

Deuteronomy 07 - Canaanite Genocide; The Law of Love; God's Goodness Recalled; Israel's Rebellion Recalled

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(C) Application in light of impending Canaanite conquest (Deut 7:1—11:32)

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Deuteronomy 7

(C) Application in light of impending Canaanite conquest (Deut 7:1—11:32)

(a) Command to destroy the Canaanites (7:1-26)

(i) Command to destroy (7:1-2)

1 "When the LORD your God brings you into the land where you are entering to take possession of it, and He drives away many nations from before you, the Hittites, the Girgashites, the Amorites, the Canaanites, the Perizzites, the Hivites, and the Jebusites, seven nations greater and mightier than you,

1 "When the LORD your God brings you into the land where you are entering to possess it, and clears away many nations before you, the Hittites and the Girgashites and the Amorites and the Canaanites and the Perizzites and the Hivites and the Jebusites, seven nations greater and stronger than you,

1 "When the LORD your God brings you into the land that you are entering to possess, he will drive out many nations before you: the Hittites, Girgashites, Amorites, Canaanites, Perizzites, Hivites, and Jebusites, seven nations who are more numerous and stronger than you.

1 When the LORD thy God shall bring thee into the land whither thou goest to possess it, and hath cast out many nations before thee, the Hittites, and the Girgashites, and the Amorites, and the Canaanites, and the Perizzites, and the Hivites, and the Jebusites, seven nations greater and mightier than thou;

- See note: [Canaanite Genocide](#).

2 and when the LORD your God turns them over to you and you defeat them, you shall utterly destroy them. You shall not make a covenant with them nor be gracious to them.

2 and when the LORD your God delivers them before you and you defeat them, then you shall utterly destroy them. You shall make no covenant with them and show no favor to them.

2 So when the LORD your God delivers them to you and you have defeated them, then utterly destroy them. You are not to make any covenant with them nor be gracious to them.

2 And when the LORD thy God shall deliver them before thee; thou shalt smite them, and utterly destroy them; thou shalt make no covenant with them, nor shew mercy unto them:

- The point of v1-2 is that Israel was to destroy all the nations within the borders of Canaan (see comments on these groups in 20:17)

- The command to destroy them totally, that is, men, women, and children, has often been thought of as unethical for a loving God

(ii) No intermarriage (7:3-4)

3 Furthermore, you shall not intermarry with them: you shall not give your daughters to their sons, nor shall you take their daughters for your sons.

3 Furthermore, you shall not intermarry with them; you shall not give your daughters to their sons, nor shall you take their daughters for your sons.

3 You are not to intermarry with them. You are not to give your daughters to their sons nor take their daughters for your sons,

3 Neither shalt thou make marriages with them; thy daughter thou shalt not give unto his son, nor his daughter shalt thou take unto thy son.

4 For they will turn your sons away from following Me, and they will serve other gods; then the anger of the LORD will be kindled against you and He will quickly destroy you.

4 For they will turn your sons away from following Me to serve other gods; then the anger of the LORD will be kindled against you and He will quickly destroy you.

4 because they will turn your children from me to serve other gods so that the LORD's anger blazes against you and swiftly destroys you by fire.

4 For they will turn away thy son from following me, that they may serve other gods: so will the anger of the LORD be kindled against you, and destroy thee suddenly.

- The command against intermarriage assumes something about human nature. Paul stated the principle well: "Don't you know that a little yeast works through the whole batch of dough?" (1 Cor 5:6)

— Marriage to an unbelieving Canaanite meant disaster for an Israelite's faith.

Moses reminded the people (Deut 7:4b) that the Lord's righteous sword cuts both ways.

The Canaanites were being judged for their wickedness; if the Israelites joined them in wickedness they would also join them in judgment.

— Therefore everything—even the Canaanites' religious objects— which might arouse the slightest curiosity about false worship, was to be totally eradicated

— The sacred stones (Cf. 12:3; Ex 23:24; 34:13) were possibly male fertility symbols and the Asherah poles were wooden poles in honor of the goddess Asherah, the consort of Baal

— Similar commands were given in Ex 34:11-15; Num 33:50-52; Deut 12:2-3

— To understand God's command to utterly destroy the Canaanites in proper context, we first need to understand that God was patient and gave them 400 years to repent (Gen 15:13,16). We also need to understand the heinous nature of their sin (outlined in graphic detail in Lev 18; 20).

