

GLEANINGS — April 17, A.D. 2016
Genocide, Part I

"Now go and attack Amalek, and utterly destroy all that they have, and do not spare them. But kill both man and woman, infant and nursing child, ox and sheep, camel and donkey." – 1 Samuel 15:3

Thus God commanded Saul, the man He had anointed to be king over Israel. And just as there is no denying the dreadful damnation to eternal shame, fiery torment, and outer darkness reserved for all the wicked, so it cannot be denied – that temporal condemnation of God the Judge of all the Earth is dreadful even though it was a lesser punishment than hell will be.

Yes, the same God Who became incarnate and said His disciples would be known by their love for one another told Saul to **exterminate** an entire ancient nation. And previously He had given similar explicit commandments to Joshua in connection with the conquest of Canaan. (Cf. Joshua 6:17, 8:26)

Disciples of the Jesus the Prince of peace have rightly and vehemently judged as exceedingly wicked the genocide being committed by Islamists today – along with all the other violence that has been perpetrated by adherents to that movement since it came to power with its imperialist agenda in the 7th Christian century. Meanwhile, enemies of Christ and His kingdom have appealed to the Biblical record (*and usually to the Crusades as well*) and claimed that Christians have done the same things in name of the God of the Bible .

Are those accusers of the brethren right? What is the ethical difference between the extermination of Canaanites by Joshua or of the Amalekites by Saul, and the genocide occurring in the Middle East today? Are Christians being hypocritical when they judge Isis, the Nazis, or the Ottomans who committed genocide against the Armenian people in the early 20th century?

Let us not settle for an easy dodge of this hard question with a response such as "you're right, but that was the old testament, now we're in the new testament era." The world may mock or falsely accuse, but the faith once for all delivered to the saints answers YES, there is great ethical difference! The God of the Bible is the only true and living God, perfectly righteous in His judgments. Those He handed down in times of old are as infallibly righteousness as His future day of judgment for all mankind will be.

God is not only the redeemer of His own people, but the sovereign creator, ruler, and judge of all nations. When He brought His people out of the nation that enslaved them, God judged both the Egyptians and their idols. He sent miraculous plagues as His instruments of judgment.

Joshua and Saul had extraordinary callings from God to execute His judgments on nations. Like the hail, frogs, insects, or boils that plagued the Egyptians, they likewise were only God's instruments. It was God Himself wiping out wicked sinners like He did in a global way at the time of the great flood. Consider God's ancient statute, given to all men long before the Law of Moses:

"Whoever sheds man's blood, by man his blood shall be shed; for in the image of God He made man." (Genesis 9:6) It is God Almighty Who determined that murder is a capital offense, i.e. that the one who commits murder has forfeited his own life. But God assigned the duty of execution to man.

The god of Islam is also an idol, a false god. Behind it is satan the evil one, an imposter who hates and envies the true God. He is that thief who comes only to steal, kill, and destroy (John 10:10). Those who believe in that false god are in reality acting by satanic instigation and out of their own sinful hatred and love of violence.

to be continued...