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Violence in the Bible: The Conquest of Canaan

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Knight & Rose Show - Wintery Knight and Desert Rose

Wintery Knight and Desert Rose discuss a common objection to Christianity - that God commanded the Israelites to commit unjustified acts of violence against innocent people. We focus on an important example of this: the Conquest of Canaan. We discuss the historical context of the war and what it says about God's character. We also discuss strategies for responding to the objection.

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Transcript

Welcome to the Knight & Rose Show, where we discuss practical ways of living out an authentic Christian worldview. Today, we're going to look at a common objection to Christianity raised by non-Christians. Did God command the Israelites to commit unjustifiable acts of violence against innocent people? I'm Wintery Knight.

And I'm Desert Rose. Welcome Rose. So I was actually asked this question during a

debate that I did on an Atheist podcast, so I'm very excited to find out what you think about it, because I know you've been asked it before.

Yes. The atheist guy who asked me this, he thought that it was an argument against the God of the Bible that God would command his people in the Old Testament to engage in total war against other nations. Yeah, I actually don't think that Christians are generally very well prepared to answer this objection.

I hear this from a lot of Christians as well, that they're hearing this from atheists. I'm thinking about how, you know, children's ministry leaders, for example, have taught the Old Testament accounts over the last few generations. And I guess I'm not really surprised that people don't know how to respond to the acts of violence.

I mean, according to most Sunday school programs I'm familiar with, Noah's Ark is about, you know, adorable little animals that like to travel in pairs. And the story of King David is about this fun little incident with a toy slingshot. So, you know, I don't know that I've ever heard a message on the Canaanites, but if there was one, it'd probably be about these like bullies on the playground who weren't very nice to play with.

And so God put them in timeout or something like that. But what we find in the Bible is actually not a lot meaner than that. Yeah.

Yeah. So in this episode, we hope to give people some things to think about as we take another look at what's actually in the Bible. So specifically, we're going to be focusing most of our time on the conquest of Canaan, because that's the one that seems to be the biggest challenge for people.

Mm hmm. That sounds good. Why don't we start with a general point about violence in the Bible? Some people refuse to take the Bible seriously because the violence it records makes them uncomfortable.

And I hear this again from from atheists, from agnostics, from people who call themselves progressive Christians, from certainly from Muslims. In fact, I was meeting with a mom who brought this up one time, and he said that the Old Testament has more violence than the entire Quran, which of course didn't surprise me because the Quran is two thirds the size of the New Testament and, you know, doesn't have an historical narrative or anything like that. But yeah, so I guess point being, you know, I hear this a lot.

So what's the answer to this objection more generally? Well, the Bible is not just a collection of commands from God to his people. It records a lot of historical narrative, including a lot of events that are not endorsed by God. So, for example, when the Bible records King David committing adultery and murder, he's not to be imitated.

In fact, most of the behaviors recorded in the Old Testament are not to be imitated. Yes.

My dad is a big Bible reader.

He reads the Bible every day, and he's always making fun of the Israelites for disobeying God over and over and on serious things. And God is always trying to bring them back into the fold. But in the Quran, bad behavior is actually considered, you know, good.

So it's very different from the Old Testament. Yeah, yeah, the Old Testament is the story of Israel's disobedience and of the inability of all people to attain righteousness under the law. It's the story of our need for a Savior, for a sacrifice in our place.

It's the message that all people fall short of the glory of God. All people need forgiveness and redemption that God needs to provide for us or that only God can provide. So I think that's really important to remember when it comes to understanding violence in the Bible.

And like you pointed out, it's a huge distinction between the violence in Islam and the violence in Christianity. When I point this out, people will often respond by saying, OK, well, so a lot of the violence in the Bible is historical narrative. It's just recording what happened.

But God himself was the one who commanded the Israelites to wipe out the Canaanites. That wasn't just sinful humans doing what sinful humans doing. That was they'll say that was God commanding genocide.

