

Deuteronomy Chapters 2,3: Accusations

The prayer of Moses 3.23–29

1. The Lord reveals his greatness.
2. The Lord reveals his holiness.
3. The Lord reveals his lordship.
4. The Lord reveals his grace.
5. The Lord reveals his provision.

Richard Dawkins / Dan Barker

“The God of the Old Testament is arguably the most unpleasant character in all fiction: jealous and proud of it; a petty, unjust, unforgiving control-freak; a vindictive, bloodthirsty ethnic cleanser; a misogynistic, homophobic, racist, infanticidal, genocidal, filicidal, pestilential, megalomaniacal, sadomasochistic, capriciously malevolent bully.”

Accusations Against the Lord

1. The Lord is unjust to harden and then punish Sihon. (2.30)

Response: the just judgment of the Sovereign God fulfilling his purposes. “*The same sun melts wax and hardens clay.*”

2. The Lord is vindictive and petty to restrict Moses from entering the promised land for a trivial infraction. (3.26), cf. Num 20.2–13

Response: absolute holiness and majesty of God requires an absolute standard for behavior.

3. The Lord is guilty of ethnic cleansing and genocide by commanding the complete destruction of peoples and cities.

Response: three approaches

The Ban: Haram / Herem (2.34; 3.3,6; 7.2,26; 13.15,17; 20.17)

1. Remove from common use and Dedicate to God
2. Devote to the service of God
3. Or devote to complete destruction
4. Irrevocable dedication or curse.

Three approaches to responding to the charge that the god and the people of the bible are no better than any other violent terrorist god or group.

1. God is God and his judgments are just.

- a. The Creator is the Sovereign Lord of the universe.
- b. He has the right to judge.
- c. He has the right to judge both temporally and eternally.
- d. His judgments are based on his absolute holiness and they are just.
- e. Human pride levels accusations against God.
- f. Every person will stand before God as the Judge.
- g. “And this is good news!”

2. The Ban (*herem*) is limited.

- a. Limited time period
- b. Limited scope. For example, Deuteronomy **7.2** commands complete destruction, but **7.3** prohibits intermarriage. And **7.22** “The LORD your God will clear away these nations before you little by little. You may not make an end of them at once, lest the wild beasts grow too numerous for you.”
- c. Limited cities. For example: Jericho was a military outpost.
- d. Language of Ancient Near East Military Victories.
- e. Longsuffering of God. Gen 15.16 “The iniquity of the Amorites is not complete (full measure).”
- f. Laxity of Application. For example: Rahab. Josh. 6.25.
- g. Lord’s Motive of Grace.

3. The Positive Goal of Salvation for the World.

- a. Overarching context of love and grace.
- b. Covenant with Abraham to bless all nations.
- c. Strategy is a holy people in a holy land leading to the Messiah.
- d. God’s Goal is realized in the person and work of Christ Jesus.
- e. He is the One who dies for his enemies.
- f. And conquers the ultimate enemies of sin, death and Satan.
- g. He promises the coming of an Age of Peace and righteousness.