

Session 3
Moral Objections to the Bible

Peter J. Williams

OLD TESTAMENT VIOLENCE

Responding to the most difficult case against the Bible: The command to destroy the Canaanites

- 1.) We sometimes accept people who take innocent life (or plan to) as heroes.

- 2.) God is the giver of life and therefore is a due authority to command the ending of life.

- 3.) God has future knowledge—and that changes things.

- 4.) There was and is plenty of evidence of God's benevolence.

Session 3
Moral Objections to the Bible

Peter J. Williams

OLD TESTAMENT VIOLENCE (*con't*)

- 5.) Miraculous narratives have different ethical rules.

- 6.) We do not know if the Canaanite children were worse off dead or alive.

- 7.) The command was given with objective evidence.

- 8.) The Canaanites were wicked.

Session 3
Moral Objections to the Bible

Peter J. Williams

IS THE OLD TESTAMENT HOMOPHOBIC?

- 1.) The terms of this debate often involve complex presuppositions.

- 2.) The difference between Christian and secular understandings of the world is far bigger than a simple matter of behavior.

- 3.) Sex is now a deity at the center of a religion.

- 4.) The Bible distinguishes aesthetic appreciation, attraction, and temptation from homosexual activity.

- 5.) It groups all activities against God's will together.

Session 3
Moral Objections to the Bible

Peter J. Williams

OLD TESTAMENT VIOLENCE (*con't*)

- 9.) The Canaanites were warned and able to repent.

- 10.) There may have been no reasonable alternative.

- 11.) Israel was God's judicial representative (unlike any nation today).

- 12.) Genocide is not an ethical category created to describe the biblical situations.

Session 3
Moral Objections to the Bible

Peter J. Williams

OLD TESTAMENT VIOLENCE (*con't*)

- 13.) God is unable to command evil; that is evidence of the goodness of this command.

- 14.) No one is absolutely innocent.

- 15.) You couldn't imitate these stories even if you tried.

- 16.) An objection needs to be a statement, not just a question like, "Why did God ...?"

Session 3
Moral Objections to the Bible

Peter J. Williams

IS THE OLD TESTAMENT SEXIST?

- 1.) Equality can mean different things.

- 2.) Scripture emphasizes that humans are different but have the same value.

- 3.) Women play key roles in biblical history.

- 4.) Secular society believes that women are equal to men but has no way to show that either has absolute value.

- 5.) Christians believe that men and women are different but of infinite value.