No, they'll ask, doesn't that prove that he's evil? Yeah, so we're moving on from I don't like that there's a ton of violence in the Bible to I don't like that God commands people to do these terrible things. So I actually looked this up prior to our recording, and I found an excellent article by a guy named Todd Statham, who is a campus chaplain in Canada. And I guess up there campus chaplains respond to objections to Christianity.

He wrote this in one of his articles. As the people of Israel passed through the wilderness and drew near the land promised to their ancestors in Genesis 15 18 to 21, God commanded them to slaughter the Canaanites who dwelt there. You must destroy them totally, God commanded.

Make no treaty with them and show them no mercy. And he gives a reference of Deuteronomy 7 2. So on route to the promised land, Israel had offered terms of peace to enemy nations. They were to kill only the warriors of towns that resisted them.

But total war was unleashed upon Canaan. Quote, do not leave any alive, anything that breathes, unquote, God insisted. Men, women, children, even animals all destroyed.

This was necessary so that the Canaanites and their gods would not lead Israel astray. And this is from Deuteronomy 20 10 through 18, and also Joshua 6 17 and 21. So his question is, did God really command the genocide of the Canaanites? So how would you

that sounds bad.

So what's the answer to this? Well, first of all, I think it's worth noting that the author and creator of life is God. And so he is the one who has the right to take people from this world when he pleases. But was the conquest of Canaan indicative of God's hatred for non Jews? No.

As we look at the conquest of Canaan, what we see is that this event was a time specific, people specific, divine judgment that was long delayed. So I'll say that again for people, because this is a really huge important point. It was a time specific, people specific, divine judgment that was long delayed.

That's how it's always been understood by Jews and Christians. And that's exactly the understanding the text warrants. Hmm.

OK. All right. So this command is often plucked out of that context that you just said, especially eliminating the long delayed part.

So tell us about the context. OK, well, the account is recorded in Joshua and then the first couple of chapters of judges. But to understand what's going on, we actually have to go all the way back to Genesis.

When God set apart Abraham and his descendants to be a nation through which he would bless all nations, he promised them the land of Canaan. God's intention wasn't to slaughter all non-Israelites or non-believers, but rather to bless all nations. From the very beginning, God wanted to bless people.

So he would make Abraham's offspring into a nation and a nation requires people, land and laws. Right. Yeah.

And he would use that nation to bless all the other nations of the earth. OK, I have an example for this. So I'm thinking about the the constituting of the United States of America, which I would say today is a blessing to all the other nations in the world in terms of liberty and prosperity and even security.

And when that nation was being formed, we had to fight with our neighbors to make space for ourselves and our different customs. So it kind of shows that if God's goal is to form a nation, there may be some conflict with neighboring nations. Yeah.

And in Genesis, twenty six, four, we see this God said to Isaac, I will multiply your offspring as the stars of heaven and will give to your offspring all these lands. And in your offspring, all the nations of the earth shall be blessed because Abraham obeyed my voice and kept my charge, my commandments, my statutes and my laws. We find the same thing, by the way, in Genesis 18, 18 and also in Genesis 22, 18.

God intended to give the land of Canaan to Abraham so that Abraham's offspring would be a blessing to all nations. OK, it's a good goal. Like, it sounds like it's going to be a good goal, a blessing to all nations.

But in the short term, it doesn't sound good for the Canaanites. So why is God picking on them? Yeah, great question. The answer to that is found in Genesis as well.

Abraham's descendants would not inherit this land for another 400 years, he's told, because according to Genesis 15, 16, quote, the iniquity of the Amorites was not yet complete. OK, so the Amorites were a tribe living in the land of Canaan. And God said their iniquity, their sinfulness had not reached completion.

God wanted to give them more time. In fact, God gave the people in Canaan more than 400 years to turn away from their wicked ways. But during that time, their abominations only increased.

OK, so when their evil was complete, that's when God sent the Israelites to conquer the land as judgment for their wickedness. This is actually reiterated in Leviticus and Deuteronomy and made very clear there. OK, all right.

So he's picking on them because they are horrible. Yes. So can we get a description of the abominations of the Amorites and the Canaanites and preferably one that doesn't get us kicked off of YouTube? We can try.

