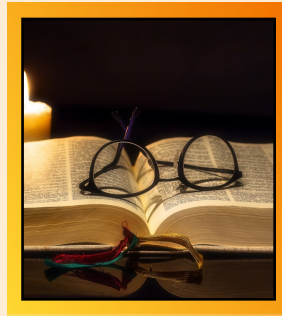




# CONVERSATIONS IN BIBLE FUNDAMENTALS

*“And there were certain Greeks among them that came up to worship at the feast: The same came therefore to Philip . . . saying, Sir, we would see Jesus.” John 12: 20, 21*



*“Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom; teaching and admonishing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with grace in your hearts to the Lord.” Colossians 3:16*

## § - Related Bible Passages:

*Isaiah 58:6, 7. “Is this not the fast that I have chosen: To loose the bonds of wickedness, To undo the heavy burdens, To let the oppressed go free, And that you break every yoke? Is it not to share your bread with the hungry, And that you bring to your house the poor who are cast out*

*Zechariah 7:8-10. Then the word of the LORD came to Zechariah, saying, “Thus says the LORD of hosts: Execute true justice, Show mercy and compassion Everyone to his brother. Do not oppress the widow or the fatherless, The alien or the poor. Let none of you plan evil in his heart Against his brother.’*

## Today’s Conversation: - Pastor Kristy Hodson

### § - Is the God of the Old Testament and the New Testament the same God?

The Church has struggled with this question for millennia. This viewpoint was introduced by Marcion, a Turkish anti-Jewish gnostic born in 85 A.D. He was excommunicated from the Roman church as a heretic because of his views on the Old Testament (OT) and New Testament (NT) God. He saw the Jewish Scripture in opposition to Christianity. He taught that the God of the OT, was an arbitrary, vindictive local tribal Hebrew God who only cared for his people and he demanded suffering. Marcion did not believe in the Incarnation. God could not be born of evil humanity! He saw the Father God who Jesus professed, as a God who is Love, who will ultimately provide universal forgiveness to all humanity.

The Jewish Hebrew Scripture engage the text in conversation in which two opposing views can be held simultaneously. The Torah was read not to determine right or wrong, but for thinking about and wrestling with the Scriptural text. In Jewish thought God is the Source of all things—of good and bad, e.g., the responses of Job’s friends who said Job brought God’s punishment upon himself. Our society today also believes this, e.g., when someone gets sick or there’s a natural disaster it is called “an act of God”.

### § - In Conclusion:

*It's OK to be uncomfortable and have uncomfortable questions with no good answers. It's OK to live in the "I don't know all" because faith is not about certainty otherwise it wouldn't be faith. Faith is understanding that we are not God and so we cannot know God's mind. We can try, through conversations with the Bible text, to understand God's ways but where our understanding ends our faith must begin.*

### § - Next Week's Conversation Question:

- *What is the Biblical evidence that the dead are asleep and know nothing?*

- *Guest Presenter: Pastor Orlando Moncrieffe*

### Scriptural Evidence (continued)

Christians today approach the Scripture looking for and expecting to see only the one right answer. Jewish traditional engagement with Scripture shows all sides of the issue— good and evil. The questions of evil, justice, and God are difficult, complicated questions. How do we explain the violence we would describe today as genocide or ethnic cleansing? To reconcile this people have several viewpoints. One is that the God of the OT and the God of the NT must be different because the God of love and compassion cannot also be a God of vengeance and destruction. Can these different approaches be found in the same God?

**Issues of Approach:** Lens— What are you looking for and what do you bring to the table when you're studying the Bible? We all bring baggage to reading the Bible— things that we were taught as children, things we have read, or things we have heard. Are we looking for ways in which God has been vindictive, ways in which God is against Women or against foreigners, or His relationship with Jesus, to see where God is a God of compassion. Examples of a compassionate God:

- 1) The OT law states that only males can inherit land but God through Moses, said yes to a family of 5 daughters
- 2) Leviticus 19 teaches love for our neighbor, that was not a new position held by Jesus
- 3) Isaiah 58 and Zachariah 7 talk about providing for the poor, the widows, and the oppressed— "least of these"
- 4) "Cities of refuge"— a liberation theology. In a land where the law was "an eye for an eye" someone who accidentally *hurt another had 5 cities of refuge.*
- 5) Zachariah 8— *God's people were meant to be a example of a compassionate people, blessing for all other nations*
- 6) *The OT story of Hosea is a story of God's unconditional love and compassion.*
- 7) *The 4 NT Gospels contain over 250 references to OT Scripture. Jesus often quoted Deuteronomy and Isaiah. Paul letters and the Book of Revelation reference the OT Scripture.*