



# Theodicy

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A close-up photograph of an olive branch with several green olives. One olive is in sharp focus in the foreground, while others are blurred in the background. The branch is light brown and the leaves are a muted green.

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# *Theos+Dike*

1. Comes from *Theos*=God and *Dike*=Justice
  - a. Justifying the actions of God
2. Also involved in this is Anthropodicy
  - a. Justifying man's actions.  
Anthro=Man and *Dike*



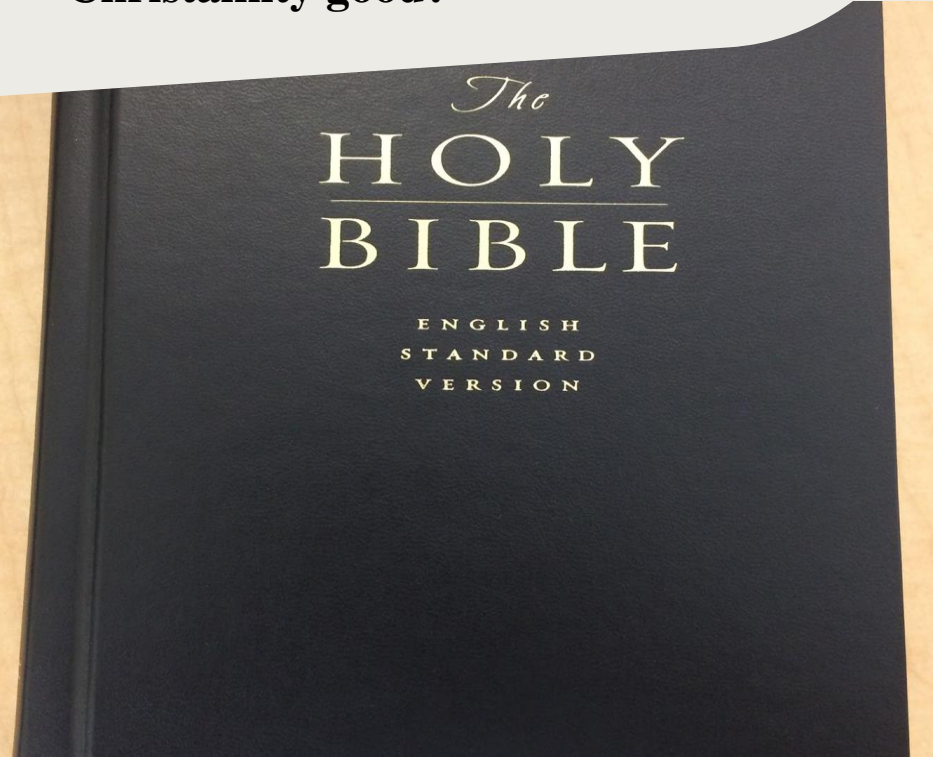
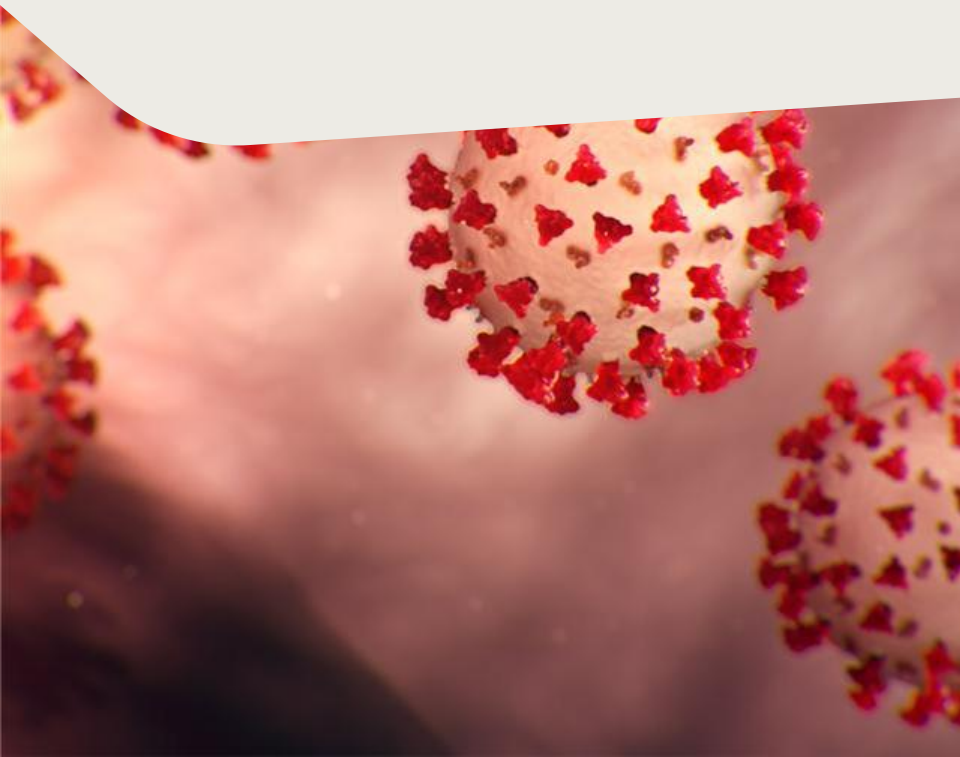


