

JOSHUA Interlude: SEX, SIN, AND SACRIFICES
25 May 13 by Glenn Palmer
Review

Joshua 1: *Strong in the Lord*
Joshua 2: *Spies*
Joshua 3: *Surge*
Joshua 4: *Stones*
Joshua 5: *Sacrament*
Joshua 5: *Supreme Commander*
Joshua 6: *Sound of the trumpet*
Joshua 7: *Sin*
Joshua 8: *Sack*
Joshua 9: *Schemers*
Joshua 10: *Sun stands Still*

SEX, SIN, AND SACRIFICES

Background:

Joshua is continually commanded to devote to the Lord all the people of the land. Devote has the idea of a complete destruction to the Lord. Joshua 2:10; 6:17; 7:1, 11-13, 15; 8:26; 10:1; 28, 25, 27, 29-40. Joshua left no survivors: 10:28, 30, 32-33, 35, 37, 39, 40; 11:11-12, 14, 20, 22. All men, women, and children were killed. Today, this would be called genocide. Austin Cline, an atheist, accepts the Bible as literal and has a field day with Christians. Note: Because this is controversial, some Christians, e.g., former Calvin College, now Notre Dame professor Nicholas Wolsterdorf, says that the expression killed them all should not be taken literally. Just like when you beat a team you say "We slaughtered them." Palmer's take: The atheist has a better understanding of what "left no survivors" means than a Christian.

Joshua & Genocide: Book of Joshua as a Manual for Genocide

By Austin Cline from following website, accessed on 22 May 13

<http://atheism.about.com/od/biblestudyoldtestament1/a/Joshua-Genocide-yahweh.htm>

The Book of Joshua describes little more than a genocidal campaign against the unsuspecting inhabitants of Canaan. The Canaanites never attacked the Israelites, never enslaved the Israelites, and aren't described as ever having done anything to warrant mistreatment of any sort. Their only crime was living in the wrong place at the wrong time — land promised to the Israelites by God at the time when God decided to make good on that promise.

Commanded to Commit Genocide

It's impossible to know the moral or mental disposition of the Israelites and in fact the text doesn't really delve into their psychology at all; the length and breadth of their roles consists of obeying or disobeying Yahweh [Jehovah]. It is thus to Yahweh that we turn to understand the genocidal actions of the Israelites. Through much of the relevant text only Yahweh is presented as being truly active and, as one might expect, all of the impetus for genocide indeed comes from Yahweh.

Already in Exodus, Yahweh promises that the Canaanites would "melt away" and that he would drive away the Canaanites when the Israelites arrive. By Deuteronomy, Yahweh says:

And when the Lord thy God shall deliver them before thee; thou shalt smite them, and utterly destroy them; thou shalt make no covenant with them, nor shew mercy unto them: Neither shalt thou make marriages with them; thy daughter thou shalt not give unto his son, nor his daughter shalt thou take unto thy son. (Deuteronomy 7:2-3)

Similar instructions appear in subsequent texts and they are clear that not only are the Israelites to make total war on the inhabitants, but they are also prohibited from entering into any sort of peace treaty with any group. There is to be no mercy for anyone, only death.

The Israelites got some practice in this by making war against the Midianites:

And they warred against the Midianites, as the Lord commanded Moses; and they slew all the males. ...And the children of Israel took all the women of Midian captives, and their little ones, and took the spoil of all their cattle, and all their flocks, and all their goods. . . And Moses said unto them . . . Now therefore kill every male among the little ones, and kill every woman that hath known man by lying with him. But all the women children, that have not known a man by lying with him, keep alive for yourselves.

(Numbers 31:7-18)

So were the young virgin girls lucky that they weren't slaughtered like the rest of their people, or were they unlucky that they were essentially taken as sex slaves to be used to satiate the lusts of the soldiers who slaughtered their fathers, mothers, brothers, and older sisters?

