

So, would you ever leave your faith?

“So, would you ever leave your faith?” That’s what I was asked. It had come out that I didn’t think evolution was plausible, and that I thought God better explained the facts.

My friend asked me, “So, what if evolution were proven? Would you leave?”

“Leave what”, I asked. “Christianity, or belief in God?”

“Well, they both go together, don’t they?”

I told my friend that there were two things that were foundational to my worldview. I’ve considered the alternatives and I’m convinced that God exists, and that Jesus rose from the dead. I’ve already covered the reasons I’m convinced [Jesus actually existed](#), that [he believed himself to be God](#), and that [he rose again to vindicate that claim](#). The one under question tonight was God’s existence.

Rather than outlining the [moral argument](#), the [cosmological argument](#), or [other apologetic standards](#), I decided to take a big picture approach. I explained that the existence of a God seemed to fit best with reality. **There are many big questions in life, and God’s existence seems to address them all.** Something that happened to my car might help explain my angle.



Last summer I noticed that my car’s A/C wasn’t working. The car was difficult to steer too. Since these seemed unrelated, I wondered what on earth was going wrong. I turned down the radio and heard some horrible clunking noises. At this point, I noticed that my engine gauge read incredibly hot, so I pulled over to shut it down before anything worse happened. (Side note: I’m definitely not a car guy, so looking at the engine is something I do because I know you’re supposed to - not because I’ll be able to fix anything.)

When I opened the hood I saw oil sprayed everywhere and what remained of a

belt. Even though I was out of my depth at this point, I had an idea what all the big parts did. It seemed to me that there were a couple of options, broadly speaking. Either there was one thing that caused all this destruction, or I had just witnessed a remarkable automotive catastrophe. Either a bunch of individual components simultaneously self-destructed like some horrible mechanical symphony, or one thing started a chain of events. One initial problem seemed most plausible, but the symptoms were so unrelated that it seemed like a stretch.

After reflecting on the symptoms, a scenario began to emerge. I knew a lot of expensive things had been connected to the belt that was now in shambles. That could explain how the problem spread. Since there was an oily mess that seemed to emanate from the steering pump, that reminded me of my difficulty steering. What if that started it all? If that seized, it would probably cause the belt to slow down. If the belt slowed down, it would make sense that my A/C would suffer. Since belts don't do well with seized parts, it probably snapped pretty quickly. That would completely shut down A/C and steering and anything else connected to the belt. If the water pump stopped working, that would explain the skyrocketing engine temperature.

It looked like the steering pump was the single cause of everything else. Was that explanation certain? No, but it did seem most plausible. If not that, it seems I would have to track down what could explain a spontaneously dying A/C unit, difficult steering, an overheating engine, and several other symptoms. It seemed more plausible to me that there was one cause rather than many. Why look for a half-dozen explanations when you would do. And when diagnosing it, the mechanic should probably start by looking at simple causes rather than outrageously rare ones.

When I say I believe in God, I'm doing the same sort of thing. I believe in God because a number of questions about reality are answered solely by his existence.

- How did something come from nothing?
- Where did life come from?
- Where did consciousness come from?
- Where did morality come from?
- What about things like justice, love, and hope?

On the Christian worldview, all these questions and more can be answered in a single response: God. I'm aware that nonbelievers have answers to some of these questions, but they are not terribly persuasive to me. Besides that, they require me to accept a separate explanation for each one. I *could* accept undirected macro-evolution, inexplicable forces of nature that happen to work nicely together, a herd morality that developed on its own, and all the other naturalistic explanations. Or I could observe that an all-powerful being could easily create all those things, and he could design them to function properly together. **The naturalistic worldview requires I take on a number of new, and unusual beliefs. The theistic worldview only requires I accept one.** I realize many people think that belief in an eternal, supernatural being is a big step - and maybe it is. But I'd rather take on one foreign belief than ten. And even so, this says nothing of the questions I'd have to be content leaving unanswered as a naturalist. Where did matter, space, life, consciousness, and all the rest come from? For these, there are no naturalistic answers. Nature can't explain where nature came from. Things cannot cause themselves - we have to look to other things for explanations. To explain nature we have to look beyond nature. Something you might call "super-nature". And that sounds to me like God. An omnipotent being that exists prior to space, matter, and time could create them all. A big bang needs a big-banger. The source of all life could create more life. A conscious creator would explain our consciousness. A maximally great being could do maximally great things. One explanation. One cause. Taking on this one belief that God exists explains everything we see. I'll concede that alone doesn't mean it's true. But it does mean it is the simplest explanation, and to my thinking the most plausible.

