

# **Towards Better Understanding of the God of Old Testament**

# Introduction

- ❖ How atheists see God in OT?
- ❖ How Christians react to the criticism?
- ❖ God in OT vs. Jesus character
- ❖ Examples of hard stories in OT
- ❖ God's mercy & love vs. anger & punishment
- ❖ Was killing Canaanites a genocide or religious racism?
- ❖ How OT's cruelty was used as an excuse for cruelty of Christians in history

# **Wrong Solutions to OT's Cruelty**

# **Wrong Solutions to OT's Cruelty**

- 1) Considering OT a problem solved by the NT**
- 2) Assuming the Israelites' Misunderstanding of God's Orders**
- 3) Considering OT stories just Symbols of Spiritual Wars**

# 1) Considering OT as a problem that is solved by the NT

- ❖ As if God of OT is for wrath, punishment & wars
- ❖ While God of NT is more pleasant
- ❖ Or, has God changed?
  
- ❖ This is wrong assumption because of 3 facts:
  - a. OT & God's love
  - b. NT & God's wrath
  - c. NT accepted OT

# a. OT & God's Love

## Examples of God's Mercy in OT:

- ❖ Intercession of Abraham (Genesis 18)
- ❖ Jonah & Ninevah
- ❖ Moses (Exodus 34:6-7)

5فَنزَلَ الرَّبُّ فِي السَّحَابِ، فَوَقَفَ عِنْدَهُ هُنَاكَ وَنَادَى بِاسْمِ الرَّبِّ. 6فَاجْتَاَزَ الرَّبُّ قُدَّامَهُ، وَنَادَى الرَّبُّ: «الرَّبُّ إِلَهُ رَحِيمٌ وَرَوْوُوفٌ، بَطِيءُ الْغَضَبِ وَكَثِيرُ الْإِحْسَانِ وَالْوَفَاءِ. 7حَافِظُ الْإِحْسَانِ إِلَى الْوَفِ. غَافِرُ الْإِثْمِ وَالْمَعْصِيَةِ وَالْخَطِيئَةِ. وَلَكِنَّهُ لَنْ يُبْرِيَ إِبْرَاءً. مُفْتَقِدُ إِثْمِ الْآبَاءِ فِي الْأَبْنَاءِ، وَفِي أَبْنَاءِ الْأَبْنَاءِ، فِي الْجِيلِ الثَّلَاثِ وَالرَّابِعِ.»

# a. OT & God's Love

## Examples of God's Mercy in OT (cont.):

❖ Psalms:

(Ps. 103:8-14)

8الرَّبُّ رَحِيمٌ وَرَوْوْفٌ، طَوِيلُ الرُّوْحِ وَكَثِيرُ الرَّحْمَةِ. 9لَا يُحَاكِمُ إِلَى الأَبَدِ، وَلَا يَحْقِدُ إِلَى الدَّهْرِ. 10لَمْ يَصْنَعْ مَعَنَا حَسَبَ خَطَايَانَا، وَلَمْ يُجَازِنَا حَسَبَ آثَامِنَا. 11لَأَنَّهٗ مِثْلُ ارْتِفَاعِ السَّمَاوَاتِ فَوْقَ الأَرْضِ قَوِيَتْ رَحْمَتُهُ عَلَى خَائِفِيهِ. 12كَبُعْدِ المَشْرِقِ مِنَ المَغْرِبِ أَبْعَدَ عَنَّا مَعَاصِينَا. 13كَمَا يَتَرَأَفُ الأبُّ عَلَى البَنِينَ يَتَرَأَفُ الرَّبُّ عَلَى خَائِفِيهِ. 14لَأَنَّهٗ يَعْرِفُ جِبَلَتَنَا. يَذْكُرُ أَنَّنَا تُرَابٌ نَحْنُ.

<sup>8</sup> The LORD is merciful and gracious, Slow to anger, and abounding in mercy. <sup>9</sup> He will not always strive with us, Nor will He keep His anger forever. <sup>10</sup> He has not dealt with us according to our sins, Nor punished us according to our iniquities.

<sup>11</sup> For as the heavens are high above the earth, So great is His mercy toward those who fear Him; <sup>12</sup> As far as the east is from the west, So far has He removed our transgressions from us. <sup>13</sup> As a father pities his children, So the LORD pities those who fear Him. <sup>14</sup> For He knows our frame; He remembers that we are dust.

# a. OT & God's Love

## Examples of God's Mercy in OT (cont.):

❖ Psalms:

(Ps. 145: 8-9, 14-18)

8 الرَّبُّ حَنَّانٌ وَرَحِيمٌ، طَوِيلُ الرُّوحِ وَكَثِيرُ الرَّحْمَةِ. 9 الرَّبُّ صَالِحٌ لِكُلِّ، وَمَرَاحِمُهُ عَلَى كُلِّ أَعْمَالِهِ..... 14 الرَّبُّ عَاضِدٌ كُلَّ السَّاقِطِينَ، وَمُقَوِّمٌ كُلَّ الْمُنْحَنِينَ. 15 أَعْيُنُ الْكُلِّ إِيَّاكَ تَتَرَجَّى، وَأَنْتَ تُعْطِيهِمْ طَعَامَهُمْ فِي حِينِهِ. 16 تَفْتَحُ يَدَكَ فَتُسْبِعُ كُلَّ حَيٍّ رِضًى. 17 الرَّبُّ بَارٌّ فِي كُلِّ طُرُقِهِ، وَرَحِيمٌ فِي كُلِّ أَعْمَالِهِ. 18 الرَّبُّ قَرِيبٌ لِكُلِّ الَّذِينَ يَدْعُونَهُ، الَّذِينَ يَدْعُونَهُ بِالْحَقِّ.