(iii) Destroy their altars (7:5)

5 But this is what you shall do to them: you shall tear down their altars, smash their memorial stones, cut their Asherim to pieces, and burn their carved images in the fire.

5 But thus you shall do to them: you shall tear down their altars, and smash their *sacred* pillars, and hew down their Asherim, and burn their graven images with fire.

5 This is what you are to do to them: tear down their altars, break their pillars, cut down their ritual pillars, and burn their carved idols in fire,

5 But thus shall ye deal with them; ye shall destroy their altars, and break down their images, and cut down their groves, and burn their graven images with fire.

(iv) Maintenance of Israel's uniqueness (7:6-11)

6 For you are a holy people to the LORD your God; the LORD your God has **chosen** you to be a people for His personal possession out of all the peoples who are on the face of the earth.

6 For you are a holy people to the LORD your God; the LORD your God has chosen you to be a people for His own possession out of all the peoples who are on the face of the earth.

6 because you are a holy people to the LORD your God. The LORD your God chose you to be his people, his treasured possession from all the nations on the face of the earth."

6 For thou art an holy people unto the LORD thy God: the LORD thy God hath chosen thee to be a special people unto himself, above all people that are upon the face of the earth.

- The basis for the command to destroy the Canaanites lay in God's election of Israel

- "...chosen" - means "to be chosen for a task or a vocation"

— God had selected Israel as His means of sanctifying the earth

— Thus they were holy (set apart for God's special use) and were His treasured possession (Cf. 14:2; 26:18; Ps 135:4; Mal 3:17)

- Since the Canaanites were polluting the earth, and since they might endanger Israel's complete subordination to the will of the Lord, they either had to repent or be eliminated

— For 400 years they had refused to repent

7 "The LORD did not make you His beloved nor choose you because you were greater in number than any of the peoples, since you were the fewest of all peoples,

7 "The LORD did not set His love on you nor choose you because you were more in number than any of the peoples, for you were the fewest of all peoples,

7 "It wasn't because you were more numerous than other people of the earth that the LORD committed himself to you and chose you. In fact, you were the least numerous of all the nations.

7 The LORD did not set his love upon you, nor choose you, because ye were more in number than any people; for ye were the fewest of all people:

- Why did God choose Israel instead of some other nation? Well, it wasn't because of any inherent goodness, trait or merit in them.

— God's choosing of Israel is a demonstration of His unconditional election...God's election of them without any condition in them to garner His election

8 but because the LORD loved you and kept the oath which He swore to your forefathers, the LORD brought you out by a mighty hand and redeemed you from the house of slavery, from the hand of Pharaoh king of Egypt.

8 but because the LORD loved you and kept the oath which He swore to your forefathers, the LORD brought you out by a mighty hand and redeemed you from the house of slavery, from the hand of Pharaoh king of Egypt.

8 But the LORD loved you and kept his oath that he made to your ancestors. The LORD brought you out with great power from slavery, from the control of Pharaoh, king of Egypt.

8 But because the LORD loved you, and because he would keep the oath which he had sworn unto your fathers, hath the LORD brought you out with a mighty hand, and redeemed you out of the house of bondmen, from the hand of Pharaoh king of Egypt.

- God's election of Israel was never to become a source of pride for the nation

— For God did not find any intrinsic merit in her which motivated Him to choose her

— In fact her small size originally would have served as a hindrance to her election

- On the positive side Moses offered two reasons for God's choice of Israel:
 - (1) The Lord loved Israel; ultimately this divine love is a mystery since it was not motivated by any goodness in the nation
 - (2) He chose them because of an oath He swore to Israel's forefathers, Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob
- The Lord had promised the patriarchs that their descendants would become a mighty nation and inherit the land of Canaan (Gen 17:7-8; 26:3-5,24; 28:13-15)
- He would always be faithful to His Word (Cf. Heb 6:13-18)
- For that reason He brought Israel out from the land of slavery (Cf. Ex 13:3,14; 20:2; Deut 5:6; 6:12; 8:14; 13:5,10)

9 Know therefore that the LORD your God, He is God, the faithful God, who keeps His covenant and His faithfulness to a thousand generations for those who love Him and keep His commandments;

9 Know therefore that the LORD your God, He is God, the faithful God, who keeps His covenant and His lovingkindness to a thousandth generation with those who love Him and keep His commandments;

9 Know that the LORD your God is God, the trusted God who faithfully keeps his covenant to the thousandth generation of those who love him and obey his commands.

