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BIBLE STUDY

**Refuge Church of Our Lord Jesus Christ of the Apostolic Faith, Inc.**

25200 Sorrento Avenue, Sorrento, FL 32776; 352.383.5052

Web Site: [www.RefugeSorrento.com](http://www.RefugeSorrento.com)

**Elder Alphonzo Baptiste, Pastor**

**Bishop M. Ruel McCoy, Sr., Diocesan**

**“HOLY WAR”**

**Deuteronomy 7:1-26**

***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;"***

***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 shew mercy unto them:"***

Israel’s possession of the promised land would be “Holy War” which includes the difficult but necessary work of destroying the God-hating nations that lived there. Moses could speak of the conquest as if it were an accomplished fact because the Lord would deliver their enemies into their hands. Though seven nations more numerous and powerful than Israel lived there, Israel was commissioned to completely destroy them. Doing so was necessary because of the wicked practices of the Canaanites (Leviticus 18:1-30; Deuteronomy 18:9-14). 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, Kenizites, Kadmonites and Rephadim. They had destroyed Rephadim with Og. The others, here, will fall with the exploits of Joshua. 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. This “Holy War” is also commanded in Joshua 2:26–37. This section records the conquest of Heshbon. For the LORD thy God hardened his spirit, and made his heart obstinate, that he might deliver him into thy hand: God had hardened the heart of Pharaoh and now “the iniquity of the Amorites” was full (Genesis 15:16), and judgment was being administered (Joshua 11:20). This “Holy War,” with Israel as God’s instrument of judgment. Utterly destroyed the men, and the women, and the little ones, of every city: The Hebrew word is chērem and was a “ban of extermination,” used in Deuteronomy in connection with people (20:17, 18) or objects dedicated to the worship of false gods. For the Hebrews, people and objects associated with pagan cultic rites were to be regarded with abhorrence, as sin should always be—as corrupt and corrupting, and as fit for nothing but complete destruction—lest the “ban” should subsequently fall on those who spared them (Joshua 6:17, “city accursed,” 18; 7:1, 11–13, 15).”

***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."***

***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."***

In this specific instance of history, God’s people were called to execute God’s vengeance. If Israel were to let them live, make a treaty with them, or intermarry with them, they would corrupt Israel and turn their hearts to worship other gods, provoking God to anger and thereby calling down his wrath on his people. 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. 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."***

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.

***Deuteronomy 7:6 "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 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. The only safeguard against idolatry’s spread was to destroy the Canaanite idols. The Lord is a holy God; therefore, his people are a “Holy People” and must live lives of holiness. The word for holy is “segulah” originally applied to ownership of property, and here to Israel as God’s very own possession. 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 calling.

***Titus 2:14 “Who gave himself for us, that he might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works.”***

***1 Peter 2:9 “But ye are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people; that ye should shew forth the praises of him who hath called you out of darkness into his marvellous light;”***

***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:"***

***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."***

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. 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. God had not set his heart on Israel because they were an especially numerous or righteous group. Rather, he did so because he loved them. This passage reminds us as Christians that we were not saved because we were something special or because we sought God’s help. It all began with God’s love: “he loved us and sent his Son to be the atoning sacrifice for our sins” (1 John 4: 10). The verb “redeemed” means “to ransom”. 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. The hornet (Exodus 23:28; Joshua 24:12) is a figure for the terror of God that descended on Israel’s foes, producing panic and rout. 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 7:9 "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;"***

***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."***

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

Distinct above every so-called god of the nations, the Lord is the only true God. He is faithful not only to bless those who love and obey him, but also to judge those who hate and disobey him. Therefore, the only wise thing Israel could do was to keep the commands and ordinances of God that Moses was laying out for them. This principle is still applicable to us. 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. This just means that God will not have someone else to do this, He will do it Himself. God will punish him personally. The people are reminded, by Moses, to keep God's commandments, if they do not want God to punish them.

***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:"***

***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."***

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

Moses reminds them, also, that God will bless them abundantly if they keep His commandments. There were blessings promised for obedience, and cursing’s for those who would not obey. God always does exactly what He says. What He promises, He will do. He is a merciful God. 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. The Hebrews thought it a curse not to have children. This is a blessing on the people, and their cattle. 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. The promises for obedience were tremendous. God would keep his covenant loyalty with Israel, by loving, blessing, and multiplying his people. Their blessings would also include freedom from all the terrible diseases they had suffered in Egypt. God would withhold no good thing from his people.

***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."***

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

***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;"***

***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 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. 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. 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. 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. But the price of blessing was obedience. And the obedience God required of Israel included the destruction of the Canaanites and the rejection of their gods. Knowing that the people harbored a fear of the Canaanites, Moses pointed to what God did to Pharaoh and all Egypt in order to rescue his people.

***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."***

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

The people will flee from the hornet sting. Those who refuse to go, will die from the hornet stings. 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. Even as seemingly weak Israel prepared to walk into the future God had prepared for them, Pharaoh’s mighty chariot army lay at the bottom of the Red Sea. So, Moses said, The Lord your God will do the same to all the peoples you fear. Don’t be terrified of them, for the Lord your God, a great and awesome God, is among you. The ultimate cure for fear is awareness of the presence and power of God.

***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."***

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."***

***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."***

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. 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."***

***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***."

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. 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. The promise of victory was accompanied by a warning not to covet and take any of the spoils of the defeated Canaanites. Just as the gold in the tabernacle was holy because it was devoted to the Lord’s service, so also the gold of the Canaanites was detestable because it was devoted to the images of their gods. So, the possessions of the Canaanites were to be devoted to destruction. Joshua 7:1-26, however, records how an Israelite would disobey this command, cause harm to his fellow Israelites, and pay the ultimate price.

**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. They were to make no \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ with them.
4. What would happen to those who married these idolaters?
5. What should they do to the altars, and images?
6. What were the altars, images, groves, and graven images associated with?
7. What kind of people are Israel to be?
8. The thing that made Israel different, was their \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ with God.
9. They were not large in number, but \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_.
10. What is God's kind of love?
11. Who had God sworn to, that they would receive the promised land?
12. How long will God keep covenant with those who love Him?
13. What are some of the blessings mentioned in verse 13?
14. The Hebrews thought it a \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ not to have children.
15. What is the sin in verse 17?
16. Why should they not keep the gold and silver from the burned images?
17. The people of God shall hate anything connected to \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ \_\_\_\_\_.