

A CRITIQUE OF THE BIBLICAL GOD

A Talk given by Joe Sampson to The Atheist Society at The Melbourne Unitarian Church in December 2024

This talk is about the God of the Christian Bible. Christian apologists say that the Bible reveals a loving God. I will argue that the God of the Bible is not a loving God, but rather a hating God, who is extremely violent and not a model of morality.

I will not spend much time considering the question of whether this God exists. I argued that he does not exist in a previous Atheist Society talk (“From Catholicism to Humanism” – July 2013).

First I will quote from some Catholic apologists in favour of the proposition that God is loving. I am quoting only from Catholics because my upbringing was Catholic and that is therefore the version of Christianity with which I have most familiarity. It is also Catholic belief that God is all knowing and powerful. There are parts of the Bible that contradict those notions. On the one hand the Catholic Church says that one should not kill, yet believes in a God, who, in the Bible, killed lots of people.

In the Catholic Bible for Children it says (page 9) “All throughout the pages of the Old Testament we meet a God who is so filled with love that He reaches out to His people again and again.’

Here are some quotations from the Catechism of the Catholic Church (2nd edition, 2009):

“God, infinitely perfect and blessed in Himself, in a plan of sheer goodness, freely created Man.”(p.7); “By love God has revealed Himself and given Himself to Man.”(p.23). “The books of the Old Testament bear witness to the whole divine pedagogy of God’s saving love” (p.34). “God’s very being is love” (p.61) “Nothing is impossible with God” (p. 71) “God creates by wisdom and love” (p.71). “The Lord is good to all, and his compassion is over all that he has made” (p.77). “God is infinitely good and his works are good” (p.97). “You shall not kill” (p. 544). “Do not slay the innocent and righteous” (p. 545). “Infanticide is a grave crime” (p. 545).

The quotes are clear: the Catholic Church believes that God is a loving being, who can do anything and to whom killing is abhorrent. I will show that the Biblical God does not have the traits that the Catholic Church claims he has. My biblical quotes are from the New Revised Standard Version Catholic Edition of the Holy Bible (published 1993).

The Bible contains 66 books, the writings of numerous authors over more than 1000 years. The Biblical God is the God that Jews, Christians and Moslems believe in. A 2014 Gallup poll says that 28% of Americans believe that the Bible is literally true. What these people are not aware of is that there is a number of contradictory passages in the Bible (e.g. see Ch. 13 (Biblical Contradictions) of “Godless” by Dan Barker). For example Luke 1,37 says “With God nothing is impossible” whereas Judges 1: 19 says “The Lord was with Judah and he took

possession of the hill country but could not drive out the inhabitants of the plain because they had chariots of iron". The biblical view of creation is contradicted by scientific evidence that humans descended from animals. By tracing the ancestry of Joseph, husband of Jesus's mother, Mary, back to Adam, creationists have calculated that the universe was created in 4004 B.C. The evidence from modern Physics, in contrast, is that the Universe is over 13 billion years old. My own impression is that most Christians do not know much about the Bible that they believe in. This impression seems to be confirmed by an editorial published in "Politics Daily" in 2009 entitled "Why a Year of the Bible Would Horrify its Sponsors"(quoted on page 3 of Werleman, C.J., *God Hates You, Hate Him Back*) showed that of Americans (of which in 2009 77% were Christians):

more than 50% do not know that Genesis is the first book of the Bible;

more than 50 % cannot name one of the Gospels;

more than 60% cannot name at least 5 of the 10 commandments;

more than 20% think that Moses was one of Jesus's disciples;

one in ten Americans think that Joan of Arc was Noah's wife; and

more than 50% of High School Seniors think that Sodom and Gomorrah was a married couple.

So apparently a lot of Christians believe that the Bible is literally true but are not aware of a lot of its contents. Perhaps if those Christians read the Bible they would agree with Isaac Asimov, who said "Properly read, the Bible is the most potent force for atheism ever conceived".

It is standard Christian belief that the God of the Bible is all-knowing, all-loving and all-powerful. If such a being exists then being all-knowing he would know that suffering exists in the world. Being all-loving he would want to stop the suffering. Being all-powerful he would be able to stop the suffering. Yet suffering occurs. Hence an all-knowing, all-loving and all-powerful being does not exist. For example 50 million people died in World War 2 yet God did nothing to stop the war. The evidence is that the God of the Bible is neither all-knowing, all-loving or all-powerful.

The God of The Bible is far from the God that Christian clerics talk of when they say "Do unto others as they would do unto you." The God of the Bible will kill you for working on the Jewish Sabbath, drown most of the human race, killed the Egyptian first born children, ordered the killing of homosexuals, the killing of adulterers, the killing of ethnic groups other than Israelis and will send you to burn in an everlasting fire for disobeying his commands. Christians claim that without God there is no morality. I argue that, on the contrary the Biblical God is not a moral God. Empathy for other humans occurs naturally. If we all behaved like the Mafia society would not be able to function.

If we were to take the Bible as a basis of morality we would stone people to death for working on the Jewish Sabbath, stone disobedient children, sell our daughters into slavery, execute homosexuals (sadly that is what is done today in some Moslem countries and is what used to be done in Christian countries).

If belief in the Biblical God were necessary for a moral society then we would expect that the more atheist a society, the more dysfunctional it would be. In his book *The Moral Landscape – How Science Can Determine Human Values*, Sam Harris quotes a survey that says that “fifty seven percent of Americans think that one must believe in God to have good values and be moral’. He goes on to say “on almost every measure of societal health the least religious countries are better off than the most religious. Countries like Denmark, Sweden, Norway and the Netherlands – which are the most atheistic societies on earth – consistently rate better than religious nations on measures like life expectancy, infant mortality, crime, literacy, GDP, child welfare, economic equality, economic competitiveness, gender equality, health care, investments in education, rates of university enrolment, internet access, environmental protection, lack of corruption, political stability and charity to poorer nations, etc... as societies become more prosperous, stable and democratic they tend to become more secular”.

