

THE GOD OF THE OLD TESTAMENT EXAMINED: -

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NOTE: - All Bible texts are taken from the King James Version; and the compiler has supplied all emphasis throughout this Bible tract.

☞ Many sincere people, both Christians and unbelievers, believe that the God of the Old Testament was a harsh, unloving God. They believe that his Laws, as was his character [as conceived by them] to be without mercy. They cannot reconcile this view of God, with the loving God of the New Testament, as revealed through the Saviour, our Lord Jesus Christ.

The following FOUR POINTS, will give some Biblical answers to clarify this issue, so that we can actually see an harmony between the God of the Old and New Testament Scriptures, and an harmony with our loving Saviour, Jesus Christ.

POINT 1: -

We need to understand that our Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ, in actual fact, was revealed as the God of the Old Testament, who was with the children of Israel throughout their wilderness wanderings.

Jesus claimed to have existed **before** the time of the patriarch Abraham, and he claimed to be the **"I AM"** of the burning bush.

Exodus 3:14: - "And God said unto Moses, **I AM THAT I AM:** and he said, Thus shalt thou say unto the children of Israel, **I AM** hath sent me unto you."

John 8:56 - 59: - "**Your father Abraham rejoiced to see my day: and he saw it, and was glad.** Then said the Jews unto him, Thou art not yet fifty years old, and hast thou seen Abraham? Jesus said unto them, **Verily, verily, I say unto you, Before Abraham was, I am. Then took they up stones to cast at him:** but Jesus hid himself, and went out of the temple, going through the midst of them, and so passed by."

God sent his Angel to go before and to be with the children of Israel, in all their journeys to the Promised Land. This Angel of the Lord appeared to Moses at the burning bush, and also spoke the Ten Commandments to the Hebrews at Mount Sinai.

Exodus 23:20 - 23: - "**Behold, I send an Angel before thee, to keep thee in the way, and to bring thee into the place which I have prepared.** Beware of him, and obey his voice, provoke him not; for he will not pardon your transgressions: for my name *is* in him. But if thou shalt indeed obey his voice, and do all that I speak; then I will be an enemy unto thine enemies, and an adversary unto thine adversaries. **For mine Angel shall go before thee, and bring thee in unto the Amorites, and the Hittites, and the Perizzites, and the Canaanites, the Hivites, and the Jebusites: and I will cut them off.**"

Acts 7:35: - "This Moses whom they refused, saying, Who made thee a ruler and a judge? **the same did God send to be a ruler and a deliverer by the hand of the angel which appeared to him in the bush.**"

Exodus 3:2 - 6: - "**And the angel of the LORD appeared unto him in a flame of fire out of the midst of a bush:** and he looked, and, behold, the bush burned with fire, and the bush was not consumed. And Moses said, I will now turn aside, and see this great sight, why the bush is not burnt. **And when the LORD saw that he turned aside to see, God**

called unto him out of the midst of the bush, and said, Moses, Moses. And he said, Here *am* I. And he said, **Draw not nigh hither: put off thy shoes from off thy feet, for the place whereon thou standest is holy ground.** Moreover he said, **I *am* the God of thy father, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob.** And Moses hid his face; for he was afraid to look upon God.”

Acts 7:38: - “This is he, that was in the church in the wilderness **with the angel which spake to him in the mount Sina, and *with* our fathers: who received the lively oracles to give unto us.**”

We also need to remember that the same voice that spoke the Ten Commandments from Mount Sinai, shall also speak from heaven at the 2nd Coming of Christ.

Hebrews 12:18 - 21, 24 - 26: - “**For ye are not come unto the mount that might be touched, and that burned with fire, nor unto blackness, and darkness, and tempest, and the sound of a trumpet, and the voice of words; which voice they that heard entreated that the word should not be spoken to them any more:** (For they could not endure that which was commanded, And if so much as a beast touch the mountain, it shall be stoned, or thrust through with a dart: And so terrible was the sight, *that* Moses said, I exceedingly fear and quake:) ... And to **Jesus** the mediator of the new covenant, and to the blood of sprinkling, that speaketh better things than *that of* Abel. See that ye refuse not him that speaketh. **For if they escaped not who refused him that spake on earth, much more shall not we escape, if we turn away from him that speaketh from heaven: Whose voice then shook the earth: but now he hath promised, saying, Yet once more I shake not the earth only, but also heaven.**”

Paul informed the Corinthians that it was Christ who journeyed with the children of Israel in their wilderness wanderings.

