:11-15). Those who reject Jesus' sacrifice on the cross in their place as the only acceptable payment for their

sins, will have to pay for their sins themselves. And this involves eternal punishment (Matthew 25:46).

As for the treatment of women, it's very important to recognize that women in ancient Israel, and especially in the early church, were treated far better than they were in the surrounding cultures of those days. All the way back in Genesis 1:27 we are told that BOTH men and women are created in the image and likeness of God. Paul says that in Christ there is neither male nor female, for we are all one in Christ (Galatians 3:28). He urged husbands to love their wives in the same manner that Christ loved the church (Ephesians 5:25). This is a sacrificial sort of love that would even give its life for the beloved, just as Christ did for His church. Christianity actually did more than any other force in the ancient world to bring about an elevation in the status of women.

It's important to realize that man is not punished because God and Satan can't get along. This idea is taught nowhere in the Bible. Men are to be judged and punished for their sins (unless they repent and receive God's mercy through faith in Christ Jesus), just as Satan and his angels are to be judged and punished for theirs. We will not be punished because God and Satan can't get along. Furthermore, we shouldn't think of God and Satan as virtual equals. Satan is a rebel angel, a being originally created good by God, but who rebelled against God and sinned. Satan has no more power relative to God than you or I. Compared to God, Satan is completely powerless. Indeed, the only power he has is due to the fact that God created him with it, maintains him in existence, and (for the moment) allows him to exercise it in a manner contrary to His perfect moral will. At God's proper time, Satan will be cast into the lake of fire for all eternity (Revelation 20:10). He will never be permitted to wreak chaos and moral rebellion in God's world again.

Finally, I will honestly say that I don't believe there is a

higher example of moral purity, holiness and virtue than that of Jesus. If what He taught is true, then the only way to be reconciled to God is through faith in Him (John 14:6). Furthermore, the Bible does not acknowledge that anyone (other than Jesus) is without sin or guilt. The Bible teaches that not one of us is righteous (Romans 3:10), but that all of us are sinners (Romans 3:23). Nevertheless, although the wages of sin is death, the free gift of God is eternal life in Jesus Christ our Lord (Romans 6:23). Although Christians are not perfect, Christ Jesus is. And it is to Him that God invites us to look for His grace, mercy, love, forgiveness, and eternal life. "O taste and see that the Lord is good; how blessed is the man who takes refuge in Him!" (Psalm 34:8).

Shalom,

Michael Gleghorn
Probe Ministries