<sup>8</sup> The LORD is gracious and full of compassion, Slow to anger and great in mercy.

<sup>9</sup> The LORD is good to all, And His tender mercies are over all His works.

<sup>14</sup> The LORD upholds all who fall, And raises up all who are bowed down. <sup>15</sup> The eyes of all look expectantly to You, And You give them their food in due season.

<sup>16</sup> You open Your hand And satisfy the desire of every living thing.

<sup>17</sup> The LORD is righteous in all His ways, Gracious in all His works.

<sup>18</sup> The LORD is near to all who call upon Him, To all who call upon Him in truth.

# a. OT & God's Love

## Examples of God's Mercy in OT (cont.):

❖ Prophets (Jer. 31:3)

❖ مَحَبَّةٌ أَبَدِيَّةٌ أَحَبَبْتُكَ، مِنْ أَجْلِ ذَلِكَ أَدَمْتُ لَكَ الرَّحْمَةَ.

❖ Also: Hos. 3: 1 & Ezek. 33: 11

❖ Even Deutronomy (10:17-18)

17لَأَنَّ الرَّبَّ إِلَهُكُمْ هُوَ إِلَهُ الْأَلْهَةِ وَرَبُّ الْأَرْبَابِ، الْإِلَهُ الْعَظِيمُ الْجَبَّارُ الْمَهِيْبُ الَّذِي لَا يَأْخُذُ بِالْوَجْهِ وَلَا يَقْبَلُ رِشْوَةً. 18الصَّانِعُ حَقَّ الْيَتِيمِ وَالْأَرْمَلَةِ، وَالْمُحِبُّ الْغَرِيبَ لِيُعْطِيَهُ طَعَامًا وَلِبَاسًا. 19فَأَحْبَبُوا الْغَرِيبَ لِأَنَّكُمْ كُنْتُمْ غُرَبَاءَ فِي أَرْضِ مِصْرَ.

❖ Majority of OT was mercy & forgiving love

# b. NT & God's Wrath

## Examples of God's Wrath in NT:

- ❖ Jesus talked about Hell more than anybody in NT (12 times)
- ❖ Jesus talked about: judgement – eternal fire – severe punishment – external darkness – torturers
- ❖ Apostles: Rom. 1: 18- 2: 16, James 2: 13, 1 Pet. 4: 17, 2 Pet. 2: 3
- ❖ Paul's comparison (Heb. 10:26-31)

26 فَإِنَّهُ إِنِ أخطَانَا بِاخْتِيَارِنَا بَعْدَمَا أَخَذْنَا مَعْرِفَةَ الْحَقِّ، لَا تَبْقَى بَعْدُ ذَبِيحَةٌ عَنِ الْخَطَايَا،  
27 بَلْ قُبُولُ ذَيْنُونَةٍ مُخِيفٍ، وَغَيْرَةُ نَارٍ عَتِيدَةٍ أَنْ تَأْكُلَ الْمُضَادِّينَ. 28 مَنْ خَالَفَ نَامُوسَ  
مُوسَى فَعَلَى شَاهِدَيْنِ أَوْ ثَلَاثَةِ شُهُودٍ يَمُوتُ بِدُونِ رَأْفَةٍ. 29 فَكَمْ عِقَابًا أَشْرَّ تَظُنُّونَ أَنَّهُ  
يُحْسَبُ مُسْتَحِقًّا مَنْ دَاسَ ابْنَ اللَّهِ، وَحَسِبَ دَمَ الْعَهْدِ الَّذِي قُدِّسَ بِهِ دَنِسًا، وَازْدَرَى بِرُوحِ  
النِّعْمَةِ؟ 30 فَإِنَّا نَعْرِفُ الَّذِي قَالَ: «لِي الْإِنْتِقَامُ، أَنَا أُجَازِي، يَقُولُ الرَّبُّ». وَأَيْضًا:  
«الرَّبُّ يَدِينُ شَعْبَهُ». 31 مُخِيفٌ هُوَ الْوُقُوعُ فِي يَدَيِ اللَّهِ الْحَيِّ!

- ❖ Judgement in OT vs. NT

## c. NT Accepted OT

- ❖ Never happened that Jesus or apostles criticised OT
- ❖ Some of OT harsh stories were included in lessons of Faith (Heb:11)
- ❖ Stories used for threat or directive advices: Flood - Sodom & Gemorah – Korah – Desert temptations – land invasion
- ❖ OT Vs. NT

## 2) Assuming the Israelites' Misunderstanding of God's Orders

- ❖ A way to exempt God from responsibility
- ❖ Are Israelites really responsible?
- ❖ Examples of misunderstanding God's will
- ❖ Was there any correction of such misunderstanding?
- ❖ Relation of God's promise with the invasion
- ❖ Who was fighting the Canaanites
- ❖ Paul & Stephen declared God's mastership in invasion

# 3) Considering OT stories as Symbols of Spiritual Wars

- ❖ Spiritual lessons vs. Historical facts
- ❖ Spiritual interpretation is accepted but in its own frame
- ❖ Which is the primary & which is the secondary?
- ❖ Fairy stories serve the opposite of historical events