So, to return to the question I was posed, the proving of evolution would not cause me to turn from Christianity. (I think proof of such a thing is a very tall order, though I accepted it for the sake of argument.) Evolution itself says nothing about Jesus' resurrection or God's existence. As I hope I've explained above, I am convinced that God exists. Until a better explanation can be given for reality, things like evolution seem minor and insignificant.

In the rest of life, we typically exhaust simple answers before turning to the extravagant. Why not in metaphysical questions as well? Smart people have examined the evidence and come to different conclusions. I realize that. But if *you* haven't pondered the issue, you would do well to consider it. **Given the shape of**

reality, what is the most plausible explanation - one cause or an infinite number of causes?

God of War: God of Hope

If you have been patient enough to read the previous series, you have read several key insights that help us understand God as he is revealed in the Old Testament:

- [God implemented justice on a particularly evil culture](#). In doing so, God was not forcing His law onto every other nation; He was



showing He was a God cared about the victims of evil.

- God [waited hundreds of years](#) before implementing His justice; [he carefully warned](#) the targeted cultures; and he drove out most of the people ahead of time.
- The language of destruction in the war texts [primarily contain language of displacement](#): God was destroying a horrific cultural system, even while the individuals within it were embraced by the Israelite community.
- [The people involved in the wars were the cultural gatekeepers](#) (priests and military), not the civilians.
- The rules of war reflected [the principle of *lex talionis*](#), the command that the punishment should not exceed the crime.
- This is [not a history of genocide](#), but of the salvation of an area of the world from specific cultures that were some of the most brutal on record

in human history.

So why does all of this matter to us today?

God is offended by evil, as we should be. Actions have consequences. For the sake of the world, at some point someone must step in and stop evil and promote good. When we read or see the atrocities of the Holocaust, do we not cheer that someone intervened to stop that? When we read about genocide in Rwanda, or Saddam's torture rooms, or Kony's enslavement of children, isn't there a part of us that rises up and says, "Won't someone do something?"

If we were to find out that God ordered the defeat of Nazi Germany, or ordered intervention into the genocide in Rwanda, or had a plan for how to intervene in nations that commit atrocious human rights violations against their own people, would we suddenly become critical of God and say, "I thought you were a God of love?" I think we would be glad to know that Justice is part of God's nature too, and that He was also offended by what was going on.

We read in the book of Micah that by approximately 700 B.C., Israel had thoroughly absorbed the worship and the lifestyle of the very Canaanites they dispossessed: they were deceitful, violent, greedy, unjust liars; they had become like both the cultures and the rulers they had previously deposed. Micah warned them that they needed to repent (Micah 6), but not, perhaps in the way they expected:

What can we bring the Lord? What kind of offerings can we bring Him? Shall I bring him an offering of young calves? Will the Lord be pleased with thousands of rams, or with ten thousand rivers of olive oil? Shall we offer our firstborn children to pay for our sins?

No! *The Lord has told you what is good, and what He requires of you: Act justly, love mercy and walk humbly with your God.*"

Act justly **and** love mercy. Is it possible that a God of Wrath and the God of Grace have more similarities than differences? Can God not hold the attributes of love and justice simultaneously? For that matter, can they even exist apart from each other? [In an interview with Lee Strobel, Paul Copan quoted Miroslav Volf, a Croatian who lived through unspeakable violence during ethnic strife in the](#)

former Yugoslavia:

"I used to think that wrath was unworthy of God. Isn't God love? Shouldn't divine love be beyond wrath? God is love, and God loves every person and every creature. That's exactly why God is wrathful against some of them.

My last resistance to the idea of God's wrath was a casualty of the war in the former Yugoslavia, the region from which I come. According to some estimates, 200,000 people were killed and over 3,000,000 were displaced. My villages and cities were destroyed, my people shelled day in and day out, some of them brutalized beyond imagination, and I could not imagine God not being angry. Or think of Rwanda in the last decade of the past century, where 800,000 people were hacked to death in one hundred days! How did God react to the carnage?

