



The Problem of Violence in the Bible

**The human Cruelty and
the Judgment of God**



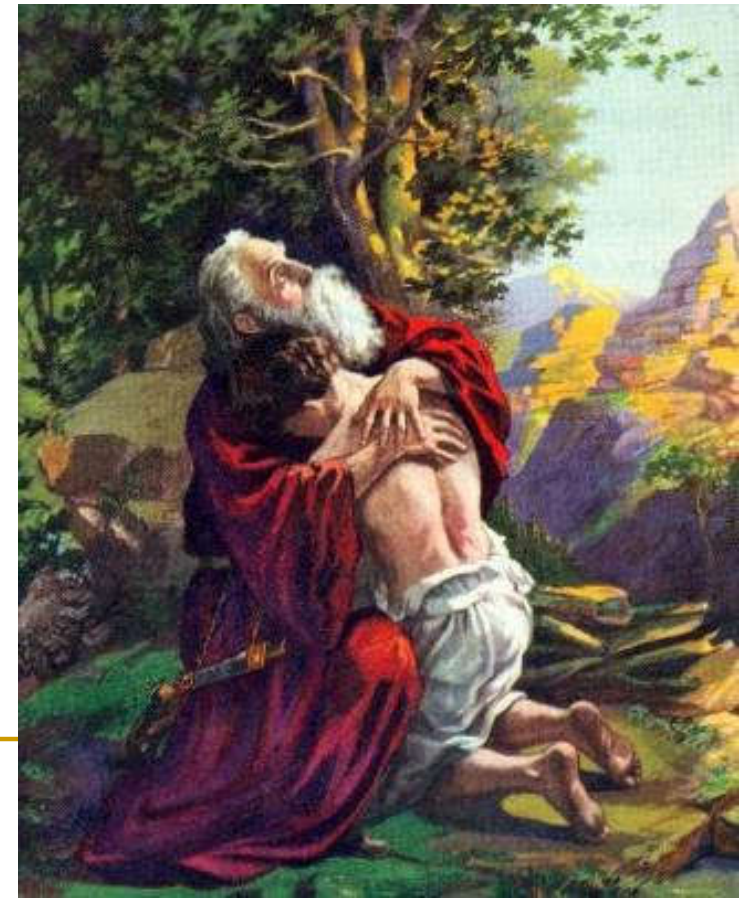
Violence as Symbol

- ❑ “You shall not murder!” (Exodus 20:13; Deut 5:17);
“God is love” (1 John 4:8.16)
- The beginning of Croatian literature (Marko Marulić):
- Judith’s “sword” against
“Nebuchadnezzar’s” project:
 - ❑ Aram, Assyria, Babylon, Persia, Greece
- = God’s judgment against Lucifer
- Jesus brought a sword (Mt 10:34)
- “will perish by the sword” (Mt 26:52)
- Bethulia:
 - [*Betula*] = a virgin, [*Bet-El*] = House of God



“Violence of God”

- ❑ God does not require from Abraham the killing of his son but
- Consecration, exultation
 - ❑ Persecutors in Exod. 14:
- “Egypt”, not “Egyptians”
 - ❑ The firstborn of Egypt in Ps 136:10:
- = the first descendants of the House of Slavery
 - ❑ Radical removal in John 15:1s:
- Father is the vinedresser
- He removes unfruitful branch, he prunes (cleanses) the fruitful



Joshua the warrior in Ex 17:8-16

Joshua fighting Amalek, Nicolas Poussin
1593/94 – 1665



- ❑ How old is he in Ex 33:11?
- youngling נער *ná'ar*
– cf. 1 Sam 3, Jer 1:6s)
- 16 chapters after Exod. 17
 - ❑ How long the fight (Ex 17:12)?
- Long time – the whole day
 - ❑ The role of Moses (v10-12)?
- Praying patronage
- The opponent: עמלק Amalek (singular! 8-11.13s.16) 7x
 - ❑ Whose fight (16b cf. 14b)?
- The Lord have war against Amalek (v16)
- Extinction (יהוה): “I will utterly blot out” 14b)

Special war in the Bible

- **Intellectual violence in 2 Kgs 18:28–36**
 - Assyrian conquest: Hamath, Arpad, Sepharvaim, Hena and Awa (2 Kgs 18:34; 19:13), Gozan, Haran, Rezeph i Eden (2 Kgs 19:12)
- **Hard siege of Jerusalem (2 Kgs 18,27):**
- **Feeding with excrements**
 - Religious accusation in 18:22:
- **King Hezekiah destroyed holy places**
 - Conqueror's false prophecy (18:25):
- **יהוה said to me: “Destroy this land!” (v25)**