# **Frames for Better Understanding**

# Frames for Better Understanding

- ❖ No crystal ball
- ❖ Trust in God's superior understanding
- ❖ Considering OT environment, factors, spiritual status, etc.
- ❖ Perception vs. Explanation or solution
- ❖ Benefit to our faith
- ❖ Embracing these stories within the whole Bible frame
- ❖ Geneva convention in OT !!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!
- ❖ Human rights based on Christian principles
- ❖ Constantine 7 laws
- ❖ Positioning vs. exaggeration

# 1) OT Story as is

- ❖ Part of history (time frame) vs. all OT (one story vs. The whole story)
- ❖ NO spiritual war but « war of Jehovah »
- ❖ « Herem » concept
- ❖ Wars rules in such time: death of women - death of children - death of animals
- ❖ Other kinds of destruction if possible: saving children & some women – saving animals – looting materials
- ❖ Judgement is God's job
- ❖ Any difference if eradication is done by one way or another?

# 1) OT Story as is (cont.)

## ❖ Destruction in life vs. Eternal Condemnation:

1 Pet. 3: 17-20

17 لِأَنَّ تَأْلَمَكُمْ إِنْ شَاءَتْ مَشِيئَةُ اللَّهِ، وَأَنْتُمْ صَانِعُونَ خَيْرًا، أَفْضَلُ مِنْهُ وَأَنْتُمْ صَانِعُونَ شَرًّا. 18 فَإِنَّ الْمَسِيحَ أَيْضًا تَأْلَمَ مَرَّةً وَاحِدَةً مِنْ أَجْلِ الْخَطَايَا، الْبَارُّ مِنْ أَجْلِ الْأَثَمَةِ، لِكَيْ يُقَرِّبَنَا إِلَى اللَّهِ، مُمَاتًا فِي الْجَسَدِ وَلَكِنْ مُحْيًى فِي الرُّوحِ، 19 الَّذِي فِيهِ أَيْضًا ذَهَبَ فَكَّرَزَ لِلأَرْوَاحِ الَّتِي فِي السِّجْنِ، 20 إِذْ عَصَتْ قَدِيمًا، حِينَ كَانَتْ أَنَاةُ اللَّهِ تَنْتَظِرُ مَرَّةً فِي أَيَّامِ نُوحٍ، إِذْ كَانَ الْفُلُّ يُبْنَى، الَّذِي فِيهِ خَلَّصَ قَلِيلُونَ، أَيُّ ثَمَانِي أَنْفُسٍ بِالمَاءِ.

17 For it is better, if it is the will of God, to suffer for doing good than for doing evil. 18 For Christ also suffered once for sins, the just for the unjust, that He might bring us to God, being put to death in the flesh but made alive by the Spirit, 19 by whom also He went and preached to the spirits in prison, 20 who formerly were disobedient, when once the Divine longsuffering waited in the days of Noah, while the ark was being prepared, in which a few, that is, eight souls, were saved through water.

# 1) OT Story as is (cont.)

## ❖ Destruction in life vs. Eternal Condemnation (cont.):

2 Pet. 2: 3-8

3 وَهُمْ فِي الطَّمَعِ يَتَّجِرُونَ بِكُمْ بِأَقْوَالٍ مُصَنَّعَةٍ، الَّذِينَ دَيُّونَتُهُمْ مِنْذُ الْقَدِيمِ لَا تَتَوَانَى، وَهَلَاكُهُمْ لَا يَنْعَسُ. 4 لِأَنَّهُ إِنْ كَانَ اللَّهُ لَمْ يُشْفِقْ عَلَى مَلَائِكَةٍ قَدْ أَخْطَأُوا، بَلْ فِي سَلْسِلِ الظَّلَامِ طَرَحَهُمْ فِي جَهَنَّمَ، وَسَلَّمَهُمْ مَحْرُوسِينَ لِلْقَضَاءِ، كَوَلَمْ يُشْفِقْ عَلَى الْعَالَمِ الْقَدِيمِ، بَلْ إِنَّمَا حَفِظَ نُوحًا تَامِنًا كَارِزًا لِلْبَرِّ، إِذْ جَلَبَ طُوفَانًا عَلَى عَالَمِ الْفُجَّارِ. 6 وَإِذْ رَمَدَ مَدِينَتِي سَدُومَ وَعَمُورَةَ، حَكَمَ عَلَيْهِمَا بِالْإِنْقِلَابِ، وَاضْعًا عِبْرَةً لِلْعَتِيدِينَ أَنْ يَفْجَرُوا، 7 وَأَنْقَذَ لُوطًا الْبَارَّ، مَغْلُوبًا مِنْ سِيرَةِ الْأَرْدِيَاءِ فِي الدَّعَارَةِ. 8 إِذْ كَانَ الْبَارُّ، بِالنَّظَرِ وَالسَّمْعِ وَهُوَ سَاكِنٌ بَيْنَهُمْ، يُعَذِّبُ يَوْمًا فَيَوْمًا نَفْسَهُ الْبَارَّةَ بِالْأَفْعَالِ الْإِثِمَةِ.