By doting on the perpetrators in a grandfatherly fashion? By refusing to condemn the bloodbath but instead affirming the perpetrators' basic goodness? Wasn't God fiercely angry with them?

Though I used to complain about the indecency of the idea of God's wrath, I came to think that I would have to rebel against a God who wasn't wrathful at the sight of the world's evil. God isn't wrathful in spite of being love. God is wrathful because God is love."

This is one of the messages of the anger of God in the Old Testament: **God is not indifferent with respect to those who suffer human cruelty.** Is it possible to conceive of a being who embodies love but does not become outraged at injustice? And while not every injustice in this life is addressed immediately, God's plan offers at least a hope that justice will have its day, if not in this life then the life to come.

"Human anger at injustice will carry less weight and seriousness if divine anger at injustice in the service of life is not given its proper place. If our God is not angry, why should we be? That God would stoop to become involved in such human cruelties as violence is... not a matter for despair, but of hope. God does not simply give people up to experience violence. God chooses to become involved...so that evil will not have the last word." - Terence Fretheim

God of War: The View from the Battlefield

“God is a moral monster with no objection to the massacre of women and children” - or so the charge goes. But is this really the case? [My previous post noted that language in the war texts is predominantly hyperbolic language of dispossession, not annihilation.](#) However, even this reading does not excuse unwarranted brutality and destruction among those who were involved in the battles. In this post, I want to cover what happened to those who remained behind.

If historians are correct, approximately 70% to 90% of the population in Canaan lived away from the cities. As I noted earlier, [God’s plan was to displace people ahead of time.](#) Many ran away in response to the foreshadowing, so the civilians were largely gone from the land by the time the Israelites arrived. Those who did battle with the Israelites were the hardcore defenders of cowardice, oppression of others, perverse sexual temple fertility rituals, and the torturous sacrifice of children. It was in the cities or on the battlefield that they made their stand.



We read that when the Israelite spies returned from Jericho, they said to Joshua, *“Surely the Lord has given all the land into our hands, and all the inhabitants of the land, moreover, have melted away before us.”* (Joshua 2:24). “All” is certainly hyperbole (they still fought a battle at Jericho) but the general tenor is unmistakable. As [historians have noted:](#)

“We have strong archaeological evidence that the targeted Canaanite cities, such as Jericho and Ai, were not population centers with women and children but military forts or garrisons... “all” who were killed therein were warriors - Rahab

*and her family being an exception. The same applies throughout the book of Joshua.... This is further suggested by the fact that the Amalekites were not all annihilated: within the very same book (1 Samuel 27:8; 30:1) we encounter an abundance of Amalekites. The command allows, **and hopes for**, exceptions (e.g., Rahab and her relatives)."*

We know all of the people in the groups were not killed since they 'lived to fight/raid again' in David's time (I Samuel 27,30) and even in Hezekiah's time (200-300 years later, 1 Chronicles 4:43). □ Joshua himself refers to "these [nations] which remain among you" (Josh. 23:12-13; cp. Josh. 15:63; 16:10; 17:13; Judges. 2:10-13). This included Caananites. While Joshua does speak of Israel's utterly destroying groups, these "annihilated" peoples reappear later in the story; after Judah destroyed Jerusalem, its occupants lived there 'to this day' (Judges. 1:8, 21). David had Hittites in his army (2 Sam 23:39) and was friendly with a Jebusite (2 Sam 24:18-24).

The Old Testament does not record that God was unhappy with the fact the the race of people continued. One would expect that if the Israelites disobeyed a command that specific, God would call them on it. He does not. The Bible highlights people like Joshua, who obeyed all Moses' commands (Joshua 9:24) while leaving plenty of survivors. The Old Testament law in Exodus and Leviticus clearly delineates how the Israelites are to treat immigrants with justice and mercy, even those from the surrounding Canaanite nations.

It's important that we understand who was involved in the battles, because it helps to contextualize another aspect of this warfare - the principle of "*lex talionis*." This "["eye for an eye" principle in the Old Testament](#)" (a similar principle is found in the Code of Hammurabi) was meant to limit punishment for crimes, not encourage revenge. If someone took an eye, the victim could demand an eye - but not more. The Israelites could and often did settle for less - but that's a topic for another time.

