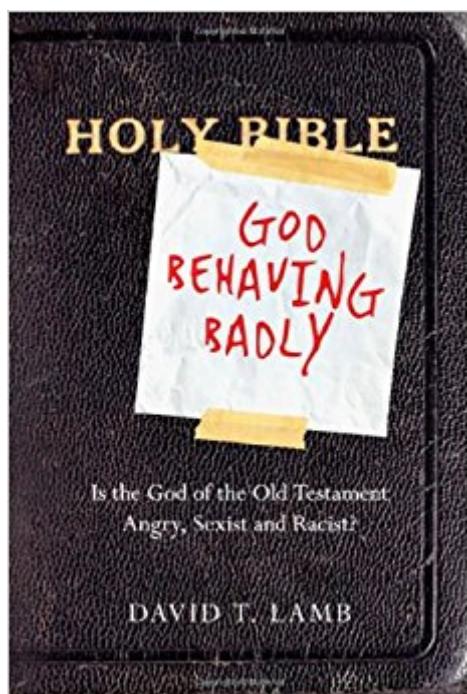


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# God Behaving Badly: Is The God Of The Old Testament Angry, Sexist And Racist?



## Synopsis

God has a bad reputation. Many think of God as wrathful and angry, smiting people right and left for no apparent reason. The Old Testament in particular seems at times to portray God as capricious and malevolent, wiping out armies and nations, punishing enemies with extreme prejudice. But wait. The story is more complicated than that. Alongside troubling passages of God's punishment and judgment are pictures of God's love, forgiveness, goodness and slowness to anger. How do we make sense of the seeming contradiction? Can God be trusted or not? David Lamb unpacks the complexity of the Old Testament to explore the character of God. He provides historical and cultural background to shed light on problematic passages and to bring underlying themes to the fore. Without minimizing the sometimes harsh realities of the biblical record, Lamb assembles an overall portrait that gives coherence to our understanding of God in both the Old and New Testaments.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

"I highly recommend this book to students, laypeople, and pastors as an excellent introduction to how to understand the Old Testament portrait of God in light of the questions raised by new atheists and struggling Christians." (George P. Wood, Enrichment, Spring 2012)"What is the book about? In a nutshell, it addresses some of the most common problematic stereotypes of the OT God: angry, sexist, racist, violent, legalistic, rigid, and distant. In about 200 pages, Lamb treats these topics in a well-informed, accessible, and humorous way. The book is very persuasive overall, easy to read, and extremely well-written. . . . So, for me, God Behaving Badly is the perfect textbook." (Nijay

Gupta, [www.nijaygupta.wordpress.com](http://www.nijaygupta.wordpress.com), December 2011)"Lamb encourages readers to prove disturbing passages with an open mind, read feminist theologians, and engage in prayerful conversation. . . . This book will challenge, comfort, and provoke reflection." (Publishers Weekly, May 9, 2011)"Let's face it: God gets a lot of bad press--it can be a little embarrassing. So even the title of Dave Lamb's book gave me hope. Dave gives honest voice and deliberate attention to some of the most troublesome questions humans have ever asked, and brings not only answers but develops our view of God too. The most thrilling thing about this book is that I can recommend it to both the faithful and the skittish, to friends and students and people who think about God and aren't sure what to think." (Alison Siewert, New Ministry Developer, Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), and editor, Worship Team Handbook)"In many of our African American churches we frequently recite the refrain, 'God is good all the time and all the time God is good.' God Behaving Badly is an engaging, thoughtful, witty and helpful book that can give all of us Christian readers a bit more confidence when reciting that refrain. David Lamb gives sound guidance for understanding a difficult topic. Lamb offers an apologetic for not only believing in God but also believing that God is good--even as he is portrayed in the Old Testament. Professor Lamb's scholarship is sound and his sense of humor had me laughing out loud. Not many theology books can do that! I'm going to use this book in class and enthusiastically recommend it to my congregants!" (Rev. Dennis R. Edwards, Ph.D., pastor, Peace Fellowship Church, Washington, DC)"Dave Lamb's book is a popular apologetic that answers the question, 'Is the God of the Old Testament angry, sexist and racist?' He prefaces his answers with a solid biblical interpretation guideline. The author emphatically states, 'When we approach Scripture, we must take the context seriously.' Dave really does that! The word context appears 59 times, scattered throughout the book. Dave's solid contextual analysis of passages--which might appear to say, Yes, Yes, Yes in answer to the question about God's anger, his view of gender and his view of races--was a highlight for me. Dave's unraveling of many problematic texts in terms of contextual analysis is superb. In addition, his many, many masterful word studies shed light on his contextual analyses. Dave writes with winsome humor. He loves the Old Testament, and you can tell that as you read the popularly written, academically sound, easy-to-read flow of material in each chapter. After reading Dave's book, I am sure you will appreciate that Dave views the God of the Old Testament and the God of the New Testament as one." (Bobby Clinton, professor of leadership, School of Intercultural Studies at Fuller Theological Seminary)"It has been said that if you love something long enough it reveals itself to you--that love is a hermeneutical key to unlocking the mysteries of life itself. This is especially true for the Bible and the God of the Bible, for God is love and can only be truly known in love. David Lamb has loved

