God Behaving Badly: Is God Violent or Peaceful?

1) **Popular perceptions of an angry, violent God**
   a) The Far Side, "God at his Computer."
   b) Ghostbusters: "Old Testament, real wrath of God type stuff."

2) **Links**
   a) **Website**: www.davidtlamb.com **Twitter**: www.twitter.com/davidtlamb
   b) **Email**: dlamb@biblical.edu **Biblical Seminary**: http://www.biblical.edu/
   c) ***God Behaving Badly****: Is the God of the Old Testament Angry, Sexist, and Racist?*
   d) **Next** : ***Prostitutes and Polygamists****: A Look at Love, Old Testament Style* (2015).
      i) *CT*: "David Was a Rapist, Abraham was a Sex Trafficker" (22 Oct 2015).

3) **How to tackle tough texts where God seems to behave badly?**
   a) ***Don't avoid tough texts***.
   b) ***State the problem*** as problematically as possible.
   c) ***Examine the problematic language***.
   d) ***Understand the context***, both ancient and biblical.
   e) ***Discuss with others***.
   f) ***Summarize*** main points and acknowledge uncertainty.

4) **Elisha the boys, and the bears** (2 Kings 2:23-25; *GBB*: 95-99)

2 Kings 2:23 He went up from there to Bethel, and while he was going up on the way, some small
boys (*ne'arim qetanim*) came out of the city and jeered at him, saying, "Go up, you baldhead! Go
up, you baldhead!" [24] And he turned around, and when he saw them, he cursed them in the name of
the **LORD**. And two she-bears came out of the woods and tore forty-two of the boys (*yeladim*). [25]
From there he went on to Mount Carmel, and from there he returned to Samaria.

   a) State as **problematically** as possible.
   b) How old were these "small boys"? What does language and context suggest?
      i) ***qetanim***: (Gen. 42:13).
      ii) ***ne'arim***: (Gen. 14:24).
      iii) ***yeladim***: (1 Kings 3:25; 12:8).
   c) **Context**? What was happening to the prophets? How were insults interpreted?

   d) **Elisha, the kings, and the horses** (2 Kings 6:8-23; *GBB*: 106-109).
   e) **Context:** Israel and Syria are at war. The Syrians are blinded and led into Samaria…

2 Kings 6:21 As soon as the king of Israel saw them, he said to Elisha, "My father, shall I strike
them down? Shall I strike them down?" [22] He answered, "You shall not strike them down. Would
you strike down those whom you have taken captive with your sword and with your bow? Set bread
and water before them, that they may eat and drink and go to their master." [23] So he prepared for
them a great feast, and when they had eaten and drunk, he sent them away, and they went to their
master. And the Syrians did not come again on raids into the land of Israel.

      i) An eye for an eye, a wedgie for a wedgie (*GBB*: 105-106)

5) **What about the Canaanite genocide?**
   a) *GBB*: 39-41, 76-81, 100-101.
   b) ***Relevant*** "Reconciling the God of Love and the God of Genocide" (Sept 2011).