

Even Atheists Acknowledge This About the Bible

The Bible is largely credited with forming the moral and intellectual foundation of Western civilization. These ideas have spread around the world, creating societies rooted in individual liberty and democracy, and that affirm the equality of all people and establish universal human rights. Yet the Bible, which has given the world so much, is now reviled by many throughout the West as irrelevant, immoral and irrational.

In PragerU's new video, *Eye for an Eye: One of the Greatest Ideas in History*, PragerU Founder Dennis Prager, defends the Bible's morality and rationality, taking on some of its critics' favorite passages, which they believe, disqualify it as a moral text.

Prager begins by asserting that as reverence for Western civilization has faded over the last half a century, so too has reverence for its source, the Bible. "This view springs not from intellectual rigor, but from intellectual laziness," says Prager. "People assume their objections to the Bible have no rational or moral responses, but this is simply not true."

Prager finds this issue so important, he has devoted his newest book, *The Rational Bible: Exodus*, to the topic, offering responses to common objections to the Bible. For purposes of this video, he offers two examples.

First, the biblical book of Deuteronomy states that a rebellious son can be brought to the elders of the city and stoned to death if he is found guilty. Understandably, critics of the Bible find this edict primitive and morally abhorrent on its face.

As Prager explains, this was actually a moral leap forward.

“This law ended—forever—parental ownership of their children—and with it, the right to kill them,” Prager explains. Furthermore, as Prager points out, there is no record of Jewish elders ever exercising their lawful right to stone an offender.

Second, critics of Western religion often reference the law, “eye for an eye, tooth for tooth, hand for hand” and so on as an immoral and antiquated biblical rule.

This law of retaliation, known as Lex Talionis, was actually another great moral advance. Prager gives three reasons why:

1. It equalized the eye of a prince with the eye of a peasant—a completely new concept in history.
2. It ensured only the guilty party was punished for his or her crime.
3. It prohibited unjust revenge by ensuring the punishment fit the crime.

Often unknown by biblical critics, Lex Talionis was a direct refutation of the Babylonian Code of Hammurabi, which legislated that the eye of a noble was of much greater value than the eye of a commoner. Eye for an eye ended this practice amongst the Jews and in its place established the concept of universal equality.

“The next time you read or hear someone argue that the Bible is irrational or immoral, tell them how [Jewish] law ended parental killing of children and ... struck a unique blow for human equality and justice,” Prager concludes.

“If they’re intellectually honest, they’ll admit that they have learned something new.”