Not everyone in the ANE was like this. [John Wood, writing for Baylor University](#), notes some characteristics of other kings that contrast remarkably with the record in the Old Testament of Israelite behavior during war :

- Assyrian King Ashurnasirpal claimed that he draped the skin of his dead enemies over the city walls and "*cut off their heads...I burnt their*

adolescent boys and girls.”

- The Assyrian king Sennacherib recorded how he surpassed his predecessors in cruelty. *“I cut [the enemy warriors’] throats like lambs,”* he bragged. *“With the bodies of their warriors I filled the plain like grass. Their testicles I cutoff, and tore out their privates like the seeds of cucumbers.”*
- Carvings in Assyrian palaces demonstrates kings ripping the tongues out of enemy warriors, cutting off hands and feet, decapitating them, and staking their heads for target practice.

This sounds like hyperbolic war text, but the tone shows that the limitations of equal retribution were not embraced by all nations at that time. In God’s judgment of the Amalekites, we see *“lex talionis”* at work on the battlefield as the Israelites purposefully engaged the cultural leaders and defenders, *not* the civilians:

- The Amalekites drove out cultures them in previous invasions; they were driven out.
- They caused whole cities to be abandoned; they were forced to abandon their cities.
- They won their battles on military strength; they were defeated by a military strength.
- They destroyed urban centers of other cultures; their urban centers were destroyed.
- They were unreasonable and unwilling to negotiate (Numbers 21.21); God did not allow Israel to negotiate with them.

Reading the texts in this context, we see the following:

- [God waited patiently, warning those who were facing judgment for catastrophic evil;](#)
- [God was dismantling notoriously bad cultures and their fundamentalist perpetrators,](#) not all the individuals in it - and specifically not the women and children. Most of the individuals relocated into the surrounding cultures, including the Israelites’;
- [God wanted to annihilate sin and its catastrophic fallout,](#) not the people

who committed the sin. As Ezekiel 33:11 notes, *“I have no pleasure in the death of the wicked; but that the wicked turn from his way and live”*;

- [God provided a clear, effective warning](#) that cleared the land of the vast majority of the people.
- The Israelites implemented a just retribution upon the leaders and defenders of these cultures.
- We continue to see favorable reference to people from all nations living in Israel after the wars.

Is it possible that God can hold the attributes of mercy and justice simultaneously? Could they even exist apart from each other? [In the conclusion of this series, we will look more closely at these attributes of God.](#)

God of War: The Genocide Question

In the previous post, [“God of War\(ning\) and Waiting,”](#) I offered four important points we need to remember while reading through the accounts of the battles between the Israelites and the various people groups in Canaan:



- God waited and warned the people groups involved;
- He commanded the Israelites to accept and assimilate any immigrants from these nations, clearly showing God was not interested in genocide;

- He sought not to destroy individual people, but to destroy the religious and cultural centers that promoted their particular evil;
- He exercised *lex talionis* (a principle which says that punishment cannot exceed the crime).


As [the first two points have been addressed](#), we are ready for the third point – the question of the war itself.

The “obliteration language” is certainly daunting. If God is truly a bloodthirsty tyrant who orders the killing of women and children, he would have a hard time explaining how he is different from [the gods of the Amalekites](#). I believe an understanding of the language of hyperbolic semitic “war texts” offers a plausible context from which we see a very different image of God emerge. Read carefully, the historical accounts show that God’s intent was to get rid of destructive cultural influences and world views, but not necessarily the people in them.

The hyperbolic exaggeration of war texts is recorded in many documents of other Ancient Near East cultures of the time (all examples cited from Historical Backgrounds of Biblical History, by Jack P. Lewis).

- An Egyptian monument commemorating Merneptah’s conquest of Canaan noted, *“Plundered is the Canaan with every evil...Israel is laid waste; his seed is not.”*
- The Babylonian Chronicle makes this claim of Nebuchadnezzar: *“...the Egyptian army withdrew before him. He accomplished their defeat and to non-existence beat them”* – and then goes on to talk about what they did to all the soldiers in the army who escaped.
- Esarhaddon once claimed that he led Sidon’s people into exile, *“teeming subjects which could not be counted.”*
- When Mesha secured a Moabite victory over Israel, he claimed, *“Israel has perished forever.”*
- When Shalmaneser defeated Ahab, he penned this commentary: *“I spread their corpses everywhere, filling the entire plain with their widely scattered soldiers...I made their blood flow down...the district. The plain was too small to let all their souls descend into the nether world, the vast field gave out when it came to bury them. With their corpses I spanned*

the Orontes before their was a bridge.”

