

# The Ethics of Conquest (Herem) in the Promised Land

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[ 0 : 00 ] One particular class of prescriptive violence is the Harim. It's a command by Yahweh during the conquest of the Promised Land to destroy certain of Israelites' enemies in their entirety, including men, women, and children, livestock, and all possessions.

The Harim is one of the most difficult concepts in the Old Testament to reconcile with a God of supposed compassion and kindness and justice. This paper will explore the primary question of what makes the Harim described in the Bible distinct from not only other conquests, but other acts of religious violence as well.

On the surface, the Harim is often viewed as a green light from Yahweh for the Israelites to engage in wanton violence. However, many people groups lived in the land, yet the Harim was limited to only a small group of very specific groups and cities.

In this exploratory paper, I will suggest that there is a violation of a categorical imperative that identified the small subset Yahweh subjected to the Harim. I further suggest that given the self-proclaimed character of Yahweh, the Harim may have functioned as a limitation to the violence. Given that the fall of Jericho is mentioned in Hebrews 11, the list of faith praising certain acts as particularly noteworthy, this would seem to support the deontological requirements of just cause, proper authority, and right intention are met in these instances of Harim.

[ 1 : 41 ] Taken in this manner, it makes a unique corollary to just war theory, where the *juz ad bellum* predicates the *juz in bello*. For the focus on the Harim, this paper takes its *prima facie* that the Hebrew scriptures known as the Old Testament are historical documents, recounting actual events that took place in time and history as the Pentateuch describes.

Also, the issues are being discussed from a Christian perspective. Therefore, any other tradition may found the foundational presuppositions questionable.

It's not the purpose of the paper to argue those. You need to take the touchpad. There we go. While the common Christian understanding is the term Harim is used exclusively for three instances of warfare in the Bible, that of the destruction of the cities of Jericho, Ai, and Hazor, it has a far broader meaning.

The Encyclopedia Judaica defines it as the status of that which is separated from common use or contact because it is proscribed as an abomination to God or because it is consecrated to Him.

[ 3 : 01 ] Gerhard Lofink describes it in war, consecrate a city and its inhabitants to destruction, totally annihilate a population in war. The general terms of warfare in Deuteronomy is that when the Israelites approach a city, they are first to offer terms of peace.

This seems consistent with a kind and loving God. Yet in Deuteronomy 20, 16-17, God names six exceptions. Quote, Only in the cities of these people that the Lord your God is giving you as an inheritance, you shall not leave alive anything that breathes, but you shall utterly destroy them, the Hittite, the Amorite, the Canaanite, and the Perizzite, the Hivite, the Jebusite, as the Lord your God has commanded you.

End quote. Of the first note is that the command is limited to those named who are living in the cities of the Promised Land. This is not a blanket command to seek out all the Hittites, Canaanites, etc.

There is no command to attack Babylon or Nineveh. So the first limitation is the boundary of the land Yahweh promised Abraham. Anything outside the Promised Land is off limits.

That's a pretty small dot on the map given the size of the ancient Near East. One reason given for Yahweh's judgment on these groups is so that they will not lead the Israelites into idolatry.

[ 4 : 30 ] That has been taken historically as a teleological statement against any who are non-Orthodox. Yet there are many instances in the Pentateuch of the Israelites peacefully cohabitating with the non-Orthodox, that is, non-Israelites.

We are told that the Exodus contained a mixed group of people. Avaris, the city where the Israelites were held in captivity in Egypt, was a large metropolitan city with Amorites, Canaanites, Egyptians, Hittites, Medjay, and Nubians, as well as the descendants of Jacob.

People from all these groups could have been part of those who fled Egypt and lived in peace with the Israelites. The mixed group who fled in lived in a manner that was harmonious with the sons of Jacob.

Yahweh declared he has written his laws on all human hearts. Therefore, every human being knows right from wrong. We see this historically as most of the world's religion follow a moral rule book similar to the Ten Commandments.

Thomas Aquinas set out his natural laws where humanity can know God's character generally through nature or specifically through revelation. Thus, the mixed group that left Egypt were the Israelites while not orthodox followed orthopraxis, right living, living in obedience to the conscience of their hearts.

