

Deuteronomy Chapter 7

Verses 1-11

Here is a strict caution against all friendship and fellowship with idols and idolaters.

Those who are in communion with God, must have no communication with the unfruitful works of darkness.

Limiting the orders to destroy, to the nations here mentioned, plainly shows that after ages were not to draw this into a precedent.

A proper understanding of the evil of sin, and of the mystery of a crucified Savior, will enable us to perceive the justice of God in all his punishments, temporal and eternal.

We must deal decidedly with our lusts that war against our souls.

Let us not show them any mercy, but mortify, and crucify, and utterly destroy them.

Thousands in the world that now is, have been undone by ungodly marriages.

For there is more likelihood that the good will be perverted, than that the bad will be converted.

Those who, in choosing yoke-fellows, keep not within the bounds of a profession of religion, cannot promise themselves helps meet for them.

Deuteronomy 7:1 "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;"

“Seven nations”:

These 7 groups controlled areas of land usually centered around one or more fortified cities.

Together they had greater population and military strength than Israel.

Six of these 7 are mentioned elsewhere (see Exodus 3:8).

The unique nation here is the Girgashites, who are referred to in (Gen. 10:16; Joshua 3:10; 24:11; 1 Chron. 1:14), and in Ugaritic texts.

They may have been tribal people living in the north of Palestine.

All of these people from these 7 nations are idolaters.

They may be physically strong, but they are no match for God.

Notice who cast out the nations before them.

It is the LORD.

Not only are there 7 nations, but they are mightier physically than the Israelites.

God had promised Abraham 10 nations.

Some of them were the Kenites, Kenizzites, Kadmonites and Rephidim.

They had destroyed Rephidim with Og.

The others here, will fall with the exploits of Joshua.

Deuteronomy 7:2 "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 show mercy unto them:"

“Utterly destroy them”:

All the men, women and children were to be put to death.

Even though this action seems extreme, the following need to be kept in mind;

- (1) The Canaanites deserved to die for their sin (9:3-4);
- (2) The Canaanites persisted in their hatred of God (7:10); and
- (3) The Canaanites constituted a moral cancer that had the potential of introducing idolatry and immorality which would spread rapidly among the Israelites (20:17-18).

For the ban of extermination (see the note on 2:26-37).

It seems cruel for them to be totally run out of this country, but that is necessary to keep the Israelites from mixing with them and worshipping their false gods.

They must not make a covenant with the world.

They are not people who would honor a covenant, since they know not God.

Deuteronomy 7:3 "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."

“Neither shalt thou make marriages”:

Because of the intimate nature of marriage, the idolatrous spouse could lead her mate astray (see 1 Kings 11:1-8 for the example of Solomon).

The sad part of this is what we said above, they are idolaters, and would cause their spouses to become idolaters also.

They must not marry these people, because they must stay faithful to God.

A believer should never marry a non-believer.

That is being unequally yoked.

Deuteronomy 7:4 "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."

From the pure worship of God, his word, statutes, and ordinances.

"That they may serve other gods":

Meaning worship their idols.

That is, the daughters of Heathens, married to the sons of Israelites, would entice them from the worship of the true God to idolatry.

So the Targum of Jonathan says; as Solomon's wives drew him aside: or "he will turn away thy son".

Meaning, as Jarchi observes, that the son of a heathen, that marries the daughter of an Israelite, will turn away the son born of her to idolatry, called here the grandfather's son.

Though Aben Ezra says this respects the son mentioned in the preceding verse.

That is, the son married to a Heathen woman, and not to a son born in such marriage.

"So will the anger of the LORD be kindled against you, and destroy thee suddenly":

By some immediate judgment striking dead at once.

There being nothing more provoking to God than idolatry, that being directly contrary to His being, nature, perfections, honor, and glory, of which He is jealous.

This had already happened, when Balaam tricked them.

God destroyed all who were involved in the unfaithfulness.

Thousands had died.

It is strange, but the worshipper of the false gods usually turns the worshipper of God, instead of the other way around.

It is better to marry within your own faith.

Deuteronomy 7:5 "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."

