

# 12. God Taught About Himself – Part 2

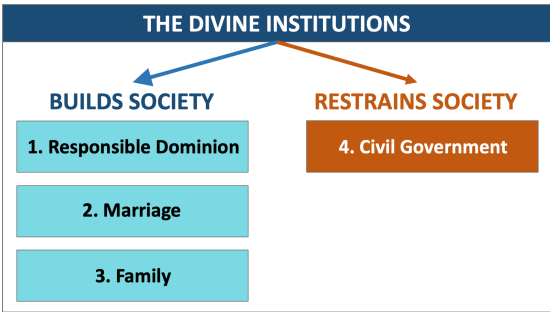
## Previously...

In the first books of the Bible, we learnt that:

- **Yahweh created the world perfect.** He made a world where innocent mankind could thrive. He did not create evil, sin, pain or suffering. All that came with mankind’s choice to sin and rebel against Him at the Fall.
- **After the Fall, mankind continued to live guided by their own consciences.** But their fallen consciences caused them to persistently choose evil and wickedness.
- **When mankind became too evil, God judged the whole world** with the Global Flood. He supernaturally destroyed all rebellious people on earth, saving only the eight who trusted Him (Noah and his family).



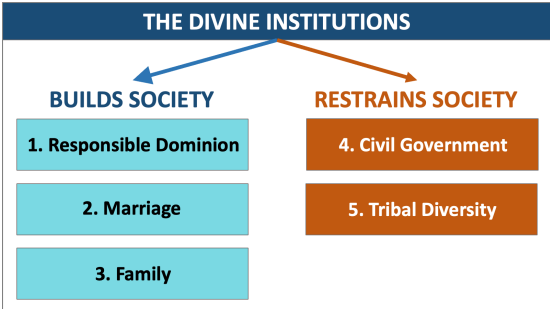
- **After the Flood, Yahweh gave mankind the fourth divine institution of civil government.** God knew the kind of evil society people would have to live in and so He put in place controls that would limit evil. He gave people the power to restrain evil through capital punishment and deadly force.



- **But mankind perverted civil government.** Instead of using civil government to limit evil, they organised themselves to collectively rebel against God by building the tower of Babel. Continued rebellion against Yahweh would lead all mankind to the lake of fire.



- **So Yahweh intervened by putting in place the fifth divine institution of tribal diversity.** He created languages to cause the people to scatter throughout the world. This was to stop organised evil on a global scale. By separating mankind into tribes and nations, God could then judge an evil people group without judging all of mankind. He could also use one people group as His instrument of judgment on another.



- **God still wanted to offer mankind the opportunity to be rescued from eternal death. But now, He chose to reveal Himself to Abraham** because mankind as a whole was not interested in Him.



He promised Abraham (i) land, (ii) descendants, and (iii) that he would be a worldwide blessing. God was going to use Abraham and his family to preserve His history and truth, and to offer reconciliation to mankind through Abraham’s family line.



- Due to famine in the land that God gave Abraham, his grandson Jacob moved his whole family to Egypt. There, they **grew into the entire nation of Israel**.



- After generations of living in Egypt, Israel became enslaved by the Egyptians who worshipped handmade gods. **God showed everyone that He is the only true Creator-God by** judging Egypt through a series of plague judgments.



The final plague judgment was death to all firstborn men and livestock whose homes did not have the blood of the sacrificial animal on the doorframes. The angel of death supernaturally carried out this judgment. This was how God rescued the Israelites out of slavery.

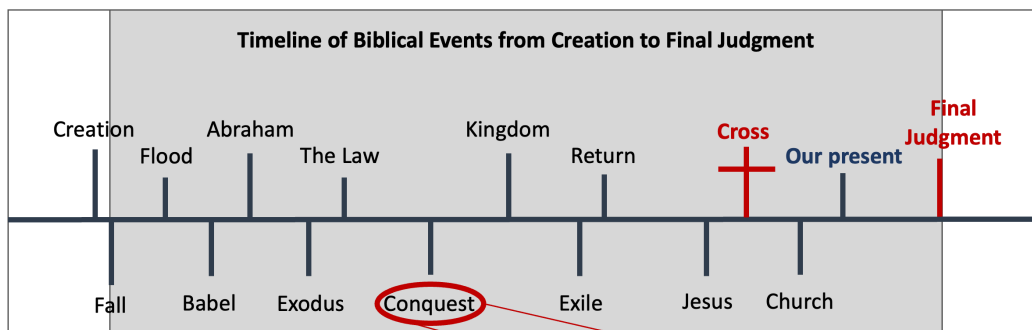


- While in the desert, **God built Israel into a nation by giving them His values, ethics and law**. All that God taught them was in total conflict with the self-focused values of the increasingly wicked and evil nations around them.



- To encourage the Israelites to live well as His children, Yahweh promised great **blessings** for obedience to Him. But He also promised severe **cursings** if they disobeyed Him. This discipline was to encourage them to repent. He did all this because the job He had for Israel was very important and would have worldwide and eternal implications for mankind. Through them, God was going to reveal Himself to the whole world and offer the opportunity to be saved from eternal death. It was important that they lived as good representatives of Him.

Yahweh held the Israelites accountable for how they chose to live. And in today’s lesson, we will see that Yahweh also holds all mankind accountable for their decisions and actions.