[ 5 : 48 ] In Joshua 5, 2-9, all the people who came out of Egypt were circumcised. That would include those not born of Jacob and those who were born in the wilderness to mixed parentage.

So we see those who follow orthopraxis becoming orthodox and part of the tribe of Israel. Moses' father-in-law was a polytheistic priest of Midian.

You can't get much more unorthodox than that. Yet Jethro was asked to join the Israelites as their expert in the desert wilderness and as a counselor to Moses because he was good and wise. He was obedient to the laws of Gora in his heart. He was not orthodox, but he lived a life of orthopraxis. And when he heard of the miracles Yahweh had done in rescuing the Israelites, when he learned of the direct revelation God had given his son-in-law, he then became a believer saying, now I know that the Lord is greater than all the gods.

His polytheism became monotheism and he offers a burnt sacrifice to Yahweh. Perhaps the most famous example of coexistence between the orthodox and those that live by orthopraxis is King David.

[ 6 : 58 ] A Moabite, a roost line. Uriah, Bathsheba's husband, was a Hittite. He was one of King David's most honorable soldiers and his death was the black mark on David's career.

First King 5 says, because David did what was right in the sight of the Lord and had not turned aside from anything that he commanded him in all the days of his life, except in the case of Uriah the Hittite.

End quote. So even though the Hittites are on the list of groups to be haramed, if they are living in the cities, we see God's grace is sovereign. Another famous example of a righteous Gentile is Obed-Edom, the man who housed the Ark of the Covenant before it traveled to Jerusalem. While one of David's nephews is killed because he touched the Ark and violated God's laws, Obed-Edom, a Gittite, which is a Philistine from Gath, had the Ark at his house and respected God's holiness.

And God blessed him because of that. Christopher Andrews states, quote, central to the belief of exponents of religious violence is a hatred of those who think differently, for which they claim divine authority.

[ 8 : 12 ] End quote. Yet merely thinking did not get an individual or group haramed, the choices they made as free moral agents did. Where the non-Orthodox, i.e. non-Israelites, lived honest, honorable lives, peaceful coexistence was possible.

Yet the example of the Hivites shows why the harim was necessary. In the story of the rape of Dina in Genesis 34, Jacob's two sons are often incorrectly exegeted as the bad guys in the story.

We are told that Shechem, son of Hamor, quote, loved the girl, but he took her by force. Scripture says he spoke tenderly to her, but this was after he had raped her.

If he had truly loved her, he would have made the offer of marriage without touching her. To truly understand what is going on, we need to understand Bedouin culture. Clinton Bailey has just come out with a brilliant book, Bedouin Culture in the Bible.

He explains that rape was one of the worst crimes a man could commit because it violated the entire social trust of the desert Bedouin society.

[ 9 : 20 ] If women lived in fear of rape, they would not go out in the fields alone to tend the sheep. They would hide in their tents and cities, and their men would have to stay near them in close proximity to protect their women.

Indeed, this is exactly what happened to Dina. Her brothers were out in the field, and Dina went out on her own to visit her friends. Shechem sees her and rapes her. Now, Shechem knows full well that Bedouin justice requires that the entire clan of the rapists be wiped out.

That is so the clan will teach their sons to respect women. It's their lives on the line. So if a woman is raped, it was a deliberate act of aggression that violated her entire clan.

If the clan does not avenge her honor, they become like a bleeding fish in a circle of sharks. Jacob's sons were correct. This was an attempt to seize all of Jacob's possessions.

Verse 23, Will not their livestock and their property and all their animals be ours? And all the Hittites agreed. Everyone consented to do evil, and that is why they were harimed.

[ 10 : 36 ] Therefore, we have the second limitation, that only those who embraced a life of evil and violence were designated as exceptions. Thus, the harim was not a command from Yahweh for world domination, but a provision from Yahweh for the Israelites to live in peace with their neighbors in the land he had given them.

That's the catch bet again. When checking for other ancient Near East cognates, there is no corresponding word in Egyptian.

However, in Ugaritic, we find the term haramu, desecrated, unholy. We find an older Semitic form in Akkadian, haramu, to separate.

