



# THE GOD OF OLD AND NEW



**Why is God so different in the  
Old and New Testaments?**



# WHAT'S AT STAKE?



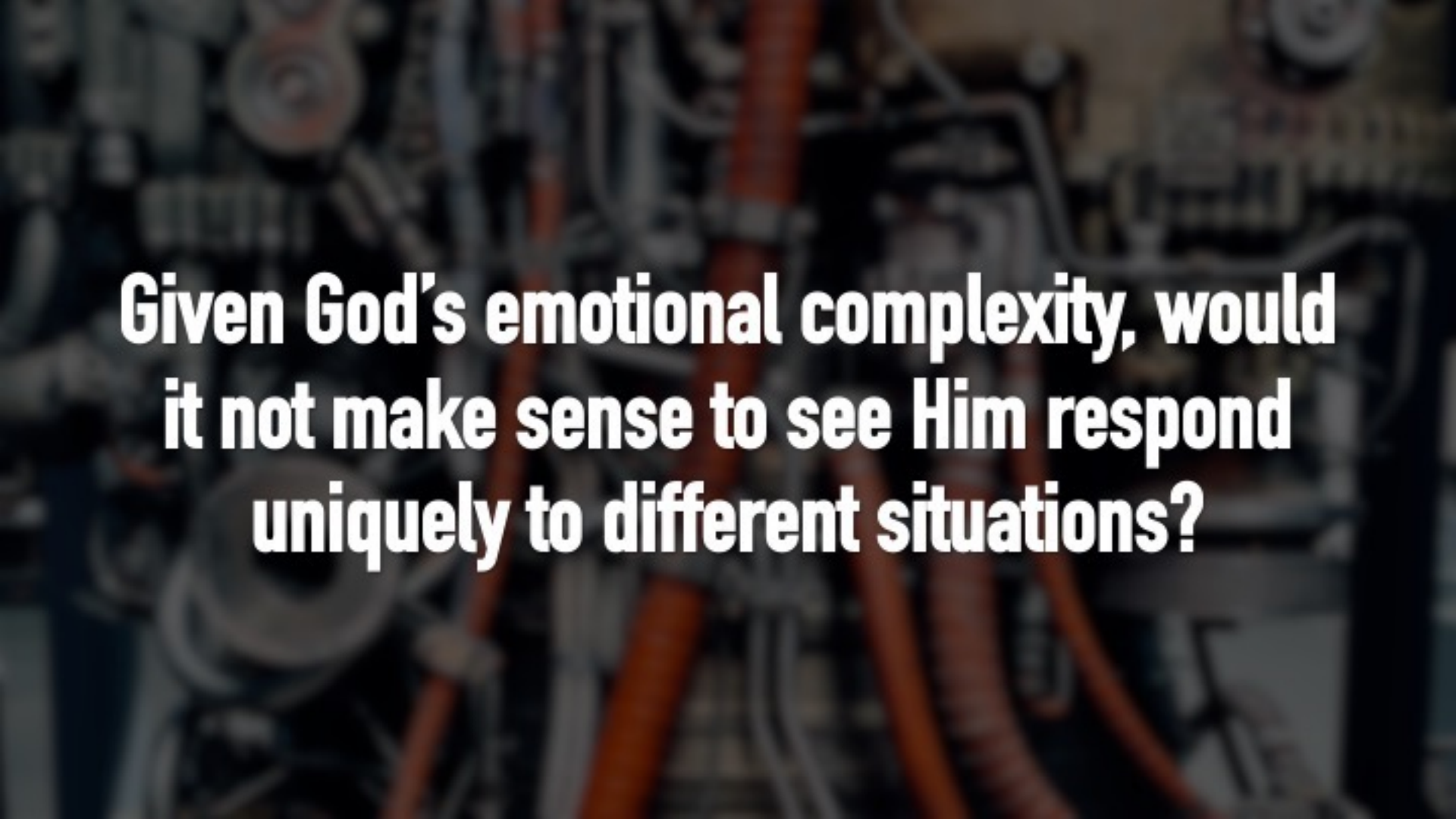
- **The credibility of the Bible** — If it doesn't appear to present a coherent, consistent explanation and portrayal of God's character, it calls into question the entire body of literature.
- **God's infallibility** — What explanation could be offered for God's changing character other than saying He is inconsistent, changes over time, or is plagued by fits of occasional rage?
- **Interpretive challenges** — How do we really explain instances of wrath and destruction? How do we reconcile that with extreme mercy? How can such qualities as love, hate, mercy, justice, wrath, and salvation co-exist?