1 How the world came to be	2 Why there is evil in the world	5 God revealed His standards	6 God taught about Himself	9 The Saviour’s work	10 The present age
3 God judged the evil world	4 God’s plan to reach the world	7 How God’s people failed	8 God’s rescue plan	11 How the world ends	12 God’s invitation

## AS THE CREATOR-GOD, YAHWEH CONTINUES TO HOLD ALL NATIONS ACCOUNTABLE FOR THEIR ACTIONS

While Yahweh worked with Israel, He never forgot about the other nations of the world. He still held rebellious and unbelieving nations accountable for their actions because everyone was accountable to Him, the Creator-God of all mankind.

About 600 years earlier, when God called Abraham and made a covenant with him, He told Abraham about the future. And He also said something curious regarding the Amorites.

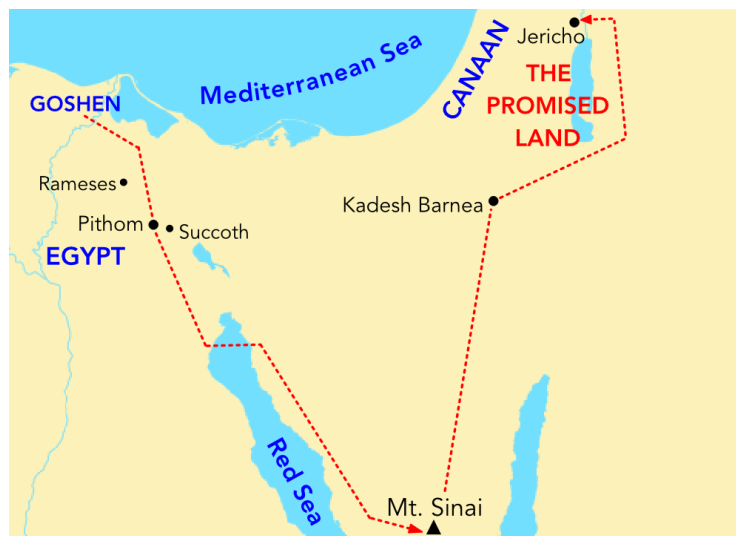
### Genesis 15:13–14, 16–21

<sup>13</sup> Then the LORD said to Abram, “You can be sure that your descendants will be strangers in a foreign land, where they will be oppressed as slaves for 400 years. <sup>14</sup> But I will punish the nation that enslaves them, and in the end they will come away with great wealth.

<sup>16</sup> After four generations your descendants will return here to this land, for the sins of the Amorites do not yet warrant their destruction. <sup>17</sup> After the sun went down and darkness fell, Abram saw a smoking firepot and a flaming torch pass between the halves of the carcasses. <sup>18</sup> So the LORD made a covenant with Abram that day and said, “I have given this land to your descendants, all the way from the border of Egypt to the great Euphrates River— <sup>19</sup> the land now occupied by the Kenites, Kenizzites, Kadmonites, <sup>20</sup> Hittites, Perizzites, Rephaites, <sup>21</sup> Amorites, Canaanites, Girgashites, and Jebusites.”



In this passage, Yahweh was describing to Abraham how his descendants would be slaves in Egypt for 400 years. After that, God would punish Egypt (the nation that enslaved them), and Abraham’s descendants would leave with great wealth. All that indeed happened as Yahweh had said.



God also said that when Abraham’s descendants left Egypt, they would return to the land He had promised them—the land of Canaan. And the exact timing of Israel’s return to their Promised Land would be dependent on the Amorites’ sins.

When God spoke to Abraham, He said, “The sins of the Amorites do not yet warrant their destruction”. This meant that during Abraham’s time, the sins of the people group known as the Amorites were not yet so great that they needed to be judged. However, this meant that a time would come when their sins would be so great that Yahweh would indeed judge and destroy them, as He had judged the world at the Global Flood when mankind’s sin became too severe.

Now, as Israel was in the desert being shaped into a nation by Yahweh, the sins of the Amorites had indeed increased so much and become so evil that God said they had exceeded the limits of His grace and it was time to judge them.

The Amorites lived in the land of Canaan. This is in the area of modern-day Lebanon, Israel and parts of Jordan and Syria. In the Bible, the name “Canaanite” is often used as a general term to include all the people groups who lived in Canaan.



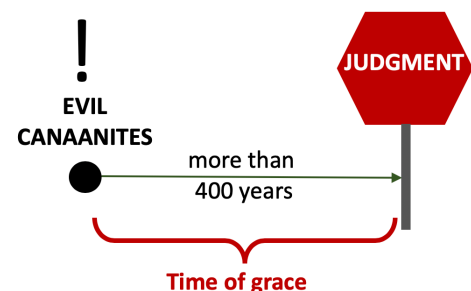
The Canaanites were described in the Bible as a large group of brutal and aggressive people who were extremely wicked. They worshipped all kinds of manmade idols, engaged with Satan and demons in witchcraft, and practised incest and bestiality (sex between humans and animals). They even offered their sons and daughters as human sacrifices to their idols. In fact, these children would be tortured, burnt alive and killed in the most horrible and painful way. The Canaanites were not innocent, righteous people.

Yahweh had given them 400 years to repent of their evil ways. That wasn’t a short time. God had patiently waited during this time of grace but they did not change.