In the mesha stela, we find an account of the king of Moab massacring the Israelites in the town of Naboh, when he retakes it because he had prescribed it, he harem, to the god Ashtar Kimosh.

Therefore, while we can conclude that the term harim does indeed mean separated for prescription, we find it's not an exclusively Hebrew theological term.

[ 11 : 51 ] The Israelites were probably familiar with the concept from their contact with other cultures before they entered the promised land. After centuries of just war theory, it's the not leaving anything that has breath alive that we in the West have problems with.

Being both a philosopher and a theologian, Augustine believed in a well-ordered world where rationality and morality coincided and where what God desires is peace.

Augustine quotes Matthew 5, 9, Blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be called the children of God. He warns that while humans are sometimes used, as instruments of God, they are more likely to be prideful slaves of their own lust for power.

While he acknowledges the harim was a just war because Moses was commanded by God, he claims that it is impossible in this day and age, from his time forward, to claim that an act of war is being done in obedience to God.

Thus, technically, there can be no truly just war. However, Augustine recognizes that war is a reality in life and has to follow some rules and use some means. The core of his view was, and remained, that warfare, especially killing in war, must be subject to the generally valid norms set for human conduct.

[ 13 : 22 ] Augustine was a Greek philosopher before converting to Christianity, so his ruminations contained both Christian theology and the principles of the Pax Romana. Just War Theory has evolved into two basic principles, *jes ad bellum*, a right to war, and *jes in bello*, rights within war.

*Jes ad bellum* limited who could wage war. It's a teleological principle stating that starting a war is morally justified if the following conditions are met. One, proper authority.

Two, just cause. Three, right intention. Only a king could declare war. Generals and politicians are forbidden. Private citizens and dissatisfied commoners certainly could not.

And the ruler could only have the authority if he or she formally declares war openly on the intended victim. That is one reason terrorism is seen as so heinous.

No war is ever declared. In a declared war, the opposing side has a moral right to defend themselves with equal force. Terrorism has no proper authority and its victims find themselves trying to respond to actions of individuals who make morally culpable choices for which the victims have no authority to respond.

[ 14 : 46 ] Therefore, terrorism is ethically never just and only preys upon the innocent. Just cause and right intention usually involve some kind of self-defense. Unprovoked wars of aggression are rarely deemed as just.

Of course, each side usually sees themselves as in the right and can offer terms of how they feel threatened by the other side. However, instigating war because one side emotionally hates a group of people who is different has never been historically justified.

Indeed, if hate is involved, Augustine claims that wars that may be justified under defense are not necessarily just. Thus, just war theory has evolved to incorporate the following two principles as well.

Four, war is a last resort. Five, peace as the goal. These are found in the Pax Romana as well as Christian theology. Hannah Cornwell states that the Pax was used to describe a usually unequal relationship of power with either the gods or other civic entities as well as interpersonal relationships.

While there were overtones of military conquest in dealing with external affairs, the concept of the Pax Romana carried the fundamental ideology that Pax, peace, was something that was negotiated between parties and physical violence was the last resort.

[16:08] In this case, Pax could be translated Pax. Contracts and negotiations were viewed as the mechanisms of peace. You said Pax.

It included with Pax? Pax, P-A-X. It's like Pax, P-A-C-T? Exactly. Oh, okay. So, peace was equated with contracts, not war.

The second principle, just in below, is based on the notion that humans are created in the image of God. Therefore, there's a universal standard that all humanity is to be treated with dignity, even in times of war.

It deals with the practicalities of the deontological issues in war, trying to limit the consequences of large-scale violence on the general population who would prefer to be noncombatants but have no choice.

Delineation of noncombatants versus soldiers. Two, proportionality. Three, no malum se, evil means. The delineation of soldiers versus noncombatants is a fundamental ethical distinction in just war.

[17:22] While everyone recognizes there will be some residual harm to the innocents during wartime, a moral and just government will do all in their power to reduce that harm. This involves proportionality, that violence is limited to that which is absolutely necessary in achieving the ends of peace.

No violence for personal reasons is acceptable, except in self-defense. Rape and torture are expressly forbidden for both soldiers and citizens alike.