“Destroy their altars”:

This destructive action would remove any consequent temptation for the Israelites to follow the religious practices of the nations they were to displace from the Land.

For “groves” (see the note on Judges 3:6-7).

Their altars, images, groves, and graven images were all associated with the worship of their false gods.

They were to be totally destroyed, for a reminder to not get involved in this sin.

They were not to just tear them down, but totally destroy them with fire as well.

Verses 6-26

“Special people”:

The word “segulah” originally applied to ownership of property, and here to Israel as God’s very own possession (compare 14:2; 26:18; Titus 2:14; 1 Peter 2:9).

In the Akkadian language, it is used to describe the king as a “treasured possession” of his god.

Thus, Israel’s character as a holy people gave them no ground for pride, but imposed on them the responsibility of their call.

“Redeemed”:

The verb means “to ransom”, “to redeem”.

In ancient Israel both property and life could be redeemed by making the appropriate payment.

In the New Testament, human redemption is achieved solely by the sacrificial death of Christ (Mark 10:45; Luke 1:68; 1 Peter 1:18-19).

Here the emphasis is on the result rather than on the price paid – that is, the liberation of the people.

God “Keepeth covenant and mercy”:

The word mercy is “chesed” and appears about 250 times in the Old Testament (compare discussion on 5:6-10).

The “hornet” (compare Exodus 23:28; Joshua 24:12), is a figure for the terror of God that descended on Israel’s foes, producing panic and rout (compare verse 23).

The fact that certain species of hornets in Palestine build nests underground and in rock crevices suggests the appropriateness of the figure with regard to the destruction of Canaanites in hiding.

Deuteronomy 7:6 "For thou [art] a 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."

“A holy people unto the LORD thy God”:

The basis for the command to destroy the Canaanites is found in God’s election of Israel.

God had set apart Israel for His own special use and they were His treasured possession.

As God’s people, Israel needed to be separated from the moral pollution of the Canaanites.

The thing that made Israel different, was their relationship with their God.

God had chosen them out of all the people on the earth to be His.

God had given Him their law.

He wanted them to be holy, as He is holy.

They are to be a representative for God upon the earth.

Deuteronomy 7:7 "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:"

He had done both, and the one as the effect and evidence of the other.

He loved them, and therefore He chose them.

"Because ye were more in number than any people":

Not for the quantity of them, nor even for the quality of them.

"For ye were the fewest of all people":

Fewer than the Egyptians, from whence they came, and also the Canaanites they were going to drive out and inherit their land (Deut. 7:1).

Those whom God has loved with an everlasting love, and as a fruit of it has chosen them in Christ before the world began.

To grace and glory, holiness and happiness, are but a small number, a little flock.

Though many are called, few are chosen.

Nor are they better than others, being by nature children of wrath even as others, and as to their outward circumstances the poor of this world.

God chose the smallest country in the world, so His greatness could show through them.

He set His love upon them.

They did not earn His love.

He gave it to them.

Deuteronomy 7:8 "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."

"Loved you ... keep the oath":

The choosing of Israel as a holy nation set apart for God was grounded in God's love and His faithfulness to the promise He had made to the patriarchs, not in any merit or intrinsic goodness in Israel.

God's great love for mankind is hard to understand.

It is even more difficult to understand His immense love for this ungrateful people.

The God kind of love (agape), is the greatest love there is.

He does not love them because of something they have done, but in spite of what they have done.

He had sworn to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob (their fathers).

God brought them out of Egypt, not by any great feat of man.

He brought them out with the ten plagues He sent on Egypt.

They had been slaves to Pharaoh, now they are God's wife.

Deuteronomy 7:9 "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;"

It is true that the punishment for certain sins may have repercussions to the third and fourth generation (Exodus 20:5-6), yet the LORD keeps His covenant promises for “a thousand generations” to those who “keep his commandments” (Neh. 1:5; Dan. 9:4).

By passing one's faith to one's children and their children, a person can impact the world beyond his or her years.

“A thousand generations” (see note on 1:11).

The people are warned against rebellion and unfaithfulness.

God is faithful and just.

He blesses the person who keeps His commandments.

He blesses their children, and grandchildren to a thousand generations.