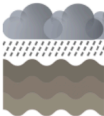






Yahweh is the God of the universe and the God of all history. He is also the Creator-Owner of all mankind. People may rebel against Him, deny that He exists and live however they want to, but He still holds everyone accountable for all their choices, actions and sins.

Because of this, Yahweh was now going to judge and punish the Canaanites for all their sins.

But how was Yahweh going to do this?



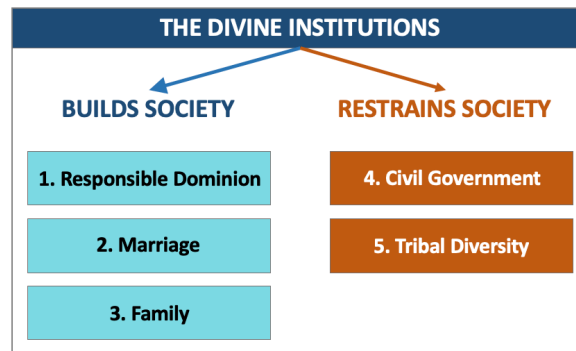
In earlier judgments, God had used nature and the angel of death as instruments of judgment. But now, He would use the Israelites.

God's judgment on those whose sins were greater than He was temporarily willing to tolerate		
Event	Who Died	God caused death through:
 <b>The Global Flood</b>	 Everyone on earth (except Noah and his family)	 Nature
 <b>The Exodus</b>	 All firstborn from a house whose door was not covered by the blood of a lamb	 The angel of death
 <b>The Canaanite Wars</b>	 The wicked Canaanites whom God had shown grace to for many years	 The Israelites

Why would God use one people group to destroy another?

Actually, this was one way God had chosen to limit evil in the fallen world.

After the Flood, God had instituted two Divine Institutions to help mankind restrain evil in society: civil government and tribal diversity.



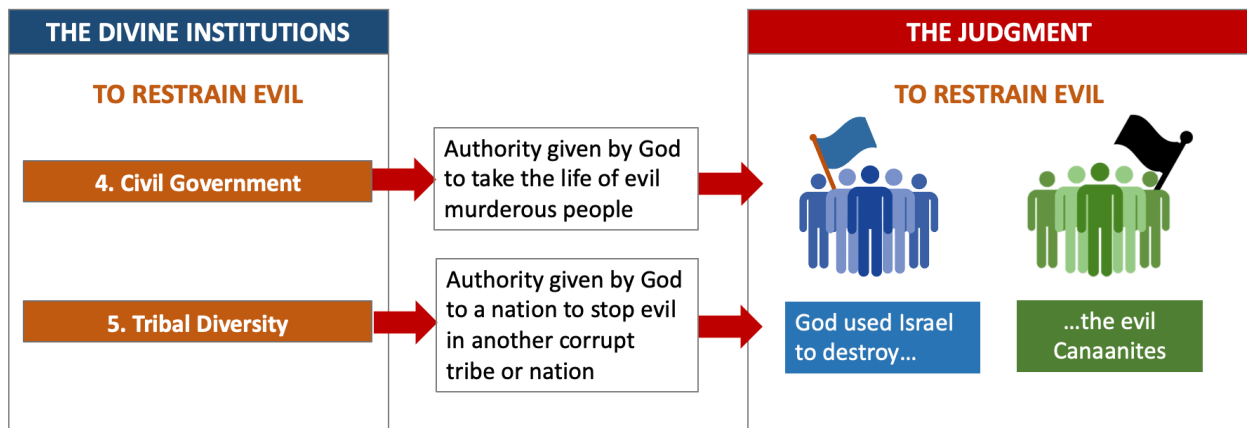
**Civil government:** God values the life of every person as all humans are made in His image. For the sin of murder, God demands the life of the murderer. The Canaanites were a murderous people who even murdered their own children. Therefore God demanded they die for their sin.

**Tribal diversity:** God had put in place a structure whereby if one people group became totally corrupt, God could judge them without having to judge the whole world. He would use another tribe as an instrument of judgment against the corrupt tribe.

After 400 years of showing the Canaanites grace, God sent His judgment on them. By this time, they had rebelled beyond the limits of His grace.

This was why Yahweh instructed the new nation of Israel to use their God-given civil authority to stop the evil behaviour of the fully corrupt Canaanite tribes.

In other words, God used the fourth divine institution (the lethal authority of civil governments) and the fifth divine institution (tribal diversity) when He instructed Israel to be His instrument of judgment.



Importantly, Yahweh did not want the Israelites to misunderstand and think that He was using them because they were a more righteous people group than the Canaanites. He reminded them of how they had rebelliously created and worshipped the golden calf idol.

And God also led Moses to say more to the people.

### Deuteronomy 9:1–6

<sup>1</sup> “Listen, O Israel! Today you are about to cross the Jordan River to take over the land belonging to nations much greater and more powerful than you. They live in cities with walls that reach to the sky! <sup>2</sup> The people are strong and tall—descendants of the famous Anakite giants. You’ve heard the saying, ‘Who can stand up to the Anakites?’ <sup>3</sup> But recognize today that the LORD your God is the one who will cross over ahead of you like a devouring fire to destroy them. He will subdue them so that you will quickly conquer them and drive them out, just as the LORD has promised.