Phil Zuckerman, a U.S. Sociology professor, wrote a book entitled “Society Without God”. Zuckerman lived in Scandinavia for fourteen months, interviewing nearly 150 Danes and Swedes for the book. He said “One study reports that only 51% of Danes and 26% of Swedes claim to believe in a God. Another study found lower rates: only 24% of Danes and 16% of Swedes.” He says: “I argue that society without God is not only possible but can be quite civil and pleasant. This admittedly polemical aspect of my book is aimed primarily at countering the claims of certain outspoken Christians who regularly argue that a society without God would be hell on earth, rampant with immorality, full of evil, and teeming with depravity. Well it isn’t. Denmark and Sweden are remarkably strong, safe, healthy, moral and prosperous societies. In fact, a good case could be made that they are among the ‘best’ countries in the world, at least according to standard sociological measures. In an age of growing religious fundamentalism and strengthening ties between religion and politics – in the U.S. as well as many other countries – this is important information. It is quite crucial for people to know that it is actually quite possible for a society to lose its religious beliefs and still be well-functioning, successful, and fully capable of constructing and obeying sound laws and following rational systems of morality and ethics. Worship of God can wane, prayer can be given up, and the Bible can go unstudied, yet people can still treat another decently, schools and hospitals can still run smoothly, crime can remain minimal, babies and old people can receive all the care and attention they need, economies can flourish, pollution can be kept at a minimum, speeding tickets can be paid, and children can be loved in warm, secure homes – all without God being a central component of everyday life”. As Harris and Zuckerman point out, the evidence shows that where many people are nonbelievers in God are happy flourishing societies.

The Bible begins with God creating the heavens and the Earth on the first day. He creates light and darkness on the first day but does not create the Sun until the fourth day. We know from science that light on Earth comes from the Sun, which came into existence before the

Earth – so here the Bible is in error. On day 3 God creates vegetation. On day five, according to Chapter 1 of Genesis, God creates fish and birds, on day six land creatures and then humans. In Chapter 2 of Genesis Adam is the first human, made on day one, contradicting Chapter 1, where he is made on day five. After Adam is made plants are made, then the animals. So in one part of Genesis Adam is made before the animals, in another part after. So much for the theory that the Bible is literally true. The scientific evidence is that animals came before humans. There are creationists who deny evolution, even though there is plenty of evidence for it. For example, former U.S. President, George W. Bush, said “on the issue of evolution, the verdict is still out on how God created the Earth”. The Bible says that Adam was made out of dust. The creationists are unhappy about the belief of evolutionists that we are descended from animals, but happy with the belief that we are descended from dust. Originally God wants Adam to have an animal as a partner. But no animal suitable as a partner is found. So God takes a rib from Adam and creates Eve, the first woman, and Adam’s partner. God puts Adam and Eve, both naked, in the Garden of Eden, where plants provide lots of food.

God tells Adam and Eve that they can eat fruit from every tree in the Garden except the Tree of Knowledge of Good and Evil. If they eat from that tree they will die. A talking snake tells Eve it is okay to eat from this Tree because if you do you will be like God, knowing good from evil. Eve then ate from the forbidden tree and gave some fruit to Adam who also ate it. Later in the evening they heard God walking in the Garden and hid themselves from Him. God asked them where they were and when Adam replied that he was afraid of God because he was naked God realised that they had eaten from the forbidden tree. God then curses the serpent and Adam and Eve and tells them that they and their descendants will work the rest of their lives and eventually die.

As pointed out by Charles Templeton in his book “Farewell To God”, there are all sorts of problems with this story. The God of Genesis is not the all-knowing, all-loving God of Christian theology:

He is incompetent: His plan for a paradise in Eden fails;

His plans do not work: He originally wanted Adam to mate with an animal; he did not originally want Eve as Adam’s partner;

He is cruel – He tells the woman “I will greatly increase your pains in childbearing” yet to ensure she does get pregnant she will have desire for her husband;

He is biased against women - He tells Eve that Adam “shall rule over you”;

He is not all-knowing – when out for an evening walk in the Garden He asks Adam and Eve where they are and only finds out from questioning them that they ate from the forbidden tree;

He can be tired – He rests on the seventh day after the first six days of creation.

The Catholic Church calls the disobedience of Adam and Eve “original sin”. The “sin” was passed on to all humans. Why did God not want Adam and Eve to know of good and evil? Did He want them just to be like animals?

If God is all knowing as traditional Christian theology teaches, then He would have known that Adam and Eve would have disobeyed Him. But the account in the Bible suggests otherwise.

Eve had sons Cain Abel and Seth and other sons and daughters. Cain offered God some fruit while Abel offered sheep. God was happy with Abel’s offering but not Cain’s. Why did God, supposedly a loving God, play favourites? Does not God like vegetarians?

Cain later killed his brother Abel. Later Cain married and had a son called Enoch. As the human race is descended from Adam and Eve, who had daughters, Cain’s wife must have been his sister. So, presumably God has no objection to incest, at least initially.

One of Adam’s descendants was Noah. He was a righteous man. However, apart from Noah and his family, the rest of the human race was corrupt and violent. God decided to send a flood to kill the rest of the human race and kill most of the animals. God tells Noah to build an ark and take two (male and mate) of each animal (later it says seven pairs of clean animals and a pair of unclean animals) onto the ark and stay on the ark while the whole earth was flooded. The remaining humans were killed along with most animals. Leaving aside that there is no independent evidence of such a flood and that the number of species is so large (how could they all be gathered in time and fitted in the ark) this, if it happened, is not the behaviour of a loving God. Killing on such a scale is mass murder – of the type that is associated with people like Hitler, Stalin, Mao Tse Tung and Pol Pot. This God is hardly one whose rules are the basis of morality. God has not yet given his Ten Commandments, yet has punished people for breaking them. When the waters recede God says to Noah that never again will He send a flood to kill living things and that the rainbow is sent by God to remind humans of His promise. Several hundred years ago Isaac Newton explained the rainbow as the passing of light through water in the air with different colours passed through at different angles. Rainbows have been around long before the supposed Great Flood.

If all the human race are descendants from Noah, where did Chinese and Negroes come from? If they have different feature due to being in different climates this suggests evolution.

At one stage, according to the Bible, everyone spoke the same language. A number of people, in a town called Babel, decided to build a tower, so that it would reach Heaven, God was so annoyed that he gave each person a different language so that they would not understand each other and not proceed with the Tower Of Babel. It seems cruel of God to give each person a different language.

