

## God's Grand Story pt 8 – God – the only Righteous Judge

**Intro:** Stefan Duerksen Lead Pastor

**Church-Wide Prayer: Next Gen** (Ps 78:7-8): Encounters with Jesus, strong mental health, boldness & belonging

- **Personal:** pray for Gen Z & Alpha (age: 0-27) by name → to know Jesus, love him, obey him, to grow in love for Scripture & prayer, find their identity & purpose in Christ.
- Pray for **students!** Homeschool, public & Christian schools – in each type of classroom there are challenges. Pray for them to be able to grow in their faith, love for people, respect for teachers, to be good examples of Christ followers in their School context.
- Pray for the Next Gen to experience deep healing for anxiety, depression, hurts, and a changing world. For the foundation to be built on their faith in Christ.
- Pray for **teachers:** public, homeschool, private: they are discipling the next generation!
- Pray that God would raise up godly, Spirit filled teachers in each arena. Pray for them to have wisdom in raising the next Gen of Christians to be able to engage culture, make disciples, stand for truth & love those around them

**INTRO: What did God command the Israelites to do to those in Canaan? Kill everyone? Or drive them out? This question and point raised a lot more questions! 😊 What does our answer say about who God is?**

**Why this matters:** Faith is TRUST built on a foundation of BELIEFS about God, Salvation, the Bible, our origin, identity, morality, how can we fix what's broken, where are we headed, etc.

- If I believe God would never judge someone for sin. This will effect how I interpret the Bible! And other beliefs I have and how I respond to sin in my own life and think about God.

**1 Peter 3:15** “always be prepared to make a defense to anyone who asks you for a reason for the hope that is in you.”

**Hermeneutics: Interpreting & Applying Scripture - We will be using this today! 😊**

1. **Scripture interprets Scripture:** historical, literary context and reading canonically! Grand Story!
2. **Science/reason/logic:** truth can often be observed & tested
3. **Experience:** our testimony & lived experience adds depth to our faith
4. **Heart Posture:** humble, obedient, Spirit led, teachable.

**A. Understanding God's ❤️ Love, Mercy & Judgement**

1. **God LOVES all people – his heart is to reconcile ALL nations!**
2. **God gives ALL people a chance to REPENT and know Him**
3. **God judges Nations & people to STOP evil from going too far & turn their hearts to Him**
4. **God is a RIGHTEOUS JUDGE. He is God. We are not.**

**B. Did the Lord command them to, “utterly destroy” or “drive out”?**

**“Utterly destroy” = No one left alive**

**“Drive out before you” = to force someone to leave an area**

**IMPORTANT: WE SHOULD NOT DISUNIFY OVER THIS – NOT SALVIFIC IN NATURE – BUT, it does matter!**  
As this is one of the barriers for people knowing God, deconstructing or become progressive.

**Exodus 23:20-30** Behold, I send an angel before you to guard you on the way and to bring you to the place that I have prepared. ... “When my angel goes before you and brings you to the Amorites and the Hittites and the Perizzites and the Canaanites, the Hivites and the Jebusites, and I blot them out, you shall not bow down to their gods nor serve them, nor do as they do, but you shall utterly overthrow them and break their pillars in pieces. You shall serve the Lord your God...I will send my terror before you and will throw into confusion all the people against whom you shall come, and I will make all your enemies turn their backs to you. And I will send hornets before you, which shall drive out the Hivites, the Canaanites, and the Hittites from before you. I will not drive them out from before you in one year, lest the land become desolate and the wild beasts multiply against you. Little by little I will drive them out from before you, until you have increased and possess the land.

- <https://www.timesofisrael.com/the-canaanites-werent-annihilated-they-just-moved-to-lebanon/>
- **ABOVE LINK:** archeology says findings are more consistent with Canaanites being driven out, than of genocide occurring. They say there is no evidence of a genocide, or ethnic cleansing taking place. Rather it appears they lived together and were pushed into other areas Lebanon.
- **Here we seem to find BOTH the language of “blot out” AND “drive out”.** You can see why a literal reading does not work from this Passage alone. NOW, you can decide which was literal, and which was hyperbolic, or figurative. But they cannot BOTH be literal.

**Exodus 23:31-33** And I will set your border from the Red Sea to the Sea of the Philistines, and from the wilderness to the Euphrates, for I will give the inhabitants of the land into your hand, and you shall drive them out before you. You shall make no covenant with them and their gods. They shall not dwell in your land, lest they make you sin against me; for if you serve their gods, it will surely be a snare to you.”

**MARCHING ORDERS → Deuteronomy 7:1-5** When the Lord your God brings you into the land that you are entering to take possession of it, and clears away many nations before you, the Hittites, the Girgashites, the Amorites, the Canaanites, the Perizzites, the Hivites, and the Jebusites, seven nations more numerous and mightier than you, and when the Lord your God gives them over to you, and you defeat them, then you must devote them to complete destruction. You shall not intermarry with them, giving your daughters to their sons or taking their daughters for your sons, for they would turn away your sons from following me, to serve other gods. Then the anger of the Lord would be kindled against you, and he would destroy you quickly. But thus shall you deal with them: you shall break down their altars and dash in pieces their pillars and chop down their Asherim and burn their carved images with fire.