By covetousness they will exploit you with deceptive words; for a long time their judgment has not been idle, and their destruction does not slumber. <sup>4</sup> For if God did not spare the angels who sinned, but cast them down to hell and delivered them into chains of darkness, to be reserved for judgment; <sup>5</sup> and **did not spare the ancient world**, but saved Noah, one of eight people, a preacher of righteousness, bringing in the flood on the world of the ungodly; <sup>6</sup> and turning the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah into ashes, condemned them to destruction, making them an example to those who afterward would live ungodly; <sup>7</sup> and delivered righteous Lot, who was oppressed by the filthy conduct of the wicked <sup>8</sup> (for that righteous man, dwelling among them, tormented his righteous soul from day to day by seeing and hearing their lawless deeds)

# 1) OT Story as is (cont.)

- ❖ Amorites' sin was not complete so far but caused long suffering of Israel in Egypt (Genesis 15: 13-16)

13 فَقَالَ لِأَبْرَامَ: «اعْلَمْ يَقِينًا أَنَّ نَسْلَكَ سَيَكُونُ غَرِيبًا فِي أَرْضٍ لَيْسَتْ لَهُمْ، وَيُسْتَعْبَدُونَ لَهُمْ. فَيَذِلُّونَهُمْ أَرْبَعَ مِئَةِ سَنَةٍ. 14 ثُمَّ الْأُمَّةُ الَّتِي يُسْتَعْبَدُونَ لَهَا أَنَا أَدِينُهَا، وَبَعْدَ ذَلِكَ يَخْرُجُونَ بِأَمْلاكٍ جَزِيلَةٍ. 15 وَأَمَّا أَنْتَ فَتَمُضِي إِلَى آبَائِكَ بِسَلَامٍ وَتُدْفَنُ بِشَيْبَةٍ صَالِحَةٍ. 16 وَفِي الْجِيلِ الرَّابِعِ يَرْجِعُونَ إِلَى هَهُنَا، لِأَنَّ ذَنْبَ الْأُمُورِيِّينَ لَيْسَ إِلَى الْآنَ كَامِلًا.»

<sup>13</sup> Then He said to Abram: “Know certainly that your descendants will be strangers in a land that is not theirs, and will serve them, and they will afflict them four hundred years. <sup>14</sup> And also the nation whom they serve I will judge; afterward they shall come out with great possessions. <sup>15</sup> Now as for you, you shall go to your fathers in peace; you shall be buried at a good old age. <sup>16</sup> But in the fourth generation they shall return here, for the iniquity of the Amorites is not yet complete.”

# 1) OT Story as is (cont.): Herem!!!

- ❖ Was Herem an Israelee practice only?
- ❖ Was destruction complete?
- ❖ The exaggeration factor in old cultures
- ❖ Did God compromise with East rules & cultures?
- ❖ What about divorce, poligamy, slavery, etc.?
- ❖ Was Herem the only possible way?
  - ❖ Fullfillment of God's promise vs. His justice with wicked peoples
  - ❖ Was it the best preferable way?
  - ❖ Long term goal

# 1) OT Story as is (cont.): Invasion was a Unique Event

- ❖ Canaan's invasion was one-generation event
- ❖ Steps of invasion since first promise
- ❖ Was invasion a continuous practice of Israel like other historical invaders?
- ❖ Was God always behind the war option?
- ❖ Was the land acquisition a military victory of Israel or God's act?
- ❖ Did Jesus condemn such OT behaviors or regret it or justified it?
- ❖ How Christians look at other nations and their enemies?

## 2) Justice & Mastership of God

Canaan's invasion was God's judgement:

- ❖ Did God do it in other occasions?
- ❖ Was Israel exempted of such judgement?
- ❖ Rejection of race superiority
- ❖ Any paradox between Exodus & following invasion?
- ❖ Genocide & racism were not a common rule
- ❖ « Divine punishment through human tools »

# 2) Justice & Mastership of God

## Evil religions & practice of Canaanites:

13 فَقَالَ لِأَبْرَامَ: «اعْلَمْ يَقِينًا أَنَّ نَسْلَكَ سَيَكُونُ غَرِيبًا فِي أَرْضٍ لَيْسَتْ لَهُمْ، وَيُسْتَعْبَدُونَ لَهُمْ. فَيَذَلُّونَهُمْ أَرْبَعَ مِئَةِ سَنَةٍ. 14 ثُمَّ الْأُمَّةُ الَّتِي يُسْتَعْبَدُونَ لَهَا أَنَا أُدِينُهَا، وَبَعْدَ ذَلِكَ يَخْرُجُونَ بِأَمْلَاكِ جَزِيلَةٍ. 15 وَأَمَّا أَنْتَ فَتَمْضِي إِلَى آبَائِكَ بِسَلَامٍ وَتُدْفَنُ بِشَيْبَةٍ صَالِحَةٍ. 16 وَفِي الْجِيلِ الرَّابِعِ يَرْجِعُونَ إِلَى هَهُنَا، لِأَنَّ ذَنْبَ الْأُمُورِيِّينَ لَيْسَ إِلَى الْآنَ كَامِلًا.»

## Genesis 15:16

- ❖ Level of their evil at time of Abraham wasn't enough for God's condemnation
- ❖ Israel had to wait 4 centuries
- ❖ 40 years of missing in Sinai, as last chance for Canaanites
- ❖ God's justice with nations & individuals
- ❖ Kinds of evil in Canaan
- ❖ They were disobedients
- ❖ Injust/selfish harshness vs. Legal harshness
- ❖ A genocide or Divine judgement?