One of Noah’s descendants was Abram, later called Abraham. At age seventy five he is told by God to leave his country of Mesopotamia and go to Canaan to set up a new nation. He left with his wife, Sarai, and nephew Lot. When they reached Canaan there was a famine there so they went to Egypt. When they reached Egypt Abram told his wife that as she was very beautiful they would kill him if they learnt she was his wife so told her to say she was his sister. The Egyptian officials praised Sarai to the Pharaoh who made her his wife. As the

Pharaoh thought that Abram was her brother he gave Abram donkeys, camels and male and female slaves. God apparently has no objection to slaves – God is not being loving approving of slaves – nor does God object to Abram’s lying that Sarai is not his wife.



Figure 1 *The Flood of Noah and Companions* (c. 1911) by Leon Comerre.

God then afflicted the Pharaoh with plagues. How can God justify such cruelty? When the Pharaoh discovers that Sarai is Abram’s wife he tells Abram to leave Egypt. Abram went to the town of Bethel, where he became wealthy. Abram complained to God that he is childless and that a slave will be his heir.

As Abram and Sarai were childless Sarai told Abram to have sex with his Egyptian slave girl, Hagar, with the hope of her becoming pregnant. When Hagar became pregnant she looked with contempt on Sarai. When Sarai complained about this to Abram he told her she could do what she liked with Hagar.. Sarai dealt harshly with Hagar, so Hagar ran away. One of God’s angels found her and asked where she was from and where she was going. Hagar told the angel and the angel then told her to return to Sarai and submit to her. The angel was not compassionate.

When Abram was ninety nine God told him his name was now Abraham; His covenant with Abraham is that he will give Canaan to his successors for perpetuity. God chose to let Abraham’s descendants take over Canaan from its inhabitants, the Canaanites – God shows no concern for the Canaanites. The belief among modern Israelis that God gave Israel to Jews forever is part of the cause of the modern Israeli – Palestinian conflict. A loving God would not favour one race over another. God tells Abraham that to keep his covenant every male among you including slaves must be circumcised. Abraham, by now ninety nine years old, was circumcised along with every male in the house. A God who demands such a cruel

procedure as circumcision is not a loving God. God told Abraham to change Sarai's name to Sarah. God tells one hundred years old Abraham that Sarah, at age ninety, will have a child named Isaac.

God said that there had been a great outcry against the towns of Sodom and Gomorrah as their inhabitants had sinned gravely. God said that He must go to the cities to see whether the outcry is justified. Despite the traditional belief that God is all-knowing, God is not all-knowing on this matter. Abraham asked God not to destroy Sodom if there are fifty righteous people in the city. God agreed not to destroy Sodom if fifty righteous people are found. Then Abraham got God not to destroy Sodom if there are forty five righteous people. And so on and on it went: God will not destroy Sodom if there are forty righteous people, then thirty, then twenty, then ten. Here we have Abraham, bargaining with God, supposedly a totally loving being, on how many people have to be righteous for Sodom to escape destruction. So if there are only nine righteous people in Sodom God will destroy it – this is a supposedly loving God prepared to kill initially forty nine righteous people, but, after bargaining with a supposedly less moral human, prepared to kill nine righteous people. This is hardly an empathetic God.

Lot was a nephew of Abraham. Two angels came to Lot's house in Sodom for dinner. Then all the men of Sodom came to Lot's house and said that they wanted to have sex with the angels. Lot told them not to have sex with the angels but instead have sex with his two virgin daughters and do what they like with them. We have Lot saying that it is okay to gang rape his daughters. And some Christians say that the Bible is the Good Book – how can they justify this? The angels then blinded the men so that they could not find the door of the house. In the morning the angels told Lot to take his wife and daughters and flee the city because God was going to destroy it and not to look back. God then rained fire from Heaven on Sodom and Gomorrah and because Lot's wife looked back turned her into a pillar of salt. God was cruel not only in killing the cities' inhabitants but also Lot's wife. Here we are not looking at a God of love but a God of hate.

Lot went with his daughters to the town of Zoar. One night the daughters decided to get Lot drunk so that they could have sex with him to produce children. So they became pregnant by their father and bore sons by him. God showed no disapproval of this.

God then commanded Abraham to take his son, Isaac, to a mountain and kill him as an offering to God. Abraham took Isaac to the mountain and was about to stab him with a knife when an angel of God called to him from Heaven not to kill Isaac. God was testing Abraham to see whether he would always obey Him. A God who would tell a man to kill his son is not a loving God, but rather a cruel God.

Isaac had two twin sons, Esau and Jacob. One night Jacob wrestled with a man till daybreak. Eventually the man pleaded with Jacob to stop but he would not till he blessed him. The man, who was God, said that henceforth Jacob would be called Israel and a nation would descend from him. In the wrestling Jacob prevailed over God, which is contrary to the Christian belief that God is all-powerful.

Israel and his family settled in Egypt. Eventually, Israel's descendants, the Israelites, became numerous in Egypt. They eventually were made slaves. The Israelites did not like being slaves so God decided to help them. One of the Israelite, Moses, one day sees a burning bush. God spoke to him from the fire, saying that He will liberate the Israelites from the Egyptians and give the Israelites control of the land of Canaan.

God told Moses to tell the Pharaoh to free the Israelites. God says that he will harden the Pharaoh's heart so that he will not let his people go. God then proceeds to punish the Egyptian people because the Pharaoh won't let the people go even though it is because God hardened the Pharaoh's heart. God sends ten different plagues to Egypt to try to get the Pharaoh to release the Israelites. This shows a cruel God punishing a whole innocent nation for what the Pharaoh did. The first plague was all the waters were turned to blood. The second plague was frogs everywhere. Next gnats are everywhere. Then flies are everywhere. Then livestock are diseased. Next boils on all humans and animals. Next thunder and hail and fire. Next a plague of locusts. Then the land was dark for three days. With the tenth plague all the first born children were to be killed. Moses told the Israelites to each kill a lamb and put its blood on the doors so that when God passes the houses He will not kill their first born. As God does not know which houses are Israelite, this is contrary to Christian theology, which says that God is all-knowing. A God who kills first born children is a monster. In the Catechism of the Catholic Church (published 2009) it says that "infanticide is a grave crime (p. 545) yet God has clearly committed infanticide. The Bible says "there was a loud cry in Egypt, for there was NO house without someone dead". God is here not shown as a God who loves all nations but rather one who kills people of one nation to favour another nation, His chosen people. This is not a God worthy of our love. After this mass slaughter the Pharaoh asks the Israelites to leave. The Israelites then asked the Egyptians for silver and gold and clothing. The text then says "And so they plundered the Egyptians".