**Historical**

**Why does God allow evil?**

**Modern**

**Is the God of the Bible evil? Is  
Christianity good?**



# Is God A Moral Monster



- Making sense of the Bible sometimes poses some moral quandaries and raises some questions about God's behavior. Some general tips
  - Don't commit the *is vs ought* fallacy.
  - Do your homework on cultural context
  - The outworking of principles always takes years, often generations, to come to fruition.

# Genocide and Ancient Warfare

- How do we think about the Canaanites and other peoples God commanded Israel to go to war with?
- It is improper to make comparisons with modern religious holy war. This was a very specific context that was always interpreted for those people at that time.
  - Comparisons to Islam are just strawmen.
- Also, genocide is anachronistic since this did not involve killing based on identity.
  - The greatest concern was to destroy Canaanite religion and culture because of *what they were doing not because of who they were*. Judgement was due to lack of repentance as proved by Rahab.

# Two Basic Responses Regarding Canaanites

- Hyperbole
  - Joshua 10:20 just read it and it seems to say both everyone was killed and was not killed in the same verse.
  - *Harem* does not necessarily entail killing but can include peace treaties, driving out of the land, maybe even forced labor.
  - There is strong textual evidence that the primary command was to drive out and only kill those who remained (see for example Exodus 23 second half of chapter).

# Responses Continued

- Just Judgment
  - Idol worshipers.
  - They regularly practiced incest.
  - Adultery was part of the religion.
  - Child sacrifice was part of their religion.
  - Homosexuality was regularly practiced including in temple sex rituals.
  - Bestiality was celebrated and practiced.





# We Can Learn From Both Responses

- God is a just judge, and we should be sober minded of that fact
- We cannot discount cultural language and norms in our hermeneutics
- Israel was called to drive out the Canaanites so that they would not become like them as God predicted
  - The prediction came true due to their failure Gen 19 compared to Judges 19

# Slavery In the Bible

- Did God command slavery? This is troubling especially in current culture.
- Beyond this there is also some language prescribing harsh treatment, or at least it appears this way at first glance
- How can we characterize Ancient Near East slavery in contrast to the modern Trans-Atlantic slave trade (or modernity in general)?



