

Did God Command and Ordain Rape?

Reading through the Old Testament, one might be forgiven for thinking that God commanded and ordained rape.

Numbers 31 (7) "And they warred against the Midianites, as the LORD commanded Moses; and they slew all the males..... (9) And the children of Israel took all the women of Midian captives, and their little ones, and took the spoil of all their cattle, and all their flocks, and all their goods. (10) And they burnt all their cities wherein they dwelt, and all their goodly castles, with fire. (15) And Moses said unto them, Have ye saved all the women alive? (16) Behold, these caused the children of Israel, through the counsel of Balaam, to commit trespass against the LORD in the matter of Peor, and there was a plague among the congregation of the LORD. (17) Now therefore kill every male among the little ones, and kill every woman that hath known man by lying with him. (18) But all the women children, that have not known a man by lying with him, keep alive for yourselves. (40) And the persons were sixteen thousand; of which the LORD'S tribute was thirty and two persons. (41) And Moses gave the tribute, which was the LORD'S heave offering, unto Eleazar the priest, as the LORD commanded Moses. (42) And of the children of Israel's half, which Moses divided from the men that warred, (43) Now the half that pertained unto the congregation was three hundred thousand and thirty thousand and seven thousand and five hundred sheep, (44) And thirty and six thousand beeves, (45) And thirty thousand asses and five hundred, (46) And sixteen thousand persons; (47) Even of the children of Israel's half, Moses took one portion of fifty, both of man and of beast, and gave them unto the Levites, which kept the charge of the tabernacle of the LORD; as the LORD commanded Moses."

In Numbers 31, it is written that God instructed Moses to command the Israelites to wage war on the Midianites. They were to kill every man, regardless of age, and every non virgin woman. These non virgin, traumatised, very young women were forced to become the property of these murderous men – men who had just violently massacred their infant and grown brothers and fathers.

For what divinely inspired purpose were these very young virgin girls reserved?

Were these young girls spared the painful death (that they saw their brothers and fathers die) so that they could learn about the love of Jesus from the Israelites?

This must be very unlikely, although, if this was the case, one would then logically have to ask why the infant brothers were savaged deprived of the opportunity to learn about the coming, gentle Messiah predicted in Isaiah 53:9?

Were these prepubescent girls simply going to be forced into slavery to perform household tasks (eg. cleaning, food preparation etc)? If so, they need not have been virgins. In fact, the more experienced, older women would have known more about running a household efficiently than would very young virgin girls. But the Israelite men obviously found that these young girls possessed a very special value as virgins.

I suggest that the only special use that a virgin girl could provide that a recently widowed woman could not have provided, was a guarantee that she was free of sexual diseases.

Why was being free of sexual diseases so important to the Israelite men? One does not have to read too many historical reports of war crimes to see a familiar pattern. In war, the conquered men are murdered, while the women are repeatedly raped – conquered - by the same ‘heroes.’

If we believe that these commands to rape and murder originated with God, then we have a problem. Were these girls ‘divinely’ ordained to be raped by the same men who also murdered their families? Even the holy priests and the Levites who worked in the temple, were allocated their ‘share’ of the slave girls. But women were not permitted to enter the temple beyond the outer court. So for what purpose were the young captive girls given to the Levites?

Some readers, might imagine that the situation whereby an Israelite man has sex with a young, unwilling virgin girl does not constitute rape; and that such a forced sexual ‘union’ constitutes a proper marriage. Consider that the girls referred to in this situation are very young – if the girls were not very young they would most probably have been already married or initiated into the sexual rituals and ceremonies which the pagans engaged at about 12+ years of age.

More evidence is found in the Bible to prove that it was not a legal, recognised and legal marriage that was consummated between the war hero and the war victim. ‘Marriages’ between Israelites and pagans were illegal under Mosaic law. After the 70 years of Babylonian captivity, when the Jews returned to Jerusalem, the book of Ezra notes that, when the law was read, the priests and other Israelite men repented of their sin and sent away their pagan wives. If they were genuine marriages, why were these wives, (many of whom were war captives) why were they sent away?

According to Numbers 31, the Israelite men retained very young virgin girls for their own sexual ‘use.’ That such a disgusting practice is considered to constitute a divinely ordained genuine marriage is an insult to any Christian’s intelligence and I imagine it would be incredibly offensive to many women.