## 2) Justice & Mastership of God

Canaan's invasion did NOT mean innocence of Israel:

(Deuteronomy 9: 4-6)

4 لَا تَقُلْ فِي قَلْبِكَ حِينَ يَنْفِيهِمُ الرَّبُّ إِلَيْكَ مِنْ أَمَامِكَ قَائِلًا: لِأَجْلِ بِرِّي أَدْخَلَنِي الرَّبُّ لِأَمْتِكَ  
هَذِهِ الْأَرْضَ. وَلِأَجْلِ إِثْمِ هَؤُلَاءِ الشُّعُوبِ يَطْرُدُهُمُ الرَّبُّ مِنْ أَمَامِكَ. 5 لَيْسَ لِأَجْلِ بِرِّكَ وَعَدَالَةِ  
قَلْبِكَ تَدْخُلُ لِتَمْتَلِكَ أَرْضَهُمْ، بَلْ لِأَجْلِ إِثْمِ أَوْلِيَاكَ الشُّعُوبِ يَطْرُدُهُمُ الرَّبُّ إِلَيْكَ مِنْ أَمَامِكَ،  
وَلَكِّي يَفِي بِالْكَلامِ الَّذِي أَقْسَمَ الرَّبُّ عَلَيْهِ لِأَبَائِكَ إِبْرَاهِيمَ وَإِسْحَاقَ وَيَعْقُوبَ. 6 فَاعْلَمْ أَنَّهُ لَيْسَ  
لِأَجْلِ بِرِّكَ يُعْطِيكَ الرَّبُّ إِلَيْكَ هَذِهِ الْأَرْضَ الْجَيِّدَةَ لِتَمْتَلِكَهَا، لِأَنَّكَ شَعْبٌ صُلْبُ الرِّقَبَةِ.

4 “Do not think in your heart, after the LORD your God has cast them out before you, saying, ‘Because of my righteousness the LORD has brought me in to possess this land’; but it is because of the wickedness of these nations that the LORD is driving them out from before you. 5 It is not because of your righteousness or the uprightness of your heart that you go in to possess their land, but because of the wickedness of these nations that the LORD your God drives them out from before you, and that He may fulfill the word which the LORD swore to your fathers, to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. 6 Therefore understand that the LORD your God is not giving you this good land to possess because of your righteousness, for you are a stiff-necked people.

## 2) Justice & Mastership of God

Canaan's invasion did NOT mean innocence of Israel (cont.):

- ❖ God's Harsh treatment of Israel
- ❖ Use of pagan gentiles to punish Israel
- ❖ Punishment itself could be done through something bad in itself

# 2) Justice & Mastership of God

## God's warning to Israel:

- ❖ Wars for discipline of Israel – Assyrian & Babylonian captivities
- ❖ No bias towards Israelites
- ❖ Israel suffered from punishment more than any other nation
- ❖ Canaan's invasion is not a Final Condemnation
  
- ❖ 1 Cor 11:31-32 shows how God treats His children

31 لَأَنَّنَا لَوْ كُنَّا حَكَمْنَا عَلَى أَنْفُسِنَا لَمَّا حُكِمَ عَلَيْنَا، 32 وَلَكِنْ إِذْ قَدْ حُكِمَ عَلَيْنَا، نُؤَدَّبُ مِنَ الرَّبِّ لِكَيْ لَا نُدَانَ مَعَ الْعَالَمِ.

<sup>31</sup> For if we would judge ourselves, we would not be judged. <sup>32</sup> But when we are judged, we are chastened by the Lord, that we may not be condemned with the world.

# 2) Justice & Mastership of God

## God is The Pantokrator:

❖ What about Canaanites' invasion if done by other nations?

