

## IS YAHWEH AN OGRE?<sup>1</sup>

He utterly destroyed Sodom and Gomorrah, killing all of the inhabitants of both cities (except Lot and his family).<sup>2</sup> He ordered Moses to slay the leaders of the Israelites when they worshiped the Moabites' false gods.<sup>3</sup> He prescribed the death penalty for sorcery,<sup>4</sup> idolatry,<sup>5</sup> and false prophecy,<sup>6</sup> as well as for adultery,<sup>7</sup> murder,<sup>8</sup> rape,<sup>9</sup> and many other offenses.<sup>10</sup> Early Christian heretics—such as the Marcionites,<sup>11</sup> the

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<sup>1</sup> Yahweh (also rendered as Jehovah) is one of the Hebrew names for God in the Old Testament. Some other names for God in the Old Testament are Elohim (the Creator-God of Genesis), Adonai (Lord), and El Shaddai (the all-sufficient God, or God Almighty). In this article, I will use “Yahweh” to refer to God as He is presented in the Old Testament.

<sup>2</sup> Genesis 19:24-25

<sup>3</sup> Numbers 25:1-4

<sup>4</sup> Exodus 22:18; see also Leviticus 20:27

<sup>5</sup> Exodus 22:20, Deuteronomy 13:1-10, 17:2-7

<sup>6</sup> Deuteronomy 18:20

<sup>7</sup> Leviticus 20:10, Deuteronomy 22:22-24

<sup>8</sup> Exodus 21:12-14; Leviticus 24:17, 24:21; Numbers 35:16-21, 35:30-31; Deuteronomy 19:11-13

<sup>9</sup> Deuteronomy 22:25-27 (note that only the rapist is punished—the rape victim is considered innocent of any sin, and therefore she is not to be punished)

<sup>10</sup> For example, death is ordered for the following offenses, among others:

violating various rules regarding the priests and the Tabernacle (Exodus 28:35, 28:43, 30:20-21; Leviticus 8:31-35, 10:6-9, 16:2, 16:13, 22:9; Numbers 1:51, 3:5-10, 3:38, 4:15, 4:19-20, 18:2-3, 18:7, 18:22, 18:25-32);

cursing, striking, or persistently disobeying a parent (Exodus 21:15, 21:17; Deuteronomy 21:18-21);

kidnapping (Exodus 21:16; Deuteronomy 24:7);

bestiality (Exodus 22:19; Leviticus 20:15-16);

homosexuality (Leviticus 20:13);

certain types of incest (Leviticus 20:11-12);

premarital sex when betrothed to another (Deuteronomy 22:20-21);

child sacrifice (Leviticus 20:2);

profaning the Sabbath (Exodus 31:14-15, 35:2; Numbers 15:32-36);

allowing a dangerous animal to kill someone (Exodus 21:29);

cursing or blaspheming God (Leviticus 24:15-16);

refusing to abide by the decision of a priest or judge (Deuteronomy 17:12)

<sup>11</sup> Marcionism, an early Christian heresy, taught that Jesus had only the appearance of an earthly body, and thus denied His humanity. The Marcionites forbid both marriage and sex, and required married couples to live apart and practice celibacy.

Paulicians,<sup>12</sup> and Gnostic Christians<sup>13</sup>—believed that He was evil, and that this world, as His creation, was also evil.

In the Old Testament, God at first seems much different than He is portrayed in the New Testament. Certainly, the Old Testament can be difficult to understand. When I first tried to read the Old Testament after becoming a Christian, I struggled through the early books before finally abandoning the effort somewhere around Deuteronomy. Yet as I have grown in my faith, I have come to understand that the Old Testament's Yahweh is the same loving, compassionate, and merciful God we see in the New Testament. God did not change—we did.

**He's the Same God.** What Jesus called the Greatest Commandment<sup>14</sup> actually comes from the book of Deuteronomy in the Old Testament: “ ‘You shall love the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your might.’ ”<sup>15</sup> The Second Greatest Commandment comes from the Old Testament book of Leviticus:<sup>16</sup> “you shall love your neighbor as yourself.”<sup>17</sup> Kindness to enemies—an idea which Jesus certainly promoted<sup>18</sup>—has its roots in the Old Testament:

“If you meet your enemy's ox or his donkey wandering away, you shall surely return it to him.”<sup>19</sup>

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<sup>12</sup> Paulicians first made their appearance in the 7<sup>th</sup> century A.D., south of Armenia. Believing that flesh is evil and that spirit is good, they denied Jesus' humanity, and thus claimed that his life and death were illusory.