The Book of Joshua makes it clear that the Israelites get to the murderous work of genocide and become quite efficient at it:

And all the cities of those kings, and all the kings of them, did Joshua take, and smote them with the edge of the sword, and he utterly destroyed them, as Moses the servant of the Lord commanded. ...every man they smote with the edge of the sword, until they had destroyed them, neither left they any to breathe. As the Lord commanded Moses his servant, so did Moses command Joshua, and so did Joshua; he left nothing undone of all that the Lord commanded Moses. (Joshua 11:12-15)

Raphael Lemkin argues in *Axis Rule in Occupied Europe* that one of the distinguishing features of genocide is not simply mass killing, which happens frequently in war, but the goal-oriented mass killing that is designed to destroy the culture or society with the purpose of replacing it entirely. This is definitely what we see happening in Joshua: the Israelites kill all the people in order to destroy their culture then move in to take over their fields, vineyards, cities, and lands.

Bullied and Threatened into Genocide

To be fair to the Israelites, it should be noted that they may have been operating from more than a little fear. Given their experience of what Yahweh did to their enemies, did they really want to become Yahweh's enemies too? Probably not — and Yahweh certainly made threats about what would happen if they Israelites didn't do as they were told:

But if ye will not drive out the inhabitants of the land from before you; then it shall come to pass, that those which ye let remain of them shall be pricks in your eyes, and thorns in your sides, and shall vex you in the land wherein ye dwell. Moreover it shall come to pass, that I shall do unto you, as I thought to do unto them. (Numbers 33:55-56)

This is of course not the only threat issued to the Israelites, but it is the one which most closely associates Yahweh's actions against the Canaanites with possible action against them: if they don't follow orders to commit genocide, Yahweh might decide to cause a bit of genocide against them instead.

This doesn't entirely let the Israelites off the hook for their actions, but insofar as their guilt is mitigated at all, it's magnified many times over for Yahweh. Not only did Yahweh order genocide to be committed and not only did he actively assist to ensure that genocide was committed, but he threatened his thugs that if they didn't blindly obey their murderous orders then he'd do the same to them later on.

And even that's not the worst...

Ensuring that Genocide Occurs

Committing genocide against the indigenous people of Canaan was made easier by the fact that they were willing to fight for their ancestral homes. It's easier to slaughter people who are trying to kill you, even if you're the one who started the fight. Had the Canaanites tried to welcome the newcomers and pursue peaceful treaties, genocide might have been harder. Even the most fanatical religious zealot has a harder time slaughtering unarmed, peaceful people.

Apparently Yahweh thought of this and took steps to ensure that nothing like this would interfere with his plans:

There was not a city that made peace with the children of Israel, save the Hivites the inhabitants of Gibeon: all other they took in battle. For it was of the Lord to harden their hearts, that they should come against Israel in battle, that he might destroy them utterly, and that they might have no favor, but that he might destroy them, as the Lord commanded Moses. (Joshua 11:19-20)

So Yahweh "hardened" the hearts of the Canaanites to guarantee that they would "come against Israel in battle." Had he not done that, some of the Canaanites might have chosen a more peaceful solution and the Israelites might have been tempted to befriend them. Instead, they slaughtered everyone.

Where else have we seen this? Not long before, Yahweh did the same thing with the pharaoh in Egypt: every time the pharaoh was about to let the Israelites go, Yahweh hardened his heart to ensure that he would say "no" and keep them a while longer as slaves. This guaranteed that Yahweh would get to kill all the firstborn sons of all the Egyptians as a show of psychopathic power.

This is thus a persistent pattern for Yahweh: order one group of humans to harm a second group of humans, then take away the free will of the second group and force them to act in a way that ensures conflict can occur. This sounds remarkably like a child torturing small animals and we all know what happens to kids like that.

Thinking critically:

1. "The Book of Joshua describes little more than a genocidal campaign against the unsuspecting inhabitants of Canaan. The Canaanites never attacked the Israelites, never enslaved the Israelites, and aren't described as ever having done anything to warrant mistreatment of any sort."

Were the Canaanites unsuspecting?

Look up Numbers 21:21-23, 33

What did Israel want to do?

Joshua 2:10

Joshua 10:1-5

Joshua 11:1-5

2. Austin Cline is an atheist who does not believe there is a God. If there is no God, how can the Lord act? According to this article, God acts throughout: He promises the land to the Israelites, is "truly active," He decides to make good on His promises, He orders, He hardens the Egyptian and the Canaanite hearts, etc. So Austin Cline wants to blame God (Yahweh) for the genocide but Cline does not believe that God exists!