1st Corinthians 10:1 - 4 & 9: - “Moreover, brethren, I would not that ye should be ignorant, how that all our fathers were under the cloud, and all passed through the sea; And were all baptized unto Moses in the cloud and in the sea; And did all eat the same spiritual meat; And did all drink the same spiritual drink: **for they drank of that spiritual Rock that followed them: and that Rock was Christ.** ... **Neither let us tempt Christ, as some of them also tempted, and were destroyed of serpents.**”

The Son of God was seen walking with the three Hebrew worthies in midst of the fiery furnace.

Daniel 3:25: - “He answered and said, **Lo, I see four men loose, walking in the midst of the fire, and they have no hurt; and the form of the fourth is like the Son of God.**”

☞ So in reality, it was Jesus Christ who led the children of Israel throughout their wilderness wanderings, and who also spoke the Ten Commandment Law from Mount Sinai.

POINT 2: -

The children of Israel’s government during the time of the first covenant until the reign of King Saul, was one of a Theocracy, in which the Lord God was their King. Therefore, the Civil, Ceremonial and Moral Laws that were laid down in the Old Testament Scriptures, to regulate their civil, moral and religious conduct, came directly from the Lord himself, who was their Law-Giver. Therefore, their Laws and form of government were unique from all the heathen nations around them.

It may be helpful to firstly define what a **theocracy** actually is.

“1. A system of government in which priests rule in the name of God or a god.”

“1.1 The commonwealth of Israel from the time of Moses until the election of Saul as king.” – Oxford English Dictionary.

“THEOCRACY, n. [Gr. God, and power; to hold.] Government of a state by the immediate direction of God; or the state thus governed. Of this species the Israelites furnish an illustrious example. The theocracy lasted till the time of Saul.” – Noah Webster’s 1828 Dictionary.

When the Lord brought the children of Israel out of Egyptian bondage, he entered into a covenant relationship with them. They were to be his obedient, favoured people, and he was to be their God and King. As such, he was their Lawgiver, laying down righteous civil, ceremonial and moral Laws, by which they were to be governed.

Exodus 19:3 - 8: - “And Moses went up unto God, and the LORD called unto him out of the mountain, saying, Thus shalt thou say to the house of Jacob, and tell the children of Israel; Ye have seen what I did unto the Egyptians, and *how* I bare you on eagles' wings, and brought you unto myself. **Now therefore, if ye will obey my voice indeed, and keep my covenant, then ye shall be a peculiar treasure unto me above all people: for all the earth *is* mine: And ye shall be unto me a kingdom of priests, and an holy nation.** These *are* the words which thou shalt speak unto the children of Israel. And Moses came and called for the elders of the people, and laid before their faces all these words which the LORD commanded him. And all the people answered together, and said, **All that the LORD hath spoken we will do.** And Moses returned the words of the people unto the LORD.”

Deuteronomy 4:5 – 8: - “Behold, I have taught you statutes and judgments, even as the LORD my God commanded me, that ye should do so in the land whither ye go to possess it. Keep therefore and do *them*; for this *is* your wisdom and your understanding in the sight of the nations, which shall hear all these statutes, and say, Surely this great nation *is* a wise and understanding people. For what nation *is there* so great, who *hath* God so nigh unto them, as the LORD our God *is* in all *things that we call upon him for*? **And what nation *is there* so great, that hath statutes and judgments so righteous as all this law, which I set before you this day?**”

Psalms 89:18: - “For the LORD *is* our defence; and **the Holy One of Israel *is* our king.**”

The following passage links to together the Lord as being Israel’s Judge, Lawgiver, King and Saviour.

Isaiah 33:22: - “For the LORD *is* our judge, the LORD *is* our lawgiver, **the LORD *is* our king;** he will save us.”