**Deuteronomy 20:10-18** “When you draw near to a city to fight against it, offer terms of peace to it. And if it responds to you peaceably and it opens to you, then all the people who are found in it shall do forced labor for you and shall serve you. But if it makes no peace with you, but makes war against you,

then you shall besiege it. ... Thus you shall do to all the cities that are very far from you, which are not cities of the nations here. But in the cities of these peoples that the Lord your God is giving you for an inheritance, you shall save alive nothing that breathes, but you shall devote them to complete destruction, the Hittites and the Amorites, the Canaanites and the Perizzites, the Hivites and the Jebusites, as the Lord your God has commanded, that they may not teach you to do according to all their abominable practices that they have done for their gods, and so you sin against the Lord your God.

- Whether literal, or, hyperbolic. This is an IMPORTANT CONSIDERATION AND POINT. What happened in Canaan was unique. AND God was righteous to judge Canaan for their wickedness.
- **Canaan:** rampant sexual immorality, incest, homosexuality, adultery, rape, bestiality & child sacrifice.
- **EXAMPLE:** Nazi Germany – were the Allies righteous in attacking Germany? War is terrible. But some wars are JUST WARS. With JUST CAUSES.

**Numbers 33:50-52** And the Lord spoke to Moses in the plains of Moab by the Jordan at Jericho, saying, “Speak to the people of Israel and say to them, When you pass over the Jordan into the land of Canaan, then you shall drive out all the inhabitants of the land from before you and destroy all their figured stones and destroy all their metal images and demolish all their high places.

**Numbers 33:55-56** But if you do not drive out the inhabitants of the land from before you, then those of them whom you let remain shall be as barbs in your eyes and thorns in your sides, and they shall trouble you in the land where you dwell. And I will do to you as I thought to do to them.”

- **Language:** Drive out for people. Destroy for idols.
- **Question:** when Israel rebelled. Did God, “utterly destroy”, or, “drive them out”? he drove them out of the land!

**Numbers 35:9-15** And the Lord spoke to Moses, saying, “Speak to the people of Israel and say to them, When you cross the Jordan into the land of Canaan, then you shall select cities to be cities of refuge for you, that the manslayer who kills any person without intent may flee there... These six cities shall be for refuge for the people of Israel, and for the stranger and for the sojourner among them, that anyone who kills any person without intent may flee there.

- Right from the beginning. When they received their “Marching orders” God included provision for non-Israelites, “strangers” & “foreigners”.
- God heart: Against other cultures and people??? NO WAY!!! NOT YAHWEH!

### C. Joshua & the Canaanite Conquest

**Joshua 10:19-21** but do not stay there yourselves. Pursue your enemies; attack their rear guard. Do not let them enter their cities, for the Lord your God has given them into your hand.” When Joshua and the sons of Israel had finished striking them with a great blow until they were wiped out, and when the remnant that remained of them had entered into the fortified cities, then all the people returned safe to Joshua in the camp at Makkedah. Not a man moved his tongue against any of the people of Israel.

- Joshua says TWO THINGS in the same verse. They wiped them all out! AND then the survivors went into the city and no longer spoke against Israel.

**Joshua 10:39-40** and he captured it with its king and all its towns. And they struck them with the edge of the sword and **devoted to destruction every person in it**; he left none remaining. Just as he had done to **Hebron** and to Libnah and its king, so he did to **Debir** and to its king. So Joshua struck the whole land, the hill country and the Negeb and the lowland and the slopes, and all their kings. He left none remaining, but devoted to destruction all that breathed, just as the Lord God of Israel commanded.

**Joshua 11:21** And Joshua came at that time and cut off the **Anakim** from the hill country, from **Hebron**, from **Debir**, from Anab, and from all the hill country of Judah, and from all the hill country of Israel. Joshua devoted them to destruction with their cities.

**Question:** How could the Anakim be alive in Hebron & Debir, if “everything that breathed” had been destroyed?

**Joshua 11:23** So Joshua took the whole land, according to all that the Lord had spoken to Moses. And Joshua gave it for an inheritance to Israel according to their tribal allotments. And the land had rest from war.

**Joshua 15:14-15** And Caleb drove out from there the three sons of Anak, Sheshai and Ahiman and Talmi, the descendants of Anak. And he went up from there against the inhabitants of Debir. Now the name of Debir formerly was Kiriath-sepher.

**Judges 1:10-11** And Judah went against the **Canaanites** who lived in **Hebron** (now the name of Hebron was formerly Kiriath-arba), and they defeated Sheshai and Ahiman and Talmi.