So in Deuteronomy 18, verses nine through 12, Moses spoke to the Israelites on behalf of God saying this, quote, when you come into the land that the Lord your God is giving you, you shall not learn to follow the abominable practices of those nations. There shall not be found among you anyone who burns his son or his daughter as an offering, anyone who practices divination or tells fortunes or interprets omens or a sorcerer or a charmer or a medium or a necromancer or one who inquires of the dead. For whoever does these things is an abomination to the Lord.

And because of these abominations, the Lord your God is driving them out before you. All right. So there's the list of abominations.

Yeah, well, there's more. So in Leviticus 18, 24 and 25, the Israelites were warned, quote, do not make yourselves unclean by any of these things. And I'll tell you what these things are in a second, because it's in the immediate context.

He says, do not make yourselves unclean by any of these things for by all these, the nations I am driving out before you have become unclean and the land became unclean so that I punished its iniquity and the land vomited out its inhabitants. So these things which cause the Lord to vomit out the inhabitants, as the phrase used included, we know from this from verse 24, incest, adultery, bestiality, pedophilia, child sacrifice and homosexuality. OK, so that's going to get us banned off YouTube.

So what should people do about that, Rose? Oh, well, they should subscribe to the podcast, of course. Yes, definitely subscribe to the podcast, because if you're listening to us on YouTube, that's the Republican trouble. The end.

All right. OK, so what else about this? So, you know, there's some overlap there, but when you put those two lists together, you get some you get a pretty awful, despicable idea of what the Canaanites were doing. In addition to that, burning the children.

That one is like the one that sticks out to me. It's like, yes, that's bad. And we actually know more about that from archaeology.

We know that they used to construct life sized metal idols and they would heat these large idols of metal to burning temperatures, and then they would place their living babies on the metal to scorch them to death as the babies were screaming. That's awful. Yeah.

So I mean, these were people who were consumed with evil, but God kept giving them chance after chance after chance, hundreds of years, in fact, to repent. And then eventually, as judgment for their sin and their their hard hearts, their refusal to do anything differently, he sent the Israelites to expel them from the land and to destroy all their idols. All right.

So I have had to feel this question a few times in my life. And I wanted to just take a break from going through the historical material to point out something that's very strange to me that I've noticed. So sometimes when you're you're debating this with a challenger, the challenger is like talking and saying, how could God let this happen to the children? How could he command this? And there seems to be like a conflict because the same people who tell me that they can't believe in a God who would command the conquest of Canaan in order to punish this evil are the same people that also tell me they can't possibly believe in a God who allows that kind of evil.

Like they see in the world. So so the Canaanites are busy doing this. And they're like, how could God allow that? And then God's like, I'll take it away.

And they're like, no, no, don't punish them. Allow that. Right.

Right. Exactly. How could God do that? Right.

Yeah. Something for you to think about and maybe call out in the questioner. It's like, what do you mean when you say, I don't want God to allow evil? And then whenever he does something about it, you get mad at him for doing something about it.

Right. Exactly. Yeah, I think another point is that maybe we don't quite understand the egregiousness of sin if we have a problem with God punishing this degree of evil.

Yes. I mean, I really think that that anyone who recoils at God's punishment of the Canaanites of this level of evil has no understanding or or appreciation of the significance and destructiveness of sin. We don't I think sometimes we don't like to see sin punished because deep down we also love sin more than righteousness.

But sin, I mean, you know, the older I get, the more I just hate my own sin. The more I also hate the sin of others. And the more I see clearly how sin destroys and mangles and tortures and carrows everything that's good and excellent.

And so when we cling to it or we're offended by God punishing it, I really just think we don't understand how destructive it is. Definitely. And I think that that's like where we're at as a society right now.

Everywhere you look, I mean, people seem to be very focused on preserving their personal autonomy and to do what? Well, they want to seek their own happiness and often by acting in sinful ways and sometimes like deliberately sinful ways and sometimes just by being really reckless and saying, well, this natural consequence of what I'm doing, it's probably not going to happen to me. And then acting surprised when in fact it does happen to them. So the same people who are doing this, you know, seeking their happiness, they may be willing to point to some evil that's going on over there, you know, in that other country or in this other place and say, oh, well, how could God allow that? But they're not very comfortable with the idea that God might say about their own evil.

