

Faith & Reason Group Discussion Questions – April 19, 2024

OLD TESTAMENT VIOLENCE:

The Canaanite Conquest, Context, and Implications Today

Introductions: go around the circle and introduce yourself, what brought you here, and the first thing that jumps to your mind about the book of Joshua (**30 seconds each**).

Discussion prompt #1 (i.e., through **32:21**, 2 minutes per person)

There were three “paradigm shifts” in thinking proposed from the way modern people conventionally think about the Canaanite conquest and the historical, textual, cultural, and theological context:

- Key cities (e.g., Jericho, Ai) were more citadels than civilian population centers
- Ancient militaristic histories assumed a comprehension of “ancient trash talk”
- Except in a handful of cases, commands were about “driving out” (vs. annihilation)

Which “shift” was newest or most insightful? Which do you struggle with most?

Discussion prompt #2 (i.e., from **44:30** through **1:18:09**, 2 minutes per person)

There were a number of cultural, moral, and practical explorations not directly about the Canaanite conquest, yet rather the Bible (and thereby God’s) posture toward and use of violence, war, and justice, relative to both ancient and modern standards:

- Israel “raising the bar” on ancient warfare (i.e., no atrocities, army-building)
- Modern war not clearing that bar (ideological basis, civilian deaths via the West)
- Jesus building upon (not refuting) Mosaic laws of restraint on violence
- Both pacifism and just-war theory being rooted in common biblical precedent

Which points or themes do you relate to most? Which do you struggle with most?