3. His presumption is that we can challenge God to a debate. Who else tried that and lost the debate?

4. Why is genocide evil?

On what basis does an atheist say that genocide is evil?

If there is no God to establish what is right or wrong, why is it evil to kill?

Who says that something is wrong?

Is it majority rule? If so, can we blame the Nazis for killing the Jews?

Is it if it is legal? If so, can we blame the Nazis for killing the Jews?

Is something always wrong?

5. How evil were the Canaanites? Austin Cline writes "***The Canaanites*** never attacked the Israelites, never enslaved the Israelites, and ***aren't described as ever having done anything to warrant mistreatment of any sort.***" Is this true? We will discuss this the rest of the lesson.

SEX, SIN, AND SACRIFICES

1. How were the Canaanites going to corrupt the Israelites? Let us read Numbers 25, especially verses 1-3
 - a. Vss. 1 & 2: What two items go hand in hand?
 - b. Vs. 3: What is the result?
 - c. Vss. 3 & 5: Which god did they worship?
 - d. Numbers 31:7-18
 - e. Revelation 2:14

2. Canaanite gods
 - a. El - Dagon
 - 1.) Head of the pantheon (like Zeus in Greek mythology) - "Father bull"
 - 2.) Dethroned his father
 - 3.) Decapitated his son
 - 4.) Married
 - a.) Chief wife: Lady Asherah of the Sea - gives birth to 70 children of El¹
 - b.) Maiden or Virgin Anath
 - 5.) "Dagon was the highly venerated national deity of the Philistines. Each city of the Philistine pentapolis had its temple for the worship of this god. The temple statuary portraying Dagon was characterized by an upper human torso, with the lower torso of a fish. The major cultic rite in Dagon's worship was human sacrifice."²

 - b. Baal - Baal means "lord" or "master"³
 - 1.) Son of El
 - 2.) Storms the palace and displaces El and then marries his father's wives: Asherah and Anath
Judges 3:7
 - 3.) Reigning king of gods - "Lord of heavens" or god of rain and storm,
 - a.) god of fertility - often pictured with a thunder bolt
 - b.) contest between Elijah and the prophets of Baal on Mt. Carmel I Kings 17:19
 - 4.) "Puissant Baal complies.
He desires a cow-calf in Dubr,
A heifer in Shihlmemat-field.
Lies with her times seventy seven
times eighty-eight."
(Note: sometimes Baal is represented as a bull, sometimes as a human. In another text it appears that he has fathered a buffalo or a wild ox with Anath.)
 - 5.) Mot, god of death, famine, drought, and adversity fights and kills his brother Baal:
"Puissant Baal is dead,
The Prince, Lord of Earth, is perished . . .
Straightway kindly El Benighn
Descends from the throne . . .

¹<http://mcweb.mc.maricopa.edu/users/shoemaker/StudentPapers/canaanite.html> accessed on 22 Jan 2002

² <http://www.biblestudytools.com/dictionaries/bakers-evangelical-dictionary/gods-and-goddesses-pagan.html> accessed on 23 May 13

³Unger, 172-173.

Pours dust of mourning on his head . . .
 And puts on sackcloth and loincloth.
 He cuts a gash with a stone . . . (first tattoos were for worship)
 He lifts up his voice and cries;
 "Baal's dead!-What of the masses?"⁴

- c. Anath: Baal's sister, mother-in-law, and consort (lover)
- 1.) Buries Baal
 - 2.) Goes to El and try to find a god that will rule the earth; one is not fast enough, another is too small his feet can not reach the footstool, etc.⁵
 - 3.) Mot boasts that he ate him:
 "I did masticate Puissant Baal.
 I made him like a lamb in my mouth;
 Like a kid in my gullet he's crushed."⁶
 - 4.) Anath fights and kills Mot.
 She seizes godly Mot -
 With sword she doth cleave him.
 With fan she doth winnow him-
 With fire she doth burn him.
 With hand-mill she grinds him-
 In the field she doth sow him.
 Birds eat his remnants,
 Consuming his portions,
 Flitting from remnant to remnant.⁷
 - 5.) Anath places Baal back on the throne
 - 6.) Goddess of sex (lust)
 - a.) Maiden, The Virgin, the Holy One
 - b.) The sacred prostitute
 - c.) there were thus often temple prostitutes - both male and female
 - (1.) Often portrayed nude
 - (2.) Often with a serpent (symbol of fecundity) snake worship
 - (3.) Gives birth to a buffalo or a wild ox ⁸
 - 7.) Goddess of war (cruelty)
 "She binds the heads to her back,
 Fastens the hands in her girdle.
 She p[lunges] knee-deep in knights blood,
 Hip-deep in the gore of heroes. . .
 Much battle she does and beholds,
 Her fighting contemplates Anath:
 Her liver swells with laughter,
 Her heart fills up with joy,
 Anath's liver exults;
 For she plunges knee-deep in knights' blood,