Again, this rests in the concept that all humans have inherent dignity and all humans are morally culpable for violating that dignity in others. The concept of protecting human dignity leads us to a modern development of just war theory, just postbellum, the utilitarian ethics of dealing with the aftermath of war.

One, no perpetual treatment of war prisoners. Two, returning the land to a state of peace. And three, no perpetual wars. Just war theory, whether religious or secular, recognizes that certain humans have an innate desire for rabies ballorum, the frenzy of war.

They lust for power and will use any means to achieve it. Peace is their enemy because when a nation is at peace, the populace is content and has very little need for more than the bare basics from government.

[18:46] People manage their own affairs through contracts and negotiations. Human dignity is protected as peace enables individuals to exercise the most free will and autonomy possible in large group settings, which is the foundation for Western law.

Thus, the utilitarian aspects of just postbellum also have teleological and deontological dimensions as well. Now we reach the heart of our inquiry.

What kind of God would sanction Harim if peace and dignity are so highly valued? Yahweh describes himself in Numbers 14, 18 as, quote, The Lord is slow to anger and abundant in loving kindness, forgiving iniquity and transgression, but he will by no means clear the guilty, visiting the iniquity of the fathers on the children to the third and fourth generation, end quote.

1. Self-proclaimed 2. Long-suffering, loving, and kind 3. Punishes evil 4.

Consistent These characteristics seem to be in direct conflict. While this problem of theodicy can, and has, filled entire books, for the purpose of this paper, I will make a very short argument.

[20:08] Augustine merely asserts that Yahweh is just, therefore the command is just, and he does not amplify that further. Oregon sought to avoid the problem by stating that the violence is

allegorical, and it speaks of conquering sin in the spiritual level.

While these arguments are logically consistent, they are wholly unsatisfying answers to the problem. Marcion saw the acts of violence in the Old Testament as evidence that Yahweh was weak, unreliable, self-contradictory, and given to irrational acts of violence.

He resolved this by reducing Yahweh into merely a Jewish tribal deity, a Demiurge who created the world but was evil. Jesus then became the son of an unknown God who was only love.

Denying Yahweh is loving and kind is also an unsatisfactory answer. And then one must call Yahweh a liar as well. It is in Grant Strawn's reply to Marcionism that we find a satisfactory answer. Quote, The problem with Marcion's simply good deity is that he is, in the final analysis, entirely devoid of justice. Marcion's God is weak and decidedly un-God-like.

[ 21 : 20 ] He may dislike evil, but he does nothing to stop it. End quote. In the throne before God, the angels do not sing love, love, love.

That is John Lennon, not God. They cry, Holy, Holy, Holy is the Lord God, the Almighty.

Yahweh is a God who passionately cares about all people. He created humanity to be in his own image. And in the New Testament, Christ says, Inasmuch as you did this to one of the least of my brethren, you did it unto me.

Now he's talking about doing a kindness in that example, but he takes notes of unkindness as well. Exodus 21-24 gives Yahweh's restriction on retributive violence.

The famous lex talionis principle, eye for eye, tooth for tooth, hand for hand, foot for foot, and it continues. In other words, you can't kill a man for breaking your leg.

[ 22 : 22 ] You can't exact more justice than the crime committed. Therefore, the crimes committed by the people God sanctioned the harem against must have been pretty vile.

Infant sacrifices were pretty common in the ancient Near East. Ceremonial burials have been found near foundation walls of temples and fortress walls, indicating a blood sacrifice to magically strengthen the walls.

The apocryphal books of wisdom described the Canaanites committing sorcery and unholy rites which included slaughtering their children and eating human flesh. While this might sound like gross exaggeration, archaeologists have found tophets, places of child sacrifices.

The most extensive was at Carthage, jars full of child skeletons in a ritual area. The most famous tophet in the Bible is the Valley of Hinnin, now known as Gehenna.

There was a reason that the Israelites defiled it. It was a tophet to Moloch. The term, pass through the fire, is a euphemism for child sacrifice. If this was the standard of such crimes committed, it is no wonder the harem involved removing the culture's posterity.

