

God Is Cruel

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God is cruel, unmerciful, destructive, and ferocious
(*Deuteronomy 7:16; 1Samuel 6:19; 15:2-3; Jeremiah 13:14*)

God is kind, merciful, and good
(*1Chronicles 16:34; Psalms 25:8; 145:9; Lamentations 3:33; Ezekiel 18:32; 1Timothy 2:4; 1John 4:16; James 5:11*)

Sooner or later, Almighty God disciplines those who rebel against His law and commandments. He does this out of love, in the hope all sinners will repent and benefit from the blessings that come as a result of obeying His commands. Those who refuse to obey Him will eventually reap what they have sown (cf. Job 4:8).

My son, do not despise the chastening of the Lord, nor detest His correction; ¹²for whom the Lord loves He corrects, just as a father the son in whom he delights (Prov. 3:11-12; NKJV throughout unless otherwise noted).

Harsh correction is for him who forsakes the way, and he who hates reproof will die (Prov. 15:10).

Those who bear false witness against Almighty God by accusing Him of being cruel, unmerciful, destructive and ferocious, will eventually understand the benefits associated with correction when they are chastened for their sinful behavior. This chastening will be part of a rehabilitation process leading to a change of attitude. With this change, every sinner will become more teachable (cf. Isa. 66:2; Jer. 32:33)

And you have forgotten the exhortation which speaks to you as to sons: 'My son, do not despise

the chastening of the Lord, nor be discouraged when you are rebuked by Him; ⁶for whom the Lord loves He chastens, and scourges every son whom He receives. ⁷If you endure chastening, God deals with you as with sons; for what son is there whom a father does not chasten? ⁸But if you are without chastening, of which all have become partakers, then you are illegitimate and not sons. ⁹Furthermore, we have had human fathers who corrected us, and we paid them respect. Shall we not much more readily be in subjection to the Father of spirits and live? ¹⁰For they indeed for a few days chastened us as seemed best to them, but He (Almighty God) for our profit, that we may be partakers of His holiness. ¹¹Now no chastening seems to be joyful for the present, but grievous; nevertheless, afterward it yields the peaceable fruit of righteousness to those who have been trained by it (Heb. 12:5-11, Ed. note in parenthesis).

The first scripture used to accuse God of being cruel involves the punishment of people who were warned to cease from their pagan practices, some of which included sacrificing their own children.

And you (nation of Israel) shall destroy (consume) all the peoples whom the Lord your God delivers over to you; your eye shall have no pity on them; nor shall you serve their gods, for that will be a snare to you (Dt. 7:16; Ed. notes in parentheses).

And they (nation of Judah) built the high places of Baal which are in the Valley of Hinnom, to cause their sons and their daughters to pass through the fire to Molech (god of the Canaanites and Phoenicians), which I (Almighty God) did not command them, nor did it come into My mind that they should do this abomination, to cause Judah to sin (Jer. 32:35; cf. Lev. 18:21; 20:2-5; 2Kgs. 23:10; Ed. notes in parentheses).

According to this last scripture, God was dealing with a people who were cruel, unmerciful, destructive and ferocious. What other words could be used to describe those who believe their children should be burned to appease a deity?

The next scripture used to accuse God of being cruel cannot be understood correctly by those who have no respect for Him nor a desire to obey His commands.

Then He (God) struck the men of Beth Shemesh, because they had looked into the ark of the Lord. He struck seventy men of the people and fifty oxen of a man, and the people lamented because the Lord had struck the people with a great slaughter (1Sam. 6:19; Ed. note in parenthesis).

Almighty God gave clear directions regarding the proper handling of holy articles including the ark, which some of the men of Beth Shemesh looked into,

And when Aaron and his sons have finished covering the sanctuary and all the furnishings of the sanctuary, when the camp is set to go, then the sons of Kohath shall come to carry them; but they shall not touch any holy thing, lest they die. These are the things in the tabernacle of meeting which the sons of Kohath are to carry. ¹⁶The appointed duty of Eleazer the son of Aaron the priest is the oil for the light, the sweet incense, the daily grain offering, the anointing oil, the oversight of all the tabernacle, of all that is in it, with the sanctuary and its furnishings. ¹⁷Then the Lord spoke to Moses and Aaron, saying: ¹⁸Do not cut off the tribe of the family of the Kohathites from among the Levites; ¹⁹but do this in regard to them, that they may live and not die when they approach the most holy things: Aaron and his sons shall go in and appoint (assign) each of them to his service and his task. ²⁰But they shall not go in to watch while the holy things are being

covered, lest they die' (Nu. 4:15-20; Ed. note in parenthesis; emphasis added).

The ark that was handled by the Levites in 1Samual 6:15 should have been done in accordance with the specific instructions given in Numbers 4:15-20. As these steps were not followed, there was a consequence. The Levites had forgotten what they were previously told, or they chose to ignore it. Either way, God cannot break His own commands nor the penalties associated with transgressing them. Without these penalties, God and His Word would be forgotten, not taken seriously, or ignored completely and the consequences are always problematic for those who persist in rebelling against Him (cf. Prov.14:12; 16:25). The ark of God was not treated in the prescribed manner and as it was symbolic of God's throne in heaven it should have been highly respected and handled accordingly, but it was not.