<sup>4</sup> “After the LORD your God has done this for you, don’t say in your hearts, ‘The LORD has given us this land because we are such good people!’ No, it is because of the wickedness of the other nations that he is pushing them out of your way. <sup>5</sup> It is not because you are so good or have such integrity that you are about to occupy their land. The LORD your God will drive these nations out ahead of you only because of their wickedness, and to fulfill the oath he swore to your ancestors Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. <sup>6</sup> You must recognize that the LORD your God is not giving you this good land because you are good, for you are not—you are a stubborn people.

This is what Moses was saying:

- God was punishing the Canaanites for their wickedness;
- God was keeping His promise to Abraham to give Israel ownership and possession of the land of Canaan;
- In making Israel enter the Promised Land, God Himself would destroy the evil Canaanites. Israel just had to obey God.



## Yahweh’s specific instructions to the Israelites

When God chose to use the Israelites as His instrument of judgment against the Canaanites, He gave them very specific instructions.

### 1. The Israelites must not take on the evil ways of the Canaanites.

#### Deuteronomy 18:9–12

<sup>9</sup> “When you enter the land the LORD your God is giving you, be very careful not to imitate the detestable customs of the nations living there. <sup>10</sup> For example, never sacrifice your son or daughter as a burnt offering. And do not let your people practice fortune-telling, or use sorcery, or interpret omens, or engage in witchcraft, <sup>11</sup> or cast spells, or function as mediums or psychics, or call forth the spirits of the dead. <sup>12</sup> Anyone who does these things is detestable to the LORD. It is because the other nations have done these detestable things that the LORD your God will drive them out ahead of you.

God was utterly disgusted and sickened by the Canaanites’ lifestyle of sin. He did not want the Israelites to live like them in any way. This meant that He did not want them to:

- Intermarry with them because He knew that their spouses would turn their hearts against Him.
- Make treaties with them or align themselves with the Canaanites in any way.



This is what God said.

#### Exodus 34:11–16

<sup>11</sup> But listen carefully to everything I command you today. Then I will go ahead of you and drive out the Amorites, Canaanites, Hittites, Perizzites, Hivites, and Jebusites. <sup>12</sup> “Be very careful never to make a treaty with the people who live in the land where you are going. If you do, you will follow their evil ways and be trapped.

<sup>13</sup> Instead, you must break down their pagan altars, smash their sacred pillars, and cut down their Asherah poles. <sup>14</sup> You must worship no other gods, for the LORD, whose very name is Jealous, is a God who is jealous about his relationship with you. <sup>15</sup> “You must not make a treaty of any kind with the people living in the land. They lust after their gods, offering sacrifices to them. They will invite you to join them in their sacrificial meals, and you will go with them.

<sup>16</sup> Then you will accept their daughters, who sacrifice to other gods, as wives for your sons. And they will seduce your sons to commit adultery against me by worshipping other gods.

Yahweh insisted that they must not blend in with Canaanite culture and learn from their wicked ways. So they had to remove all the idols of the Canaanites. Why?



The Canaanites had chosen to rebel against Yahweh and worship the idol-gods they had created with their own hands. This would lead to their eternal death.

If Israel was to be effective in sharing with the world the way to be saved from eternal death, they must not lose their God-given mission. They must not worship any other god.

But the Israelites had a bad track record so far.

- In Egypt, surrounded by hundreds of Egyptian idol-gods, many Israelites had followed the practices of the Egyptians by also worshipping those idols.
- In the desert, they had forced Aaron to build them a calf idol that they worshipped.



In moving into the Promised Land, God did not want them to be deceived into worshipping idols and engaging in the evil practices He detested.

His purpose for Abraham and his family was that they would be a counterculture. To represent Yahweh well, the Israelites had to live in a way that pointed people to the real Creator-God who could save them from eternal death.



## 2. The Israelites must utterly destroy the Canaanites.

In judging the Canaanites for all their sin, God commanded the Israelites to destroy every living thing.

### Deuteronomy 20:16–17

<sup>16</sup> In those towns that the LORD your God is giving you as a special possession, destroy every living thing. <sup>17</sup> You must completely destroy the Hittites, Amorites, Canaanites, Perizzites, Hivites, and Jebusites, just as the LORD your God has commanded you.



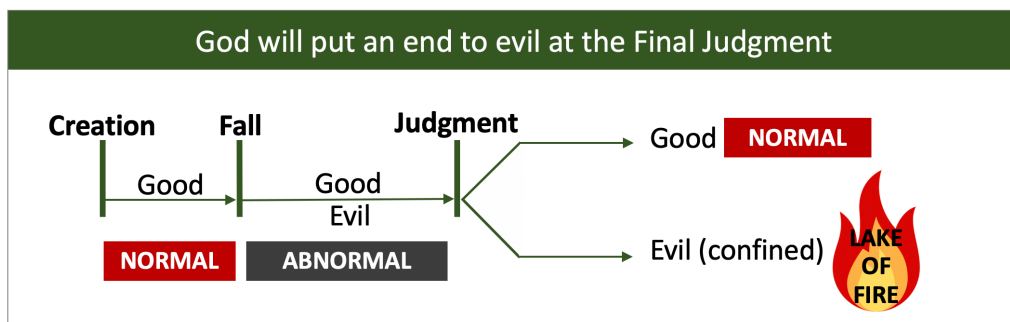
Why did God command total and utter destruction of this people group?