### Deuteronomy 2: 9-12, 18-23

«فَقَالَ لِي الرَّبُّ: لَا تُعَادِ مُوَابَ وَلَا تُتِرْ عَلَيْهِمْ حَرْبًا، لِأَنِّي لَا أُعْطِيكَ مِنْ أَرْضِهِمْ مِيرَاثًا، لِأَنِّي لِبَنِي لُوطٍ قَدْ أُعْطِيتُ «عَارَ» مِيرَاثًا.<sup>10</sup> الْإِيمِيُّونَ سَكَنُوا فِيهَا قَبْلًا. شَعْبٌ كَبِيرٌ وَكَثِيرٌ وَطَوِيلٌ كَالْعَنَاقِيِّينَ.<sup>11</sup> هُمْ أَيْضًا يُحْسَبُونَ رَفَائِييْنَ كَالْعَنَاقِيِّينَ، لَكِنَّ الْمُوَابِيِّينَ يَدْعُوْنَهُمْ إِيْمِيِّينَ.<sup>12</sup> وَفِي سَعِيرَ سَكَنَ قَبْلًا الْحُورِيُّونَ، فَطَرَدَهُمْ بَنُو عَيْسُوَ وَأَبَادُوهُمْ مِنْ قُدَّامِهِمْ وَسَكَنُوا مَكَانَهُمْ، كَمَا فَعَلَ إِسْرَائِيلُ بِأَرْضِ مِيرَاثِهِمُ الَّتِي أَعْطَاهُمُ الرَّبُّ.<sup>18</sup> أَنْتَ مَارُّ الْيَوْمِ بِتُحْمِ مُوَابَ، بَعَارَ.<sup>19</sup> فَمَتَى قَرُبْتَ إِلَى تَجَاهِ بَنِي عَمُّونَ، لَا تُعَادِهِمْ وَلَا تَهْجُمُوا عَلَيْهِمْ، لِأَنِّي لَا أُعْطِيكَ مِنْ أَرْضِ بَنِي عَمُّونَ مِيرَاثًا، لِأَنِّي لِبَنِي لُوطٍ قَدْ أُعْطِيتُهَا مِيرَاثًا.<sup>20</sup> هِيَ أَيْضًا تُحْسَبُ أَرْضَ رَفَائِييْنَ. سَكَنَ الرَّفَائِيُّونَ فِيهَا قَبْلًا، لَكِنَّ الْعَمُّونِيِّينَ يَدْعُوْنَهُمْ زَمْرَمِيِّينَ.<sup>21</sup> شَعْبٌ كَبِيرٌ وَكَثِيرٌ وَطَوِيلٌ كَالْعَنَاقِيِّينَ، أَبَادَهُمُ الرَّبُّ مِنْ قُدَّامِهِمْ، فَطَرَدُوهُمْ وَسَكَنُوا مَكَانَهُمْ.<sup>22</sup> كَمَا فَعَلَ لِبَنِي عَيْسُوَ السَّاكِنِينَ فِي سَعِيرَ الَّذِينَ أَنْتَفَ الْحُورِيِّينَ مِنْ قُدَّامِهِمْ، فَطَرَدُوهُمْ وَسَكَنُوا مَكَانَهُمْ إِلَى هَذَا الْيَوْمِ.<sup>23</sup> وَالْعَوِيُّونَ السَّاكِنُونَ فِي الْقُرَى إِلَى غَزَّةَ، أَبَادَهُمُ الْكَفْتُورِيُّونَ الَّذِينَ خَرَجُوا مِنْ كَفْتُورَ وَسَكَنُوا مَكَانَهُمْ.

❖ Other nations' invasion & destiny directed by God too

❖ Direct Divine order vs. permission

# 2) Justice & Mastership of God

## God is The Pantokrator (cont.):

### Deuteronomy 2: 9-12, 18-23

<sup>9</sup> Then the LORD said to me, ‘Do not harass Moab, nor contend with them in battle, for I will not give you any of their land as a possession, because I have given Ar to the descendants of Lot as a possession.’ ” <sup>10</sup> (The Emim had dwelt there in times past, a people as great and numerous and tall as the Anakim. <sup>11</sup> They were also regarded as giants, like the Anakim, but the Moabites call them Emim. <sup>12</sup> The Horites formerly dwelt in Seir, but the descendants of Esau dispossessed them and destroyed them from before them, and dwelt in their place, just as Israel did to the land of their possession which the LORD gave them.)

<sup>18</sup> ‘This day you are to cross over at Ar, the boundary of Moab. <sup>19</sup> And when you come near the people of Ammon, do not harass them or meddle with them, for I will not give you any of the land of the people of Ammon as a possession, because I have given it to the descendants of Lot as a possession.’ ” <sup>20</sup> (That was also regarded as a land of giants; giants formerly dwelt there. But the Ammonites call them Zamzummim, <sup>21</sup> a people as great and numerous and tall as the Anakim. But the LORD destroyed them before them, and they dispossessed them and dwelt in their place, <sup>22</sup> just as He had done for the descendants of Esau, who dwelt in Seir, when He destroyed the Horites from before them. They dispossessed them and dwelt in their place, even to this day. <sup>23</sup> And the Avim, who dwelt in villages as far as Gaza—the Caphtorim, who came from Caphtor, destroyed them and dwelt in their place.)

# 3) Divine Plan for Salvation

- ❖ Canaan's invasion was NOT a separate event but a part of the whole Salvation story
- ❖ Final plan is Peace
- ❖ Grace for all nations through Israel & Christ
- ❖ We still struggle to understand but we have confidence in God's will & purpose
- ❖ 2 Factors to consider:
  - ❖ Vision of Peace
  - ❖ Blessing of Nations

## a. Vision of Peace

- ❖ Judgement of cruelty by Jacob (to his sons)
- ❖ God prevents David from building the temple because of bloodshed
- ❖ OT prophets looked for peace to come
- ❖ Peace as final destination

## b. Blessing of Nations

- ❖ Painful invasion of Canaan as part of the story of « Blessing the Nations »
- ❖ Started with Israel but ends with Gentiles too
- ❖ Scope of OT is not « Israel against Gentiles » but « Israel for Gentiles »
- ❖ Eschatological plan of God vs. Some contradicting steps
- ❖ Judgement is God's act towards everyone , including Israel itself
- ❖ Final goal is to end with blessing of those who accept His salvation (both Israel & gentiles)
- ❖ 3 important points:
  - ❖ Inclusion of foreigners
  - ❖ OT Law takes care of foreigners
  - ❖ Praise of nations

## i. Inclusion of Foreigners

- ❖ Book of Joshua (invasion textbook) started with Rahab's story
- ❖ Faith & theological perception of Rahab saved her (Josh. 2: 9-11)