Deuteronomy 7:10 "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."

Openly, publicly, and at once, they not being able to make any resistance.

Onkelos interprets it in their lifetime, and so Jarchi which agrees with the Targums of Jonathan and Jerusalem: "or to His face"; the face of God.

That is, he will punish them that hate him to his face, who are audacious, bold, impudent sinners.

Sinners before the LORD, as the men of Sodom were (Gen. 13:13).

"He will not be slack to him that hateth him, He will repay him to His face":

Not defer the execution of His judgment and vengeance, which may seem to slumber and linger.

But will quickly and openly bring it upon the sinner.

This just means that God will not have someone else to do this, He will do it Himself.

God will punish him personally.

Deuteronomy 7:11 "Thou shalt therefore keep the commandments, and the statutes, and the judgments, which I command thee this day, to do them."

The laws, moral, ceremonial, and judicial, urged thereunto both by promises and threatenings, in hopes of reward, and through fear of punishment.

"Which I command thee this day, to do them":

In the name of the LORD, and by His authority.

By virtue of which He made a new declaration of them to put them in mind of them in order to observe them.

The people are reminded by Moses to keep God's commandments, if they do not want God to punish them.

Verses 12-26

We are in danger of having fellowship with the works of darkness if we take pleasure in fellowship with those who do such works.

Whatever brings us into a snare, brings us under a curse.

Let us be constant to our duty, and we cannot question the constancy of God's mercy.

Diseases are God's servants; they go where He sends them, and do what He bids them.

It is therefore good for the health of our bodies, thoroughly to mortify the sin of our souls; which is our rule of duty.

Yet sin is never totally destroyed in this world; and it actually prevails in us much more than it would do, if we were watchful and diligent.

In all this the LORD acts according to the counsel of His own will.

But that counsel being hid from us, forms no excuse for our sloth and negligence, of which it is in no degree the cause.

We must not think, that because the deliverance of the church, and the destruction of the enemies of the soul, are not done immediately, therefore they will never be done.

God will do His own work in His own method and time; and we may be sure that they are always the best.

Thus, corruption is driven out of the hearts of believers little by little.

The work of sanctification is carried on gradually; but in the end, there will be a complete victory.

Pride, security, and other sins that are common effects of prosperity, are enemies more dangerous than beasts of the field, and more apt to increase upon us.

Verses 12-15

The LORD promised Israel blessings for their obedience, which are further enumerated (in verses 28:1-14).

Deuteronomy 7:12 "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 sware unto thy fathers:"

“The LORD thy God shall keep unto thee the covenant”

If Israel was obedient to the LORD, they would experience His covenantal mercy.

However, the people could forfeit the blessings of the covenant through their own disobedience.

Moses reminds them also that God will bless them abundantly, if they keep His commandments.

There were blessings promised for obedience, and a cursing for those who would not obey.

God always does exactly what He says.

What He promises, He will do.

He is a merciful God.

Deuteronomy 7:13 "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."

“Corn ... wine ... oil”:

These were the 3 principal food products of Palestine.

“Corn” (grain), included wheat and barley.

“New wine” was the grape juice as it came from the presses.

The “oil” was the olive oil used in cooking and in the lamps.

This is a list of some of the blessings that would come upon them, if they kept their covenant with God.

Hebrews considered children as a special blessing from God.

They were blessed with big families, plenty of food, and an abundance of cattle and sheep.

They would have need for nothing.

Deuteronomy 7:14 "Thou shalt be blessed above all people: there shall not be male or female barren among you, or among your cattle."

Even with temporal blessings, besides those of a religious kind.

They having the oracles of God, the covenants, the giving of the law, the service of God, and the promises (Rom. 3:1).

"There shall not be male or female barren among you":

Which to be was reckoned a reproach, and the contrary of a blessing (Luke 1:25; Psalm 128:3).

"Or among your cattle":

The Targum of Jonathan is, nor thy beasts' barren of wool, and milk, and lambs.

The Hebrews thought it a curse not to have children.

This is a blessing on the people, and their cattle.

Deuteronomy 7:15 "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."