Hey, I need to stop you from doing this. Right. And I've given you a ton of warnings and now I'm I'm going to really take action.

Well, they don't want that. Right. So yeah.

Yeah. It reminds me of when Nathan the prophet confronted David. And he's like, you know, a man did such and such.

And David's like, what? Tell me who he is off with his head. And and then Nathan's like, you are the man. And he's like, oh, what? But yeah, that was that was an awesome story.

I think it's in Second Samuel. I just think I think it's important that as Christians, you know, we do remember as we're reading this account of the Canaanites that we ought to hate what is evil because we love what is good. It's good that God is holy.

It's good that God is righteous and that he's just. It's also good, of course, that he gives us time to repent. We've all needed that.

Lord knows I needed that. I didn't become a follower of Jesus till I was 21. You know, and there are more to come into the kingdom.

But it's also good when God says enough is enough when he puts an end to the most despicable of evil on the earth. Yeah. And thinking of like, imagine like a child who's like the victim of a parent who is acting really badly, you know, and they're the victim of it.

They may say, well, how could God allow my, you know, my mother to be an alcoholic or how could God allow my father to pay no attention to me and not care about, you know, my education or something? So they're they're complaining to God about evil. But then if you look at look at their lives, they, you know, probably aren't expecting God to do anything about that. So I think what we should want is we should say, well, I think God should do something about what the parents are doing.

And God should also do something about what the child is doing. And because all sin is bad for you and the people around you. So we shouldn't get mad when God does something to punish evil.

I don't know that that's that's where we're at right now. It seems like there's this great fear of punishment out there in the culture. Nobody ever wants to know.

Do you ever heard of don't judge? This just seems to capture for me what the spirit of the ages. Yeah. Anyway, I do have funny story about this.

So I grew up in a different country, a very secular left country, not in the United States. I had to immigrate here legally through my employment. Got an employer to sponsor me.

And I didn't grow up in a Christian home. So my parents were like on one side Muslim on the other side, mostly Hindu, some Catholic. And one of the ways that God got me really early on, like in the fifth grade, I got a New Testament.

And from that point on, he kept having people, his his team, deliver good books into my hands. And even before I got out of elementary school, one of the kids kind of heard about, you know, my interest in this stuff. He gave me a book of Bible stories that his parents had given to him.

I guess they were hoping that they would curb his bad behavior. But he didn't want to read it. So he gave it to me.

And I remember reading this story about the Gibeonites and they had a nice picture to go with it. Of of these Gibeonites. OK, yeah, yeah.

They were like all in rags with like looking hungry and pathetic. And what happened is the Israelites kind of wanted to conquer them. But they went out and they made peace with with the Israelites before they got attacked.

So the point of this is, is that God doesn't always just go around all the time telling his people to defeat every people group and every nation that's different from the Israelite

nation. Sometimes they negotiate and they get to carry on, you know, with what they're they're doing. Right.

Exactly. Yeah. And that's a great point because actually God did not command, as you know, you mentioned the Gibeonites, but God didn't command the Israelites to just kill everyone they encountered.

There were even more groups in addition to the Gibeonites as they entered the as they went toward the Promised Land and entered the Promised Land. They were commanded to spare Saeir. You can read about that in Deuteronomy two.

They were also commanded to spare the Moabites, also in Deuteronomy two and the the Ammonites. So as well as the Gibeonites. So and this wasn't because those four groups were super passionate about the one true God and following him and all things and that sort of thing.

It's because they weren't as hardened in their extreme wickedness as the other groups were. And so, you know, this is not just some sort of like hatred of all groups who are not Jewish, but but it was a divine punishment and again, very long delayed. Yeah.

You know, the first thing I'm thinking of when you're saying all these different groups is I'm thinking so the God of the Bible doesn't just say every person who isn't a part of a community with me has to get slaughtered, but there is a religion that does command that everyone who is different from them get slaughtered. Yes, there is. Yes.

