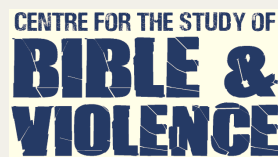


MAD, BAD, AND DANGEROUS TO READ?

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FOUNDATIONS:

Agreeing some principles for interpretation

My presuppositions

- The fullest revelation of God is in Jesus Christ
- The Bible is God's word to us
- The Old Testament should be wrestled with, not discarded



How to avoid misunderstanding the Old Testament

- Understand the different world-view



How to avoid misunderstanding the Old Testament

- Understand the different world-view
 - *Pattern matching (analogical thought)*
 - *What is a 'good' society?*
 - *Primacy of God and the role of Satan*



How to avoid misunderstanding the Old Testament

- Read 'big'



How to avoid misunderstanding the Old Testament

- Understand the genre



How to avoid misunderstanding the Old Testament

- Understand the genre
 - *Read history as it is intended*
 - *Read narrative as it is intended*



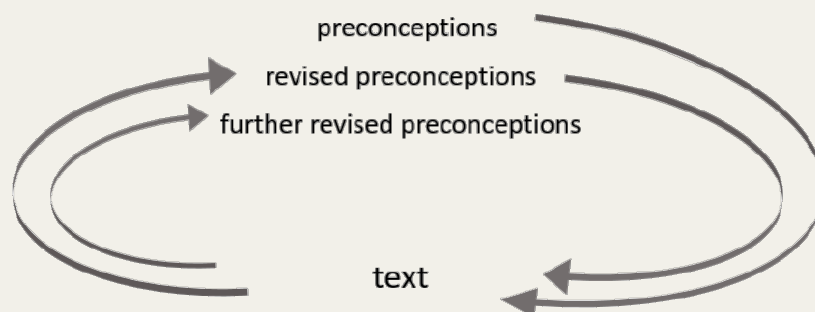
How to avoid misunderstanding the Old Testament

■ Wrestle



How to avoid misunderstanding the Old Testament

■ Wrestle



THE CONQUEST OF CANAAN

Words used for the conquest

- grš 'drive out' - Exod. 23.28, 29, 30, 31; 33.2; 34.11
- šlh 'cast out' - Lev. 18.24; 20.23
- qya 'vomit out' - Lev. 18.25, 28; cf. 20.22
- yrš 'possess/dispossess' - Num. 33.52, 55)
- 'bd 'destroy' - Deut 7.20, 23-24; 8.19; 9.3; 12.30; 31.3-4
- hrm 'ban' - Deut 7.2; 20.17

NB this is not an exhaustive list!

Conquest of Canaan

- What does (and doesn't) herem mean?



What territory did Israel take?



- Theological claim
- Practical account

Conquest of Canaan

■ Did people really die in large numbers?

- *Rhetoric and hyperbole*
- *Human behaviour*
- *Archaeological record*
- *Ambiguity in the text*



Ambiguity in the text: what became of the people and cities that Joshua conquered?

| | |
|---------------|-------------|
| Josh 10:20a | Josh 10:20b |
| Josh 10:39 | Josh 11:21 |
| Josh 11:21-22 | Josh 15:14 |
| Jdg 1:8 | Jdg 1:21 |
| Jds 11:23 | Jdg 2:21-23 |

What became of the people and cities that Joshua conquered?

| | |
|---|--|
| When Joshua and the Israelites had finished inflicting a very great slaughter on them, until they were wiped out (Joshua 10:20a). | ... and when the survivors had entered into the fortified towns (Joshua 10:20b). |
| [Joshua] took [the city of Debir]... and utterly destroyed every person in it (Joshua 10:39). | Joshua came and wiped out the Anakim... from Debir (Joshua 11:21). |
| Joshua came and wiped out the Anakim... Joshua utterly destroyed them with their towns. None of the Anakim was left in the land of the Israelites (Joshua 11:21-22). | Caleb drove out from [Hebron] the three sons of Anak: Sheshai, Ahiman, and Talmi, the descendants of Anak (Joshua 15:14). |
| The people of Judah fought against Jerusalem and took it. They put it to the sword and set the city on fire (Judges 1:8). | The Benjaminites did not drive out the Jebusites who lived in Jerusalem; so the Jebusites have lived in Jerusalem among the Benjaminites to this day (Judges 1:21). |
| So Joshua took the whole land, according to all that the Lord had spoken to Moses; and Joshua gave it for an inheritance to Israel according to their tribal allotments. And the land had rest from war (Joshua 11:23). | 'I [God] will no longer drive out before them any of the nations that Joshua left when he died.' In order to test Israel, whether or not they would take care to walk in the way of the Lord as their ancestors did, the Lord had left those nations, not driving them out at once, and had not handed them over to Joshua (Judges 2:21-23). |

Conquest of Canaan

- Comparative reading (reading for surprise)
 - *Comparison with other ANE texts*
 - *Comparison with the biblical text elsewhere*
 - The man with the drawn sword
 - Rahab and Achan



Conquest of Canaan

■ What can we say more positively?

