

# Rebuking In the Bible



## The Rebuke by people

Numbers 20:12 *"But the LORD said to Moses and Aaron, "Because you did not trust in me enough to honor me as holy in the sight of the Israelites, you will not bring this community into the land I give them."*

If pressed, I am sure that most people would believe that God rebukes. I have seen paintings that depict God as an angry gray-haired man that is pointing at the earth in rebuke. His face is always stern. For many, the Old Testament and New Testament are complete opposites. Jesus is about love and God the Father is about rebuking. Just look at Numbers 20:12. God told Moses to speak to the rock for water. Yet, Moses struck the rock twice in anger towards these stiff-necked people disobeying Gods command. God in turn punishes Moses and the people for their unbelief. It's stories like these that have painted God the Father as judgmental, rebuking, and angry.

On the flip side we have the loving Jesus. John 11:35 *"Jesus wept."* It is the shortest verse in the Bible. It's also one of the ways we see the compassion of Jesus. Yet, in 1 John 4:8 it says *"Whoever does not love does not know God, because God is love."* I could go on and on comparing these two characters in the Bible. Yet, if Jesus is God, then He his love. The reverse is also true. If Jesus is in the Father, then God must also be love. Then we have people. Jesus says that we will be his. That He will reside in us. John 14:20 *"In that day you will know that I am in My Father, and you in Me, and I in you."* So, we must be love too, right?

I get it that people are not that holy. There have been very few people that have ever lived that might be mistaken for Jesus or God. Yet, it's not that uncommon for people to rebuke each other. Twitter is the rebuking capitol of the universe. If you dig into the Bible, you will find that rebuking is not common. I mean 100 references to rebuking is not that much within the entire Bible. This book is not all about conflict between God and people. yet, we do have some profound instances of people rebuking each other.

Luke 3:19 *"But when John rebuked Herod the tetrarch because of his marriage to Herodias, his brother's wife, and all the other evil things he had done."*

The Bible is about the relationship between a loving God and his creation. Some of the rebuking in the Bible reflects Gods heart. Take the verse above: God wants us to live honest lives. Marriage is to be between one man and one woman. They are to be one in a loving union. Herod had his brother killed so that he could have his wife. The wife was an evil beast who demanded the head of John the Baptist. Yes, John sternly rebuked Herod. That whole situation reflected God's displeasure with adultery and murder.

Luke 23:40 *"But the other criminal rebuked him. "Don't you fear God," he said, "since you are under the same sentence?"*

There Jesus hung on the cross. All three men were dying. It's amazing to me that there was a dialogue going on between them. Jesus was offering them salvation. One guy was understandably angry at the situation. The other guy was sorry that Jesus ended up sharing in their fate. Can you imagine Jesus listening to the guys on each side fighting over ethics? Both, ironically believed that Jesus could save them. Of course, you might try and rebuke another

when you're both nailed to a cross. Yet, Jesus said nothing to the angry one. Instead, he told the rebuking one (who defended Jesus) that he will find himself in heaven.

Sometimes, family has disagreements and misunderstandings. That might lead to a rebuke or two. Just look at this exchange between Joseph and his family below.

*Genesis 37:10 "When he (Joseph) told his father as well as his brothers, his father rebuked him and said, "What is this dream you had? Will your mother and I and your brothers actually come and bow down to the ground before you?"*

Joseph had a vision in his dreams. Was he telling them what he remembered or was it a brag? His father had given him a very nice coat that his brothers despised. There was tension in the family. Joseph was basically the spoiled child. Brag or not, the family had enough of these wild dreams. The rebuke by his father was telling his young son "Enough!" We tend to think of rebuking in the Bible as coming from God in a command. No, in this instance it was a family squabble. Rebuking between people in the Bible is usually found within a bigger narrative. The adultery of Herod and John the Baptize. Jesus between two thieves and salvation. The rebuking of Joseph was part of a bigger narrative of saving the Israelite people from starvation. In the Bible, God uses the rebuke for good.