And that would be Islam, where the Quran is pretty clear that all non-Muslims should be fought against wherever you find them. Right. So we did we did some shows on that.

Exactly. Yeah. Again, the this this Old Testament conquest is time specific and it's people specific.

It's divine judgment, long delayed on the most egregious evildoers on the earth. So did you read about Rahab by any chance in your book of Bible stories? I did. They had a picture of the castle with a little red rope hanging out one of the windows and people leaving anyway.

Oh, that's adorable. OK. This is actually also relevant because God gave many opportunities for repentance by making sure the Canaanites had heard of his signs and wonders, that they had received news of God's evidence that he was God.

And this is also different from Islam. But Rahab is an example of God giving people a chance when they repent. So in Joshua, Chapter two, when Joshua sent out spies to stake out Jericho before the attack, they came across a woman named Rahab and she told the spies that she and all the Canaanites had heard of God's signs and wonders that he had displayed in rescuing the Israelites.

So I could actually read a quote. Yeah, go ahead. If you'd like.

She said this. I know that the Lord has given you the land and that the fear of you has fallen upon us and that all the inhabitants of the land melt away before you. For we have heard how the Lord dried up the water of the Red Sea before you when you came out of Egypt and what you did to the two kings of the Amorites who were beyond the Jordan for the Lord, your God, he is God in the heavens above and on the earth beneath.

Wow. OK. Yeah.

So she makes it clear that God had provided a series of overwhelming displays of divine signs and wonders so that not only Israelites, but also their enemies, everyone would know that he is God and that they would have a chance to respond appropriately. The Canaanites knew the truth. They were given every opportunity to repent, but they chose to continue in their evil ways.

So usually when a nation goes to war with another nation, even if they are wicked, they just fight army against army and they don't intentionally target civilians. Yeah, I mean, Muslims do, but yeah, decent people don't. So right.

These people don't target civilians. Right. So was it really necessary for God to command the deaths of every woman and child in this Canaanite conquest as well? Yeah, that's a great question that that comes up as well.

So, of course, only God knows what is necessary. But as a woman, I can tell you that women participate in evil, too. Women participate in all of those those different sins that were listed.

They participate in in homosexuality. They commit adultery. They sacrifice their own babies.

Now, it's true that the Canaanites sacrifice their babies after they were born. While most women today usually sacrifice their babies before they're born. But regardless of the baby's age or location or level of development, it's still the same sin.

Yeah. So that would be my response. I mean, women sin, too.

And they've clearly throughout history committed these same sins. Yeah, this is these, you know, we're obviously this is answering a tough question, but you only answered about the women. So what would you say about the children, too? Yeah, yeah, we have a limited perspective, of course, while God is all knowing.

So, you know, we'd have to ask the question. We don't know. Would these children have grown up to be as evil as their parents? I mean, if we pay attention to the 400 years of preceding history that led up to this, it seems that the children would have been at least

as bad and likely even worse if that's even possible.

So that is a possibility. God knows that. I don't.

It may also be that, and this is a bit of speculation, but it's possible that the children were spared not only the suffering of this life, but also perhaps eternal suffering. If there's some sort of age of accountability that needs to be reached before God holds people responsible, or it's possible that God just, you know, would have known. I mean, he does.

He certainly would know exactly how they would have turned out. Those are a couple of different possibilities. What we do know is that God is just God is merciful and no one ever receives a punishment greater than what they deserve.

All right. So isn't it true that when God gives these commands that sometimes we find out later that the people that were the target of the commands were not all wiped out? Yeah, actually, yeah. Another another great question in the Bible, like in the Bible.

It's like, here's the command, wipe them out. And then a bit a couple of chapters later, and then there were some of these people wearing around as well. Exactly.

So what's going on here? Yeah, so several scholars are convinced that the language used when it says like completely wipe them out, blot them out, that sort of thing. But this was hagiographic hyperbole. So what? So, for example, just as today we might say the Duke Blue Devils completely destroyed the North Carolina Tar Heels.