9 Know therefore that the LORD thy God, he is God, the faithful God, which keepeth covenant and mercy with them that love him and keep his commandments to a thousand generations;

10 but He repays those who hate Him to their faces, to eliminate them; He will not hesitate toward him who hates Him, He will repay him to his face.

10 but repays those who hate Him to their faces, to destroy them; He will not delay with him who hates Him, He will repay him to his face.

10 But for the one who hates him, he will repay him by destroying him. He will not delay dealing with someone who hates him.

10 And repayeth them that hate him to their face, to destroy them: he will not be slack to him that hateth him, he will repay him to his face.

- Moses meant for the Israelites to draw two conclusions from God's choice and redemption of them:

- The Lord alone is God. He is able to control history, to raise up nations, and to bring them down

- He is the faithful God. The thousand generations is a proverbial expression meaning "endlessly" or "forever"

11 Therefore, you shall keep the commandment, the statutes, and the judgments which I am commanding you today, to do them.

11 Therefore, you shall keep the commandment and the statutes and the judgments which I am commanding you today, to do them.

11 Therefore keep the commands, decrees, and the ordinances that I am instructing you to obey today."

11 Thou shalt therefore keep the commandments, and the statutes, and the judgments, which I command thee this day, to do them.

(v) Ushering in blessing (7:12-16)

12 "Then it shall come about, because you listen to these judgments and keep and do them, that the LORD your God will keep His covenant with you and His faithfulness which He swore to your forefathers.

12 "Then it shall come about, because you listen to these judgments and keep and do them, that the LORD your God will keep with you His covenant and His lovingkindness which He swore to your forefathers.

12 "If you pay attention to these laws and obey them, then the LORD your God will continue his covenant of gracious love with you that he promised with an oath to your ancestors.

12 Wherefore it shall come to pass, if ye hearken to these judgments, and keep, and do them, that the LORD thy God shall keep unto thee the covenant and the mercy which he swore unto thy fathers:

- Though He will never abandon His covenant of love to Israel, rebellious individuals within the nation will be judged for their sin just as His enemies in other nations (those who hate Him) are judged by Him

- Therefore each individual Israelite needed to be careful to follow His commands

- This verse summarizes v12-16

— If the nation is obedient to the Lord she will experience His covenantal love

— Though God will not abandon the covenant because of His promises to the patriarchs (forefathers; Cf. v8,13) the people could forfeit the blessings of the covenant through their own disobedience

13 And He will love you, bless you, and make you numerous; He will also bless the fruit of your womb and the fruit of your ground, your grain, your new wine, and your oil, the newborn of your cattle and the offspring of your flock, in the land which He swore to your forefathers to give you.

13 He will love you and bless you and multiply you; He will also bless the fruit of your womb and the fruit of your ground, your grain and your new wine and your oil, the increase

of your herd and the young of your flock, in the land which He swore to your forefathers to give you.

13 He'll love you and increase your numbers. He'll bless the fruit of your womb, the fruit of your land (the grain, new wine, and oil), the offspring of your herds, and the lambs of your flock, in the land that the LORD promised your ancestors he would give you.

13 And he will love thee, and bless thee, and multiply thee: he will also bless the fruit of thy womb, and the fruit of thy land, thy corn, and thy wine, and thine oil, the increase of thy kine, and the flocks of thy sheep, in the land which he sware unto thy fathers to give thee.

14 You shall be blessed above all peoples; there will be no sterile male or infertile female among you or among your cattle.

