

CHAPTER and VERSE.

honest questions about the Bible

Part Four: Why Is There So Much Violence in the Bible? Sermon Study Guide 7/31/16 The Story Houston

So far with this series we've asked three questions:

- * Is the Bible holy?
- * Is the Bible true?
- * Is the Bible perfect?

What ideas and insights from this series so far have stood out to you most? What questions remain?

(email your most pressing Bible questions to thestoryhouston@gmail.com)

Today's question is a doozy. **Why is there so much violence in the Bible?** Before today's sermon, how would you have answered this question?

What are some examples of violence and bloodshed found in the Bible?

You'll notice most, if not all, of these examples are found in the Old Testament. Many people struggle with the apparent "differences" between the God of the Old Testament and Jesus of Nazareth in the New Testament. Old Testament God seems angry and bloodthirsty, while Jesus preached love and forgiveness. In the second century, the Church was almost torn apart by this apparent contradiction.

Who was Marcion, and what did he believe?

Why is it notable that Marcion was born into a wealthy family and grew up in the most desirable sector of Rome? How does privilege affect our understanding of violence, vengeance, and justice?

Marcionism makes two assumptions: the God of the Old Testament was always violent (and unnecessarily so), and Jesus of Nazareth was never violent. Why are both assumptions flawed?

What are some possible explanations for some of the violence in the Old Testament?

Exodus 34:6 And He passed in front of Moses, saying, "The Lord, the Lord, the compassionate and gracious God, slow to anger, abounding in love and mercy."

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Moving to the New Testament, why is it misleading to say Jesus was never violent? **What examples do we have of his penchant for aggression? What circumstances set him off?**

Matthew 18:2-6 He called a little child to him, and placed the child among them. And he said, "Truly I tell you, unless you change and become like little children, you will never enter the kingdom of heaven. Therefore, whoever become like a child is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven. And whoever welcomes one such child in my name welcomes me. But if anyone causes one of these little ones to stumble, it would be better for them to have a large millstone hung around their neck and to be drowned in the depths of the sea."

John 2:13-16 When it was almost time for the Jewish Passover, Jesus went up to Jerusalem. In the temple courts, he found people selling cattle, sheep and doves, and others sitting at tables exchanging money. So he made a whip out of cords, and drove all from the temple courts, both sheep and cattle, he scattered the coins of the money changers and overturned their tables. To those who sold doves he said, "Get these out of here! Stop turning my Father's house into a market!"

What are some instances when you think it's okay for followers of Christ to be aggressive, even violent, if necessary?

How do you think wealth and privilege have removed us from the *grit* of the real world?

Who are the people today who still depend on and long for the justice and wrath of God?

Even so, what is our ultimate hope? What will the kingdom of God look like?

Isaiah 11:1-9 A shoot will come up from the stump of Jesse; from his roots a Branch will bear fruit. The Spirit of the Lord will rest on him - the Spirit of wisdom and understanding, the Spirit of counsel and might, the Spirit of the knowledge and fear of the Lord. He will not judge by what he sees with his eyes, or decide by what he hears with his ears; but with righteousness he will judge the needy, with justice he will give decisions for the poor of the earth. He will strike the earth with the rod of his mouth; with the breath of his lips he will slay the wicked. Righteousness will be his belt and faithfulness the sash around his waist. The wolf will live with the lamb, the leopard will lie down with the goat, the calf and the lion and the yearling together, and a little child will lead them. The cow will feed with the bear, their young will lie down together, and the lion will eat straw like the ox. The infant will play near the cobra's den, and the young child will put its hand into the viper's nest. They will neither harm nor destroy on all my holy mountain, for the earth will be filled with the knowledge of the Lord as the waters cover the sea.