<sup>13</sup> Gnostics believed in a “Gnosis,” or Truth, revealed in all religions. Gnosticism was really a separate religion, not part of Christianity, but many early Christians attempted to blend elements of Gnosticism with Christianity. These Gnostic Christians taught that the flesh, with its desires and lusts, was evil, and that salvation involved the freeing of the spirit from these fleshly desires. Since flesh was regarded as evil, most Gnostic Christians denied that Jesus had existed in the flesh, and thus denied or minimized his earthly life, death, and resurrection.

<sup>14</sup> Matthew 22:36-38; Mark 12:28-30; Luke 10:27

<sup>15</sup> Deuteronomy 6:5; other verses which remind the Israelites to love God above all else include: Deuteronomy 10:12, 11:1, 11:13, 11:22, 13:3, 19:9, 30:6, 30:16; Joshua 22:5, 23:11; 1 Samuel 12:20

<sup>16</sup> Matthew 22:39; Mark 28:31; Luke 10:27

<sup>17</sup> Leviticus 19:18

<sup>18</sup> Matthew 5:44; Luke 6:27-28, 6:35; see also Romans 12:20, which expresses a similar sentiment

<sup>19</sup> Exodus 23:4

The New Testament encourages Christians to be kind and generous to the poor,<sup>20</sup> but so does the Old Testament:

“If there is a poor man with you, one of your brothers, in any of your towns in your land which the LORD your God is giving you, you shall not harden your heart, nor close your hand from your poor brother; but you shall freely open your hand to him, and shall generously lend him sufficient for his need *in* whatever he lacks. . . . You shall generously give to him, and your heart shall not be grieved when you give to him, because for this thing the LORD your God will bless you in all your work and in all your undertakings. For the poor will never cease *to be* in the land; therefore I command you, saying, ‘You shall freely open your hand to your brother, to your needy and poor in your land.’ ”<sup>21</sup>

We can see some of the compassion of the New Testament in the Old Testament’s insistence upon proper treatment of widows, orphans, and strangers:

“You shall not wrong a stranger or oppress him, for you were strangers in the land of Egypt. You shall not afflict any widow or orphan.”<sup>22</sup>

Many other parallels exist between the Old and New Testament portrayals of God. Isaiah calls Him “Father” and “Redeemer,”<sup>23</sup> names reminiscent of the New Testament, and adds that God “longs to be gracious to you, and therefore He waits on high to have compassion on you.”<sup>24</sup> The Psalmist testifies that God often restrained His anger and forgave His people, even when they were unfaithful to Him.<sup>25</sup> Just as Jesus and John the

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<sup>20</sup> Matthew 19:21; Mark 10:21; Luke 14:13, 18:22, 19:8; Romans 15:26; Galatians 2:10; James 2:2-6, 2:15-16

<sup>21</sup> Deuteronomy 15:7-8 and 15:10-11; similarly, see Ezekiel 18:7, and Isaiah 58:6-7 and 58:10

<sup>22</sup> Exodus 22:21-22

<sup>23</sup> Isaiah 63:16

<sup>24</sup> Isaiah 30:18

<sup>25</sup> Psalm 78:36-39

Baptist called upon people to repent, so does Ezekiel.<sup>26</sup> And when the people of the Assyrian city of Nineveh did repent, God forgave them.<sup>27</sup> People thought Jesus' prohibition of divorce<sup>28</sup> was new, but Malachi spoke of God's hatred for divorce centuries before Christ.<sup>29</sup>

Many of the New Testament teachings are trees grown from the seeds of the Old Testament. So why does God *seem* so different in the Old Testament? Let's start with what people were like back then—and what God was trying to teach them.

**It's All About Trust.** A wise parent does not discipline a two-year-old the same way he disciplines a teenager. A teenager needs firm guidance combined with the freedom to make many of her own decisions—and mistakes. But a two-year-old would be lost if given such freedom. He needs strict rules which are strictly enforced, and a great deal of supervision. In terms of spiritual maturity, Jesus was teaching teenagers, while Yahweh was working with two-year-olds.