The Israelites then, with their flocks and herds, headed to Canaan, the promised land. God told Moses to turn back the Israelites to give the impression to the Egyptians that they are lost. God is being Machiavellian. The Pharaoh then sends his troops after the Israelites. Moses stretched out his hand over the sea and God caused the sea to be driven back by a wind and turn a region covered by the sea into dry land. The Israelites crossed the dry sea bed to the other side. The Pharaoh's army followed but then God told Moses to stretch his arm again and then the sea returned, drowning the army. God, if he were a God of love, would, instead of hardening the Pharaoh's heart, soften the Pharaoh's heart so that the Israelites would be allowed to leave. The violence has not ended though. God will order the slaying of the people of Canaan, so that His people will live there – the supposed God of love, who loves all nations, will collude in ethnic cleansing.

The Israelites eventually entered the Sinai wilderness. They camped in front of a mountain called Mount Sinai. Then God called Moses from the mountain, saying "tell the Israelites – you have seen what I did to the Egyptians, and how I bore you on eagles' wings and brought you to myself. Now therefore, if you obey my voice and keep my covenant, you shall be my treasured possession out of all peoples. Indeed the whole earth is mine, but you shall be for

me a priestly kingdom and a holy kingdom and a holy nation.” Here is the God who Christian clerics say loves all nations giving preferential treatment to one nation.

God then tells Moses “I am going to come to you in a dense cloud, in order that the people may hear when I speak with you and so trust you ever after”. God told Moses that on the third day God will come down on Mount Sinai in the sight of all the people. God said to Moses: “You shall set limits for the people all around, saying ‘Be careful not to go up the mountain or touch the edge of it. Any one who touches the mountain shall be put to death. No hand shall touch them, but they shall be stoned or shot with arrows; whether animal or human being, they shall not live’. When the trumpet sounds a long blast, they may go up on the mountain”. Here the supposed God of love is saying He will kill anyone who goes up the mountain and kill any human or animal who touches someone who goes on the mountain. This is the behaviour not of a loving being but rather a hating dictator.

The Bible then goes on to say “On the morning of the third day there was thunder and lightning as well as a thick cloud on the mountain, and a blast of a trumpet so loud that all the people who were in the camp trembled. Moses brought the people out of the camp to meet God. They took their stand at the foot of the mountain. Now Mount Sinai was wrapped in smoke, because the Lord had descended upon it in fire; the smoke went up like the smoke of a kiln, while the whole mountain shook violently. As the blast of the trumpet grew louder and louder, Moses would speak and God would answer him in thunder.” God told Moses to come up the mountain with his brother Aaron.

God then spoke a large number of commandments, beginning with what are known as the ten commandments, which are as follows:

“You shall not make for yourself an idol, whether in the form of anything that is in heaven above, or is that is on the earth. You shall not bow down to them or worship them, for I the Lord your God am a jealous God, punishing children for the iniquity of parents, to the third and fourth generation of those who reject me, but showing steadfast love to the thousandth generation of those who love me and keep my commandments,

“You shall not make wrongful use of the name of the Lord your God, for the Lord will not acquit anyone who misuses His name.

“Remember the Sabbath day and keep it holy. Six days you shall labour and do all your work. But the seventh day is a Sabbath to the Lord your God; you shall not do any work – you, your son or your daughter, your male or female slave, your livestock, or the alien resident in your towns. For in six days the Lord made heaven and earth, the sea and all that is in them, but rested the seventh day; therefore the Lord blessed the Sabbath day and consecrated it.

“Honour your Father and your mother, so that your days may be long in the land that the Lord your God is giving you.

“You shall not murder.

“You shall not commit adultery.

“You shall not bear false witness against your neighbour.

“You shall not covet your neighbour’s house, you shall not covet your neighbour’s wife, or male or female slave, or ox, or donkey, or anything that belongs to your neighbour.”

The first four commandments are about humans’ required relation with God. This God punishes children up to the fourth generation for the wrongdoing of their ancestors - hardly the behaviour of a loving God. God says that you shall not murder, but as we have seen, God does not practise what He preaches. God says that you shall not covet your neighbour’s wife but does not say that you shall not covet your neighbour’s husband. In the fourth commandment God says slaves must not work on the Sabbath, so God has no objection to slaves – hardly a loving God.

After the ten commandments God gives a whole lot of other commandments; again a lot of these are cruel. God gives rules about slaves – it is okay for a man to sell his daughter as a slave. Anybody who strikes or curses his or her father will be put to death. If a slave owner strikes a slave with a rod and the slave dies immediately the owner shall be punished but if the slave survives a day or two there is no punishment. God is uncivilised, for He says:

“ If any harm follows, then you shall give life for life, eye for eye, tooth for tooth, hand for hand, foot for foot, burn for burn, wound for wound, bruise for bruise.” And some Christians claim that one cannot be moral without a belief in God – their God is hardly moral. God said: “You shall not permit a female sorcerer to live”. Because of such a commandment many so-called witches were put to death in medieval Europe (see drawing below). Even today in Saudi Arabia people are executed for sorcery in Saudi Arabia



Burning of three witches in Baden, Switzerland (1585).

Seventy elders went to Mount Sinai and saw God. After stating His commandments, God went on to promise The Israelites that they will conquer Canaan, wiping out their inhabitants, not because they had done any wrong. God is a harsh chauvinistic warrior.

Moses and Aaron, and Aaron's sons, Nadab and Abihu, and seventy elders went to Mount Sinai and saw God. . . Some time later when Nabob and Abihu offered God the wrong incense God burnt them alive (Leviticus 10:1-2). Such a vengeful God! In Leviticus 18:22 God says "You shall not lie with a man as with a woman; it is an abomination". Such a verse has been used to justify killing or jailing homosexuals for several centuries. One would think that God, being the creator of all living things, would know that homosexuality is observed in numerous species and is quite natural. Leviticus 19 has God saying not to take vengeance – this from a God who kills people in revenge.

God said that if a daughter of a priest becomes a prostitute she must be burnt alive. God is hardly being infinitely merciful here. In Leviticus 24 it says that there was a man who cursed God. Moses asks God what should be done with him. God replies that he should be stoned to death for blasphemy. God's orders are carried out – God is thin-skinned. In Leviticus God says that you may acquire slaves from nations around you. How can merciful God allow slaves?