Just like we use that kind of hyperbolic language to talk about sporting events. Those are those are university teams and their mascots, by the way. But it was common in ancient Near East writing to refer to a military victory as destroying one's enemies, blotting them out, leaving not one remaining.

And so this would explain why phrases like destroy the Canaanites were used interchangeably with phrases like drive them out of the land. It would also explain your question. You know, why is it that we hear that they were commanded to destroy them? And then we see that they were they were victorious.

They wiped them out. And then we see Canaanites later appearing. That would explain that perfectly, and it would fit with the writing of the time.

I don't think it explains the commands every single time. They're told to obliterate every everyone and everything. For example, Jericho was a we now know was a military installation.

And and it seems like that was a literal command. And so it's possible that maybe military installations had a different understanding than like towns or villages. But this

this theory of hyperbole would also explain God's condemnation of the Israelites in Judges after most of this was over.

He condemned them not for failing to end every Canaanite life, but rather for failing to drive out the inhabitants from the land. So if people are interested in this topic, then I would recommend a book by Paul Kagan and Matt Flanagan called *Did God Really Command Genocide?* Two excellent philosophers. Yeah.

Yeah. All right. So what are the takeaways for our listeners about this topic and how to respond to this challenge? Yeah, I think for our purposes here, that that possibility of hyperbole is a bit of a side note.

But because whether you accept that hypothesis or not, what I really think everyone needs to remember is that even if God did command the killing of literally every man, woman and child, this was a time specific, people specific, divine judgment on horrific evil that was long delayed. OK, it was not a standing order for Israelites or for Christians. Certainly it was secluded to a very specific time in history.

This was only for the very most wicked of peoples. This was not like you pointed out. Just go and kill everyone who disagrees with you or everyone who's not Jewish or anything like that.

This was divine judgment. And again, the Canaanites were given 400 years to repent, but they just kept getting worse. And in addition, I think an important takeaway is that this was accompanied by evidence of who God is.

God provided miracles and made sure the Canaanites heard of them. We know from Rahab that the Canaanites had heard of God's miracles. They had enough information to know who he was and to and to repent.

But that's not what they did. And then I would say the probably the sixth point is that what we mentioned at the very beginning, which is that this horrific evil of the Canaanites was used by God to establish Israel in the land so that they would be a blessing to all nations, to all people all throughout the world later on. Yeah.

OK, so what is the big theological lesson from the story that we looked at? Oh, that's a good question, because, yeah, we learn different aspects of God's character through different accounts in the scripture. So some of the accounts teach us more about God's love. Some teach more about his forgiveness or his mercy.

But the lesson of Canaan is that God is just. He does not allow evil to go unpunished forever. Thank God.

He is slow to anger. But eventually the opportunity to repent ends and God's justice prevails. So, I mean, I think, you know, I think the lesson of this is God is just.

And while he may be given us time right now, we never know when that's going to end. And so, you know, the best time to turn to him is now. Yeah, excellent thoughts.

So I had something to add to this. So given that I have experience answering this from atheists, here are a couple of things that I thought people might want to think about if they ever get asked this. So I've written an article that something like the the worst mistake that Christians can make.

Yes, I've read that. Yeah, when doing evangelism or apologetics. And the worst mistake is you let somebody ask you a question that's like very far down the case for the Christian worldview.

So the beginning of the Christian worldview should be something like, does God exist? Because if there's no God there, then there's no way to have an inspired text anyway. And there's nobody who can do raising Jesus from the dead. Right.

So you want to start with the existence of God. You don't want to start with with something like. Am I going to hell? Am I going to hell? Or like passages in the Bible that are disputed? You know, where was there one angel at the tomb or two angels? You know, we want to start with getting them to accept a supernatural creator of the universe.

And then we can talk about these issues where we have less data and where disagreement is more acceptable or just saying, I don't know, you know, right? Is OK. So this is one of the things that I think people should not answer until they are able to establish God's existence. So go back to our series of are all religions the same? Listen to part one, which is on the arguments for a beginning of the universe and part two, which is on arguments for fine tuning and a designer of the universe.