This is a specific type of genre, one understood by the audience then in a very particular way. We can't read the war texts of that time with 21st century eyes and do justice to the original intent.  Israelite scribes wrote in a cultural context; their war texts reflect historical reality as it was typically recorded in the ANE. So the Bible records that God (or the Israelites) plan was to:

- “wipe them out” (Exodus 23.23)
- “throw them into confusion” (Exodus 23.27)
- “make them turn their backs and run” (Exodus 23.27)
- “drive them out of your way” (Exodus 23.28)
- “struck down” (Psalms 135.10)
- “dispossessed” (Numbers 21.32)
- “destroy them” (Deuteronomy 9.3)
- “subdue them before you” (Deuteronomy 9.3)
- “annihilate” (Deuteronomy 9.3)
- “delivered them over to you” (Deuteronomy 7.2)
- “defeated them” (Deuteronomy 7.2)

Were the Israelites supposed to “make them run” or “annihilate” them? Well, yes. In ANE vocabulary, these commands are not inconsistent considering the hyperbolic language of the war texts in that time period. The question is which command was consistently given.

[These biblical “war texts” use words that fall into two categories: **dispossession or destruction.**](#) If all biblical references were listed here, we would see that the “dispossession” words outnumber the “destruction” words by 3-to-1. This would seem to indicate that the dominant purpose was not destruction, but disruption and displacement of particular cultural groups (such as the Amalekites).

For example, in Exodus 23 God tells his people that He himself would “wipe out” their enemies (verse 23), but he explains this means to slowly drive them out ahead of time (verse 29). God tells the Israelites their specific role: “demolish their gods and break their sacred stones to pieces”(verse 24). Just to make sure the people would not return, the Israelites were not to make a covenant with them, “because the worship of their gods will certainly be a snare to you” (verse 33). Plenty of people continue to live – just not as neighbors,

because God did not want his people to start burning babies on the outstretched iron arms of Molech.

Dueteronomy 7 ([read the whole chapter here](#)) contains a similar clear command for destruction, but also has insightful information about how this “destruction” would look:

“ This is what you are to do to them: Break down their altars, smash their sacred stones, cut down their Asherah 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...He will give their kings into your hand, and you will wipe out their names from under heaven. No one will be able to stand up against you; you will destroy them. The images of their gods you are to burn in the fire.”

Note the traditional war language, but also note that they specifically command the destruction of centers of worship. There is certainly a violent military aspect to this, but **the destruction was for the worship centers and cultural systems that created and sustained systemic horrors, not necessarily the people who committed them.**

The commands were given with two consistent goals: the destruction of religious systems that fostered remarkable evil, and the displacement of those who refused to give up their allegiance. God did not command genocide as is so often claimed.

Even so, this does not yet show that these wars were necessarily just. There was a lot of fighting, and a lot of evil can occur short of wiping out an entire people group. [So just how violent were these battles? Stay tuned...](#)

God of War(ning) and Waiting

[In the previous post](#), I noted that [the war texts](#) show how God implemented justice on a particular Canaanite people group that was outstandingly evil.

(William F. Albright, famed archeologist, described the Amalekite religion as “perhaps the most depraved religion known to man.”)



We may not like that war was involved, but we must enter into the world as it was to to fully understand the big picture. This was a world in which [every people group gauged their god’s authority and power by the quality of their own lives](#). If they were rich and strong, they believed their gods liked what they were doing. If they failed to flourish or were conquered, apparently their god was unhappy or another god was stronger (think of the Ark of the Covenant vs. Dagon in 1 Samuel 5, or the clash between Moses and Pharaoh). You may find this to be simply a lot of superstition, but *in the context at that time*, the God of the Israelites was challenging the God of the Amalekites in a manner that was understood by both cultures.

However, a key question still remain: **Even if the judgement was justified and the actions were understood, is their punishment defensible?** I am going to argue in the following posts that a clear reading of the Old Testament mitigates against a God of cruelty and genocide by highlighting four key factors that contextualize and clarify what was actually happening:

- God waited and warned the people groups involved;
- He commanded the Israelites to accept and assimilate any immigrants from these nations, clearly showing God was not interested in genocide;
- He sought not to destroy individual people, but to destroy the religious and cultural centers that promoted their particular evil;
- He exercised *lex talionis* (a principle which says that punishment cannot

exceed the crime).