In Leviticus 26 God specifies the rewards for obedience to His commands. : "If you follow my statutes and keep my commandments and observe them faithfully I will give you rains in their season, and the land shall yield its produce, and the trees of the field will yield their fruit. And I will grant peace in the land and you shall lie down and no one shall make you afraid. You shall give chase to your enemies and they shall fall by the sword. And I will walk among you". God promises a comfortable life for those who follows His commands. What , however, happens to those who do not obey his commands? God says "But if you will not obey me, and do not observe all these commandments I in turn will do this to you: I will bring terror to you, consumption and terror that waste the eyes and cause life to pine away. You shall sow your seed in vain, for your enemies shall eat it. I will set my face against you, and you shall be struck down by your enemies... I will set loose wild animals against you, and they shall bereave you of your children and destroy your livestock; they shall make you few in number and your roads shall be deserted... You shall eat the flesh of your sons, and you shall eat the flesh of your daughters." This is a vengeful God who will turn people into cannibals.

In Numbers 5 God tells Moses how to detect whether a wife has been unfaithful. Interestingly, God has no test for an unfaithful husband. If a man suspects that his wife has been unfaithful he will take her to a priest who will take some holy water mixed with dirt from the Tabernacle, a tent which the Israelites carried around. A woman was to drink the polluted water. If the wife was unfaithful the water will cause bitter pain and her uterus to drop. If the woman has been faithful then she will be immune and able to conceive children. This is a harsh punishment. I wonder how many Christians would support this, even though their God commanded it.

Eventually God commanded that the Israelites leave the Sinai, which they did. The people in the new place started complaining that they had only bread to eat whereas in Egypt they had lots of meat. So God promised them that they would have so much meat for the next month that they would be tired of it

Some time later God sent a strong wind that blew quails in from the sea until Israel's camp was completely surrounded with birds, piled up about a metre high for many kilometres in every direction. The people picked up quails for two days—each person filled at least ten large baskets. Then they spread them out to dry. But before the meat could be eaten, God

became angry and sent a deadly disease through the camp. After they had buried the people who had been so greedy for meat, they called the place “Graves for the Greedy.” God once again is punishing his people very harshly.

In Numbers 12 it says that at a place called Hazeroth, Miriam (sister of Moses), Moses and Aaron complain, asking why God speaks only through Moses and not through them. God came down and spoke to Miriam, Moses and Aaron. God said: “Hear: when there are prophets among you, I the Lord speak to them in dreams. Not so with my servant Moses; he is entrusted with all my house. With him I speak face to face clearly, not in riddles, and he beholds the form of the Lord.” God clearly says that he does not speak in riddles, when speaking to Moses. So those Christian apologists who say that the Bible is metaphorical are shown to be incorrect. So that when God says that a female sorcerer should be put to death he means it. God was so angry at Miriam that he gave her leprosy – more cruelty from God.

God then told Moses to send out some men to spy on the land of Canaan, which God has promised to the Israelites (Numbers 13). So some men spied and came back and said the land is wealthy but that the land could not be conquered because the occupants were stronger than the Israelites. Then the congregation complained, saying that they should go back to Egypt and choose a leader to take them there (Numbers 14); God then appeared to Moses and said that He would exterminate the Israelites. Moses then pleads with God not to kill His people because other nations will hear about it and “if you kill this people all at one time then the nations who have heard about you will say “It is because the Lord was not able to bring this people into the land He swore to give them that He has slaughtered them in the wilderness (Numbers 14, 15, 16). Moses asks God to reverse His decision. Moses has talked God out of the genocide of His chosen people because it would be bad for His reputation. God is vain and quick to anger. God then went on to kill by plague most of the people who spied on Canaan except for those who had not complained about leaving Egypt.

Korah, Dathan and Abiram and two hundred and fifty other men questioned Moses’s leadership (Numbers 16). As punishment God had the earth swallow up Korah, Dathan and Abiram and their families and God burnt alive the two hundred and fifty men. Such an unpleasant God! Then all the Israelites rebelled against Aaron and Moses saying “You have killed the people of the Lord. Then God became angry and sent down a plague that killed 14,700 people. More murder by a supposedly loving God.

When on their way to the Red Sea the Israelites later again complain, speaking against God and Moses, saying “Why have you brought us up out of Egypt to die in the wilderness? For there is no bread and no water and we detest this miserable food” (Numbers 21). Then God “sent poisonous serpents among the people and they bit the people so that many Israelites died.” Yet again God killing His chosen people.

While the Israelites were staying at Shittim Israelite men began to have sexual relations with Moabite women and to worship their gods (Numbers 25). As punishment God sent down a plague that killed 24,000 Israelites. After the plague God told Moses to take a census of men aged twenty or more who are able to serve in the Israelite army. God, who, according to Christian theology, knows every thing, asks for a census.

Shortly after, God told the Israelites to attack the Midianites. God commanded the Israelites to kill every Midianite male (Numbers 31). Moses went to meet the army commanders saying that he was unhappy that they had not killed the women. He told them to kill all male

children and all women who were not virgins. All female virgins the men can keep for themselves. God is not in agreement with the Geneva Convention.

Moses sent messengers to King Sihon of Heshbon asking for the Israelites to be allowed to travel on roads throughout the kingdom to pass into the land that God had promised the Israelites. In Deuteronomy 2:30 it says: “But King Sihon of Heshbon was not willing to let us pass through, for the Lord your God had hardened his spirit and made his heart defiant in order to hand him over to you”. God had made the king unwilling to let the Israelites through so that they could win battle over Heshbon. God is clearly taking sides and is unconcerned that people will die in battle. The Israelites captured all the king’s towns and killed all the men, women and children. They kept the livestock and plundered the towns. God is a god of war with no qualms about killing people – clearly not the empathetic God of Christian theologians.