his way into understanding Yahweh more fully; subsequently he can lovingly help us to 'see' and experience God in new and revealing ways." (Alan Hirsch, author of *The Forgotten Ways*) "This is a book which not only should be read by those into apologetics, but read by all Christians in our churches. It is striking right at the heart of one of the most pressing questions being asked today and we cannot ignore this. *God Behaving Badly* is an extremely helpful book in wrestling with these very difficult questions in a winsome, biblical and readable way. If you are at all missionally living in our culture and aware of the questions being asked and challenges to Christianity, then you really cannot help but read this book!" (Dan Kimball, author of *They Like Jesus But Not The Church*) "David Lamb faces up to all the questions that most often trouble people about the God of the Old Testament. Written in a winsome and engaging way, this book is going to help many who wonder if the God of the Old Testament is indeed the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ." (John Goldingay, David Allan Hubbard Professor of Old Testament, Fuller Theological Seminary) "I will require my college students to read this book. I became sensitive to the 'God questions' in the Bible because students asked me questions that came straight from troubled hearts. This book is written for students and speaks with wit and wisdom to the questions they have." (Scot McKnight, Karl A. Olsson Professor in Religious Studies, North Park University)

David T. Lamb (D.Phil., Oxford) is associate professor of Old Testament at Biblical Theological Seminary in Hatfield, Pennsylvania. He previously worked in campus ministry with InterVarsity Christian Fellowship and has taught extensively in various crosscultural contexts. He is the author of *Righteous Jehu and His Evil Heirs* (Oxford).

Through solid exposition and an inviting, readable writing style, Lamb has provided us with the perfect resource for anyone with honest questions about God or the Bible. Even if you do not consider yourself to be an official "skeptic" - at one time or another you have come across things in the Old Testament (or heard about them!) that make you cringe. You want to love God and trust Him, but how can you if He orders toddlers to be mauled by bears, oppresses gifted women or calls for innocent nations to be swept away by the sword? But then along comes this extremely helpful book - one that raises all of these legitimate, thought-provoking questions (and more), and then carefully, faithfully answers them, one by one - leaving you not only with a deeper appreciation (and interest in) the Old Testament, but inspiring you with a deeper love for God Himself. Lamb's contagious joy in his relationship with God and his deep love for His Word combine with his scholarly gifts to give us the kind of answers that lead to deeper faith - and all that for under ten

bucks! I highly recommend this book! Enjoy!

I really enjoyed the author's discussion of these difficult issues. I have grown up in the Church, and struggle with the way many Churches and Christians seem to treat women differently (they can't be in leadership positions and they can't teach mixed adult classes), and yet that is not what I see when I read the Bible. I appreciate David Lamb's assessment that God is affirming to women and that he is not afraid to use women's talents for his purposes, even if they seem to go against what many church leaders might think.

This is a treatment of Old Testament violence by God. Those of us who don't follow the "Inerrancy" camp ( no mistakes in copying scripture over hundreds of years, etc.), find there may be something not really commanded by God happening in the Bible. Mr. Lamb does give a detailed reason for many of the "Bad" behavior incidents citing disobedience and broken relationships as reason for pretty bad results. I took away from this that God means what he says and He will follow through.

I teach the Pentateuch (Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers & Deuteronomy) to freshmen in high school. The questions that I hear are difficult to tackle. This book was recommended to me by a college professor that meet with periodically. I have never encountered a resource that helped me help students in such an excellent way. This book is understandable and presents new ideas on the Old Testament in a mature and readable way. I recommend this to any student of the Old Testament, and **ESPECIALLY ANY TEACHER WHO ENDEAVORS TO TEACH THE OLD TESTAMENT** to any age. This would be a great book to study in a small group setting or in a Sunday school class.

In this book, David T. Lamb challenges popularly-held, negative perceptions of God by taking the reader through relevant Bible passages. He uses a conversational tone in presenting his arguments, making his book accessible to all. He also incorporates many modern-day illustrations to demonstrate God's goodness. I recommend this book to anyone who desires to understand God better- from Christians who want to defend their faith to non-believers who have serious questions about God's character.

This wonderful book seeks to answer the question: Is the God of the Old Testament Angry, Sexist and Racist? David T. Lamb is an Old Testament professor at Biblical Theological Seminary in

Pennsylvania. He does an excellent job exploring the Old Testament in context and comparing Yahweh in the OT to Jesus in the NT. The book is not shallow, but it is written in casual language with lots of modern and cultural references that will be familiar to people. He also includes discussion questions for each chapter in a section at the end of the book. It's a great way for people to be introduced to OT theology and biblical studies while also answering practical questions. I look forward to using this book in the future for small groups or sunday school classes.

I can read the Pentateuch with new understanding. Excellent resource for anyone hoping to reconcile the messages of both Old and New Testaments.

I had a ball reading this book. Unpacks a lot of hard questions. And he has a great sense of humor that kept me glued to the book till I was finished. This is one of my favorite books on christian apologetics.

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