In early Old Testament days, God's people had little knowledge or experience of God. The Psalms had not yet been written, and none of the Prophets had appeared on the scene. The coming of Jesus and the Holy Spirit was not even on the horizon. God still had a lot to teach His people, beginning with the most important lesson: Trust Me and do what I tell you to do.

We see this as early as the story of Adam and Eve.<sup>30</sup> God made it simple for the first man and woman. He gave them only one rule: don't eat the fruit of the tree of knowledge of good and evil.<sup>31</sup> People with ill motives toward God have criticized Him for trying to keep Adam and Eve from acquiring knowledge—knowledge they clearly were not ready for, by the way. But this misses the point. The story of Adam and Eve is all about trust. The serpent was able to deceive Eve by convincing her to trust him instead of God:

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<sup>26</sup> Ezekiel 14:6

<sup>27</sup> Jonah 4:11 (even if you view the book of Jonah as allegory, as many do, the lesson it teaches about forgiveness and mercy is unchanged)

<sup>28</sup> See Matthew 5:31-32, 19:3-9; Mark 10:2-12.

<sup>29</sup> See Malachi 2:13-16, and especially Malachi 2:16: “‘For I hate divorce,’ says the LORD, the God of Israel. . . .”

<sup>30</sup> For purposes of this discussion, I do not care whether you consider the story of Adam and Eve to be history, allegory, or parable. The lesson is the same.

<sup>31</sup> Genesis 2:16-17

Now the serpent was more crafty than any beast of the field which the LORD God had made. And he said to the woman, “Indeed, has God said, ‘You shall not eat from any tree of the garden’?” The woman said to the serpent, “From the fruit of the trees of the garden we may eat; but from the fruit of the tree which is in the middle of the garden, God has said, ‘You shall not eat from it or touch it, or you will die.’” The serpent said to the woman, “You surely will not die! For God knows that in the day you eat from it your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God, knowing good and evil.”<sup>32</sup>

The serpent convinced Eve that God had lied to her, and so she trusts the serpent rather than God.<sup>33</sup> Adam in turn trusts Eve rather than God, and eats of the fruit, too.<sup>34</sup> Adam and Eve received a failing grade for their lesson in trust, and were banished from Eden because of it.<sup>35</sup>

God continued this lesson in trust with the Israelites, the descendants of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob.<sup>36</sup> And as a first step, God gave them rules: the Ten Commandments and the Law, as detailed in the Pentateuch.<sup>37</sup> Like any parent, He promised rewards for obedience and punishments for disobedience.<sup>38</sup> Unfortunately, the Israelites repeatedly fell into idolatry

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<sup>32</sup> Genesis 3:1-5

<sup>33</sup> Note that Eve misquotes God—for He never said she could not *touch* the fruit. I think the serpent used this mistake to his advantage, by touching the fruit himself as he says, “You surely will not die!” When Eve sees that the serpent touched the fruit and did not die, she begins to doubt God and to trust the serpent. Then he tempts her, saying that if she eats, she will “be like God,” and she gives in to the temptation. Adam, in turn, saw that Eve had eaten the fruit and was still alive, so he too doubts God and eats.

<sup>34</sup> Genesis 3:6

<sup>35</sup> Genesis 3:23-24

<sup>36</sup> Abraham was the father of Isaac and the grandfather of Jacob, who was also known as Israel. See Genesis 21:2-3, 25:21-26, and 32:28. Israel in turn became the father of twelve sons. See Genesis 29:31-30:24, 35:16-18. The descendants of Israel became known as the Israelites.

<sup>37</sup> The Pentateuch refers to the first five books of the Old Testament: Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, and Deuteronomy

<sup>38</sup> For example, Deuteronomy 28:1-14 describes the blessing God will grant the Israelites if they obey Him, including many children, abundant rain, plentiful crops, fruitful flocks and herds of animals, and victory over enemies. But Deuteronomy 28:15-68 describes the consequences of disobedience, which include diseases, drought, defeat in war, oppression by enemies, exile to a foreign land, insects to eat their crops, captivity, hunger, thirst, deprivation, exile, fear, and slavery. Similarly, compare Leviticus 26:1-13

and wickedness, so they were often punished.<sup>39</sup> The punishments God inflicted may seem harsh in our eyes, but perhaps they would seem otherwise if we truly understood whom God was dealing with. Let's look at the world of the Israelites.