WAITING, WARNING, AND ASSIMILATING

The Bible records how God often sent prophets to give advance notice to cultures under judgement so they could repent. For example, God sent Jonah to the people of Ninevah to tell them that God was going to destroy them. They repented, and God did not destroy them. **God was not eager to bring about this type of justice.** Though the Amalekites distinguished themselves by repeatedly oppressing, terrorizing, and vandalizing Israel (and other nations) for up to 400 years after the Israelites left Egypt, God waited and gave plenty of warning before the judgment, even at a cost to his own people.

Then the LORD said to him (Abraham), "Know for certain that your descendants will be strangers in a country not their own, and they will be enslaved and mistreated four hundred years. But I will punish the nation they serve as slaves, and afterward they will come out with great possessions... In the fourth generation your descendants will come back here, for the sin of the Amorites [\[sometimes used interchangeably with 'Amalekites'\]](#) has not yet reached its full measure." (Genesis 15.13-16)

It is not unreasonable to believe that the Canaanite tribes in general (including the Amalekites) had plenty of notice of what would happen if they continued to commit such evil. There would have been numerous points of contact with Israelites in generally friendly settings. The cultures were not inherently antagonistic; Abraham had close relationships with both Amorites (e.g. Gen 14.7,13) and Hittites (e.g. Genesis 23). Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob lived among these groups trying to peacefully resolve issues of water and land rights (Genesis 21; 26; 36). God even told Israel to freely accept immigrants from these nations during this period. Many of them were, after all, distant relatives (The Amorites and Amalekites have a convergent history through Esau's grandson Amalek and Noah's son Ham). These cross-cultural relationships and the 400 year time frame were ways of making sure that the Caanaanites (including Amalekites) knew that even though violence was not preferred, a time was coming when God would say, "Enough."

In a world that put a lot of stock in the interaction between cultures and the gods

they served, it was also significant that Balaam specifically prophesied to the King of Moab that Amalek would be destroyed (Numbers 24:20). Moab and Midian were close allies of Amalek, and this prophecy would surely have been taken seriously and passed on.

In addition to the prophecies, the shared family history, and the cultural crossover, God orchestrated very clear warnings for the people in the broader Canaanite culture:

“I will send my terror ahead of you and throw into confusion every nation you encounter. I will make all your enemies turn their backs and run. I will send the hornet ahead of you to drive the Hivites, Canaanites and Hittites out of your way...”
(Exodus 23:27 ff)

“Now when all the Amorite kings west of the Jordan and all the Canaanite kings along the coast heard how the LORD had dried up the Jordan before the Israelites until we had crossed over, their hearts melted and they no longer had the courage to face the Israelites.” (Joshua 5)

We read in the book of Joshua that Rahab, who lived in Jericho, was well aware of what awaited the city:

“Before the spies lay down for the night, she went up on the roof and said to them, ‘I know that the Lord has given you this land and that a great fear of you has fallen on us, so that all who live in this country are melting in fear because of you. We have heard how the Lord dried up the water of the Red Sea for you when you came out of Egypt, and what you did to Sihon and Og, the two kings of the Amorites east of the Jordan, whom you completely destroyed. When we heard of it, our hearts melted in fear and everyone’s courage failed because of you, for the Lord your God is God in heaven above and on the earth below.’”
(Joshua 2:8-11)

Everybody appears to have known what was coming. Remember, at that point in world history God was revealing himself clearly in a way that all people expected and understood. If my observations so far are correct, at least three key points ought to be considered:

- There were justifiable reasons for the Amalekite culture to be judged;

- God gave a clear, fair notice of intent;
- God's purpose and intent were widely known;
- God ordered his people to assimilate those who came to Israel

However, several hurdles remain. **In the carrying out of this warfare, what actually happened?** If God ordered atrocities, his reasons and his patience would seem to be irrelevant. After all, waiting four hundred years and giving multiple, clear warnings hardly justifies genocide.

[In the next two posts](#), I will discuss what actually happened, particularly the boundaries of the war (*lex talionis*) and the actual toll on human life.