[ 23 : 35 ] They had already tried to sacrifice their posterity for prosperity. There's a missing piece to this puzzle. Kim Jin-man points out this is not just the deontological category of an action that makes something right or wrong.

He amplifies, quote, it is necessary to know either what consequences result when people generally perform an action or what the consequences of a particular act of that type are performed at a particular time.

End quote. It can be reasonably concluded that the harem is justified war only as a particular act performed at a particular time to those God had named exceptions.

Contrary to those who advocate religious violence, it is not a blanket teleological rule to wipe out all who do not believe in your religious viewpoint or your worldview. Therefore, when we look to the jazed vellum, we find that one, the proper authority is a loving, long-suffering God with the intent on bringing peace to the land.

Two, the harem still meets the criteria of delineation, but the delineation is not soldier versus non-combatant, but Yahweh's standard of orthopraxis versus wanton evil.

[ 24 : 59 ] And even in punishing extreme evil in war, we still see three, no malum se, evil means are to be used. The men and women facing harem were not raped or tortured.

They were not humiliated. They were put to the sword in judgment. God does not glory in bloodshed. When the Israelites exceed the limitations of harem and start to embrace warfare instead of peace, in Micah 3, 9-12, he condemns them.

Quote, Now hear this, heads of the house of Jacob and rulers of the house of Israel, who abhor justice and twist everything that is straight, who build Zion with bloodshed and Jerusalem with violent injustice.

End quote. God does not permit even his chosen people to spill innocent blood. We can therefore conclude that the people condemned to the harem not only committed heinous crimes, but they had rejected God's kindness and exceeded the limits of his long-suffering.

He would have preferred the people to repent of their evil and live. An interesting case in the consistency of God's character is shown in the book of Jonah. Jonah gets angry at God for his long-suffering and kindness because it's shown to the Assyrians.

[ 26 : 19 ] Barker makes the case that the evil and suffering caused by Nineveh in a world supposedly subject to divine sovereignty suggests that it should face divine judgment. Yet when Jonah prophesies that God will destroy them unless they repent, to Jonah's bitter anger, they do.

God's freedom to respond without constraints prevents Yahweh's response from being reduced to a formula where the repentance of Nineveh necessitates forgiveness. Yahweh's desire is to bring peace through repentance and right living.

And he only resorts to violence as the last option. Barker concludes with a challenge that Jonah pushes its audience to broaden its perspective on who can find hope based on their response to Yahweh.

The laws given at Sinai are part of a progressive revelation with the law being a schoolmaster.

There's a common perception that the Harim influenced the Crusades.

However, the historical record shows this isn't actually true. Recent studies going to the extant historical documents show the Harim is never mentioned for the First Crusade.

[ 27 : 39 ] And Jonah is actually only mentioned as an example of a very good general. Therefore, if we consider God's character expressed through the Harim as a particular exception to limit violence and bring peace to the land, we find a pivotal historical development in the medieval Pax Dei, the peace and truce of God.

At the end of Charlemagne's reign, the Carolingian Empire's power decreased dramatically and anarchy began to rule. Any minor noble could and did start a war.

Soldiers simply bent on destruction would destroy anything in front of them, destroying churches and monasteries as well as looting and burning fields and farms. Clerics and peasants were slaughtered indiscriminately.

Knights who decided to go on their own became bandits, robbed and slaughtered rich and poor alike on trade routes and routes to holy sites. Unsurprisingly, with huge number of fields burnt and cattle slaughtered, famine became widespread, with local churches destroyed, a town had even less means of keeping order.

Trade began to dry up, both from fear of the violence on the routes as well as a decided lack of goods to sell. And much to the church's consternation, the number of faithful going on pilgrimage decreased dramatically.

[ 29 : 00 ] Feudal wars were draining Europe dry. Christian nobles, like the Israelites before them, were exceeding the limitations of the Harem and embracing warfare instead of peace.

God's blessing left the land. Years of drought also struck the land, creating a famine so great that there were reports that even the wealthiest resorted to cannibalism.

Given that this war was in the mid-900s, fear of an apocalyptic judgment grew as a millennium approach. The year 1033 would be the 1,000-year anniversary of the death, resurrection, and ascension of Christ.