- *Symbolic action*
- *New creation imagery*

- Chaos monsters
- Separation
- Sevens
- Rest



How does this theme of divine warfare develop?

1. God fights the flesh-and-blood enemies of his people
 - *fulfilment of the covenant promise Deut 28:7*
 - *The enemy of the people of God identified as the enemy of God e.g. Pharaoh as anti-creation mandate; Amalek as chaos...*



How does this theme of divine warfare develop?

2. God fights *against* Israel e.g. Ai (Josh 7), Philistines (1 Sam 4:1-11), Lam 2:4-5



How does this theme of divine warfare develop?

3. God, the eschatological warrior.

Pss. 18:7-15; 68:4, 33; 104:1-3;

Nah. 1:3

Zech 14

Isa 63



How does this theme of divine warfare develop?

4. Jesus Christ, the divine warrior.
 - *Refuses the sword - Matt. 26:50-56*
 - *His death disarms the powers and authorities Col 2:15*
 - *Ascension is a victory parade Eph 4:7-8, quotation from Ps 68, a divine warrior hymn*
 - *Jesus' followers are to do likewise - Eph 6:10-18*



How does this theme of divine warfare develop?

5. Jesus Christ, the eschatological warrior.
 - *Revelation 19:11-16*
 - *Rom. 16:20; Rev. 12:9, cf. Gen. 3:14-15*



Revelation subverts our expectations

- Rev 5:5-6 *Hears* of a lion, sees a lamb



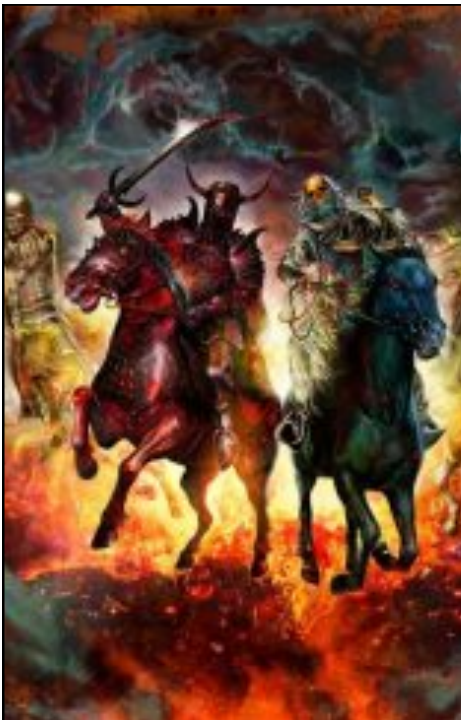
Revelation subverts our expectations

- Rev 7:2-14, *hears* about 144,000 i.e. 12,000 from each tribe of Israel. Cf census of Numbers 1, a count of fighting men.. Sees a great multitude from “every nation, tribe, people and language” (7:9)
- *They are dressed in white, like the festal garments of those who celebrate victory, and waving palm branches, like the Maccabees did after recapturing Jerusalem*
- v. 14 “*These are they who have come out of the great tribulation.*” cf Daniel 12:1, this is victory in the eschatological war.
- “*They have washed their robes and made them white....*” The washing of robes was part of the ritual post-war purification, described in Numbers 31:19-20.
- “*... in the blood ...*” The War Scroll (DSS) also has a victorious army washing its robes in blood. This was the blood “of the guilty cadavers.”
- “*...of the Lamb.*” Surprise!—it is by the self-sacrifice of the Lamb that the multitude are victorious.



Revelation subverts our expectations

- Revelation 14: 4-5, “These are those who did not defile themselves with women, for they remained virgins. They follow the Lamb wherever he goes. They were purchased from among mankind and offered as firstfruits to God and the Lamb. No lie was found in their mouths; they are blameless.”
 - *The sexual abstinence of the men reflects the ritual purity required of Israel’s armies (Deut 23:9-14), and leads the reader to assume that this 144,000 will wage war.*
 - *But “no lie was found in their mouths” cf slain lamb of Isaiah 53:9, in whose mouth there was no deceit.*
 - *The word translated above “blameless” (amōmos) could be translated “without physical defect,” cf. the slain lambs of the Passover.*



Revelation subverts our expectations

- The great host of chapter 19 stand behind the heavenly rider, wage war. This rider conquers by means of the sword of his mouth, a subversion of the militaristic metaphor which has previously been signalled (1:16; 2:12, 16).

For further reading:

- *God of Violence Yesterday, God of Love Today?* Helen Paynter
- *Did God really command genocide?* Paul Copan and Matthew Flannagan
- *The forgotten world of the Israelite conquest.* John Walton
- *Bloody, Brutal, Barbaric* William Webb and Gordon Oest
- *Flood and Fury* Matt Lynch
- Richard Bauckham, *Climax of prophecy: Studies on the book of Revelation*