**This war was actually a stern warning picture of the Final Judgment.**

God created the world perfect and “normal”. But after the Fall, sin, evil, pain and suffering made the world “abnormal”. However, God will not tolerate this evil forever. As a perfect, righteous and loving God, He does not want people to live in sin. So God will put an end to evil. There will come a day of judgment where God will separate good from evil forever.

Specifically:

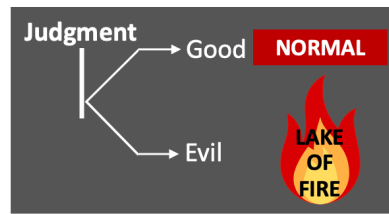
- Evil will be forever confined in the lake of fire.
- God will restore “normal” and make all creation good and perfect once again.



God wants people to have a picture of what that final judgment will look like. The war against the Canaanites was a warning picture of the terrible and inescapable final judgment.



The Canaanite War... ..is a picture of...

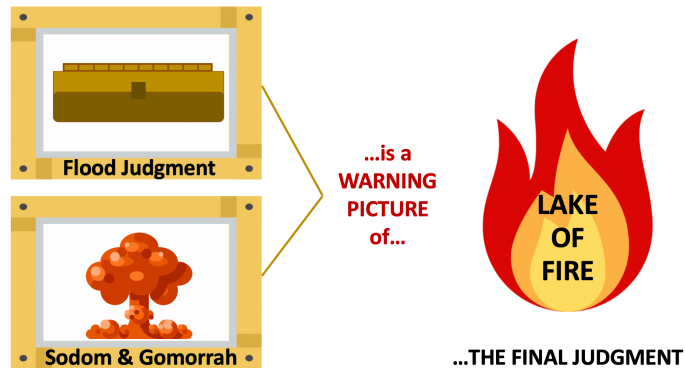


...the Final Judgment

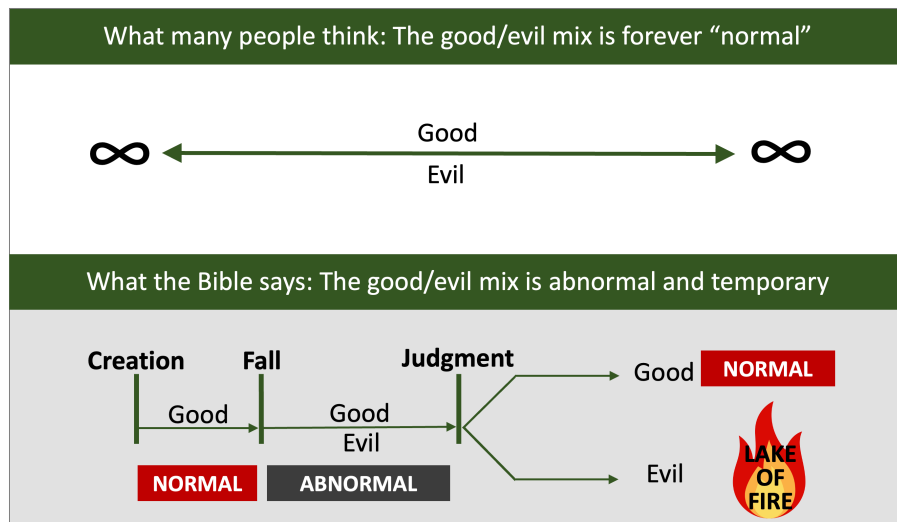
In fact, the Bible states that the accounts of judgments in the Old Testament such as the Flood and another one called “Sodom and Gomorrah” (where God utterly destroyed these two cities), were examples to warn people of what will happen to ungodly people.

**2 Peter 2:5–6**

<sup>5</sup> And God did not spare the ancient world—except for Noah and the seven others in his family. Noah warned the world of God’s righteous judgment. So God protected Noah when he destroyed the world of ungodly people with a vast flood. <sup>6</sup> Later, God condemned the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah and turned them into heaps of ashes. He made them an example of what will happen to ungodly people.



The Bible teaches very clearly that at the end of mortal history, the separation of good and evil will be final. God will get rid of evil permanently. It will be a very frightening day of no escape, no second chances and no change of mind. There will be no negotiations and no tolerance.



At that time, with all the pictures that God had given earlier, no one would be able to claim they had no idea or warning of how destructive and frightening that final judgment would be.

This topic about the Canaanite wars and final judgment bothers many people. And it should. It is a very serious matter. It is a matter that has eternal consequences.



**In thinking about the Canaanite wars, some people wonder what would happen to individuals among the Canaanites who perhaps were not as wicked as the rest. Would they have been spared?**

## ANYONE WHO TRUSTS YAHWEH WILL BE SAVED

At the time of the Global Flood, there were two groups of people. The Global Flood judgment made a distinction between those two groups: those who trusted in Yahweh were saved, and those who rebelled against Yahweh died in the Flood.



In the account of the Exodus, God saved all who trusted Him, whether they were Israelites or others. The Bible called the people who left Egypt “a mixed multitude”, meaning there were non-Israelites among the Israelites (Exodus 12:38).