9 وَقَالَتْ لِلرَّجُلَيْنِ: «عَلِمْتُ أَنَّ الرَّبَّ قَدْ أَعْطَاكُمْ الْأَرْضَ، وَأَنَّ رُعبَكُمْ قَدْ وَقَعَ عَلَيْنَا، وَأَنَّ جَمِيعَ سُكَّانِ الْأَرْضِ ذَابُوا مِنْ أَجْلِكُمْ،<sup>10</sup> لِأَنَّنا قَدْ سَمِعْنَا كَيْفَ بَيَّسَ الرَّبُّ مِيَاهَ بَحْرِ سُوفَ فُدَّامَكُم عِنْدَ خُرُوجِكُمْ مِنْ مِصْرَ، وَمَا عَمِلْتُمُوهُ بِمَلِكِي الْأُمُورِيِّينَ اللَّذِينَ فِي عِبْرِ الْأُرْدُنِّ: سِيحُونَ وَعُوجَ، اللَّذِينَ حَرَّمْتُمُوهُمَا. <sup>11</sup> سَمِعْنَا فِدَابَتَ قُلُوبِنَا وَلَمْ تَبْقَ بَعْدُ رُوحٌ فِي إِنْسَانٍ بِسَبَبِكُمْ، لِأَنَّ الرَّبَّ إِلَهُكُمْ هُوَ اللَّهُ فِي السَّمَاءِ مِنْ فَوْقُ وَعَلَى الْأَرْضِ مِنْ تَحْتِ.

<sup>9</sup> and said to the men: “I know that the LORD has given you the land, that the terror of you has fallen on us, and that all the inhabitants of the land are fainthearted because of you. <sup>10</sup> For we have heard how the LORD dried up the water of the Red Sea for you when you came out of Egypt, and what you did to the two kings of the Amorites who were on the other side of the Jordan, Sihon and Og, whom you utterly destroyed. <sup>11</sup> And as soon as we heard these things, our hearts melted; neither did there remain any more courage in anyone because of you, for the LORD your God, He is God in heaven above and on earth beneath.

# i. Inclusion of Foreigners

- ❖ Rahab mentioned 3 times in NT:
  - ❖ Genealogy of Christ (Mathew 1:5)
  - ❖ Hero of faith (Hebrews 11:31)
  - ❖ Proving faith with deeds (James 2:25)
- ❖ Any other believing Canaanites elsewhere?
- ❖ Gibeonites save themselves by trick (Joshua 9)
- ❖ Other examples of foreigners who joined Israel or got the blessings:
  - ❖ Ruth (Ruth 1: 16-17)
  - ❖ Naaman (2 Kings 5: 15)
  - ❖ The widow of Zarephath (1 Kings 17: 24)
  - ❖ Jesus pointed to these facts (Luke 4: 24-27)

# i. Inclusion of Foreigners

## ❖ Jebusites & David (Deuteronomy 7: 1-8 vs. Joshua 15: 63)

1 «مَتَى أَتَى بِكَ الرَّبُّ إِلَهُكَ إِلَى الْأَرْضِ الَّتِي أَنْتَ دَاخِلٌ إِلَيْهَا لِتَمْتَلِكَهَا، وَطَرَدَ شُعُوبًا كَثِيرَةً مِنْ أَمَامِكَ: الْحِثِّيِّينَ وَالْجَرْجَاشِيِّينَ وَالْأَمُورِيِّينَ وَالْكَنْعَانِيِّينَ وَالْفِرِزِّيِّينَ وَالْحَوِّيِّينَ وَالْأَبْيُوسِيِّينَ، سَبَعَ شُعُوبٍ أَكْثَرَ وَأَعْظَمَ مِنْكَ،<sup>2</sup> وَدَفَعَهُمُ الرَّبُّ إِلَهُكَ أَمَامَكَ، وَضَرَبْتَهُمْ، فَإِنَّكَ تَحْرِمُهُمْ. لَا تَقْطَعْ لَهُمْ عَهْدًا، وَلَا تُشْفِقْ عَلَيْهِمْ،<sup>3</sup> وَلَا تُصَاهِرْهُمْ. بَنَاتِكَ لَا تُعْطِ لِابْنِهِ، وَبَنْتَهُ لَا تَأْخُذُ لِابْنِكَ.<sup>4</sup> لِأَنَّهُ يَرُدُّ ابْنَكَ مِنْ وَرَائِي فَيَعْبُدُ آلِهَةَ أُخْرَى، فَيَحْمِي غَضَبُ الرَّبِّ عَلَيْكُمْ وَيُهْلِكُكُمْ سَرِيعًا.<sup>5</sup> وَلَكِنْ هَكَذَا تَفْعَلُونَ بِهِمْ: تَهْدِمُونَ مَذَابِحَهُمْ، وَتُكْسِرُونَ أَنْصَابَهُمْ، وَتُقَطِّعُونَ سَوَارِيَهُمْ، وَتُحْرِقُونَ تَمَاثِيلَهُمْ بِالنَّارِ.<sup>6</sup> لِأَنَّكَ أَنْتَ شَعْبٌ مُقَدَّسٌ لِلرَّبِّ إِلَهُكَ. إِيَّاكَ قَدْ اخْتَارَ الرَّبُّ إِلَهُكَ لِتَكُونَ لَهُ شَعْبًا أَحْصَى مِنْ جَمِيعِ الشُّعُوبِ الَّذِينَ عَلَى وَجْهِ الْأَرْضِ،<sup>7</sup> لَيْسَ مِنْ كَوْنِكُمْ أَكْثَرَ مِنْ سَائِرِ الشُّعُوبِ، التَّصَقَ الرَّبُّ بِكُمْ وَاخْتَارَكُمْ، لِأَنَّكُمْ أَقَلُّ مِنْ سَائِرِ الشُّعُوبِ.<sup>8</sup> بَلْ مِنْ مَحَبَّةِ الرَّبِّ إِيَّاكُمْ،

63 وَأَمَّا الْأَبْيُوسِيُّونَ السَّاكِنُونَ فِي أُورُشَلِيمَ فَلَمْ يَقْدِرْ بَنُو يَهُودَا عَلَى طَرْدِهِمْ، فَسَكَنَ الْأَبْيُوسِيُّونَ مَعَ بَنِي يَهُودَا فِي أُورُشَلِيمَ إِلَى هَذَا الْيَوْمِ.