Unfortunately, God's word is not regarded as being all that important in today's world, including by those who claim to believe in Him. Eventually, God will act as He did during the time of Samuel and when He does people will have a wake-up call to the importance of obeying His commands.

1Samuel 15:2-3 is another scripture used by some to accuse God of being cruel. This section is dealing with the Amalekites who were known to be ferocious and unmerciful with anyone they attacked. The prophet Samuel confirmed this fact when dealing with one of their leaders. Samuel treated Agag in exactly the same manner that Agag had treated many of the Israelites.

Then Samuel said, 'Bring Agag king of the Amalekites here to me.' So Agag came to him cautiously. And Agag said, 'Surely the bitterness of death is past (i.e. by now you have forgotten what I did to Israel in the past).'³³But Samuel

said, 'As your sword has made women childless, so shall your mother be childless among women.' And Samuel hacked Agag in pieces before the Lord in Gilgal (1Sam. 15:32-33; Ed. note in parenthesis; emphasis added).

Unlike King Saul who was attempting to be more righteous than God, Samuel obeyed the command that was given during the time of Moses.

Remember what Amalek did to you on the way as you were coming out of Egypt, ¹⁸how he met you on the way and attacked your rear ranks, all the stragglers at your rear, when you were tired and weary; and he did not fear God. 19 Therefore it shall be, when the Lord your God has given you rest from your enemies all around, in the land which the Lord your God is giving you to possess as an inheritance, that you will blot out the remembrance of Amalek from under heaven. You shall not forget (Dt. 25:17-19; emphasis added).

Amalek in the Arabic language is Imlik (<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Amalek>), which is singular for giant, suggesting that the sons of this tribe were known for being unusually tall. According to historians such as Ibn Khaldun and Alu ibn al-Athir, Amalek is a name given to the Amorites and Canaanites. As many Canaanites were descendants of the Nephilim (see study: Is God a Megalomaniac?), and as these are the same people who negatively influenced those living in the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah, it should be no surprise that they behaved the way they did toward Israel. In a proclamation against Amalek, God confirmed that the Amalekites were a very ancient people and, according to the Arab historian Abu al-Hasan Ali al-Masudi, the Amalekites existed before the time of Abraham,

Then he (Balaam) looked on Amalek, and he took up his oracle and said, 'Amalek was first among

the nations, but shall be last until he perishes' (Nu. 24:20; Ed. note parenthesis; emphasis added).

Because the Amalekites were so heavily influenced by the fallen host, Christ's following statement should be considered as possibly referring to them when it comes to a future resurrection of all who have sinned,

and he (Christ) will speak, saying to you, 'I do not know where you are from; depart from me all you workers of iniquity.' 28 There shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth when you see Abraham and Isaac and Jacob and all the prophets in the kingdom of God, but yourselves being cast outside. 29 And they will come from East and West and North and South, and they will recline in the kingdom of God. 30 And behold, there are last who will be first and there are first who will be last (in order of resurrections). (Lk. 13:27-30; RNT; Ed. notes in parentheses; emphasis added).

So those who use 1Sam. 15:2-3 to claim that God is cruel, need to study their Bible more thoroughly and hopefully come to the truth that it is always mankind and/or the fallen host that act in a cruel, unmerciful, destructive, and ferocious manner; not Almighty God.

The last scripture used to accuse God of being cruel has to do with correcting the nations of Israel and Judah. These two nations refused to obey God's commands and by doing so they refused to help other nations come to the knowledge of God's truth. So to say that Israel and Judah were self-centered would be an understatement,

For as the sash clings to the waist of a man, so I (God) have caused the whole house of Israel and the whole house of Judah to cling to Me, says the Lord, that they may become My people, for

renown, for praise, and for glory; but they would not hear (Jer. 13:11; Ed. note in parenthesis).

Not only did they fail to fulfill their God-given responsibility to help other nations benefit from the knowledge of God's truth, as expressed in His law and commandments, they went in the opposite direction and were engrossed in all the evils associated with pagan worship systems (cf. Jer. 32:35),

This evil people, who refuse to hear My words, who walk in the imagination of their heart, and walk after other gods to serve them and worship them, shall be just like this sash which is profitable for nothing (Jer. 13:10).

God warned these two nations numerous times, but they stubbornly refused to listen. As a consequence, they were both taken into captivity.

And I (God) will dash them one against another (a man against his brother), even the fathers and the sons together, says the Lord. I will not pity nor spare nor have mercy, but will destroy them (Jer. 13:14; Ed. notes in parentheses).

It is unpopular to advocate punishment for evil deeds in some societies today but God does not, and never will, subscribe to the methods suggested by many "bleeding hearts groups" or modern behavioral psychologists. Instead, He will always make sure "the punishment fits the crime." As mentioned previously in this study, God uses various forms of correction to get everyone to the point where they can be taught. In some cases, it takes a more severe form of punishment to humble people, and humility is a prerequisite for instructing individuals, and nations, in the ways of righteous behavior. As Almighty God's goal is to bring all sinners to repentance for their eternal well-being, and as He was willing to allow His son, Jesus Christ, to

die in the place of every sinner, it is preposterous to claim that God is cruel, unmerciful, destructive, and ferocious. Instead, His actions are those of a loving Father,

The Lord is not slack concerning His promise, as some count slackness (cf. vs. 8), but is longsuffering toward us, not willing that any should perish but that all should come to repentance (2Pet. 3:9; Ed. note in parenthesis).

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