# Slavery In the Bible

ANE

Trans-Atlantic Slave Trade

Closest analogy is indentured servitude

Strict, race based Chattel Slavery

Release after fixed period of time or harsh treatment

Lifelong bondage no repercussions for any bodily violation

Kidnapping required death penalty

Based on kidnapping from African nations

Built into the economic system for dealing with debt, poverty, and prisoners

Built into the economic system for profit

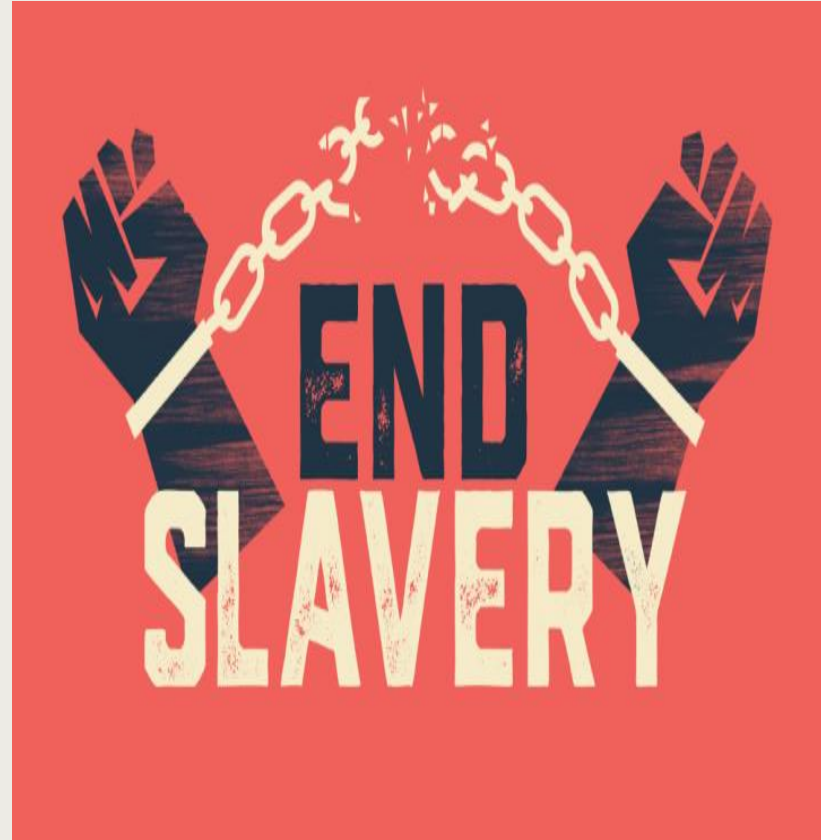
# An Institution Regulated Toward Liberation

- Imagine a Theoretical Hebrew Slave
  - Fixed time of servitude proportionate to his restitution or term limit
  - Able to work and eat while obtaining skill
  - Released with blessings to start a new life
- Possible objection--Foreigners
  - Non-hostile should be treated like Israelite
  - Means for incorporating this people group into the family of God



# NT Slavery: From Property to Brother

- Philemon 1:15-16 Some of the most revolutionary words in all of history
- Paul sowed the seeds for the destruction of the institution
- 1 Corinthians 7:21-23 explicit call for freedom; “Man Stealers” will face punishment in Hell (1 Tim 1:9-10)
- Overturning an entire society in one generation unwise
- No simple alternative to bonded servitude
- History is not our enemy on this topic