**The Way They Were: The Canaanites.** If God dealt harshly with the Israelites, He was much harder on the peoples nearby. Before the Israelites entered the land of Canaan (modern Israel), which they were to occupy, God gave them this command:

“I will fix your boundary from the Red Sea to the sea of the Philistines, and from the wilderness to the River *Euphrates*; for I will deliver the inhabitants of the land into your hand, and you will drive them out before you. You shall make no covenant with them or with their gods. They shall not live in your land, because they will make you sin against Me; for *if* you serve their gods, it will surely be a snare to you.”<sup>40</sup>

God ordered the Israelites to drive out the Canaanites, or to kill them, and not to allow any of them to live in the land anymore.<sup>41</sup> All evidence of their religion was to be completely obliterated:

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(blessings of obedience) and Leviticus 26:14-39 (consequences of disobedience). See also Deuteronomy 4:25-27 and Deuteronomy 29:19-21 (consequences of idolatry).

<sup>39</sup> See, for example: Numbers 21:4-6 (God sends poisonous snakes to punish the Israelites for grumbling against God and Moses); Judges 2:11-23 (the Israelites returned to idolatry each time God delivered them from oppression); 1 Kings 11:9-13 (Solomon's unfaithfulness results in the division of his kingdom after his death); 1 Kings 12:25-13:5, 1 Kings 14:1-18, 1 Kings 15:28-30, and 2 Kings 23:20 (the idolatry of King Jeroboam and its consequences); 2 Chronicles 5:1-8 (Egypt conquers Judah because of the people's unfaithfulness to God); 2 Chronicles 21:12-19 (King Jehoram's idolatry and wickedness and its consequences); 2 Chronicles 25:14-28 (the idolatry of King Amaziah and its consequences); 1 Kings 16:31-34, 1 Kings 21:20-24, and 2 Kings 9:14-10:11 (the idolatry of King Ahab and its consequences); 2 Kings 17:5-18 (because of the idolatry and wickedness of Israel, they are conquered and scattered by the Assyrians); 2 Kings 22:14-17 and 2 Kings 24:1-20 (Judah is conquered and taken into exile by the Babylonians because of their idolatry and wickedness).

<sup>40</sup> Exodus 23:31-33.

<sup>41</sup> Most of the Old Testament verses say that the Israelites were to drive out the Canaanites (i.e., the inhabitants of Canaan), not necessarily kill them. See, for example, Exodus 23:28-30, Exodus 33:2, Exodus 34:11, 34:24, Leviticus 20:23, Numbers 33:51-52, Deuteronomy 11:23, Deuteronomy 18:12, Joshua 13:6, Joshua 17:18, Joshua 23:5, Joshua 24:12, 24:18, Judges 11:23, Psalm 44:2, Psalm 78:55, Psalm 80:8. However,

“You shall utterly destroy all the places where the nations whom you shall dispossess serve their gods, on the high mountains and on the hills and under every green tree. You shall tear down their altars and smash their *sacred* pillars and burn their Asherim with fire, and you shall cut down the engraved images of their gods and obliterate their name from that place.”<sup>42</sup>

Sometimes God even commands the Israelites to leave no survivors, such as at the city of Ai,<sup>43</sup> or in the conquest of southern Canaan.<sup>44</sup> This may seem cruel, but only because we have forgotten who the Canaanites were.

God was trying to protect the Israelites from the immorality of these people, which was far more dangerous than any hot stove for a two-year-old. God was bringing the Israelites into a land occupied by some incredibly evil people. He knew that the Israelites would become just as wicked if they were exposed to the Canaanites for very long. And, unfortunately, that is exactly what happened. The Israelites failed to drive out the Canaanites, and soon began to acquire all of their faults.

Now the Canaanites were barbarians—at least, by our standards. For example, their religious worship included human sacrifice—*and even child sacrifice*—and the Israelites (contrary to God’s instructions) adopted that same monstrous practice.<sup>45</sup> The Canaanites may have even practiced a form

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some verses do speak of “destroying” the Canaanites: Exodus 23:23-24; Deuteronomy 7:1-2, 9:3, 20:16-18.

