

# Sermon Outline

## THE PROBLEM OF HOLY WAR IN THE OLD TESTAMENT | Geoff Lin

Bible Reading: Joshua 8:1-29; Joshua 8:30-35

1. Deep Dive, 730-9pm Thursday 5 September  
2. <https://www.thegospelcoalition.org/blogs/justin-taylor/how-could-god-command-genocide-in-the-old-testament-2/>

### Part 1: Ai is totally destroyed (Jos 8:1-29)

Jos 8:22 Those in the ambush also came out of the city against them, so that they were caught in the middle, with Israelites on both sides. Israel cut them down, leaving them neither survivors nor fugitives.

Jos 8:24 When Israel had finished killing all the men of Ai in the fields and in the wilderness where they had chased them, and when every one of them had been put to the sword, all the Israelites returned to Ai and killed those who were in it. 25 Twelve thousand men and women fell that day—all the people of Ai. 26 For Joshua did not draw back the hand that held out his javelin until he had destroyed all who lived in Ai.

#### 1. Don't simply write God off as violent or vengeful

Gen 18:25 ... Will not the Judge of all the earth do right?

#### 2. Don't drive a wedge between the God of the OT and the God of the NT

Ex 20:5 You shall not bow down to them or worship them; for I, the LORD your God, am a jealous God, punishing the children for the sin of the parents to the third and fourth generation of those who hate me, 6 but showing love to a thousand generations of those who love me and keep my commandments.

Acts 17:31 For he has set a day when he will judge the world with justice by the man he has appointed. He has given proof of this to everyone by raising him from the dead.

2 Cor 1:20 For no matter how many promises God has made, they are "Yes" in Christ.

#### 3. Don't read into Scripture what isn't actually there

Jos 17:12 Yet the Canaanites were not able to occupy these towns, for the Canaanites were determined to live in that region. 13 However, when the Israelites grew stronger, they subjected the Canaanites to forced labor but did not drive them out completely.

Ex 23:27 I will send my terror ahead of you and throw into confusion every nation you encounter. I will make all your enemies turn their backs and run. 28 I will send the hornet ahead of you to drive the Hivites, Canaanites and Hittites out of your way. 29 But I will not drive them out in a single year, because the land would become desolate and the wild animals too numerous for you. 30 Little by little I will drive them out before you, until you have increased enough to take possession of the land.

#### 4. Do acknowledge that war was conducted differently "back then"

#### 5. Do be honest about anthropology (what the bible says WE are like)

Gen 15:12 As the sun was setting, Abram fell into a deep sleep, and a thick and dreadful darkness came over him. 13 Then the LORD said to him, "Know for certain that for four hundred years your descendants will be strangers in a country not their own and that they will be enslaved and mistreated there. 14 But I will punish the nation they serve as slaves, and afterward they will come out with great possessions. 15 You, however, will go to your ancestors in peace and be buried at a good old age. 16 In the fourth generation your descendants will come back here, for the sin of the Amorites has not yet reached its full measure."

Dt 12:29 The LORD your God will cut off before you the nations you are about to invade and dispossess. But when you have driven them out and settled in their land, 30 and after they have been destroyed before you, be careful not to be ensnared by inquiring about their gods, saying, "How do these nations serve their gods? We will do the same." 31 You must not worship the LORD your God in their way, because in worshiping their gods, they do all kinds of detestable things the LORD hates. They even burn their sons and daughters in the fire as sacrifices to their gods.

Gen 6:5 The LORD saw how great the wickedness of the human race had become on the earth, and that every inclination of the thoughts of the human heart was only evil all the time. 6 The LORD regretted that he had made human beings on the earth, and his heart was deeply troubled. 7 So the LORD said, "I will wipe from the face of the earth the human race I have created—and with them the animals, the birds and the creatures that move along the ground—for I regret that I have made them." 8 But Noah found favor in the eyes of the LORD.

#### 6. Do rejoice greatly in our theology (ie what the bible says GOD is like)

1 Jn 4:10 This is love: not that we loved God, but that he loved us and sent his Son as an atoning sacrifice for our sins.

"My memory is nearly gone, but I remember 2 things: that I am a great sinner and that Christ is a great saviour" (John Newton)

### Part 2: Israel is totally obedient (Jos 8:30-35)

Jos 1:8 Keep this Book of the Law always on your lips; meditate on it day and night, so that you may be careful to do everything written in it. Then you will be prosperous and successful.

**Next week:** thinking theologically about the Israeli-Palestinian conflict ...