**Judges 1:20** And **Hebron** was given to Caleb, as Moses had said. And he drove out from it the three sons of **Anak**. From there they went against the inhabitants of **Debir**. The name of Debir was formerly Kiriath-sepher.

**They were still fighting people in Anak, Debir & Hebron AFTER Joshua said ALL had been wiped out.**

**Some ARGUE:** there were people in the land because Israel failed to do what God commanded! TRUE - Judges supports this (Judges 2:20-23) BUT not as the only reason. Because that explanation cannot account for Joshua’s claim to have “Done all that Moses commanded” and “left not alive” when he clearly had left MANY alive.

We’ve established what Scripture says. In this case, it could be taken both ways. So let’s apply logic and reason, based on what we learned LAST WEEK, this week and our experience.

- God did judge the Canaanites for their sin. He gave 400 years for them to repent. This was just.
- Joshua did not make mistakes in writing his own account. Clerical errors would have been caught and corrected!
- Joshua stated he “utterly destroyed all the breathed” and then stated that there were people left alive.

- Joshua did not take the command literally. The language was common language used for military conquest of the day. Hyperbolic language is commonly used then, and is commonly used now. (*Is God a moral monster? Paul Copan – gives 6 historical examples of other nations using the same language in the same way. P. 172*)
- Joshua understood the command to mean completely destroy every idol, altar, high place and those who worship the Canaanite gods.
- Yes, there will have been innocents killed in battle, along with the wicked. But, the Canaanite Conquest was a JUST WAR, not a genocide.
- The Israelites FAILED to drive out all the inhabitants. And they did become a snare for them. And God did drive them out of the land, just as he said he would.

**(Worship Team come out & play music) I prefer the hyperbolic argument, as opposed to the literal one, for “utterly destroyed” as it makes the best sense, in my opinion, to what Scripture says. Scripture interpreting Scripture.**

#### **D. God the Righteous Judge will judge ALL people**

We know that God does not enjoy the death of the wicked. (**Ezekiel 33**)

We know that he desires, ‘none to perish, but all to reach repentance’ (**2 Peter 3**)

We know God is love. He is good. He is so committed to rescuing us from our sins that he came down in human form and died, died a criminals death to pay the ransom owed for our sins. And then was resurrected and now sits in heaven. (**Romans 5:8**)

He is also a judge. He cannot be loving if he does not judge sin. He is SLOW to anger! He is patient.

**But as surely as he judged those in Canaan and Israel, He is coming back! And he will judge EVERY ONE OF US.**

**Acts 17:30-31** he times of ignorance God overlooked, but now he commands all people everywhere to repent, because he has fixed a day on which he will judge the world in righteousness by a man whom he has appointed; and of this he has given assurance to all by raising him from the dead.”

**Revelation 20:11-15** Then I saw a great white throne and him who was seated on it. From his presence earth and sky fled away, and no place was found for them. And I saw the dead, great and small, standing before the throne, and books were opened. Then another book was opened, which is the book of life. And the dead were judged by what was written in the books, according to what they had done. And the sea gave up the dead who were in it, Death and Hades gave up the dead who were in them, and they were judged, each one of them, according to what they had done. Then Death and Hades were thrown into the lake of fire. This is the second death, the lake of fire. And if anyone's name was not found written in the book of life, he was thrown into the lake of fire.

#### **ARE YOU READY?**

**Whatever is His way, is our way!**

1. **Does your life reflect the authority:** 1. Scripture; 2. Science, reason & logic; THEN 3. Experience & what the culture says OR, the reverse?
2. **What is God asking you to do?** Forgive? Serve? Give? Each one, reach one?
3. **What is God asking you to repent of?** Sin? Compromise? Apathy? Pride? Bitterness?
4. **Receive Salvation:** You don't earn it! You receive it through faith! A gift of GRACE
5. **Praise God:** He is a Righteous Judge! He is kind! He is loving! And he won't allow sin & death to go on forever!

**2 Peter 3:9** *The Lord is ...patient toward you, not wishing that any should perish, but that all should reach repentance.*

**CLOSE in PRAYER: AFTER SERVICE PRAYER → MARANATHA!**

**AFTER SERVICE PRAYER – PRAYER ROOM – 9AM and 11AM**

**MARANATHA!! Come soon Lord!**

[Care@mysouthland.com](mailto:Care@mysouthland.com)

**SC CHURCH WIDE PRAYER REQUESTS 2023**

**Cruise ship → → → → → Battleship**

1. **Life on Mission** (Mt 28:18-20, Mt 22:37-40): Love, serve & disciple people to Jesus
2. **Next Gen** (Ps 78:7-8): Encounters with Jesus, strong mental health, boldness & belonging
3. **Israel & Persecuted Church** (Lk 21:13): Faith, fortitude & wisdom “to not waste the opportunity to share the Gospel”
4. **Heart of Prayer** (Ps 27:4): Every generation to find Jesus & learn to bring their needs to Him in prayer
5. **Church Renewal:** Directors for India and other new countries & many global disciple makers