When the people of Israel in the days of Samuel, demanded a king to rule over them, just like the heathen nations around them, they rejected the Lord from being their king. In other words, they broke the covenant to have the Lord as their King. They made null and void the Theocracy!

1st Samuel 8:4 - 7: - “Then all the elders of Israel gathered themselves together, and came to Samuel unto Ramah, and said unto him, Behold, thou art old, and thy sons walk not in thy ways: **now make us a king to judge us like all the nations.** But the thing displeased Samuel, when they said, Give us a king to judge us. And Samuel prayed unto the LORD. And the LORD said unto Samuel, Harken unto the voice of the people in all that they say unto thee: **for they have not rejected thee, but they have rejected me, that I should not reign over them.**”

POINT 3: -

People often assume that the God of the Old Testament was a God without love or mercy. A God of justice and vengeance only. But the following Old Testament passages refute such a belief. In fact, they portray God in the very opposite light to this commonly held assumption. He is portrayed as “the Saviour”.

Exodus 34:5 - 7: - “And the LORD descended in the cloud, and stood with him there, **and proclaimed the name of the LORD.** And the LORD passed by before him, and proclaimed, The LORD, The LORD God, **merciful and gracious, longsuffering, and abundant in goodness and truth, keeping mercy for thousands, forgiving iniquity and transgression and sin,** and that will by no means clear *the guilty*; visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children, and upon the children's children, unto the third and to the fourth *generation.*”

Psalms 86:15: - “But thou, **O Lord, *art* a God full of compassion,** and gracious, longsuffering, and plenteous in mercy and truth.”

Psalm 103:8 - 13: - **“The LORD is merciful and gracious, slow to anger, and plenteous in mercy. He will not always chide: neither will he keep *his anger* for ever.** He hath not dealt with us after our sins; nor rewarded us according to our iniquities. For as the heaven is high above the earth, so great is his mercy toward them that fear him. As far as the east is from the west, so far hath he removed our transgressions from us. Like as a father pitieth *his* children, so the LORD pitieth them that fear him.”

Psalm 116:5: - “Gracious *is* the LORD, and righteous; yea, **our God *is* merciful.**”

Psalm 145:8: - “The LORD *is* gracious, and **full of compassion**; slow to anger, and **of great mercy.**”

Isaiah 43:11: - “I, **even I, *am* the LORD**; and beside me *there is* no saviour.”

Isaiah 45:15: - “Verily thou *art* a God that hidest thyself, **O God of Israel, the Saviour.**”

Micah 7:18: - **“Who is a God like unto thee**, that pardoneth iniquity, and passeth by the transgression of the remnant of his heritage? he retaineth not his anger for ever, **because he delighteth *in* mercy.**”

POINT 4: -

We need to understand, that God has appointed the ultimate penalty for all unrepented sin as being death.

Romans 6:23: - “For the wages of sin *is* death; but the gift of God *is* eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord.

NOTE: - This was the penalty under the Mosiac Law, and it is still the ultimate penalty in the New Testament. Under the Law of Moses, the death penalty was executed immediately. Whereas, under the New Testament since the Cross of Christ, the penalty has been deferred until the Day of Final Judgment. The Apostle Paul makes this contrast between the infliction of punishment for sin, under the two Testaments, very clear in the following passage.

Hebrews 10:26 - 31: - “For if we sin wilfully after that we have received the knowledge of the truth, there remaineth no more sacrifice for sins, **but a certain fearful looking for of judgment and fiery indignation**, which shall devour the adversaries. **He that despised Moses' law died without mercy under two or three witnesses: of how much sorer punishment, suppose ye, shall he be thought worthy, who hath trodden under foot the Son of God, and hath counted the blood of the covenant, wherewith he was sanctified, an unholy thing, and hath done despite unto the Spirit of grace?** For we know him that hath said, **Vengeance *belongeth* unto me, I will recompense, saith the Lord.** And again, The Lord shall judge his people. ***It is* a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God.**”

☞ John 17:3: - “And this is life eternal, that they might know thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom thou hast sent.”

NOTE: - Let us know, that is, understand the character of our God, and of our Lord Jesus Christ correctly, as truly revealed through the Scriptures.