“The evil diseases of Egypt”:

Some virulent and malignant diseases such as elephantiasis, ophthalmia, and dysentery were common in Egypt.

Some diseases are caused from sin.

Sinful acts sometimes cause disease.

Sexually transmitted diseases are a good example of that.

Not all diseases are sin.

We know that, by the blind man that Jesus healed.

His disciples asked him who had sinned, him or his parents.

Jesus told them neither of them, it was to glorify God.

Deuteronomy 7:16 "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."

All the inhabitants of the land of Canaan, which the LORD should deliver into their hands.

Them they were not to spare, but utterly destroy men, women, and children.

"Thine eye shall have no pity upon them":

See notes on Deut. 7:2.

"Neither shall thou serve their gods; for that will be a snare unto thee":

Which will bring into utter ruin and destruction (see Exodus 23:33).

The enemy was a strong nation, but God would be with the Israelites.

He told them to get rid of the people He had delivered before them.

They should have no pity on them, because they served false gods.

If they spared them, they might get ensnared by their worship of false gods.

Deuteronomy 7:17 "If thou shalt say in thine heart, These nations [are] more than I; how can I dispossess them?"

Should have secret thoughts arise in the heart, misgivings of heart, fears and doubts there.

Which, though not outwardly expressed, might be inwardly retained.

"These nations are more than I":

Seven to one, and perhaps anyone of them as powerful as Israel.

"How can I dispossess them?"

Of the land they inherit, and take possession of it.

This would be a terrible thing to think in their hearts.

This was the sin their fathers had committed.

They must not faint at the size of the people, but have faith in God.

Deuteronomy 7:18 "Thou shalt not be afraid of them: [but] shalt well remember what the LORD thy God did unto Pharaoh, and unto all Egypt;"

When facing their enemies, Israel was exhorted to “remember what the LORD thy God did unto Pharaoh, and unto all Egypt”:

When facing crises, it is wise to recall ways in which God has answered prayer in the past (Psalm 105:5).

Pharaoh had a large, well-trained army with many chariots, but God drowned them all in the Red sea.

They must depend on the power of their God, and not on their own power.

Deuteronomy 7:19 "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."

The miracles wrought in Egypt (see Deut. 4:34).

"And the mighty hand, and stretched out arm, whereby the LORD thy God brought thee out":

That is, out of Egypt, which was an instance and proof of His almighty power.

"So shall the LORD thy God do unto all the people of whom thou art afraid":

Not perform the same miraculous operations among them, but exert the same power in the destruction of them.

And in dispossessing them of their land, as in destroying the Egyptians, and delivering Israel from among them.

The temptation is to look at these people, and be afraid.

They must not do that.

They must remember the great odds against God bringing them out of Egypt, but He did.

They must use all the faith they have, and believe God will deliver these people into their hands.

Deuteronomy 7:20 "Moreover the LORD thy God will send the hornet among them, until they that are left, and hide themselves from thee, be destroyed."

“God will send the hornet”:

The hornet or wasp was a large insect, common in Canaan, that may have had a potentially fatal sting.

Here the reference was probably figurative in the sense of a great army sent into panic when the LORD would inflict His sting on them (see 11:25; see note on Exodus 23:28).

The people will flee from the hornet sting.

Those who refuse to go, will die from the hornet stings.

Deuteronomy 7:21 "Thou shalt not be affrighted at them: for the LORD thy God [is] among you, a mighty God and terrible."

At their numbers, nor at their gigantic stature.

"For the LORD thy God is among you":

In the Tabernacle, in the Holy of Holies.

Which was in the midst of them, and besides would give proof of his powerful presence among them.

In protecting them, and destroying their enemies.

"A mighty God and terrible":

Mighty to save his people, and terrible to others.

Fear is the opposite of faith.

They must put their faith and trust in the LORD who is among them.

He is a mighty God and terrible.

Deuteronomy 7:22 "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."

“Little and little”:

Even though the LORD promised that the defeat of the people of the land would be quick (4:26; 9:3), the process of settlement would be more gradual to avoid the danger of the land returning to a primitive state of natural anarchy.

We see the enemy is not moved out in one night, because there would be too many wild animals left for this group of Israelites to fight.

