Your Greatest Doubts and Fears
How to Keep the Faith When Facing Life's Toughest Questions

#5: Some Parts of the Bible Seem Morally Troubling—Are We Sure It's a "Good" Book?

Intro: We've come a long way since Dan Quayle and Murphy Brown

I. The New Argument Against the Bible

A. Our Culture of "Moral Outrage"

1. Despite embracing relativism, our culture has more "moral outrage" than ever before
2. What are people morally upset about today?

B. Thus, modern people tend to care less about the historicity of the Bible, and more about the *morality* of the Bible

II. Defense: Is the Bible Really a "Good" Book?

A. Genocide

1. The problem
   - God commanded the Israelites to wipe out all the people living in Canaan (Deut 20:17)
   - Bumpersticker: "The only difference between God and Adolf Hitler is that God is more proficient at genocide."

2. A response
   - Every human on the planet deserves judgement (not just the Canaanites)
   - Thus, at any moment God would be just to take a person's life as judgment for their sins
   - The sins of the Canaanites were particularly heinous (though they weren't alone)
   - God uses means to execute his judgment (disease, weather, human armies)

B. Slavery

1. The problem
   - Bible says that slaves should submit to their masters (Eph 6:5). Is God pro-slavery?
   - Sadly, some Christians have advocated slavery on the basis of these passages

2. A response
   - We should acknowledge and lament the fact that some Christians have defended slavery
   - Slavery in the Greco-Roman world was notably different than the chattel slavery of the American South
   - The Bible lays the foundation for abolishing slavery (Philemon)
   - Some of the strongest abolitionists were evangelical Christians

C. Women

1. The problem
   - Does the Bible treat women as lesser than men (Eph 5:22)?
   - Historically, women have sometimes been mistreated and abused, even by Christian men

2. A response
   - Compared to the Greco-Roman world, the Bible affirms the equal worth and dignity of women (Gen 1:27)
   - Women were significant and valued in the early Christian movement (Romans 16)
   - Distinctions in roles should not be equated as a distinction in worth
   - The Bible condemns husbands who are domineering, abusive, heavy-handed (Eph 5:25; Col 3:19)

III. Offense: Does the Non-Christian Have a Basis for Their Moral Complaints?

A. This Argument Against the Bible Only Works if a Person Has a Basis for Moral Absolutes

B. Talking with non-Christians about morality

1. Moral laws come from God, not us—thus a person's complaint is with God himself

2. God gives moral laws not to oppress people, but to bless people

3. Your best argument is where you and your non-Christian friend *agree* about morals

4. Don't always debate individual behaviors; instead ask why *any* behavior is right/wrong

Class Schedule:

Jan 9: Doubting Christian: What Role do Doubts and Fear Play in the Christian Life?
Jan 16: [Class cancelled for snow]
Jan 23: If Christianity is True then Why do so Many Intelligent People reject it?
Jan 30: Does saying Jesus is the Only Way Make us Arrogant or Intolerant?
Feb 6: Does the existence of evil and suffering in the world mean that God doesn't exist?
Feb 13: Some parts of the Bible seem morally troubling—are we sure it's a "good" book?
Feb 20: How Do I Deal with Depression and Anxiety About the Future?
Feb 27: Missions Week, Combined Sunday School
Mar 6: If Christianity is true, then how we do explain the bad behavior of Christians?
Mar 13: Isn't Christianity just the same as all the other religions? What makes it different?
Mar 20: What if the Gospels are just made-up stories? Is it possible everything we believe is a lie?
Mar 27: Lots of Christians are "deconstructing" their faith? Does that mean Christianity isn't true?
April 3: What do I do if Christianity Just isn't working for me?
April 10: What if I am Not a Christian? How Can I Know for Sure?