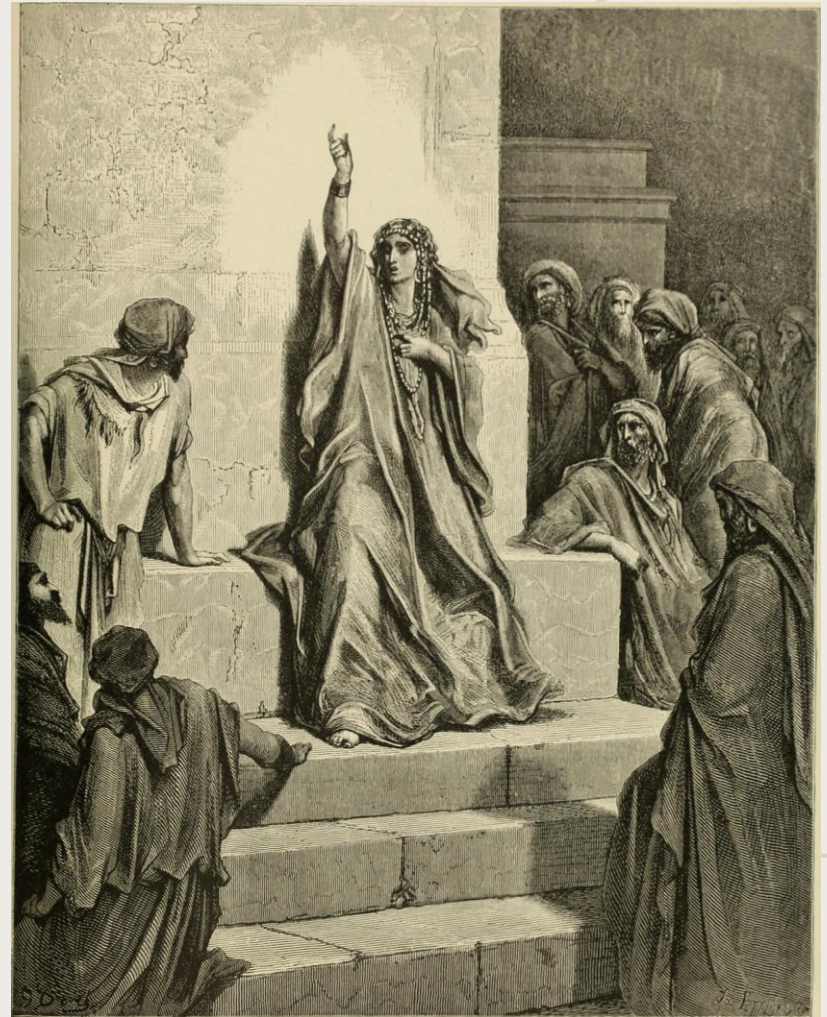


# Women In the OT

- Some OT examples that seem problematic
  - The Trial of jealousy Numbers 5: This is how to check if your wife is cheating on you
  - Impurity at childbirth Leviticus 12:1-8 the unclean period for boys is shorter than for girls
  - Levirate Marriage Deuteronomy 25:5-10 women marry the brother of their dead husband
  - Deuteronomy 22:23-29 discusses laws about rape that critics say imply that rape is allowed
  - Your neighbor's wife Exodus 20:17 coveting someone's wife as if she were property

# Women In the OT Cont

- First realize that the OT presupposes female equality in passages like Gen 1:27, 2:24 (man and women created), Ex 20:12, Lev 19:3 (honor father and mother), and all over Proverbs.
- The OT is full of powerful matriarchs like Sarah, Hagar, Rebekah, The Hebrew midwives, Zipporah, Debrah, Ruth, Naomi, and so many more.
- The moral and ceremonial laws presumed that women were equal and shared moral responsibility in keeping the law. Note that both the man and woman committing adultery were to be put to death contrary to some claims of “women as property” in the OT.



# Rapid Fire Hermeneutics

- If the woman was cheating she suffered, how is this unjust?
- Distancing birth events and temple worship was critical for distinction from Canaanite evil sexual temple practices. Think of temple prostitution, blood rituals, and the fact that baby girls bleed vaginally also.
- Maybe not ideal, but it was for the explicit protection of the women in a society within which it is hard for us to identify. Give a better option?
- Scott Rae- “Far fewer lives were ravaged by sexual misconduct in the central hill country of Israel in the iron age than in Southern California”
- This is a simple strawman, all relationships were understood relative to the *Bet Ab* or Father’s House



# Women in The NT



- The Bible invented women's rights and rights in general
  - 1550 Bartolome Las Casas and the Image of God
- Why so many women in Christianity's history?
  - Literally a "safe space"
- But what about Eph 5:21-33 and ὑποτασσω (submission).
  - Headship redefined as self sacrifice
- How about speaking in church and leadership?
  - Complementarian and Egalitarian positions can be faithful to God's Word and the honoring of women

# Biblical Sexual Ethics

- Everyone has some form of sexual ethics
  - Modern ethics are based in sentiment, not argument
  - Not something special to Christians but common to humanity
- Jesus' approach to sexual ethics
  - When Jesus was asked about sexual ethics, he responded with a theology of marriage
  - Bible's sexual ethics are based in a Biblical Anthropology

# A Theology of Marriage

- Marriage is a three faceted interlocking reality
  - Pattern=male-female monogamy for life
  - Purpose=procreation, union, and allegory to Christ
  - Symbol=God's relationship with his people



# Concluding Remarks on Sexuality

- Sex was designed for marriage, violating this design has objective consequences
  - Built for monogamy
  - Children's rights
  - Poor health outcomes
  - Pornography
- Christian are not anti-sex, we are pro-body; 1 Cor 6:13



# Q&A

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