Similarly, in the war against the Canaanites, those who put their trust in Yahweh were not destroyed.



Here’s an example: the Bible mentions a Canaanite woman named Rahab. She was a prostitute living in Jericho, one of the walled cities in Canaan. Even though Rahab was not an Israelite, she had learnt of Yahweh’s history and believed that He was the true God of heaven and earth.

This was what she said to some Israelite men she met.

### Joshua 2:9–11

<sup>9</sup> “I know the LORD has given you this land,” she told them. “We are all afraid of you. Everyone in the land is living in terror. <sup>10</sup> For we have heard how the LORD made a dry path for you through the Red Sea when you left Egypt. And we know what you did to Sihon and Og, the two Amorite kings east of the Jordan River, whose people you completely destroyed. <sup>11</sup> No wonder our hearts have melted in fear! No one has the courage to fight after hearing such things. For the LORD your God is the supreme God of the heavens above and the earth below.”

The Canaanites knew that Yahweh had given the land to Israel. They knew how God had supernaturally rescued Israel from Egypt. They knew God was with Israel. But even though they knew about Yahweh, they chose to reject Him and rebel against Him.

However, Rahab was different from the others in Jericho. She chose to trust in Yahweh. She believed all that she knew about Yahweh, which probably included the information about the Saviour that Yahweh would send in the future. She had faith in Yahweh’s promises of a Saviour.



This is what the Bible recorded about Rahab's faith in Yahweh.

**Hebrews 11:31a**

It was by faith that Rahab the prostitute was not destroyed with the people in her city who refused to obey God.

God saved Rahab's life because she chose to trust in Him. The Bible does not say if she was indeed less wicked than the general Canaanite. That was not the point. Rather, we see that whenever Yahweh judges people, He divides them into two groups:

- Those who trust Yahweh.
- Those who reject Yahweh.

God destroys those who reject Him. These people are wicked, sinful and continually rebellious. But He saves those who have faith in Him—even non-Jews from a wicked people group. "Race", language, bloodline, nationality or people group are not the dividing factors.

Rahab is just one example of a non-Israelite whom God saved during the time of the Canaanite wars. The Bible mentions other non-Israelites who also chose to trust in Yahweh and were saved.



**? Other people wonder about the Canaanite babies and very young children. Would they have been destroyed forever?**

The Bible tells us that after Adam and Eve sinned, they were separated from God and removed from the garden of Eden. This means that all their descendants—everyone in the whole world—has been born separated from God.

However, even outside the garden of Eden, the Bible also says that God has left enough evidence and revelation of Himself in the world. The evidence is sufficient for people to realise that there is a Creator-God.

So when God judges people after they die physically, this general revelation about Him will be used as evidence against them. They knew He exists but have also chosen to reject Him. This is what the Bible records.

**Romans 1:20**

For ever since the world was created, people have seen the earth and sky. Through everything God made, they can clearly see his invisible qualities—his eternal power and divine nature. So they have no excuse for not knowing God.

God says that people have "no excuse for not knowing" there is a God who created everything, that is, a Creator-God.

However, it could be possible to say that babies, very young children and people with mental challenges **do have an excuse.**

Through no fault of their own, they are unable to grasp even Yahweh's general revelation about Himself.

So when such a person stands before God after death, they can possibly offer an excuse for not responding in belief to the information about God: they were too young, or their human minds were simply not able to grasp the knowledge about God.

God did not record for us in the Bible exactly how He will handle such people who die physically without ever getting a chance to get to know Him or respond to His salvation message. But we can rely on His all-good character to do what is just. This is what we know of Yahweh's character.

**Psalm 145:17**

The LORD is righteous in everything he does;  
he is filled with kindness.

Abraham also affirmed Yahweh's righteous character using a rhetorical question:

**Genesis 18:25b**

Should not the Judge of all the earth do what is right?"

These and other Bible passages state that the God of the Bible is all-just and all-righteous. He must, and will, deal righteously and justly with those who do have "an excuse".

But how will He deal with them? The Bible doesn't give a direct answer. We don't know why, but perhaps if Yahweh presented clearly how such people would be saved from eternal death without the need for understanding and choosing to put their faith in Him, then "loving" people might be very tempted to kill them in order to save them for eternity.

You can imagine the perverse logic:

"If the Bible says babies, the very young and the mentally challenged are saved from eternal death automatically, then why risk letting them grow up only to reject Yahweh? The most loving thing would be to kill them young in order to save them for eternity."

This idea would lead to disastrous consequences and even more murder. However, this is just speculation as to why God has not given a direct answer. Whatever the case, as we continue our journey through God's Word, we will see more and more of His just and fair character and will be able to trust Him on how He will handle the very young and mentally challenged ones.

## WHAT GOD WAS TEACHING AT THIS POINT IN HISTORY

Through the events up to this point in world history, God was showing that:

- Humankind is very wicked: both the Israelites and non-Israelites. They were not just rebellious towards Him, but they were wicked towards each other.
- Even when Israel was given God's standard of righteousness through the Mosaic Law, right from the start, they could not keep it. They were not able to attain God's standard of righteousness on their own. They would not be saved from eternal death by trying to obey the law.