⁴. James B. Pritchard, ed., *Ancient Near Eastern Texts*, 3rd edition with supplement, (Princeton, N.J.:Princeton University Press, 1969), 139.

⁵. *ANET*, 140.

⁶. *ANET*, 140.

⁷. *ANET*, 140.

⁸. *ANET*, 142.

Hip-deep in the gore of heroes. . .
 [She w]ashes her hands of knights blood,
 Her [fi]ngers of gore of heroes.”⁹

8.) Astarte or Ashtoreth: Goddess of evening star



Figure 1: Astarte
http://www.sassonanientart.com/artwork/show_7_archive.html
 accessed on 23 May 13



Figure 2: Asherah
<http://www.britannica.com/EBchecked/topic/38192/Asherah>
 accessed on 23 May 13



Figure 3: Fertility goddess.
<http://www.dovesandserpents.org/wp/2013/04/redeeming-asherah/> accessed on 23 May 13

According to Figure 1, “They have been excavated in Judean sites, particularly in Jerusalem, from where the finest examples come, dating mostly to the eighth and seventh centuries BC.”

3. The Bible says:

a. Why they should not follow other gods

- 1.) Leviticus 20:23: “You must **NOT** live according to the customs of the nations I am going to drive out before you. Because they did all these things, [earlier in this chapter: human sacrifices, consulting spiritists, cursing parents, adultery, incest, homosexuality, & bestiality] I abhorred them.”
- 2.) I Kings 11:1-10: ¹ King Solomon, however, loved many foreign women besides Pharaoh’s daughter--Moabites, Ammonites, Edomites, Sidonians and Hittites. ² They were from nations about which the LORD had told the Israelites, ‘**You must not intermarry with them, because they will surely turn your hearts after their gods.**’ Nevertheless, Solomon held fast to them in love. ³ He had seven hundred wives of royal birth and three hundred concubines, and **his wives led him astray.** ⁴ As Solomon grew old, **his wives turned his heart after other gods,** and his heart was not fully devoted to the LORD his God, as the heart of David his father had been. ⁵ He followed **Ashtoreth** the goddess of the Sidonians, and **Molech** the detestable god of the Ammonites. ⁶ So Solomon did evil in the eyes of the LORD; he did not follow the LORD completely, as David his father had done. ⁷ On a hill east of Jerusalem, Solomon **built a high place for** Chemosh the detestable god of Moab, and for **Molech** the detestable god of the Ammonites. ⁸ **He did the same for all his foreign wives, who burned incense and offered sacrifices to their gods.** ⁹ The LORD became angry with Solomon because his heart had turned away from the

⁹ ANET, 136.

LORD, the God of Israel, who had appeared to him twice. ¹⁰ Although he had forbidden Solomon to follow other gods, Solomon did not keep the LORD's command"

b. Human sacrifice

1.) Leviticus 20:1-5: "The Lord said to Moses, "Say to the Israelites: 'Any Israelite or any alien living in Israel who gives any of his children to Molech must be put to death. The people of the community are to stone him. I will set my face against that man and I will cut him off from his people; for by giving his children to Molech, he has defiled My sanctuary and profaned My holy name. If the people of the community close their eyes when that man gives one of his children to Molech and they fail to put him to death, I will set my face against that man and his family and will cut off from their people both him and all who follow him in prostituting themselves to Molech."