So the first one is on, yeah, the beginning of the universe. Then a creator. And then the second one is on fine tuning and the need for a designer and say to this person, I will answer your question about the Bible when you let me know that you accept the scientific arguments for a supernatural creator and designer.

And don't budge on that until they give you the big concession about the way the world really is with respect to is it theistic or is it atheistic? So another one is this is the one that I had that I pulled on the guy and the atheist podcast. So he was going on and on and on about the poor children, the Canaanites, Buhu. And I was saying, so are children's rights really important to you? And he looked at me like I was crazy.

And I said, you seem to be really passionate about the rights of children. And then I just said, are you pro life? And he goes, he looked at me like he was like, oh, no, I've been caught in a terrible, terrible trap. And he goes, well, he weaseled and weaseled.

And then he was like, no, I'm not really pro life. You know, I, you know, I like women's

rights and blah, blah, blah. And as long as they're women who are born and developed.

Yeah, exactly. He was in favor of sex selection abortions. He was in favor of saying, if this baby is the wrong sex, we can we can end it.

So I feel like you got to like, it's a good strategy to just say, why is this important to you? What are the Canaanites to you? And just see what's really going on there. Because a lot of times what they're really concerned about is something else that's under the surface. And they're just throwing this up as an objection to say, I don't like God and I don't like him because of something he did to me.

And I don't want to tell you what that is because it makes me look bad. So let's talk about the Canaanites instead. So you need to you need to dig a little bit.

You need to be strategic. Yeah. Other things are that a lot of times, atheists, when they bring up these questions, they are committed to Darwinism and communism, you know, they praise nations like Cuba and Venezuela.

You know, we've had we have people in this country who do that. And what I think is interesting is that, is you say to them, oh, so is Darwin teaches survival of the fittest and that some species can kill off other species that are weak, you know. So do you agree with that? And is that genocide too? Is that too? And and ask them about whether, you know, a system of government that denies private property and elevates a redistribution of wealth by a powerful centralized government.

Well, we've seen we've tried that. We tried that in China. We tried that in the Soviet Union.

We tried that in a lot of different places. We try that in North Korea and it doesn't work out too well. Nope.

Leads to mass starvation. Yeah, like 100 million people died from communism, which is an atheistic system of economics in the 20th century alone. So just look up the starvation of the Ukrainian peasants, the Holodomor, I think it's called, and read that and ask them, is this bad, because it seems to me that you're all in favor of this kind of thing is that you like this economic system that does this.

So just challenge them a little bit. And then, yeah. So I think those are some good challenges to say.

Do you have standing to ask this question? Yeah, excellent. And then one more point that I want to make about this. Whenever you hear an atheist making a moral judgment like saying, I don't like this thing, it's evil.

OK, so in this case, the commanding, you have to ask yourself, oh, how are you helping

yourself to a moral standard of good and evil, a moral standard that's so amazingly objective that it even applies to God that you can use this as a moral yardstick to measure God and go, not good enough, God, not good enough. OK, so really smart atheists know this and they know never to make moral judgments or to make them all personal preferences. So this actually happened in a debate between David Robertson and Matt Dillahunty that I blogged about on my blog, and they were debating whether atheism could properly ground moral judgments and moral standards.

And Robertson said to him, do you think that what happened to the Jewish people during World War two in Germany was moral or immoral? And the atheist Matt Dillahunty said, I'm not going to answer that. And that was a smart move. It's appalling to us because, you know, atheism, you don't have morals.

But no, he had to say that because if he said that it was immoral, then he would have committed himself to an objective moral standard. And then he would have had to have explained where that comes from on his worldview. Theists can explain that because we say the objective moral standard comes from the designer, God.

But atheists can't say that. And they know not to make those moral judgments. So we actually did an entire show on this.

So that was episode 13, which is Why Should I Be Moral? Christianity versus atheism. It's one of our best shows. So if you haven't heard that one, check it out.

Yeah, well, I think that's those are excellent points. And that sounds like a great place to stop for today. Yeah, I agree.

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