There were apocalyptic signs. Europe was experiencing war, famine, and disease. Three of the four horsemen. And Haley's Comet made an appearance in 989.

But with the apocalyptic fear also came a strong belief in God's millennial kingdom of peace and joy. They believed it was going to be established on earth once the wicked were punished.

[ 30 : 03 ] The clergy were able to short-shape these forces between apocalyptic fear and millennial hope to create the sociopolitical vision similar to the Israelites' vision as they entered the Promised Land, where all the faithful lived in accordance to God's law.

A religious council was held in Lopoi in 975 to address the issue. Individual repentance was seen as inadequate. The body of Christ as a whole was called to collectively create a new, just, and peaceful society to abrogate apocalyptic justice.

In a radical move, major relics were brought from their holy sites to the council so that great crowds who followed the procession, growing in size with every town the parade passed through, were subsequently invited to participate in the council, which was in a large open field.

Men and women, anyone over the age of 12, was invited to a political rally. Commoners participated in the fundamental decision on how to reduce the violence in their society with clergy and nobility.

Subsequent councils were held in Cherue, Narbonne, Limogines, Poitiers, and Borge. Regional authorities with the blessing of the crown gathered with churchmen to impose God's will on non-royal individuals with secular power.

[ 31 : 25 ] Councils were held in England and Germany and other scattered councils throughout Europe popped up. All followed the same structure of having major relics, parade, gathering a crowd from every sector of feudal life, and ending in a democratic political rally.

As we have seen with Jonah, the fear of God's justice can bring repentance and a return to biblical orthopraxis, which God desires instead of the Harem.

The cult of saints, a relic's jamboree, reminded people of God's miraculous provision in a time of terror and apparent judgment. Like the Assyrians, Christian Europe repented and renounced the violence against the church and defenseless.

The aim of the gatherings was to bring down to earth through the agency of the saints the peace of the heavenly order. The movement became what the scholars have dubbed the first mass peace movement in history.

Lance describes this remarkable social transformation of feudal society as, quote, anyone and everyone attended these assemblies.

[ 32 : 32 ] The presence of female commoners at these events especially suggests that either church council is a misnomer or these were among the most unique councils in the history of the church.

In the course of a few days, these commoners saw more people, thousands, than they might in the course of their entire lives. An unheard of social experience, including unprecedented levels of socializing between clergy and laity.

Monks, in principle, had no exposure with laity, especially women, and yet here, for days and nights, with no walls to cloister them, an unwanted proximity reigned between lay commoners, the saints, and their guardians.

Similarly, peasants, normally isolated in their village and markets, could exchange information about lords and their evil customs, an opportunity as subversive as bosses allowing workers to communicate freely.

All this contrasts markedly with the norms of the prevailing culture, where commoners petitioning for fair treatment might have their hands and feet chopped off. End quote.

[ 33 : 36 ] By the 11th century, other councils were being called across Europe to limit the number of days of violence that could be enacted, called the truce of God.

Where these wars could be held and what resources could be confiscated were sharply defined and limited as well. By the end of the 11th century, the two movements had blended together, forming what is now known as the peace and truce of God.

So what was achieved at these radical cults? As has been said, it was a Western European peace movement involving every strata of feudal society from the 10th through 13th century.

An attempt to return Europe to the law and structure of the promised land. Weapon bearers, namely nobility and knights, took penitential oaths not to harm clerics, church land, or other church resources in their wars.

In recognition that the farmers and tradesmen were necessary to feed and provide trade for Europe, commoners could not be killed in war, especially when tending their field and their herds and flocks.

[ 34 : 44 ] These were considered common property for the common good and could not be taken to feed an army. Also declared necessary for the common good were individuals, crops and trees, farm tools and farm animals, tradesmen's tools and inventory, as well as their horses and oxen and the wagons they pulled.

Commoners' homes were now off limits, including their women. The church recognized that farms needed strong families, so the dignity of peasant families was finally granted under oath.

To the astonishment of the age, highborns swore to keep the most basic Old Testament law, thou shalt not steal, in the belief that God's wrath was imminent for those who disobeyed.