In Deuteronomy 7:1-6, God says “When the Lord your God brings you into the land you are entering to possess and drives out before you many nations—the Hittites, Girgashites, Amorites, Canaanites, Perizzites, Hivites and Jebusites, seven nations larger and stronger than you—and when the Lord your God has delivered them over to you and you have defeated them, then you must destroy them totally. Make no treaty with them, and show them no mercy. Do not intermarry with them. Do not give your daughters to their sons or take their daughters for your sons, for they will turn your children away from following me to serve other gods, and the Lord’s anger will burn against you and will quickly destroy you. This is what you are to do to them: break down their altars, smash their sacred stones, cut down their poles and burn their idols in the fire. For you are a people holy to the Lord your God. The Lord your God has chosen you out of all the peoples on the face of the earth to be his people, his treasured possession.” This is a God who advocates genocide and chauvinism. This is an angry God who will murder his own people if they disobey Him. Today we have the Israelis who think that they have a God-given right to have dispossessed the Palestinians, kill them and treat them as second class citizens. Similarly, Hitler thought that he had God on his side to justify his warring against other nations and causing mass bloodshed.

In Deuteronomy 13: 6-11 God shows that He is intolerant of other religions, demanding severe punishment for Israelites who worship other Gods: “If your very own brother, or your son or daughter, or the wife you love, or your closest friend secretly entices you, saying, ‘Let us go and worship other gods’ (gods that neither you nor your ancestors have known, gods of the peoples around you, whether near or far, from one end of the land to the other), do not yield to them or listen to them. Show them no pity. Do not spare them or shield them. You must certainly put them to death. Your hand must be the first in putting them to death, and then the hands of all the people. Stone them to death, because they tried to turn you away from the Lord your God, who brought you out of Egypt, out of the land of slavery. Then all Israel will hear and be afraid, and no one among you will do such an evil thing again.” God is so intolerant that He orders the killing of people who worship other gods. The text seems to imply that other gods exist. We see in some Moslem countries today this same intolerance of Moslems who convert to other religions or atheism – such people can be executed.:

Not only will people who disobey God be killed but also those who disobey God’s priest or judge (Deuteronomy 17: 12-13):”Anyone who shows contempt for the judge or for the priest who stands ministering there to the Lord your God is to be put to death. You must purge the evil from Israel. All the people will hear and be afraid and will not be contemptuous again.”

God has no objection to soldiers raping enemy women as in Deuteronomy 21: 10-13:” When you go to war against your enemies and the Lord your God delivers them into your hands and you take captives, if you notice among the captives a beautiful woman and are attracted to her, you may take her as your wife. Bring her into your home and have her shave her head, trim her nails and put aside the clothes she was wearing when captured. After she has lived in your house and mourned her father and mother for a full month, then you may go to her and be her husband and she shall be your wife.“ In recent years we have seen Islamic State soldiers taking women as sex slaves, all in the name of the Abrahamic God.

God is not a merciful God in dealing with rebellious children, for God says (Deuteronomy 21:18-21): “If someone has a stubborn and rebellious son who does not obey his father and mother and will not listen to them when they discipline him, his father and mother shall take hold of him and bring him to the elders at the gate of his town. They shall say to the elders, ‘This son of ours is stubborn and rebellious. He will not obey us. He is a glutton and a drunkard.’ Then all the men of his town are to stone him to death. You must purge the evil from among you. All Israel will hear of it and be afraid.” This is an extreme way of handling rebellious children. God is no Dr. Spock.

God has harsh laws about sexual relations as in Deuteronomy 22:13-29: if a man believes his wife is not a virgin he shall tell the elders of the city. If the elders are convinced she is not a virgin she will be stoned to death. “If a man is found sleeping with another man’s wife, both the man who slept with her and the woman must die. You must purge the evil from Israel. If a man happens to meet in a town a virgin pledged to be married and he sleeps with her, you shall take both of them to the gate of that town and stone them to death—the young woman because she was in a town and did not scream for help, and the man because he violated another man’s wife. You must purge the evil from among you. But if out in the country a man happens to meet a young woman pledged to be married and rapes her, only the man who has done this shall die. Do nothing to the woman; she has committed no sin deserving death. This case is like that of someone who attacks and murders a neighbour, for the man found the young woman out in the country, and though the betrothed woman screamed, there was no one to rescue her. If a man happens to meet a virgin who is not pledged to be married and rapes her and they are discovered, he shall pay her father fifty shekels of silver. He must marry the young woman, for he has violated her. He can never divorce her as long as he lives.” So, God will put a couple to death for consensual sex but for rape of a virgin the punishment is only a fine and the woman raped must marry the rapist. God is hardly a compassionate, forgiving being.

God yet again shows his harshness in saying in Deuteronomy 25:11-12:” If two men are fighting and the wife of one of them comes to rescue her husband from his assailant, and she reaches out and seizes him by his private parts, you shall cut off her hand. Show her no pity.”

God does not approve of cross-dressing, for He says (Deuteronomy 22:5): “A woman must not wear men’s clothing, nor a man wear women’s clothing, for the Lord your God detests anyone who does this.” I wonder whether this applies to a Scotsman wearing a kilt.

God has lots of harsh punishments (Deuteronomy 28:15-25): “if you do not obey the Lord your God and do not carefully follow all his commands and decrees I am giving you today, all these curses will come on you and overtake you: You will be cursed in the city and cursed in the country. Your basket and your kneading trough will be cursed. The fruit of your womb will be cursed, and the crops of your land, and the calves of your herds and the lambs

of your flocks. You will be cursed when you come in and cursed when you go out. The Lord will send on you curses, confusion and rebuke in everything you put your hand to, until you are destroyed and come to sudden ruin because of the evil you have done in forsaking Him. The Lord will plague you with diseases until he has destroyed you from the land you are entering to possess. The Lord will strike you with wasting disease, with fever and inflammation, with scorching heat and drought, with blight and mildew, which will plague you until you perish. The sky over your head will be bronze, the ground beneath you iron. The Lord will turn the rain of your country into dust and powder; it will come down from the skies until you are destroyed. The Lord will cause you to be defeated before your enemies. You will come at them from one direction but flee from them in seven, and you will become a thing of horror to all the kingdoms on earth. Your carcasses will be food for all the birds and the wild animals, and there will be no one to frighten them away. The Lord will afflict you with the boils of Egypt and with tumours, festering sores and the itch, from which you cannot be cured. The Lord will afflict you with madness, blindness and confusion of mind. At midday you will grope about like a blind person in the dark. You will be unsuccessful in everything you do; day after day you will be oppressed and robbed, with no one to rescue you.”

God taught Moses a song that he wanted Moses to teach the Israelites (Deuteronomy 31:19). In part of the song (Deuteronomy 32:80) the words are:” When the Most High apportioned the nations, when He divided humankind, he fixed the boundaries of the people according to number of gods, the Lord’s own portion was his people”. The implication seems to be that the Most High is a higher god than Yahweh (the Jewish God) and that each nation has its own gods.