- ❖ Zachariah (Zach. 9:1-7) gives good prediction for Philistines
- ❖ God's power to convert those who were astray
- ❖ Therefore invasion was not a complete destruction

## ii. OT Law Takes Care of Foreigners

- ❖ Weakness of foreigners in Israel, but God protected them:
  - ❖ Protection from public injustice (Ez. 22: 21)
  - ❖ Protection from bias in courts (Ez. 23: 9)
  - ❖ Inclusion in « Sabbath Rest » (Ez. 20: 9-11)
  - ❖ Participation in worship & passover (Ez. 12: 45-49)
  - ❖ Participation in feasts & Attonment (Deut. 16, Lev. 16: 29)
  - ❖ Renewal of covenant (Deut. 29: 1-13, 31: 12)
  - ❖ Tithe of third year (Deut. 14: 28-29, 26: 12-13)
  - ❖ Leaving sheaf of harvest in field (Deut. 24: 19-22)
  - ❖ Equality before the law (Lev. 19: 34)

## ii. OT Law Takes Care of Foreigners

- ❖ « Love the foreigner » was a commandment to Israelites (Deut. 10: 17-19 & Lev. 19: 33-34)

17لَأَنَّ الرَّبَّ إِلَهُكُمْ هُوَ إِلَهُ الْأَلْهَةِ وَرَبُّ الْأَرْبَابِ، الْإِلَهُ الْعَظِيمُ الْجَبَّارُ الْمَهِيبُ الَّذِي لَا يَأْخُذُ بِالْوُجُوهِ وَلَا يَقْبَلُ رَشْوَةً. 18الصَّانِعُ حَقَّ الْيَتِيمِ وَالْأَرْمَلَةِ، وَالْمُحِبُّ الْغَرِيبَ لِيُعْطِيَهُ طَعَامًا وَلِبَاسًا. 19فَأَحِبُّوا الْغَرِيبَ لِأَنَّكُمْ كُنْتُمْ غُرَبَاءَ فِي أَرْضِ مِصْرَ.

«وَإِذَا نَزَلَ عِنْدَكَ غَرِيبٌ فِي أَرْضِكُمْ فَلَا تَظْلِمُوهُ. 34كَالْوَطَنِيِّ مِنْكُمْ يَكُونُ لَكُمْ الْغَرِيبُ النَّازِلُ عِنْدَكُمْ، وَتُحِبُّهُ كَنَفْسِكَ، لِأَنَّكُمْ كُنْتُمْ غُرَبَاءَ فِي أَرْضِ مِصْرَ. أَنَا الرَّبُّ إِلَهُكُمْ.

- ❖ Invasion was not a common practice but exceptional event
- ❖ Love of foreigners was a NT commandment too (Romans 12:13, Hebrews 13:1-2)

# iii. Praise of Nations

- ❖ Hope behind judgement of Israel!!
- ❖ Same applies to Gentiles
- ❖ Gentiles will:
  - ❖ Be blessed through Abraham too (Psalm 67)
  - ❖ Share in God's worshipping (Psalm 86: 8-10)
  - ❖ Join Israel as one God's people (Psalm 87)
- ❖ Psalm 47:1-4 celebrates submission of gentiles to Israel!!!?

1 يَا جَمِيعَ الْأُمَمِ صَفِّقُوا بِالْأَيْدِي. اهْتَفُوا لِلَّهِ بِصَوْتِ الْابْتِهَاجِ. 2 لِأَنَّ الرَّبَّ عَلَيَّ مَخُوفٌ،  
مَلِكٌ كَبِيرٌ عَلَى كُلِّ الْأَرْضِ. 3 يُخْضِعُ الشُّعُوبَ تَحْتَنَا، وَالْأُمَمَ تَحْتَ أَقْدَامِنَا. 4 يَخْتَارُ لَنَا  
نَصِيبَنَا، فَخْرَ يَعْقُوبَ الَّذِي أَحَبَّهُ.
- ❖ Temporary defeat vs. Global eternal victory (e.g. our first Hos in Psalmody praises God for defeating Egyptian army)

# Conclusion: The Cross & Golgotha

- ❖ Invasion is one tiny picture of full panorama of salvation
- ❖ Our Criticism vs. Accepting word of God
- ❖ Surrender to His Wisdom
- ❖ Final praise for salvation may also consider this « invasion » little story as one tiny step towards Golgotha
- ❖ Cross journey included worst cruelty ever against mankind
- ❖ God accepted on Himself the worst evil & His own judgement to mankind
- ❖ **Submission to God's justice + Meditation in the Cross mystery = Stronger Faith + better Understanding of matters above our mind**