14 You shall be blessed above all peoples; there will be no male or female barren among you or among your cattle.

14 You'll be blessed among all the nations. There'll be no infertility among you, not even among your herds.

14 Thou shalt be blessed above all people: there shall not be male or female barren among you, or among your cattle.

- For their obedience, God promised the blessing of fertility of human, animal, and plant life in Israel

15 And the LORD will remove from you all sickness; and He will not inflict upon you any of the harmful diseases of Egypt which you have known, but He will give them to all who hate you.

15 The LORD will remove from you all sickness; and He will not put on you any of the harmful diseases of Egypt which you have known, but He will lay them on all who hate you.

15 The LORD will turn aside every disease from you. He won't inflict on you the terrible diseases you knew in Egypt, but will inflict them instead on all who hate you.

15 And the LORD will take away from thee all sickness, and will put none of the evil diseases of Egypt, which thou knowest, upon thee; but will lay them upon all them that hate thee.

16 You shall consume all the peoples whom the LORD your God will turn over to you; your eye shall not pity them, nor shall you serve their gods, for that *would be* a snare to you.

16 You shall consume all the peoples whom the LORD your God will deliver to you; your eye shall not pity them, nor shall you serve their gods, for that *would be* a snare to you.

16 You are to utterly destroy everyone whom the LORD your God will deliver to you. Don't have pity on them nor serve their gods. Otherwise, they will become a snare for you."

16 And thou shalt consume all the people which the LORD thy God shall deliver thee; thine eye shall have no pity upon them: neither shalt thou serve their gods; for that will be a snare unto thee.

- The Israelites could also count on freedom from the horrible diseases that were common in Egypt — possibly including boils (Cf. 28:27,60; Ex 15:26)

- The Israelites' obligation in entering the land was to destroy all the peoples within the borders of Canaan (Cf. v1-2)

— If Israel would not do so, they would become ensnared by them and their gods (Cf. Ex 34:12-14) and as a result would not experience the blessings just mentioned (Deut 7:13-15)

— Verse 16 naturally led Moses to the exhortation recorded in v17-26

(vi) Admonition not to fear (7:17-24)

17 "If you say in your heart, 'These nations are greater than I; how can I dispossess them?'

17 "If you should say in your heart, 'These nations are greater than I; how can I dispossess them?'

17 "You may say to yourselves, 'These nations are more numerous than we are. How can we dispossess them?'

17 If thou shalt say in thine heart, These nations are more than I; how can I dispossess them?

18 you are not to be afraid of them; you shall remember well what the LORD your God did to Pharaoh and to all Egypt:

18 you shall not be afraid of them; you shall well remember what the LORD your God did to Pharaoh and to all Egypt:

18 But you mustn't fear them. Be sure to remember what the LORD your God did to Pharaoh and all of Egypt.

18 Thou shalt not be afraid of them: but shalt well remember what the LORD thy God did unto Pharaoh, and unto all Egypt;

- Moses knew the hearts of his fellow Israelites. He remembered how 40 years earlier the Anakim had made their hearts melt (1:26-28)

- So he concluded this part of his speech (on holy war) by setting the battles in proper perspective

— The Israelites were to concentrate not on the strength of their enemies but on the greatness of the Lord

19 the great trials which your eyes saw and the signs and the wonders, and the mighty hand and the outstretched arm by which the LORD your God brought you out. The LORD your God will do the same to all the peoples of whom you are afraid.

19 the great trials which your eyes saw and the signs and the wonders and the mighty hand and the outstretched arm by which the LORD your God brought you out. So shall the LORD your God do to all the peoples of whom you are afraid.

19 Your eyes saw the great trials, the signs and wonders, and the awesome power with which the LORD your God brought you out. The LORD your God will do the same to all the people whom you fear.

19 The great temptations which thine eyes saw, and the signs, and the wonders, and the mighty hand, and the stretched out arm, whereby the LORD thy God brought thee out: so shall the LORD thy God do unto all the people of whom thou art afraid.

20 Indeed, the LORD your God will send the hornet against them, until those who are left and hide themselves from you perish.

20 Moreover, the LORD your God will send the hornet against them, until those who are left and hide themselves from you perish.

20 He'll send plagues against them until the survivors who hide from you have perished.

20 Moreover the LORD thy God will send the hornet among them, until they that are left, and hide themselves from thee, be destroyed.