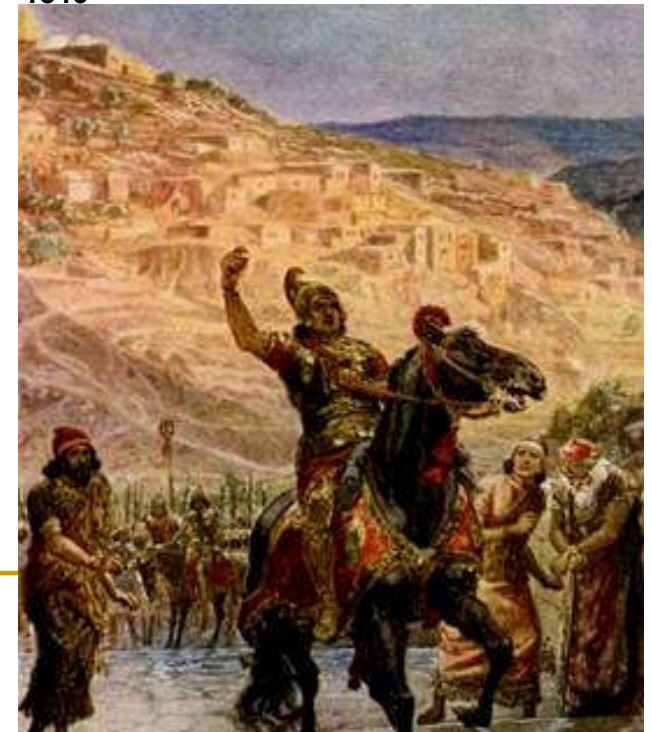
Asirski kralj Sanherib

New attack

- ❑ Diplomatic language in 2 Kings 18:26.28:
- Judean (28) instead of Aramaic (26)
 - ❑ Cult of personality in 18:29.31:
- *Thus says the king* (↔ thus says יהוה)
- cf. “Hear the word of the *great king*” (28)
- ↔ do not listen to *Hezekiah* (2x 31s)
 - ❑ deceitful call in v31:
- Make peace with me (31)
= HB: make a blessing! ברכה *b^erakâ*
- Conquered gods are powerless (35) →
- יהוה powerless?



The Assyrian Rabshakeh demanding the Surrender of Jerusalem – by William Hole 1846



Royal answer

- ❑ Answer to verbal attack (2 Kgs 19:1):
- Tearing clothes, with sackcloth in the Temple
 - ❑ Answer to written attack (19:14-19):
- The letter “before יהוה” (14)
- Sennacherib (name only!) against God (16)
- Gods of nations truly powerless, they are no gods (18)
 - ❑ Theological intention of the prayer (19:19):
- That all the kingdoms may know God (19)
- Success: Jerusalem spared

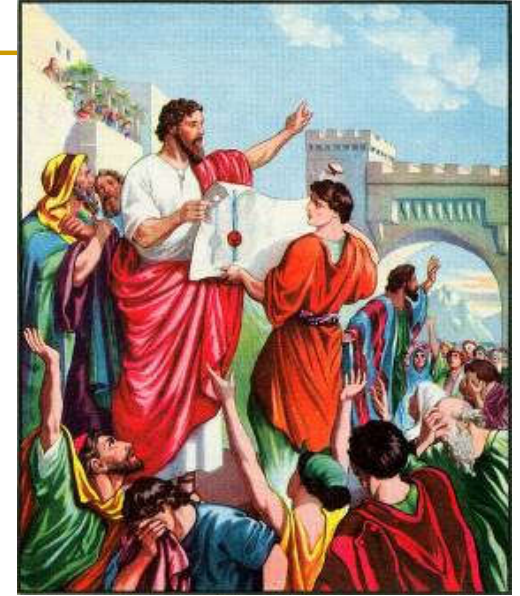


Attack on Nehemiah's restoration

- Personal testimony of Nehemiah
- “great anger” (Neh 3:33; 4:1) at first as mocking
 - The opponents of the restoration 3:33.35; 4:1:
- Sanballat – *Sinuballit* – Acadian (Moon-god has a son 3:33)
- Tobiah – the Ammonite (traitor, Vg. 4:3)
- Arabs, Ammonites, Ashdodites (Vg. 4:7)
 - = Samaritans
 - New attack u 4:2 (Vg. 4:8):
- War
 - Method in 4:5 (Vg. 4:11):
- Undercover, infiltration
 - “cainic” intention: to kill (כָּרַח cf. Gen 4:8)