"When you go out to war against your enemies and the LORD, your God, delivers them into your hand, so that you take captives, if you see a comely woman among the captives and become so enamored of her that you wish to have her as wife, you may take her home to your house. But before she may live there, she must have her head shaved and pare her nails and lay aside her captive's garb. After she has mourned her father and mother for a full month, you may have relations with her, and you shall be her husband and she shall be your wife. However, if later on you lose your liking for her, you shall give her her freedom, if she wishes it; but you shall not sell her or enslave her, since she was married to you under compulsion."

Note that the men chose pagan women according to their physical/sexual attractiveness. After the woman was forced to ‘marry’ (i.e was raped by) the man who possibly murdered all the males and elder females in her family, she was still not safe from abuse. The Israelite warrior could ‘lose his desire or liking for her’ and

'legally' he could send her away - and he would still be 'holy.' In all of this, he was permitted to consider that he had not sinned against the captive girl – but was he innocent of any crime?

“Inasmuch as ye have done [it] unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done [it] unto me.” (Matthew 25:40)

Consider the predicament of the young girl.

Because she saw her family violently murdered, she is suffering post traumatic stress disorder. Because she was 'forced' to marry her family's murderer, she is depressed and possibly injured and pregnant, but definitely stressed and afraid. She is living in a foreign land. She possibly does not understand the Hebrew language. Her possessions are claimed by her captives, so she has no financial independence. She is a slave and in fact, a sex slave. Finally, after some time, her 'husband' doesn't find anymore delight in that girl and she is turned out of his house. Where can she go? She has no family left to return to for support because her 'husband' of one night perhaps, murdered them the previous month. In fact, she would be informed that the Israelites' God had ordered that her husband's clan destroyed her family's home, ruined the crops, stolen or sacrificed the livestock and murdered most of her relatives. The captive 'bride', is now abandoned by her tormentor, but she is not given any assistance to return to her homeland. As she is unaccompanied and unsupported, there is no guarantee of safe travel even if she tried to walk 'home' to her destroyed village. If she survives, this abused girl would likely develop an intense hatred for the Israelites and their religion. Is this a divinely inspired situation?

And again, rape is condoned in Deuteronomy 21.

(10) When thou comest nigh unto a city to fight against it, then proclaim peace unto it. (11) And it shall be, if it make thee answer of peace, and open unto thee, then it shall be, that all the people that is found therein shall be tributaries unto thee, and they shall serve thee. (12) And if it will make no peace with thee, but will make war against thee, then thou shalt besiege it: (13) And when the LORD thy God hath delivered it into thine hands, thou shalt smite every male thereof with the edge of the sword: (14) But the women, and the little ones, and the cattle, and all that is in the city, even all the spoil thereof, shalt thou take unto thyself; and thou shalt eat the spoil of thine enemies, which the LORD thy God hath given thee.”

In Judges 4 & 5, again, we see that the pattern repeated.

(Perhaps the married Israelite women were motivated to assist their husbands to win the war, knowing full well the unwelcome reward that awaited the married women who were unfortunate enough to be found on the losing side. The enemy performed the same sacrificial rituals as thank offerings to their gods - sparing only the virgin women for their own use. Married women were of reduced value - not being virginal, but they were useful for sacrificial offerings.

(4) "And Deborah, a prophetess, the wife of Lapidoth, she judged Israel at that time. ... 6 ...Hath not the LORD God of Israel commanded, saying, Go (7) I will deliver him into thine hand..... (1) Then sang Deborah and Barak the son of Abinoam on that day, saying, (2) Praise ye the LORD for the avenging of Israel, when the people

willingly offered themselves. (30)Have they not sped? have they not divided the prey; to every man a damsel or two..."

Did God also ordain and organise that the war heroes should have two extra (unwilling) wives? As He is credited with winning the battle and directing the spoils of war, God must also receive the credit for having ordained and organised rape.