Lords and knights were forbidden to fight on holy days as it would keep the people from attending church. Therefore, it was an infringement on God's sovereignty. Every weekend was declared a

monastic celebration of Christ's passion, from Thursdays celebrating the Lord's Supper through Sunday to His death and resurrection.

So four days out of seven were off limits. There were saints' days and holidays as well as civic celebrations called by the crown. Nobility took an oath to protect routes to pilgrimage sites and universities, committing their resources to the well-being of those below them.

[ 36 : 13 ] War was eventually limited to a mere 80 days out of the year. Feudal violence was restricted to declared war exclusively between nobility and their knights using their own resources.

The peace and truce of God revoked the noble birthright, the right to kill, to take vengeance, to be the sole judge of what constituted justice in their own land. They were now oath-bound to recognize that all Christians played a role in bringing the kingdom of God down to earth.

No matter how humble of birth, independent violence of any sort against anyone became illegitimate. The progression from the harem of schoolteacher to the fruit of the Pax Dei can be seen in a feudal society that embraced for three centuries the idea that the kingdom of God on earth was a place where people engaged in voluntary relations.

Proersion of any kind, especially physical, was deemed illegitimate. While we in the modern West take this for granted as a natural human right, medieval Europe was a place of power politics of warlords and in a law of hierarchy at a time when the Highborns legitimately owned people. It was only in the fear of God's wrath and the hope of his peace that an entire culture was transformed for 300 years from feudal violence and wanton cruelty to an orthopraxis of peace.

[ 37 : 43 ] The adoption of the Pax Dei had an immediate economic impact. The following year the famine ended, crops grew in abundance.

Second, third, fourth year were no less abundant. Because of this new sense of social order was based on God's faithfulness in keeping his covenant with his people, the church was able to reinforce the people's duty to be faithful in the covenants they made with each other.

Trade unions grew. Unprecedented loans for business ventures were given. Commoners began making trade ventures as they were allowed to finally keep much of their own profit.

The concept gave dignity to manual labor instead of it being a stigma. The reemergence of a covenant community created a radical third estate in feudal society, a demos, the nation.

Land sums it up, quote, riding on the wave of abundance that followed the famine. This alliance of elite and commoners added a dose of positive-sum behavior to social interaction.

[ 38 : 48 ] Trust, empathy, productive labor, mutual benevolence, renunciation of violence. And the result is one of the earliest clear manifestations of the kind of civil society that Western Europe would eventually generate on a stable basis some eight centuries later.

End quote. In conclusion, whatever theology or theories we develop must always be consistent with Yahweh's character, and we must be utterly meticulous in basing human interpretation and understanding against what Yahweh himself has said.

Thus, we see the harem is indeed an act of violence commanded by God, but only as a last resort against wicked people who repeatedly rejected God's grace.

We see Yahweh's purpose is consistent with his character to bring peace to the land. Those that lived by orthopraxis lived in peace with their orthodox neighbors.

This makes the harem a limitation on the amount of violence in the land, and we see the progress of this concept in the peace and truce of God, which in turn has progressed to the foundations of modern Western society.

[ 40 : 06 ] This is the ethic of the harem, to stop brutal violence that cripples lives and destroys the land, to use the only means left to put an end to the violence done by those who have such hate in their hearts that no amount of grace and mercy will cause them to repent.

God's grace is sovereign, but there are those who by their actions make themselves exceptions to his long-suffering. Yahweh is not indifferent. He passionately cares for all people and acts on their behalf to limit evil and bring peace to the land.

Finally, Isaiah 1, 16-20. Wash yourselves, make yourselves clean, remove the evil of your deeds from my sight, cease to do evil, learn to do good, seek justice, reprove the ruthless, defend the orphan, plead for the widow.

Come now, let us reason together, says the Lord. Though your sins are as scarlet, they will be white as snow. Though they are red like crimson, they will be like wool.

If you consent and obey, you will eat from the best of the land. But, if you rebel and refuse, you will be devoured by the sword.

[ 41 : 27 ] Truly, the mouth of the Lord has spoken. Thank you.