- God loves and cares for all mankind. When it became clear that the world in general had chosen to reject Him, He chose to work with the Israelites to preserve His history and truth for the purpose of saving the world. He was very strict with the Israelites because of His love for the world.
- Even while Yahweh was working with Israel, He also saved non-Israelites who put their trust in Him. This is because His plan has always been to offer rescue from eternal death to all humankind.

## What happened next?

After Israel's disastrous start at keeping the Mosaic Contract, and after moving into the land of Canaan, how did the Israelites live? Did they indeed do their job of being a blessing to the world? We will learn more about this in the next lesson.

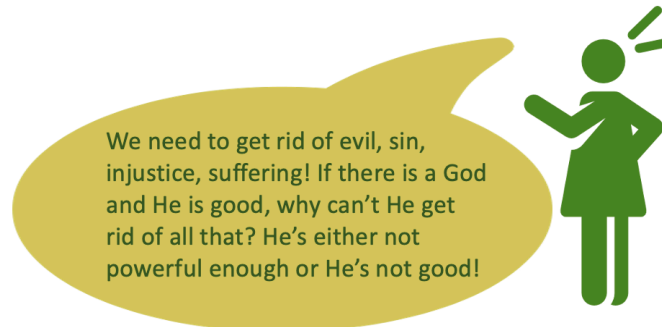


### **Bible reading for review**

Exodus 33–34; Deuteronomy 18:9–20:20; Joshua 2

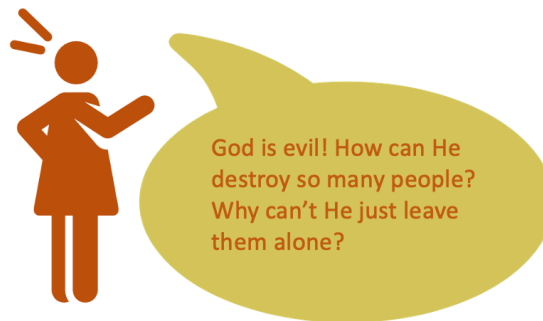
## Is God cruel for commanding the Canaanite wars?

Whenever bad things happen to people, they often curse God. They wish they did not have to live with evil, sin, tragedy and suffering.



### Accusations against Yahweh during the time of grace

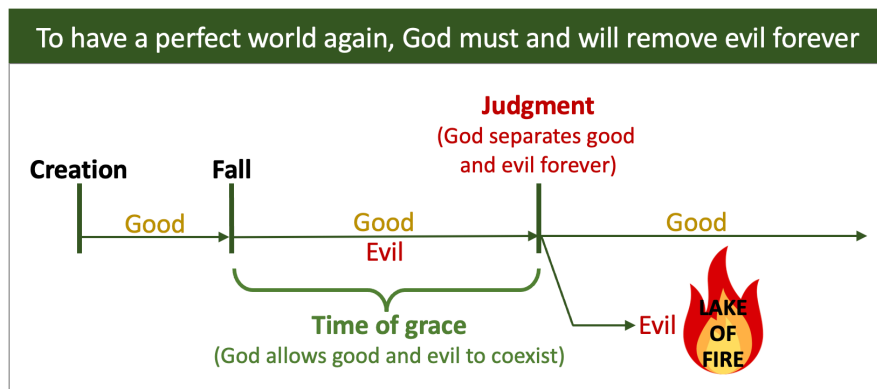
However, when God judges sin such as during the time of the Canaanite wars, these same people often turn around and condemn God because He is judging evil.



### Accusations against Yahweh when He judges sin

People cannot have it both ways.

If people object to evil and want it gone, there has to be judgment to remove evil. This also means there must be an end to grace.



God shows what salvation looks like in a fallen world. In order to fulfil His promise of creating a perfect world with no evil in it, He must remove evil forever.

The Canaanite wars were a small-scale version of Yahweh's ultimate elimination of evil from the earth.

God does not show favouritism. As with all mankind, regardless of ethnicity, history, upbringing, wealth, etc., people have a choice to rebel against God like most of the Canaanites did, or trust God like Rahab the Canaanite prostitute did. Trust, or faith in God, and not anything else, will determine each person's eternal destiny.

### **Why did God specifically choose the Israelites to be His instrument of judgment against the Canaanites? Isn't that unfair?**

As we have learnt, Israel was chosen by God to record His history and truth and to be a worldwide blessing to the world. God selected this people group not because they were more righteous, or because they were His favourite people. But as the Creator-God of all mankind, He had every right to choose whom He would work through.

After He saved Israel out of Egypt, He formed a Father-son relationship with them and He held them to His high standard of right and wrong as seen in the Mosaic Contract that He signed with them. He told them there would be blessings for obedience to His laws, and cursings for disobedience.

One characteristic of Yahweh is that He is a very careful judge and He applies His standard of right and wrong fairly across all people groups.

Once, during Abraham's lifetime, God visited him and said He had been observing two Canaanite cities called Sodom and Gomorrah. Yahweh said the two cities' wickedness had reached such a terrible state that He was going to judge them.

#### **Genesis 18:17–21**

<sup>17</sup> "Should I hide my plan from Abraham?" the LORD asked. <sup>18</sup> "For Abraham will certainly become a great and mighty nation, and all the nations of the earth will be blessed through him. <sup>19</sup> I have singled him out so that he will direct his sons and their families to keep the way of the LORD by doing what is right and just. Then I will do for Abraham all that I have promised."