In Zechariah the prophet claims, in his understanding of the vision, that it is God who brings the enemies to rape the backsliding Israelite women. Of course, it was not God who inspired the rapes; it was the God's evil enemy who inspired rape in the minds of the men whom he, Satan, controlled. However, the prophet, in his limited conception of God, credited God with sending the raping enemies instead. Of course, we don't say that the prophecy was false and throw out the baby with the bathwater, but we can understand that the prophet did not correctly describe just who was sending the enemy. God withdrew His protection from Jerusalem and Satan sent his evil agents. As in Job's misunderstanding, he also claimed that God was sending afflictions on him, (Thou He slay me, yet will I trust Him), but the reader is told that it was Satan who caused all Job's woes. God has been misunderstood by the OT prophets and Zechariah demonstrates that in chapter 14.

Zechariah 14:1 2 NAB

"Lo, a day shall come for the Lord when the spoils shall be divided in your midst. And I will gather all the nations against Jerusalem for battle: the city shall be taken, houses plundered, women ravished; half of the city shall go into exile, but the rest of the people shall not be removed from the city."

Exodus 21:7 11 NLT

When a man sells his daughter as a slave, she will not be freed at the end of six years as the men are. If she does not please the man who bought her, he may allow her to be bought back again. But he is not allowed to sell her to foreigners, since he is the one who broke the contract with her. And if the slave girl's owner arranges for her to marry his son, he may no longer treat her as a slave girl, but he must treat her as his daughter. If he himself marries her and then takes another wife, he may not reduce her food or clothing or fail to sleep with her as his wife. If he fails in any of these three ways, she may leave as a free woman without making any payment. (Exodus 21:7 11 NLT)

Did God ordain selling women as sex slaves? Did He ordain that sex slaves could be passed from one man to another at their whim? The abused woman had no option to give or to withhold her consent. She had to have sex with any man, who was regarded as her owner, in the same way that a farmer might organise the mating of his cattle. That is not a marriage relationship. It is not a permanent arrangement 'until death us do part.' It is not based on mutual love and consent. It is therefore, rape.

My position is that in the Old Testament, it is claimed that God commanded these heinous acts, but these representations of God's character were often faulty. The evidence is found in Jesus' own words. He said, "By their fruits you will know them."

The 'war stories' of the Old Testament reveal interesting and important comparisons

between what God was supposed to have commanded and what men commanded and then often attributed to have originated from God.

'God' Commanded	Men Commanded
Destroy men, sexually active women, children and infants 1 Samuel 15:3	Destroy men, sexually active women and children Judges 21:9, 25
Desirable virgins captured in war can be married to the victors, but discarded after 'humbling' (literally 'piercing') if they are no longer desired Deuteronomy 21:10-14	Desirable virgins captured in war can be 'married' to the victors Judges 21:12
To war against their own people Judges 20:18	To war against their own people Judges 20:8-14
War on evil doers Deuteronomy 20:17	War on evil doers Judges 20:8-14
Fasting, offering peace offerings to win the battle (serving the Lord) Exodus 20:24; chapters 28-30; 31:39; 2; Kings 17:36-39	Fasting, offering peace offerings (serving the Lord) in order to win the battle 1 Samuel 14:24; 1 Samuel 12:10

Did the Lord Jesus ever set a violent, warring example for humanity to follow?

Rape is not a fruit of the unselfish, loving spirit of God. Rape is sexual violence against women. It is sexual sin. All sexual sinners and murderers will be excluded from heaven, along with the fallen angel who inspired such acts and passed them off as being 'commanded by God.'

God ordained marriage –not rape.

There is something amiss with the Old Testament representations of God. If not, then your god condoned, organised, ordained and commanded the rape of little girls and he founded a sexist society.

In stark contrast, Jesus elevated and honoured women in society.

I don't worship a god that sanctions rape, but a God who, in the person of His Son, uplifted all humanity men, women and little children of all sexes and all races.

Q. When is a rape not a rape?

A. When people try to defend the Bible's portrayal of sexual exploitation in the Torah or when other people try to defend rape as part of their religious culture based on their holy books.

Rape is not righteous.

Rape by any other name is still rape - regardless of the culture which practices it, because rape involves the use of violent force or power against another unwilling person.

The use of force over another person is rooted in selfishness - which is sin. Rape is sin. And the Creator did not command anyone to sin - but to abstain from sin.