2.) II Kings 3:26-27: "When the king of Moab saw that the battle had gone against him, he took with him seven hundred swordsmen to break through to the king of Edom, but they failed. Then he took his firstborn son, who was to succeed him as king, and offered him as a sacrifice on the city wall. The fury against Israel was great; they withdrew and returned to their own land."

Philo of Byblos (Porphyry): "It is the custom among the ancients, in times of great calamity, in order to prevent the ruin of all, for the rulers of the city or nation to sacrifice to the avenging deities the most beloved of their children."

3.) II Kings 23:10 "He [Josiah] desecrated Topheth, which was in the Valley of Ben Hinnom, so no one could sacrifice his son or daughter in the fire of Molech."

Note that in Carthage they found an cemetery for newborns to 2 year olds. Settlers from Sidon founded Carthage.

c. Prostitution

1.) Genesis 38:21: Judah asks: "Where is the shrine prostitute who was beside the road at Enaim?"

2.) Deuteronomy 23:17 "No Israelite man or woman is to become a temple prostitute."

3.) Deuteronomy 23:18: "You must not bring the earnings of a female prostitute or of a male prostitute [literally "of a dog"] into the house of the Lord your God to pay any vow, because the Lord your God detests them both."

4.) I Kings 14:24: "There were even male shrine prostitutes in the land; the people engaged in all the detestable practices of the nations the Lord had driven out before the Israelites."

5.) I Kings 15:12: "He [King Asa] expelled the male shrine prostitutes from the land and got rid of all the idols his father had made."

6.) I Kings 22:46: "He [King Jehoshaphat] rid the land of the rest of the male shrine prostitutes who remained there even after the reign of his father Asa."

7.) II Kings 23:7: "He also tore down the quarters of the male shrine prostitutes, which were in the temple of the Lord and where the women did the weaving for the Asherah."

8.) Hosea 4:

¹³ They sacrifice on the mountaintops
and burn offerings on the hills,
under oak, poplar, and terebinth
Where the shade is pleasant.

Therefore your daughters turn to prostitution
and your daughters-in-law to adultery.
¹⁵ I will not punish your daughters
when they turn to prostitution,
nor your daughters-in-law
when they commit adultery,
because the men themselves consort with harlots
and sacrifice with temple prostitutes-
a people without understanding will come to ruin. . .
¹⁷ Ephraim is joined to idols;
Leave him alone!
¹⁸ Even when their drinks are gone,
they continue their prostitution
their rulers clearly love shameful ways.
¹⁹ A whirlwind will sweep them away,
and their sacrifices will bring them shame.

Note how the prostitution and adultery are tied to false worship.

d. Bestiality existed in Canaanite culture:

- 1.) Leviticus 20:15-16, 23-24
- 2.) Compare Baal fathering a buffalo or a wild ox with Anath

4. Austin Cline writes: “**The Canaanites** never attacked the Israelites, never enslaved the Israelites, and **aren’t described as ever having done anything to warrant mistreatment of any sort.**”

Is this true?

5. Summary: Worship of Canaanite gods involved:

- a. Human sacrifice: Molech
- b. Male and Female prostitution
- c. Incest: Baal married his sister, Ashtoreth, who was also his father’s wife
- d. Bestiality
- e. Sex with foreign women led them to worship other gods. All this turned them away from worshipping the Lord:
 - 1.) Numbers 25:1-3
 - 2.) I Kings 11:1-5

Practical Application: *The Canaanite culture was obsessed with sex and no sex act was considered inappropriate.*

Dr. Ben Carson has taught for 36 years at John Hopkins School of Medicine and is the director of Pediatric Neurosurgery of Johns Hopkins Hospital. He has also been awarded the Presidential Medal of Freedom and he was the keynote speaker this year at the National Prayer Breakfast with President Obama in attendance (12 February 13). On 26 March 13 in interview on television, he said: “Marriage is between a man and a woman. No group, be they gays, be they NAMBLA [North American Man-Boy Love Association] , be they people who believe in bestiality, it doesn’t matter what they are — they don’t get to change the definition.” After he said this, the homosexual community was so intolerant that on 10 April 13 he was forced to withdraw from being the John Hopkins School of Medicine commencement speaker.

How is America today different from the Canaanite culture?