<sup>20</sup> So the LORD told Abraham, "I have heard a great outcry from Sodom and Gomorrah, because their sin is so flagrant. <sup>21</sup> I am going down to see if their actions are as wicked as I have heard. If not, I want to know."

Yahweh discussed the issue with Abraham, and Abraham pleaded with God to spare the cities if God could find just ten righteous people in them. Yahweh agreed to this incredibly low number.



**Genesis 18:32–33**

<sup>32</sup> Finally, Abraham said, “Lord, please don’t be angry with me if I speak one more time. Suppose only ten are found there?”

And the LORD replied, “Then I will not destroy it for the sake of the ten.”

<sup>33</sup> When the LORD had finished his conversation with Abraham, he went on his way, and Abraham returned to his tent.

Yahweh was demonstrating several things:

1. He was willing to show grace to all the people in both cities if He could find at least ten righteous people.
2. He is not a careless judge. As the all-knowing God, He knows the state of each person’s heart. Yet He went down personally to examine the people in the two cities to show how careful He was in all His judgments.

The result of God’s examination was that there were not even ten righteous people in the two Canaanite cities. And so He judged them, along with surrounding cities that were wicked beyond the level that He was allowing.

**Genesis 19:24–25, 27–28**

<sup>24</sup> Then the LORD rained down fire and burning sulfur from the sky on Sodom and Gomorrah. <sup>25</sup> He utterly destroyed them, along with the other cities and villages of the plain, wiping out all the people and every bit of vegetation.

<sup>27</sup> Abraham got up early that morning and hurried out to the place where he had stood in the LORD’s presence. <sup>28</sup> He looked out across the plain toward Sodom and Gomorrah and watched as columns of smoke rose from the cities like smoke from a furnace.

Yahweh had put a stop to the evil He saw.

Now, at the start of the Canaanite wars, God had decided to use Israel as His instrument of judgment against Canaan. He told the Israelites that He was so angry with the evil Canaanites that He would cause the land to vomit them out. He also warned the Israelites that if they also became as evil as the Canaanites, He would not spare them either. He would also punish them by causing the land to vomit Israel out. This was what God said.

**Leviticus 18:24–28**

<sup>24</sup> “Do not defile yourselves in any of these ways, for the people I am driving out before you have defiled themselves in all these ways. <sup>25</sup> Because the entire land has become defiled, I am punishing the people who live there. I will cause the land to vomit them out. <sup>26</sup> You must obey all my decrees and regulations. You must not commit any of these detestable sins. This applies both to native-born Israelites and to the foreigners living among you.

<sup>27</sup> “All these detestable activities are practiced by the people of the land where I am taking you, and this is how the land has become defiled. <sup>28</sup> So do not defile the land and give it a reason to vomit you out, as it will vomit out the people who live there now.

During the Canaanite wars, God used Israel to vomit out, or drive out, the wicked and thoroughly evil Canaanites.

But years later, when Israel became just as corrupt, God also did not spare them. He held them to the standard of right and wrong that He had set down in the Mosaic Contract.

At that time, God called one of His prophets, Jeremiah, to make a close examination of Israel. He told the prophet to search the streets of Israel’s capital, Jerusalem, to look for one just and honest person. This was similar to what Yahweh had done with the Canaanite cities of Sodom and Gomorrah.

**Jeremiah 5:1–3, 7–9, 15–17**

<sup>1</sup> “Run up and down every street in Jerusalem,” says the LORD.

“Look high and low; search throughout the city!

If you can find even one just and honest person,  
I will not destroy the city.

<sup>2</sup> But even when they are under oath,  
 saying, ‘As surely as the LORD lives,’  
 they are still telling lies!”

<sup>3</sup> LORD, you are searching for honesty.  
 You struck your people,  
 but they paid no attention.  
 You crushed them,  
 but they refused to be corrected.  
 They are determined, with faces set like stone;  
 they have refused to repent.

<sup>7</sup> “How can I pardon you?  
 For even your children have turned from me.  
 They have sworn by gods that are not gods at all!  
 I fed my people until they were full.  
 But they thanked me by committing adultery  
 and lining up at the brothels.

<sup>8</sup> They are well-fed, lusty stallions,  
 each neighing for his neighbor’s wife.

<sup>9</sup> Should I not punish them for this?” says the LORD.  
 “Should I not avenge myself against such a nation?”

<sup>15</sup> O Israel, I will bring a distant nation against you,  
says the LORD.

“It is a mighty nation,  
an ancient nation,  
a people whose language you do not know,  
whose speech you cannot understand.

<sup>16</sup> Their weapons are deadly;  
their warriors are mighty.

<sup>17</sup> They will devour the food of your harvest;  
they will devour your sons and daughters.

They will devour your flocks and herds;  
they will devour your grapes and figs.

And they will destroy your fortified towns,  
which you think are so safe.

At this point in history, the Israelites had become very evil and wicked. When Yahweh could find no one righteous among the Israelites, He judged them as He had the Canaanites. He called another nation, Babylon, to be His instrument of punishment against the horribly evil and wicked Israelites. In this way, He caused the land to vomit out Israel.

We see then, that God does not play favourites. He holds all peoples to His righteous standard. He will get rid of stubborn, rebellious people who refuse to repent, but He will rescue those who trust Him.