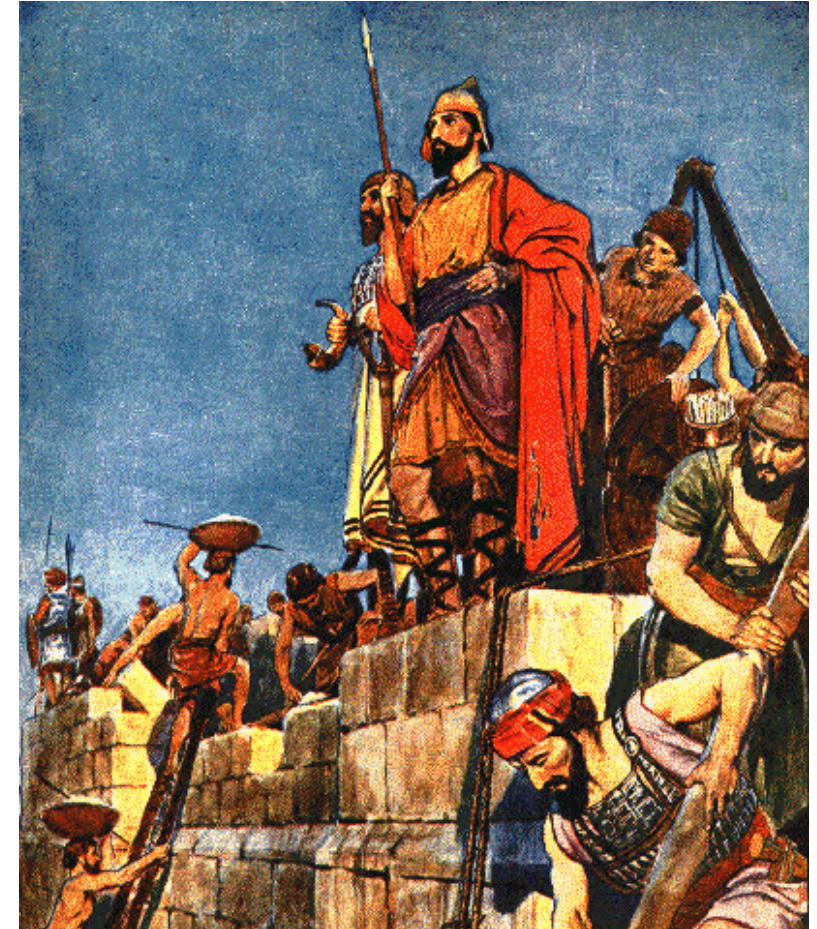
Successful answer



- ❑ Nehemiah role model in Neh 1:4; 2:4; Vg. 4:40 →
- **Community praying (Neh Vg. 4:9)**
 - ❑ The leader has insight (Vg. 4:10):
- **Resignation, forces gone, end too far away**
 - ❑ Motivational speech to the people in Vg. 4:14:
cf. 2:17 (emotion, mind, purpose):
- ***Emotion*: “Do not be afraid!” (Vg. 4:14)**
- **Method of Moses: *thinking* on God (Vg. 4:14)**
 - ❑ Respectable Lord (cf. 1:5),
God will fight (Vg. 4:20)
- ***Purpose*: family and home (Vg. 4:14)**
- **Success in Vg 4:19 (⇔ v8):**
- **Infiltration discovered**
 - ❑ Opponents wanted to stop the word (Vg 4:8 cf. v11)
- ⇔ **God stopped their plan (Vg v15) = God’s war (20)**
 - ❑ = The prayer in 4:9 was (still) worth it

Military answer

- Strategy and equipment u Neh 4:3.7.10 (Vg. 4:9.13.16):
- Guards day and night (Vg. 9)
- sword, spear, bow, shield, body armor (Vg. 13.16)
- Building and defendig (Vg. 17):
- Work with one hand, weapon with the other
- The leader working himself (Vg. 21.23):
- *We* labored (Vg. 4:21)
- Neither *I* nor my brothers... (Vg. 4:23)



New Testament and violence



- The one whom they have pierced (Zec 12:10; John 19:37); LXX: “he”, HB: “me”
 - Christ’s summary in Luke 24:44:
- “everything”... in the Bible... “must be fulfilled” – became victim of human violence
 - Exposed in John 8:6.8:
- Bent down (6.8)
 - Only he in the dialogue with the accused (8:10s):
- “Woman” (10) – “Lord” (11)
 - Lamb of God who takes away the sin (John 1:29) cf. 8:59
- They want to stone Jesus