Holy Warriors Own the Women (Concubines)

From the Koran

Sura 33:50

"O Prophet! We have made lawful to thee thy wives to whom thou hast paid their dowers, and those whom thy right hand possesses out of the prisoners of war whom God has assigned to thee For the believers (at large), We know that We have appointed for them as to their wives and the captives whom their right hands possess..."

Dr Samuele Bacchiocchi (Retired Professor of Theology, Andrews University) comments on this text from the Koran –

Sura 33:50:

“One of the benefits of fighting for the cause of Islam is the permission to take captured women as concubines, in addition to several legitimate wives. The notion that God would assign captured women as concubines to Muslim believers who for His cause, hardly reflect high moral standards of the Islam faith. Polygamy and servile concubinage have destroyed the dignity of women and the beauty of the home. In this areas the infinite superiority of Christianity is clearly evident.”

(<http://www.keithhunt.com/Islam.htm>)

Note: The Old Testament Israelites must not have practised “Christian principles” as Dr Bacchiocchi outlines above, because the Israelite warriors were authorised supposedly by God to take many thousands of concubines as captives after being victorious against the pagan nations in war. These women were not necessarily kept permanently, but could be “divorced” or sent away (Deut 21:10-14; Judges 21:12; Numbers 31:18; Ezra 9, 10).

The Roman Catholic Religion

To investigate the ritualised abuse of women in the Catholic church, refer to “the Nun’s Story” by the late ex-nun, Sister Charlotte. Audio file available from www.adventist4truth.com

Old Testament - The Bible

Judges 21:10-12

“And the congregation sent thither twelve thousand men of the valiantest, and commanded them, saying, Go and smite the inhabitants of Jabeshgilead with the edge of the sword, with the women and the children. (11) And this is the thing that ye shall do, Ye shall utterly destroy every male, and every woman that hath lain by man. (12) And they found among the inhabitants of Jabeshgilead four hundred young virgins, that had known no man by lying with any male: and they brought them unto the camp to Shiloh, which is in the land of Canaan.”

Numbers 31:17, 18, 32, 35, 40, 41

“Now therefore kill every male among the little ones, and kill every woman that hath known man by lying with him. (18) But all the women children, that have not known a man by lying with him, keep alive for yourselves..(32) And the booty, being the rest of the prey which the men of war had caught, was six hundred thousand and seventy thousand and five thousand sheep (35) And thirty and two thousand persons in all, of women that had not known man by lying with him. (40) And the persons were

sixteen thousand; of which the LORD'S tribute was thirty and two persons. (41) And Moses gave the tribute, which was the LORD'S heave offering, unto Eleazar the priest, as the LORD commanded Moses.”

Deuteronomy 21:10-14

“When thou goest forth to war against thine enemies, and the LORD thy God hath delivered them into thine hands, and thou hast taken them captive, (11) And seest among the captives a beautiful woman, and hast a desire unto her, that thou wouldest have her to thy wife; (12) Then thou shalt bring her home to thine house; and she shall shave her head, and pare her nails; (13) And she shall put the raiment of her captivity from off her, and shall remain in thine house, and bewail her father and her mother a full month: and after that thou shalt go in unto her, and be her husband, and she shall be thy wife. (14) And it shall be, if thou have no delight in her, then thou shalt let her go whither she will; but thou shalt not sell her at all for money, thou shalt not make merchandise of her, because thou hast humbled her.” (‘humbled’ – literally ‘pierced’)

It is interesting to note that the Israelite warriors were prepared to ‘wait for the rape’ as they ensured the pagan virgins were de-parasitised (or quarantined) for one month. Parasites were very common in the Middle East. Lice could be carried under long fingernails, in hair and in clothing. Thus, the Israelites rituals (shaving hair, cutting fingernails, changing infected clothing) ensured that prior to the rape, the captive virgin victim, was not going to infect her rapist with parasites.

On the basis of earlier research that has shown that intestinal parasites can be preserved in arid, sub-surface conditions, Zias sent the samples to Harter-Lailheugue at CNRS for analysis. Three of the four samples from the suspected latrine area yielded four species of preserved worm eggs and embryophores that were all identified as human intestinal parasites – Ascaris sp. (human roundworm), Taenia sp. (a human tapeworm), Trichuris sp. (a human whipworm) and a human pinworm, Enterobius vermicularis, that had not previously been reported in the ancient Near East. The soil sample from the stable contained the eggs of Dricrocoelium sp., a common parasites of ungulates. The control samples from the surrounding desert areas contained no parasites, human or animal. “Frankly, I was surprised,” said Zias. “A parasitologist I talked to told me that my chances of finding something were just about nil. Finding evidence of parasites would be easy in a latrine, but in the middle of the desert... But small things like parasite eggs in feces can hang around for thousands of years. At the Dead Sea, we have hair and hair combs with desiccated lice in them because of the dryness.”

