

INTRODUCTION

In our series: 9 Contradictions and issues with the Bible, we are on number five. The issue is this: ***The God of the Old Testament isn't the God of the New.*** They are just too different.

For example, we find the God of **Gen 6:12** saying "***I will destroy mankind from the earth.***" The God of the Old Testament is hard- ***His hands are bloody from countless battles. He is a firm dictator who demands His way only.***

Then in the New Testament, we have the God of **1 John 4:8**, "***God is love.***" ***He is the sentimental God who weeps over a fallen sparrow. He pines for us, dies for us, forgives everything. He isn't anything like the firm dictator.***

So apparently, this book we call the Bible doesn't really know who God is. ***It offers only a disjointed picture.*** So, how can it be true?

Does the Bible teach us two totally different Gods? In a spiritual sense, the question really comes down to: who is our FATHER?

1. DEFINING FATHERHOOD

I'm sure we could come up with all kinds of categories, but when I reflect on my physical child/father experience, I come up with four basic faces to fatherhood. ***There is:***

DAD AS CREATOR

Most dads hope their kid is a chip off the old block. They have dreams and hopes for their new child. And those dreams start long before the child can even understand them.

DAD AS KING OF THE CASTLE

The teacher who imparts ***skills***: It might be woodworking, fishing and hunting- but good dads impart skills. Dads impart values. And dads enforce ***limits***- there are few of us who grew up without seeing the business side of our dads. Why the limits? Especially for us boys; it was to keep us from hurting or killing ourselves before we got to develop the skills and values dad was trying to impart!

DAD AS PROTECTOR

Dads protect their kids in all kinds of ways; by giving food and shelter to dealing with the neighborhood bully.

But sometimes, ***protection isn't so direct.*** For example, some children suffer the most horrific diseases- cancers, tumors, or various disorders. And the only option is exposing that child to the surgeon's knife, or some other procedure nearly as bad as the disease, itself. But the father has to expose their child to that suffering, in the hope of saving life.

DAD AS A FRIEND

As the children mature to adulthood, the relationship in healthy families changes. Dad and child talk at a deeper level. A friendship develops.

DAD AS LOVE

The truth is- in a good dad; all those faces are faces of love. So, in fact, all those faces are the faces of the ***same dad.*** For the most part, it isn't dad who changes, but us; the children.

Now comes the big question: Does that reality hold true for our heavenly Father?

2. GOD AS OUR FATHER

Let's start with the God of the ***Old Testament.***

GOD AS CREATOR

Gen 1:

26. Then God said, "Let us make a man --***someone like ourselves,*** to be the master of all life upon the earth and in the skies and in the seas."

27. So God made man like his Maker. Like God did God make man; Man and maid did he make them.

God created a "chip off the ol' block" if you will. He created with a plan and a vision in mind.

GOD AS KING OF THE CASTLE

The God of the Old Testament is definitely almighty, all wise; **He set the limits-**

Gen 2:

16. And the Lord God commanded the man, saying, "Of every tree of the garden you may freely eat;

17. "but of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil you shall not eat, for in the day that you eat of it **you shall surely die.**"

The original Hebrew wording is interesting in this warning. "**תוֹמַת תוֹמָה moth tamuth**" **A death you will surely die.** It is a warning that still holds today! -*If you cross this line; death will become part of your life.*

Good dads draw lines- If you cross certain lines, you bring death into your life- death of conscience, death of character, death of your future; even physical death. **God set limits for the sake of keeping our lives, alive.**

The Old Testament drives home the role of **God as the final, wisest, and ultimate sovereign.**

GOD AS PROTECTOR

Look at the following passages in light of what we've already discovered:

Gen 6:

12. As God observed how bad it was, and **saw that all mankind was vicious and depraved,** he said to Noah, "I have decided to destroy all mankind; for the earth is filled with crime because of man. Yes, I will **destroy mankind** from the earth.

Gen 13:

13. The men of this area were **unusually wicked,** and sinned greatly against Jehovah.

14. After Lot was gone, the Lord said to Abram, "Look as far as you can see in every direction,

15. for **I am going to give it all to you and your descendants.**

There were times that mankind had to go under the surgeon's knife. Large portions of humanity had become **terminally ill with something called "sin."** The word "wicked" in the Hebrew (**רַיִם raim, from עָרָא, ra,**) means to *break into pieces, the established order of things.*

The **Hebrew and Greek connotation for sin** are the same- *to constantly miss the mark;* missing the mark becomes the **cultural norm.** -Don't worry about being right or wrong because, there **IS** no right or wrong.