They will take the people, a few at a time, to give them time to build safe places for their own cattle and sheep.

Deuteronomy 7:23 "But the LORD thy God shall deliver them unto thee, and shall destroy them with a mighty destruction, until they be destroyed."

Gradually, by little and little, until at length they should all come into their hands.

"And shall destroy them with a mighty destruction, until they be destroyed":

Even all of them.

God will be with them all the time, that they are fighting these people.

God will go before them in every instance, and protect them.

God will place them before the Israelites, as they are to fight against them.

Deuteronomy 7:24 "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."

Who were very numerous, for though there were but seven nations, there were more kings.

Even one and thirty (Joshua 12:9).

"Thou shalt destroy their name from under heaven":

Not only destroy the name of the reigning kings, so as that they should not be remembered and made mention of any more.

But put an end to the name and race of kings among them, so that they should never have any more, as they never had.

"There shall no man be able to stand before thee, until thou have destroyed them":

The nations and their kings.

It would be very important to destroy their leaders, so the people would not have someone to lead them in their battles.

This seems as if the siege is for quite some time.

Deuteronomy 7:25 "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."

Which is repeated from (Deut. 7:5).

That it might be the more observed and strictly performed, and which unless done, they could not expect the utter destruction of their enemies.

Who were left in the land to try and prove them with respect to this very thing.

"Thou shall not desire the silver or gold that is on them":

The raiment of gold or silver with which they were bedecked, or the plates of gold and silver with which they were covered.

Or any ornament about them, as chains and the like, that were of either of these metals (see Ezek. 16:16).

"Nor take it unto thee, lest thou be snared therein":

Nor take it into their possession, or bring it into their houses, as in the next verse.

Lest they should be under a temptation to worship it, or keep it as a superstitious relic.

"For it is an abomination to the LORD thy God":

Not only the idol itself, being put in the place of God, and so derogatory to His honor and glory.

But the gold and silver on it, being devoted to a superstitious and idolatrous use.

And even the taking of it, and appropriating it to a man's own use, was an abomination, and resented by the LORD as such.

The graven images were made mostly of silver and gold.

The metal alone in them would have been valuable.

God tells them not to take the metal, after they have melted these images.

Gold and silver could be a temptation to sin.

Deuteronomy 7:26 "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."

"Thou shalt utterly detest it ... utterly abhor it":

"Detest" and "abhor" were strong words of disapproval and rejection.

Israel was to have the same attitude toward the idols of the Canaanites as did God Himself.

"Is a cursed thing":

The images or idols were to be set aside for destruction.

The gold and silver had been associated with the false god.

God tells them not to bring anything into their homes, that are related in any way to the worship of false gods.

The things used in false worship are cursed, and could bring the curse to them.

These people of God shall hate anything connected to false gods.

Deuteronomy Chapter 7 Questions

1. Who are the people in the land, that will be cast out?
2. All of the people from these 7 nations are _____.
3. God had promised Abraham _____ nations would be destroyed.
4. Who were the others?
5. Who was a Rephidim?
6. They were to make no _____ with them.
7. Why is it necessary to run them out totally?
8. Why should they not marry these people?
9. What would happen to those who married these idolaters?
10. What should they do to the altars, and images?
11. What were the altars, images, groves, and graven images associated with?

12. What kind of people are Israel to be?
13. The thing that made Israel different, was their _____ with God.
14. They were not large in number, but _____.
15. What is God's kind of love?
16. Who had God sworn to, that they would receive the Promised Land?
17. How had God brought them out of Egypt?
18. How long will God keep covenant with those who love Him?
19. What was the condition of His covenant with them?
20. What are some of the blessings mentioned in verse 13?
21. The Hebrews thought it a _____ not to have children.
22. How do we know that all sickness is not from sin?
23. Why did God tell them to have no pity on these people?
24. What is the sin in verse 17?
25. What were they to remember, to help them not be afraid?
26. What will God send among their enemies, to help run them off?
27. Why would it take some time to move all of the enemy out?
28. Why should they not keep the gold and silver from the burned images?
29. The people of God shall hate anything connected to _____.