

WEEK 5: “Doesn’t religion cause violence?”

[WARM-UP]

[THINK]



Q1: How should we view the Crusades?

Not OVERSIMPLIFIED

Not BIBLICAL

Not GOOD

Not EXCLUSIVE (to Christianity or any religion)

Q2: Why is there violence in the world?

✗ Religion

✓ Sinful Desires

(Christians are prone to sin too!)

What causes quarrels and fights among you? Is it not this: that your passions are at war within you? You desire and do not have, so you murder. You covet and cannot obtain, so you fight and quarrel. —James 4:1-2

Q3: Does the Bible generally command acts of violence?

Matthew 5:43-44

Romans 12:14-21

Romans 13:1-4

Genesis 9:5-6

Q4: How should we view the violent or gory passages in Scripture?

[READ]

Select Examples of Violence in the Scriptures		
CATEGORY A: Wrong (Not God-Approved)	CATEGORY B: God Acts Directly	CATEGORY C: God Commands
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Mark 6:27 <i>Beheaded John</i> Judges 20:6 <i>Dismembered Concubine</i> 2 Kings 8:12 <i>Dashed, Ripped open</i> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Exodus 14:28 <i>Drowned Pharaoh's Army</i> 2 Samuel 6:7 <i>Struck down Uzzah</i> Acts 2:23 / Isaiah 53:4 <i>Crucified Jesus</i> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Numbers 25:1-9 <i>Speared Couple</i> Joshua 11:10-15 (Judges 4:2) <i>Left None Breathing in Hazor</i> 1 Samuel 15:1-9 (Deut. 25:17-19) <i>Devoted to Destruction Amalek</i>

On war violence commanded in the Old Testament:

- Divine commands from God to violence in the Bible are always LIMITED in scope:
✓ Only particular times, places, people, and means (i.e. without torture)
- Common war rhetoric is used in describing total destruction—not literally everyone died.
- Destruction is about sin (not ethnicity), and we cannot presume to know innocence.

TAKEAWAYS:

- Typically violence is wrong, but God sometimes commanded it only in specific occasions.
- The Biblical principle is to love your enemy—giving war and just punishment to governors.
- Violence in the Bible is *never* about race (genocide) but it *is* about God’s judgment upon sin.

Next week: “Hasn’t science disproven Christianity?” (Chapter 7)