“Moses was a hundred and twenty years old when he died, yet his eyes were not weak nor his strength gone” (Deuteronomy 34:7). Joshua then took over as leader of the Israelites. God spoke to Joshua, saying: “Moses my servant is dead. Now then, you and all these people, get ready to cross the Jordan River into the land I am about to give to them—to the Israelites. I will give you every place where you set your foot, as I promised Moses. Your territory will extend from the desert to Lebanon, and from the great river, the Euphrates—all the Hittite country—to the Mediterranean Sea in the west. No one will be able to stand against you all the days of your life. As I was with Moses, so I will be with you; I will never leave you nor forsake you. Be strong and courageous, because you will lead these people to inherit the land I swore to their ancestors to give them. Be strong and very courageous. Be careful to obey all the law my servant Moses gave you; do not turn from it to the right or to the left, that you may be successful wherever you go”. (Joshua 1: 2-7) “So Joshua ordered the officers of the people: ‘Go through the camp and tell the people, ‘Get your provisions ready. Three days from now you will cross the Jordan here to go in and take possession of the land the Lord your God is giving you for your own.’” (Joshua 1:10-11)“Joshua...secretly sent two spies from Shittim. ‘Go, look over the land,’ he said, ‘especially Jericho.’ So they went and entered the house of a prostitute named Rahab and stayed there.” The spies eventually return to Joshua, saying that the inhabitants of Jericho are afraid of the Israelites, knowing how God dried up the water of the Red Sea when the Egyptians pursued the Israelites and how the Israelites utterly destroyed the cities of Sihon and Og. The spies returned to Joshua saying (Joshua 2:24):“The Lord has surely given the whole land into our hands; all the people are melting in fear because of us.”

The next morning Joshua set out with all the Israelites, and they came to the Jordan River. God stopped the waters flowing through the river so that the Israelites were able to cross the river to opposite Jericho.

God then told Joshua that flint knives had to be made to circumscribe all the males, which was done. Why would God command that all the males, many adult, be circumcised? It is a painful procedure for which there is no reason.

God commanded that seven priests walk round the city blowing trumpets, which caused the city's walls to crumble. The Israelites invaded the city, killing all its inhabitants, except Rahab and her relatives. God is quite happy that the Israelites have murdered all the people of Jericho – such a harsh God.

God had told Joshua that all of the gold, silver, bronze and iron will be set aside for God. However, an Israelite called Achan helped himself to some gold and silver from Jericho. When Joshua sent some men to attack the town of Ai they were defeated. Joshua asked God why he let Ai defeat the Israelites God replied that it was because some items were taken from Jericho that were meant for God. God demands that Joshua burn to death the guilty party. Achan admits to taking the silver and gold. Joshua had Achan and his family and animals stoned to death then burnt. Then God was angry no more and said that He would now hand over to them the King of Ai with his people, his city and land. The Israelites conquered Ai, killing all 12,000 inhabitants, except for the king, whom Joshua hanged. God was complicit in the genocide of Ai, not a compassionate God.

As told in Judges 10, the people of Gibeon, after hearing of what the Israelites had done to Jericho and Ai, made a treaty with the Israelites. When the kings of the Amorite cities of Jerusalem, Hebron, Jarmuth, Lachish and Eglon heard about what the Israelites had done to Jericho and Ai, and that they had made a peace treaty with Gibeon, all of whose men were warriors, they attacked Gibeon. The Gibeonites then asked Joshua to help them. Joshua's army attacked the forces of the kings, whose armies fled. God then threw down huge hailstones on them from Heaven; more died from the hailstones than were killed with the sword. God made the Sun to stand still for a day so that the Israelites could defeat the Amorites. I have no evidence that astronomers believe that the Sun stood still a few thousand years ago. Joshua then hanged the five kings. Joshua, on God's instructions, eventually defeated thirty one kings and killed the inhabitants of their cities. So much for the theory that God's whole being is love.

At one stage Abimelech, son of Gideon, an Israelite military leader, who with one stone murdered his seventy brothers, ruled over Israel for three years (Judges 9:22). God sent an evil spirit that stirred up trouble between Abimelech and the leading citizens of Shechem, and they revolted. (judges 9: 23). So God, supposedly totally good, sends an evil spirit.

At one stage Jephthah was the leader of the Israelites. When the Ammonites made war against the Israelites, Jephthah complained to the Ammonite king: "Should you not possess what your god Chemosh gives you to possess? And should we not be the ones to possess everything that the Lord our God has conquered for our benefit?" (Judges 11:24). It is here implied that the Israelite God is not the only God. Jephthah made a vow to God that "If you will give the Ammonites into my hand, then whoever comes out of the doors of my house to meet me, when I return victorious from the Ammonites, shall be the Lord's, to be offered up by me as a burnt offering.' So Jephthah crossed over to the Ammonites to fight against them;

and the Lord gave them into his hand. He inflicted a massive defeat on them.” (Judges 11: 30-33). When Jephthah returned from battle to his home his daughter greeted him. In accordance with his vow to God, Jephthah had his daughter burnt to death (Judges 11: 34-39). A God who would accept such a sacrifice is not a God of love.

In 2 Samuel 21 of the it says that there was famine in Israel when David was king. David asked God why. God replied: “Saul and his family have incurred bloodguilt because he put the Gibeonites to death.” Saul was king of Israel before David; Saul had tried to wipe out the Gibeonites. “David said to the Gibeonites: ‘What can I do for you? How shall I atone for our treatment of you so that you may bless the heritage of the Lord?’”(2 Samuel 21:1). “They said to the king:’ We cannot forget that man who destroyed us and planned to annihilate us so that we would never be able to have a place in the territory of Israel. Please hand over to us seven of his male descendants, so that we may dismember them before the Lord at Gibeon on the mountain of the Lord’ The king replied: “I will hand them over to you...the king took Armoni and Meribbaal, the two sons that Rizpah, the daughter of Aiah, had borne to Saul, and the five sons of Saul’s daughter Merab whom she had borne to Adriel, the son of Barzillai of Meholah. He surrendered them into the hands of the Gibeonites, who dismembered them on the mountain before the Lord. All seven of them perished together... After all of the king’s commands had been carried out, God answered prayers that were offered up on behalf of the country.” (2 Samuel 7, 9, 10, 14). What sort of a God would demand such a bloody sacrifice of innocent people? Not a loving God.

