



BIBLE REFLECTIONS

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This Newsletter

The purpose of this Newsletter is to provide you with answers to certain biblical facts which have been misconstrued or misunderstood.

Q: Who are our readers?

A: Anyone interested in matters of faith.

Q: What will our readers want to know?

A: Timely, helpful, problem-solving information regarding the Bible.

The difficulty with 'fake news' is that often it is virtually indistinguishable from the 'truth'. At times, its proximity to 'truth' renders it a rather subtle phenomenon that is difficult to decipher. Furthermore, the subjectivity of presenter and audience render as 'truth' something that seems evidently 'false' to a different audience. The example below arguably falls under this category. This is not an easy subject to tackle with any definite degree of certainty as it really lends itself to debate but I trust you will pay close attention to a different reflection of an often cited argument.

Fake News: 'The God of the Bible, especially OT, is vengeful, violent, vindictive, cantankerous, capricious and blood thirsty.' This is a claim made by many secular people and self-proclaimed atheists. Surprisingly (or maybe not) many church goers have also made similar claims. On face value, the above claim has merit. However, those who assert this often ignore the highly nuanced biblical depiction of God.

Fact Check: I present 4 examples, from the OT only, to demonstrate another side of God and hopefully enable you to decide for yourself on this matter. I have chosen examples of how God dealt with people outside of the 'Israel' box. (1) When God acknowledged the unsalvable nature of Noah's world (Gen 6.5-6), we are told that this 'broke his heart'. Yet, imminent and necessary judgement were held back for 120 years. (2) When God decided it was time for Sodom and Gomorrah to be judged for their great evil, the execution of the sentence was not taken arbitrarily. God informed Abraham that he intended to personally investigate if there was merit in the reports about these cities (Gen 18.20-21) and even engaged in negotiations with Abraham for the sparing of the cities (Gen 18.23-33). (3) When it was time for the great exit of Israel from slavery in Egypt, God provided Pharaoh with 10 opportunities to change his belligerent attitude (Exod 8-11) and each time Pharaoh feigned a change of heart, God relented and removed the plague. (4) God sent Jonah to Nineveh, a city and a people notorious for their cruelty and sworn enemy of northern Israel. They were given time (40 days) to change their ways otherwise they would be destroyed. When they did place themselves at God's mercy, they were not destroyed, much to the chagrin and protestations of Jonah.

I am drawn to the following assertion of Paul, 'What is it then? I will pray with the spirit, and I will also pray with my understanding. I will sing with the spirit, and I will also sing with my understanding.' (1 Cor 14.15 HCSB). I suggest this maxim should be our *modus operandi* when we contemplate theological and biblical truths. In a world filled with 'fake news', the Church should be the bearer of real good news not more 'fake news'.