# COMPLEXITY

- First, are any of us “one-note” beings? Do we have the ability to display many different moods and emotions while still feeling satisfied by our internal, personal consistency? I’m still “me” whether I’m happy or sad. I’m still “me” whether I’m interacting with my kids or a police officer, but I act very different around them.
- God is an infinitely complex being. All of our emotions are modeled after His, but on a much smaller scale. This is why we must have a healthy dose of fear when we come to God, knowing His incredible capacity for complex emotion (Psalm 104:31–35, 11:5, John 3:16, 1 John 4:7ff, Genesis 6:6).





**Given God's emotional complexity, would it not make sense to see Him respond uniquely to different situations?**



# THINGS CHANGE

**Mankind has changed in many ways since the time of the Old Testament. While our fundamental spiritual needs are the same, how we interact, conduct business, build societies, approach relationships, understand the natural world, etc. have all changed since then. In fact, the world of the First Century was vastly different than what Abraham, Joshua, or David knew. As mankind changed, God's approach changed as well (in communication, in the specifics of worship, etc.).**

# WARFARE



- **Skeptics often point to the wars of the OT as evidence of a capricious, bloodthirsty God, totally irreconcilable with the love and mercy of the NT.**
- **But the Israelites lived in a brutal, backward-thinking world. They were surrounded by violence and danger that would be unimaginable today. God did not invent flaying, beheading, and raping. But His people had to survive among it (Lev. 20:3-5, Amos 1:13, 2 Kings 8:12) AND behave better (Deut. 20:17-18).**

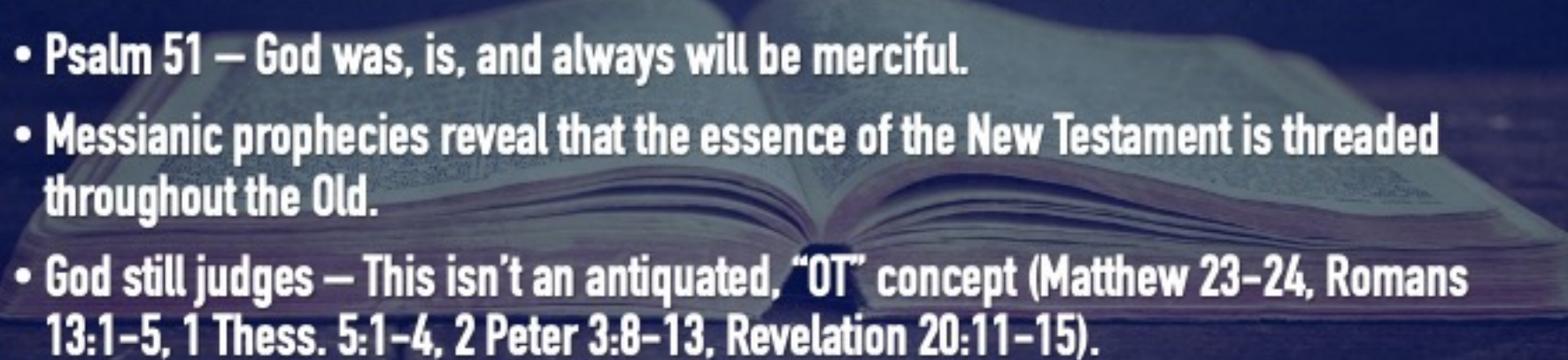


**God instructed Israel to  
engage in war, but never to  
become warlords.**



# **OLD AND NEW — REALLY SO DIFFERENT?**

- God dealt with mankind in an ancient, brutal, backward time as they could understand Him. When mankind was ready, He revealed Himself in a way that was appropriate for that time period (Rom. 5:6). Just as a father deals with his children in different stages of life and maturity, so God revealed Himself in ways that were appropriate for the age (Hebrews 12:7ff, Galatians 4:1ff).
- But is God still the same God from age to age? Is your dad still the same man? Your mom? An objective look at the Bible reveals incredible crossover between the testaments...

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- **Jeremiah 31:31-34** — The character of the new covenant wasn't an accident.
  - **Psalm 51** — God was, is, and always will be merciful.
  - **Messianic prophecies** reveal that the essence of the New Testament is threaded throughout the Old.
  - **God still judges** — This isn't an antiquated, "OT" concept (Matthew 23-24, Romans 13:1-5, 1 Thess. 5:1-4, 2 Peter 3:8-13, Revelation 20:11-15).
  - **NT writers** didn't hesitate to mention OT judgments (1 Cor. 10:1ff, Jude 7, Heb. 3:16-19).
  - **Uzzah and Ananias/Sapphira** — Similar stories that stand out because of their exceptional nature.
  - **God still abhors sin** (Gal. 5:19-21) and it comes with a spiritual price (Rom. 6:23).
  - **God sees faith as a virtue** (Hebrews 11).