

GROUP DISCUSSION

Questions for facilitating dynamic discussion

Too Good to Be True?

October 8, 2023

Week 5: Then why is there violence in the Bible?

The Bible declares that God's goodness exceeds our wildest dreams. Yet skeptics have a list of reasons why it can't be true. Rather than ignore their arguments, let's have honest and courageous conversations about life's hardest questions. This week, we're on the topic of why there's so much blood and violence in the Bible, especially during sacraments and holidays. We'll take a look at how that's all tied into God's plans for His people.

Kicking It Off: Jeff mentioned that at its peak, more than 25% of Chicago's workforce was involved in work at the city's stockyards. Jeff also shared how he was a boat operator after graduating from college. What's the most unusual job (paid or unpaid) that you've ever held?

Discussion:

1. According to Deuteronomy 32:39, who decides when life begins and when it ends? By contrast, list a few ways that the world tells us life's beginning and ending should occur.
"See now that I myself am he! There is no god besides me. I put to death and I bring to life, I have wounded and I will heal, and no one can deliver out of my hand."
2. What did you learn are examples of some people who can kill others in an "official capacity," especially in light of Romans 13:4b? Does this instill confidence in you, or invite more questions?
"But if you do wrong, be afraid, for rulers do not bear the sword for no reason. They are God's servants, agents of wrath to bring punishment on the wrongdoer."
3. Read Deuteronomy 7:2 and Deut. 20:17-18. What did we learn were some evil deeds which made the Canaanite *conquest* both just *and* necessary for the Israelites? What might happen to their culture (and ours) if God's people don't preserve certain moral principles? Where do you see that at work today?
"And when the LORD your God has delivered them over to you and you have defeated them, then you must destroy them totally. Make no treaty with them, and show them no mercy."
"Completely destroy them ... Otherwise, they will teach you to follow all the detestable things they do in worshiping their gods, and you will sin against the LORD your God."
4. Through the *execution* of certain sinners (e.g., Ananias and Sapphira in Acts 5:1-10), how does God warn us of the dangers of sin? How does His love also shine through in some of these cases?
5. Ultimately, we learn about Jesus' perfect *sacrifice* as the lamb of God. How do the Old Testament sacrifices help us to understand this significance? Why should the truth of Romans 5:8-9 matter to us?
But God showed his great love for us by sending Christ to die for us while we were still sinners. And since we have been made right in God's sight by the blood of Christ, he will certainly save us from God's condemnation."

Wrapping Up: When we understand God's loving sacrifice and His commitment to rescue us, it leads us to compassion and a heart for others to know Him just the same. Pray each member of your group will be moved to share the amazing rescue story of Jesus with others in the days and weeks ahead.