When a culture reaches the point where wrong is right, and right is wrong, it has reached **an un-survivable condition.**

As protector, God has only one option, to save the life of humanity; in His time, **He surgically removes the irreversible tumors the "Sodoms and Gomorrahs," for the protection of the whole.**

GOD AS FRIEND

James 2

23. And the Scripture was fulfilled which says, "**Abraham believed God,** and it was accounted to him for **righteousness.**" And he was called the friend of God.

Even Old Testament saints, like Abraham, **who matured** in spiritual character became friends with God.

GOD AS LOVE

Deut 23:

5. "Nevertheless the Lord your God would not listen to Balaam, but the Lord your God turned the curse into a blessing for you, **because the Lord your God loves you.**

Balaam was a prophet for hire. He was hired to curse the Jewish people, but God intervened and made Balaam bless them instead. Why? Only one reason is given; **God loved His people.** **God loves you;** that is an **Old Testament concept!**

God as creator, sovereign, protector, friend- through the battles, judgments, and pruning of humanity; it all comes down to the same reason- **God loves you.** That is the God; the "dad" of the Old Testament.

How about the New?

GOD AS LOVE

1 John 4

8. But if a person isn't loving and kind, it shows that he doesn't know God--for God is love.

Rom 5:

5. Then, when that happens, we are able to hold our heads high no matter what happens and know that all is well, for we know how dearly God loves us, and we feel this warm love everywhere within us because God has given us the Holy Spirit to fill our hearts with his love.

In the New Testament, God loves enough to sacrifice Himself; we expect to hear that about the New Testament God. – But in fact, it is an Old Testament concept.

GOD AS FRIEND

James, in the New Testament tells us it is *faith, like that of Abraham*, which still produces *righteousness*. And it is righteousness that develops a *relationship* with God. *We can be friends*. It is an Old Testament concept.

GOD IS STILL CREATOR

John 3

3. Jesus answered and said to him, "Most assuredly, I say to you, unless one is born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God."

In the beginning, we died spiritually, and death entered human life. So to take death back out of the picture, we need to be born again- in the spiritual sense. **God is still in the creating business!** And He is still creating in His image.

GOD IS STILL SOVEREIGN

Eph 1:

4. just as He chose us in Him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before Him in love,

5. having predestined us to adoption as sons by Jesus Christ to Himself, according to the good pleasure of His will, In this generation where we pride ourselves as "captains of our own ships", and makers of our own fate- it doesn't sit well to hear there is a being, *no matter how supreme*- who is calling the shots.

The fact that God might actually destine things without our personal input- well, that's pretty much intolerable to our cultural conditioning. **But reality is what reality is; God is what God is- regardless of how we think.**

GOD IS STILL PROTECTOR

Romans 8:

37. Yet in all these things we are more than conquerors through Him who loved us.

38. For I am persuaded that neither death nor life, nor angels nor principalities nor powers, nor things present nor things to come,

39. nor height nor depth, nor any other created thing, shall be able to separate us from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.

-Interesting how it keeps revolving around the same themes, isn't it? –It is, and has always been motivated by love and qualified by life.

CONCLUSION

So where does that lead us? **There are different faces to fatherhood, but it is the same Father.** And it's even more than that:

Eph 1

9. God has told us his secret reason for sending Christ, a plan he decided on in mercy long ago;

10. and this was his purpose: that when the time is ripe he will gather us all together from wherever we are--in heaven or on earth--to be with him in Christ, forever.

11. Moreover, because of what Christ has done we have become gifts to God that he delights in, for as part of God's sovereign plan we were chosen from the beginning to be his, and all things happen just as he decided long ago.

How long ago?

Rev 13

8. And all who dwell on the earth will worship him, whose names have not been written in the Book of Life of the Lamb slain [before] the foundation of the world.

Let me share two great realities of God:

First:

Not only has God remained the same from eternity past- **so has His motive and His plans for us.** It is the same continuous love story by the same Father.

Second:

Do you know how we have **depth perception?** It is because humans have “*stereoscopic vision.*” You see through two eyes at once, and the brain processes the two, slightly different views.

The Bible is a “stereoscopic view” of God. You will have no proper depth in your perception or experience of God unless you see Him from the eye of the Old Testament and the New. It is the two that brings depth.

CHALLENGE

The notion that God is different in the Old and New Testaments is a pretty popular theory these days. **But it comes from misunderstanding of the very fundamentals of the message.** Rather than a challenge, it’s a warning; a warning against staying spiritually superficial.

When it comes to Scripture, there is only one approach to understanding: **Look constantly, explore deeply, and most of all; search with reverence.**

-If you will do that, it will save you from being robbed of the richness and the reassurance that is the real God, your Father.