



Q: How can anyone worship a tyrannical, bloodthirsty God like the one depicted in the pages of the Old Testament?

1. We can't require _____ from God, nor _____ one.

"Do you still want to argue with the Almighty? You are God's critic, but do you have the answers?
... Will you discredit my justice and condemn me just to prove you are right? — Job 40:2,8

2. The Hebrew Scriptures should be read _____.

Q: How did this story function in the community that handed it down?

When the LORD your God hands these nations over to you and you conquer them, you must completely destroy them. Make no treaties with them and show them no mercy. You must not intermarry with them. — Deuteronomy 7:2

Israel has sinned and broken my covenant! They have stolen some of the things that I commanded must be set apart for me. And they have not only stolen them but have lied about it and hidden the things among their own belongings. That is why the Israelites are running from their enemies in defeat. — Joshua 7:11-12

The Israelites examined their [*the Gibeonites*] food, but they did not consult the LORD. Then Joshua made a peace treaty with them and guaranteed their safety, and the leaders of the community ratified their agreement with a binding oath. — Joshua 9:14-16

Now King Solomon loved many foreign women. Besides Pharaoh's daughter, he married women from Moab, Ammon, Edom, Sidon, and from among the Hittites. The LORD had clearly instructed the people of Israel, "You must not marry them, because they will turn your hearts to their gods." — 1 Kings 11:1-2

These stories tell of Israel's _____ and God's _____.

"I am the LORD, and I do not change. That is why you descendants of Jacob are not already destroyed. — Malachi 3:6

3. Judging a culture by the norms of our own is _____.

What will your great-grandchildren say about your culture?

The punishment must match the injury: a life for a life, an eye for an eye, a tooth for a tooth, ... — Exodus 21:23-24

4. We can _____ aspects of Iron Age Israelite culture.

I am aware of their suffering. So I have come down to rescue them from the power of the Egyptians and lead them out of Egypt into their own fertile and spacious land. — Exodus 3:7-8

“Are you Israelites more important to me than the Ethiopians?” asks the LORD. “I brought Israel out of Egypt, but I also brought the Philistines from Crete and led the Arameans out of Kir.” — Amos 9:7

The elders of Israel asked, “Why did the LORD allow us to be defeated by the Philistines?” Then they said, “Let’s bring the Ark of the Covenant of the LORD from Shiloh. If we carry it into battle with us, it will save us from our enemies.” — 1 Samuel 4:3

When Samuel finally found him, Saul greeted him cheerfully. “May the LORD bless you,” he said. “I have carried out the LORD’s command!”

“Then what is all the bleating of sheep and goats and the lowing of cattle I hear?” Samuel demanded. — 1 Samuel 15:13-14

I will remove all weapons of war from the land, all swords and bows, so you can live unafraid in peace and safety. — Hosea 1:18

The LORD will mediate between peoples and will settle disputes between strong nations far away. They will hammer their swords into plowshares and their spears into pruning hooks. Nation will no longer fight against nation, nor train for war anymore. — Micah 4:3

5. Christians see _____ in light of Jesus Christ.

Jesus Christ sets us free to become a community characterized by love.

Jesus Christ ... is the faithful witness to these things, the first to rise from the dead, and the ruler of all the kings of the world. All glory to him who loves us and has freed us from our sins by shedding his blood for us. All glory to him who loves us and has freed us from our sins by shedding his blood for us. He has made us a Kingdom of priests for God his Father. All glory and power to him forever and ever! Amen. — Revelation 1:5

So Christ has truly set us free. Now make sure that you stay free, and don’t get tied up again in slavery to the law. — Galatians 5:1

“You have heard the law that says the punishment must match the injury: ‘An eye for an eye, and a tooth for a tooth.’ But I say, do not resist an evil person! If someone slaps you on the right cheek, offer the other cheek also.” — Matthew 5:39

“So now I am giving you a new commandment: Love each other. Just as I have loved you, you should love each other. Your love for one another will prove to the world that you are my disciples.”

Jesus Christ reveals God.

Jesus replied, “Have I been with you all this time, Philip, and yet you still don’t know who I am? Anyone who has seen me has seen the Father! So why are you asking me to show him to you? If you had really known me, you would know who my Father is. From now on, you do know him and have seen him!” — John 14:7