<sup>42</sup> Deuteronomy 12:2-3; see also, Exodus 23:24

<sup>43</sup> In Joshua 8:1-2, God instructs Joshua to “do to Ai and its king just as you did to Jericho and its king.” The Israelites killed all of the inhabitants of Jericho except Rahab and her family, although the Old Testament does not clearly state that this was done at God’s command. See Joshua 6:17-21. Similarly, Joshua left no survivors from his battle with the kings of northern Canaan, and the implication is that this was in accordance with God’s instructions to Moses. See Joshua 11:6-15.

<sup>44</sup> See Joshua 10:40.

<sup>45</sup> Many Old Testament verses refer to this practice, including the following: Deuteronomy 12:29-31, 18:9-10; 2 Kings 16:3-4, 17:17, 17:31, 21:6, 23:10; 2 Chronicles 28:3, 33:6; Psalm 106:37-38; Isaiah 57:5; Jeremiah 7:31, 19:4-5, 32:35; Ezekiel 16:20-21, 16:36, 20:26, 20:31, 23:36-39. To “pass through fire,” as in Deuteronomy 18:10 and 2 Kings 16:3, is a euphemism for human sacrifice. Compare 2 Kings 16:3 and 2 Chronicles 28:3. And see Ezekiel 16:20-21:

of cannibalism, by eating the human flesh which had been sacrificed.<sup>46</sup> Similarly, following the local customs, the Israelites began to worship idols (i.e., false gods), and this idolatry became a chronic problem for them until after their return from exile in Babylon.<sup>47</sup> The Israelites also learned witchcraft, sorcery,<sup>48</sup> and temple prostitution<sup>49</sup> from the Canaanites. Eventually, the Israelites' wickedness *exceeded* that of the peoples they had displaced.<sup>50</sup> The Psalmist sums up the problem:

They did not destroy the peoples,  
As the LORD commanded them,  
But they mingled with the nations  
And learned their practices,  
And served their idols,  
Which became a snare to them.<sup>51</sup>

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“Moreover, you took your sons and daughters whom you had borne to Me and sacrificed them to idols to be devoured. Were your harlotries so small a matter? You slaughtered My children and offered them up to idols by causing them to pass through the fire.”

Similarly, compare Ezekiel 23:37 and 23:39. God's law expressly forbid any type of human sacrifice, on pain of death. See Leviticus 20:2-5. And see Exodus 13:15; Leviticus 18:21, 18:24.

<sup>46</sup> See Ezekiel 23:37 (emphasis supplied):

“For they have committed adultery, and blood is on their hands. Thus they have committed adultery with their idols and even caused their sons, whom they bore to Me, to pass through *the fire* to them **as food**.”

<sup>47</sup> Judges 8:24-27; 1 Kings 11:4-8, 12:26-32, 15:11-14, 16:30-33, 21:25-26, 22:51-53; 2 Kings 17:7-12, 21:2-5; 2 Chronicles 21:11, 28:22-25, 33:2-5, 33:22; Jeremiah 2:5-28, 3:6-10, 7:9-10, 11:17, 32:33-34; Ezekiel 16:15-19, 16:26-29, 20:30-32; Hosea 1:1-5:14, 9:1-17

<sup>48</sup> 2 Kings 21:6; 2 Chronicles 33:6 (witchcraft, sorcery, and similar types of “magic” were forbidden by Deuteronomy 18:9-12, which also makes clear that the inhabitants of Palestine practiced these things; see also Exodus 22:18 and Leviticus 20:27, which prescribe the punishment of death for those who practice such things)

<sup>49</sup> 1 Kings 14:24, 1 Kings 15:12; Hosea 4:14 (prostitution, including religious prostitution, is forbidden by Leviticus 19:29 and Deuteronomy 23:17)

<sup>50</sup> 2 Kings 21:9 and 2 Chronicles 33:9

<sup>51</sup> Psalm 106:34-36 (other verses agree that the Israelites fell into idolatry and evil because they followed the practices of the previous inhabitants of Palestine; see, for example, Judges 3:1-8; 1 Kings 14:22-24; 2 Kings 17:7-12, 21:2-5; 2 Chronicles 28:2-3)

Viewed in its proper context, God's order to kill or drive out the Canaanites was an act of mercy toward the Israelites. If they had obeyed, they would have been much better off. As for the Canaanites, shall we have much sympathy for people who killed children as part of their religious worship? How much sympathy do we have for today's terrorists who kill innocent women and children?