- God would cause Israel's enemies to run from her in battle as if they were attacked by swarms of hornets (Cf. Ex 23:28; Josh 24:12)

- Some say the reference to the hornet is to be taken literally; others say it refers to the Egyptian army

21 You are not to be terrified of them, because the LORD your God is in your midst, a great and awesome God.

21 You shall not dread them, for the LORD your God is in your midst, a great and awesome God.

21 Don't tremble before them, because the LORD your God, who is among you, is a great and awesome God.

21 Thou shalt not be affrighted at them: for the LORD thy God is among you, a mighty God and terrible.

22 And the LORD your God will drive away these nations from you little by little; you will not be able to put an end to them quickly, otherwise the wild animals would become too numerous for you.

22 The LORD your God will clear away these nations before you little by little; you will not be able to put an end to them quickly, for the wild beasts would grow too numerous for you.

22 He slowly will dislodge these nations before you, but he won't destroy them quickly, so the wild animals won't multiply around you.

22 And the LORD thy God will put out those nations before thee by little and little: thou mayest not consume them at once, lest the beasts of the field increase upon thee.

23 But the LORD your God will turn them over to you, and will throw them into great confusion until they are destroyed.

23 But the LORD your God will deliver them before you, and will throw them into great confusion until they are destroyed.

23 But the LORD your God will deliver them over to you, throwing them into great confusion, until they are destroyed.

23 But the LORD thy God shall deliver them unto thee, and shall destroy them with a mighty destruction, until they be destroyed.

- The enemies were in fact fearful of Israel (Ex 15:15; Num 22:3; Joshua 2:9-11,24; 5:1; 9:24)

- He would throw Israel's enemies into great confusion, that is, a divinely inspired panic would engulf the Canaanites and render them helpless in battle (v24)

- All this would happen according to a well-conceived plan so that the land would not be de-populated too quickly and overrun by wild animals

24 And He will hand over their kings to you, so that you will eliminate their name from under heaven; no one will be able to stand against you until you have destroyed them.

24 He will deliver their kings into your hand so that you will make their name perish from under heaven; no man will be able to stand before you until you have destroyed them.

24 He will deliver kings into your control, and you are to wipe out the memory of them from under heaven. No one will be able to stand before you. You are to utterly destroy them.

24 And he shall deliver their kings into thine hand, and thou shalt destroy their name from under heaven: there shall no man be able to stand before thee, until thou have destroyed them.

(vii) Admonition to destroy their booty (7:25-26)

25 The carved images of their gods you are to burn with fire; you shall not covet the silver or the gold that is on them, nor take it for yourselves, or you will be trapped by it; for it is an abomination to the LORD your God.

25 The graven images of their gods you are to burn with fire; you shall not covet the silver or the gold that is on them, nor take it for yourselves, or you will be snared by it, for it is an abomination to the LORD your God.

25 Burn the images of their gods in the fire. Desire neither the silver nor the gold that adorns them, nor take them for yourselves, so you won't be ensnared by them, because the gold and silver is detestable to the LORD your God.

25 The graven images of their gods shall ye burn with fire: thou shalt not desire the silver or gold that is on them, nor take it unto thee, lest thou be snared therein: for it is an abomination to the LORD thy God.

26 And you shall not bring an abomination into your house and become designated for destruction, like it; you are to utterly detest it, and you are to utterly loathe it, for it is something designated for destruction.

26 You shall not bring an abomination into your house, and like it come under the ban; you shall utterly detest it and you shall utterly abhor it, for it is something banned.

26 Don't bring any detestable thing to your house, because you yourself will be utterly destroyed along with these detestable things. You must absolutely abhor and detest all of it, because it has been devoted to destruction.

26 Neither shalt thou bring an abomination into thine house, lest thou be a cursed thing like it: but thou shalt utterly detest it, and thou shalt utterly abhor it; for it is a cursed thing.

- The Israelites could be assured of this glorious victory if only they had the faith to begin the battle and afterward the discipline to destroy the idols left behind with the silver and gold

— Otherwise the Israelites would find themselves trapped by idolatry and they would become the objects of the Lord's holy war.

— The Canaanites' idols, some of them suggestive of sexual perversions, were detestable to God. So His people were to detest them too, for the images were designated for destruction.