The Book of Job is a book in the Bible, about “Job, a good and righteous man,” who lived in the land of Uz. He feared God and shunned evil. He was the father of seven sons and three daughters, and he possessed seven thousand sheep, three thousand camels, five hundred yoke of oxen, and five hundred donkeys, in addition to a large number of servants.” (Job 1: 1-3). “One day the angels assembled to present themselves before the Lord, and Satan was with them. The Lord said to Satan, ‘Where have you come from?’ Satan answered the Lord and said, ‘I have been roaming the earth and going back and forth in it.’ The Lord asked him, “Have you paid any notice to my servant Job? You will not find anyone like him on the entire earth. He is a good and righteous man who fears God and shuns evil.” Satan said in reply, : ‘Why should Job not be a God-fearing man? You have safeguarded him and his family and all his possessions with your protection. You have blessed every one of his undertakings, and his flocks have continued to increase throughout the land. But if you stretch out your hand and strike all that he has, he will surely curse you to your face.’ The Lord then said, ‘Very well. All that he has is in your power. However, you may not lay a hand upon him.’ So Satan went forth from the presence of the Lord.” (Job 1: 6-12).

Some time after all Job’s animals and children and most of his servants were killed. Job’s response was to say that “the Lord gives and the Lord takes away”. The next time God saw Satan, God said that Job does not condemn God for his misfortune. Satan replied that if he were to harm Job, then Job would curse God. God’s reply was that Satan could harm Job but not kill him. Satan then inflicted unpleasant sores all over Job’s body. “Job’s wife then tells him to curse God. “He replied, ‘You are talking like a foolish woman. Shall we accept good from God, and not trouble?’ In all this, Job did not sin in what he said.” (Job 2:10).’

God then appears to Job and justifies his behaviour by saying that He created the Universe. Job apologises. As a reward God gives Job more children and more animals. God does not justify his murder of Job’s children. He did a deal with Satan, who is supposedly His evil adversary. God kills lots of people in the Bible. The only people Satan kills are Job’s

children and servants, and that is with God's approval. God comes across as a lot more evil than Satan. Again, God is not a loving being but a capricious and cruel dictator. A God who kills children is not a God of love.

The Book of Ecclesiastes says that the fate of humans and animals is the same: "All go to the same place; all come from dust, and to dust all return." (Ecclesiastes 3:20). "The living know that they will die, but the dead know nothing; they have no further reward, and even their name is forgotten." (Ecclesiastes 9:5). The Book of Ecclesiastes says that there is no afterlife, contrary to Christian doctrine.

God told a priest, Ezekiel, to bake barley-bread on human dung for three hundred and ninety days and eat it; God said: "In this way the people of Israel will eat defiled food among the nations where I will drive them." Ezekiel protested and God said that you can use cow dung instead of human dung (Ezekiel 4:9-16). God is behaving badly asking someone to eat bread cooked over dung.

At one stage the Babylonians took control of Jerusalem and took some of its people back to the king's palace. One of these people was Daniel, who became an important official in Babylon.. There were officials who were jealous of Daniel and so they asked King Darius to make a law that nobody could pray to anyone except the king, with punishment for breaking the law to be thrown in a den of lions. When Daniel was found to be praying to God he was thrown in a lions' den. Daniel was unharmed because God had sent an angel who shut the lions' mouths. Darius freed Daniel and put the conspirators, their wives and their children in the den of lions, who killed them (Daniel 6:1-24). So, the supposedly merciful God saves Daniel but stands by while the conspirators, their wives and their children are torn to pieces by lions.

I believe that I have shown that The God of the Old Testament is not a loving, compassionate, empathetic being. Rather God kills or tortures people for the most trivial of reasons. He is an ethnic cleanser and a hater of homosexuals. He is not a source of morality by any standard.

In the New Testament Jesus equates Himself with the Old Testament God, saying: "I and the Father are one." (John 10:30). Jesus also said "I am in the Father and the Father is in me". (John 14:11). So Jesus identified Himself with the God who killed so many people in the Old Testament. Jesus spoke of "Hell where the fire never goes out" (Mark 9:43). Jesus said "As the weeds are pulled up and burned in the fire, so it will be at the end of the age. The Son of Man will send out his angels, and they will weed out of his kingdom everything that causes sin and all who do evil. They will throw them into the blazing furnace, where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth." (Matthew 13: 40-42). In talking of the Last Judgment Jesus said "Depart from me, you who are cursed, into the eternal fire prepared for the Devil and his angels."(Matthew 25:41). A God who makes people suffer forever is not a loving being but rather a sadistic monster.

In conclusion, the God of the Bible is not a God of love, but rather a God of hate.

Main References

BibleGateway [BibleGateway.com: A searchable online Bible in over 150 versions and 50 languages.](http://BibleGateway.com)

Holy Bible The New Revised Standard Version, Catholic Edition, 1993, Catholic Bible Press.

Catechism of the Catholic Church, 2009, St. Paul's Publications.

Other References

Barker, Dan, *God: The Most Unpleasant Character in All Fiction*, 2016, Sterling Publishing Co. Inc.

Barker, Dan, *Godless*, Ulysses Press, 2008.

Dawkins, Richard, *The God Delusion* Houghton Muffin, 2006.

Harris, Sam, *Letter to a Christian Nation*, Knopf, 2006.

Harris, Sam. *The Moral Landscape – How Science Can Determine Human Values*, Free Press, 2011

Hitchens, Christopher, *God Is Not Great*, Twelve, 2007.

Kennedy, Ludovic, *All In The Mind: A farewell To God*, Hodder and Stoughton, 1999.

Sommer, Joseph, H. C. *Some Reasons Why Humanists Reject The Bible*
<https://americanhumanist.org/what-is-humanism/reasons-humanists-reject-bible/>

Stenger, Victor J. *God: The Failed Hypothesis. How Science Shows That God Does Not Exist.* Prometheus Books, 2009.

Templeton, Charles. *Farewell to God: My Reasons For Rejecting The Christian Faith*, McLelland and Stewart, 1999.

Werleman, C.J., *God Hates You, Hate Him Back: Making Sense of The Bible*, Dangerous Little Books, 2009.

Zuckerman, Phil., *Society Without God*, New York University Press, 2008.