Ancient Parasites Show that Cleanliness May Have Been Next to Sickliness 13 November, 2006, Source: University of North Carolina at Charlotte
<http://www.physorg.com/news82662390.html>

Deuteronomy 7:1-5 states that the Israelites were NOT to engage in marriage with the Canaanite pagans. Deuteronomy 21: 10-14 apparently negates that prohibition,

permitting intermarriage to a 'virgin that you have a desire unto'; however Ezra does not seem to be aware of the amended law in Deuteronomy 21, because in Ezra 9 & 10, he laments (while rebuilding the ruins of Jerusalem), that the Israelites, even the priests, have married pagan wives and had children to them. In a desperate attempt to put away the evil from within the camp, these wives (war victims from battle conquests) and their children were sent away. Ezra was very distressed because the Israelite men who made marriages with pagan women had committed a serious violation of the law in Deuteronomy 7).

One has to ask why Ezra didn't continue reading the ancient book of Deuteronomy where he would have been expected to see the amended law in Deuteronomy 21, which permitted the marriage of pagan women after taking them as conquests in battle. Had the passage been in existence, or considered to be a valid portion of Scripture, then Ezra would have been 'off the hook' and the Israelites could then have welcomed their pagan wives back!

One has to question, why this did not occur.

Jesus

In stark contrast to the treatment of women by organised religions, Jesus treated women – even those who were “sinners” (outcasts of society e.g. prostitutes) - with respect and offered them freedom.

Mark 2:16

“And when the scribes and Pharisees saw him eat with publicans and sinners, they said unto his disciples, How is it that he eateth and drinketh with publicans and sinners?”

John 8:3-11

“And the scribes and Pharisees brought unto him a woman taken in adultery; and when they had set her in the midst, (4) They say unto him, Master, this woman was taken in adultery, in the very act. (5) Now Moses in the law commanded us, that such should be stoned: but what sayest thou? (6) This they said, tempting him, that they might have to accuse him. But Jesus stooped down, and with his finger wrote on the ground, as though he heard them not. (7) So when they continued asking him, he lifted up himself, and said unto them, He that is without sin among you, let him first cast a stone at her. (8) And again he stooped down, and wrote on the ground. (9) And they which heard it, being convicted by their own conscience, went out one by one, beginning at the eldest, even unto the last: and Jesus was left alone, and the woman standing in the midst. (10) When Jesus had lifted up himself, and saw none but the woman, he said unto her, Woman, where are those thine accusers? hath no man condemned thee? (11) She said, No man, Lord. And Jesus said unto her, Neither do I condemn thee: go, and sin no more.”

Mark 14:3-9

“And being in Bethany in the house of Simon the leper, as he sat at meat, there came a woman having an alabaster box of ointment of spikenard very precious; and she brake the box, and poured it on his head. (4) And there were some that had indignation within themselves, and said, Why was this waste of the ointment made? (5) For it might have been sold for more than three hundred pence, and have been

given to the poor. And they murmured against her. (6) And Jesus said, Let her alone; why trouble ye her? she hath wrought a good work on me. (7) For ye have the poor with you always, and whensoever ye will ye may do them good: but me ye have not always. (8) She hath done what she could: she is come aforehand to anoint my body to the burying. (9) Verily I say unto you, Wheresoever this gospel shall be preached throughout the whole world, this also that she hath done shall be spoken of for a memorial of her.”

If Jesus didn't condemn women in any way, and did not condone the treatment of women as sex slaves, then certainly, the Father also does not condone or command men to abuse women in such an appalling and degrading manner.

To study more about marriage, please feel welcome to download “The Assassination of God's Character Vol 1 and search for the chapter “Marriage.” www.themeofthebible.com/

Direct link:

<http://themeofthebible.com/index.php?action=tpmod;dl=item79>