Of course, what about the Canaanite children? Was it truly necessary to kill even children and infants? In answer to that, we may well ask what alternative did the Israelites have? With the parents dead, the very young children would have faced a painful death from starvation or dehydration, while the older children would have represented a very real threat once they grew up and sought vengeance for the killing of their people. However, let's look at another, more complete answer that we must always keep in mind when trying to understand the Old Testament, or the Bible as a whole.

**The Eternal Perspective.** Yahweh seems ogre-like to us primarily because so many people die in the Old Testament. When the Israelites worshipped the Golden Calf and got "out of control," Moses brought them back into line by ordering the Levites to kill—and 3,000 men died.<sup>52</sup> To punish the Amalekites, who had attacked the Israelites as they fled from Egypt,<sup>53</sup> God ordered Saul to destroy them completely—every man, woman, child, and animal.<sup>54</sup> Jehu murdered the descendants of the wicked King Ahab and the worshippers of the false god Baal, and God praised him for it.<sup>55</sup>

We see all of this death, much of it done in Yahweh's name or at His command, and our first thought is that He must be terribly evil to inflict so much death, even if many of the deceased probably deserved it. But our initial reaction is wrong, because it is based on a false assumption. We too often view death as the ultimate evil, because we assume that death is the end of life. If this assumption were true, then the Old Testament would be reprehensible, and Yahweh would be morally indefensible. But death is not the end. Death is merely a door to eternal life. Yahweh knew this, as did Jesus. When we view the Old Testament from God's eternal perspective, everything changes.

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<sup>52</sup> Exodus 32:25-28

<sup>53</sup> See Exodus 17:8-16.

<sup>54</sup> 1 Samuel 15:1-3

<sup>55</sup> 2 Kings 10:1-30

We must not assume that those who died in the past are gone forever, or that they cannot make it to Heaven, for the New Testament says otherwise. In John 5:25-29,<sup>56</sup> Jesus proclaims that the dead will live again, and that some of them will receive eternal life. 1 Peter 3:18-20<sup>57</sup> says that after Jesus died, “He went and made proclamation to the spirits *now* in prison, who once were disobedient”—that is, those who have died. 1 Peter 4:6 is even more explicit:

For the gospel has for this purpose been preached even to those who are dead, that though they are judged in the flesh as men, they may live in the spirit according to *the will of God*.

This preaching was not mere idle chatter for the amusement of the dead, but an opportunity for them to embrace God’s mercy, forgiveness, and salvation. Many who died in Old Testament times will undoubtedly make it to Heaven with us—and perhaps before we do.

Judging Yahweh is a perilous undertaking, for our understanding of this life and this world are necessarily limited. From God’s perspective, the deaths of people in the Old Testament were unfortunate, but necessary to preserve the purity of His message: “Trust Me.” That message was more important than any individual life, because He was trying to lead people toward faith, righteousness, and, eventually, eternal salvation. Those who opposed that message were obstructions which had to be removed for the

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<sup>56</sup> In John 5:25-29, Jesus says:

“Truly, truly, I say to you, an hour is coming and now is, when the dead will hear the voice of the Son of God, and those who hear will live. For just as the Father has life in Himself, even so He gave to the Son also to have life in Himself; and He gave Him authority to execute judgment, because He is *the* Son of Man. Do not marvel at this; for an hour is coming, in which all who are in the tombs will hear His voice, and will come forth; those who did the good *deeds* to a resurrection of life, those who committed the evil *deeds* to a resurrection of judgment.”

<sup>57</sup> 1 Peter 3:18-20:

For Christ also died for sins once for all, *the* just for *the* unjust, so that He might bring us to God, having been put to death in the flesh, but made alive in the spirit; in which also He went and made proclamation to the spirits *now* in prison, who once were disobedient, when the patience of God kept waiting in the days of Noah, during the construction of the ark, in which a few, that is, eight persons, were brought safely through *the* water.

greater good of all. Thus, both the Canaanites and the rebellious Israelites suffered exile or death for their opposition to God. Shall we now judge Yahweh in how He chose to deal with them, or in how He will deal with all who are now dead? Or shouldn't we learn the lesson of the Old Testament and trust Yahweh to judge them with mercy and compassion?

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