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Show No Pity

7: 16-26

Show no pity DIG: What kind of life do you think the Israelites had in the wilderness, as compared to the more urban population of Canaan? How might this affect the Israelites' will to conquer the nations of Canaan? If the Israelites viewed these nations as strong, how did it affect their opinion of the gods of these nations? What problems might this create for the Israelites as they attempted to establish themselves in Canaan? About how long did it take to control the whole Land? What is the cherem judgment? Why did God impose it?

REFLECT: We aren't supposed to isolate ourselves from the world (First Corinthians 5:9-13) because the world needs our witness and service. We cooperate with different people at different times for different reasons, but we're careful not to compromise our witness for Messiah. We do some things because it's for the good of humanity and other things because we're citizens or employees. But whatever we do, we seek to do it to the glory of God. How are you doing with this balance of being a light to the world, yet separate from the world?

The Israelites were to utterly destroy the pagans of Canaan and show no pity. If they would not do so, Israel would become ensnared by their gods and would not experience the blessings that ADONAI intended for them.



A. You must utterly destroy all the Canaanites (7:16): You will devour all the peoples ADONAI your God gives over to you. Your eye is not to pity them. You are not to serve their gods, for that would be a snare to you (7:16). Moses reminded the Israelites of their God-given task, the extermination of all the Canaanites and their gods (to see link click [Ag](#) - The Problem of Holy War in the TaNaKh). Moshe warned them against the natural sympathy they would feel for those pagans and pressed them to carry out Ha'Shem's bidding. If the Israelites would not do so, they would become ensnared by the pagans and their gods (Exodus 34:12-14), and as a result, would not experience the blessings just mentioned (see [Cc](#) - Because You are Listening).²³²

B. ADONAI will destroy them (7:17-21): The remedy for fear would be a good memory. Remembering God always gives evidence of His continuing faithfulness. For Isra'el, the victory in the coming holy war was already assured because the commander of YHVH's army (Joshua 5:14), the pre-incarnate Yeshua Messiah, was leading them. But Moses knew the hearts of his fellow Israelites. He remembered how forty years earlier the Anakites had made their hearts melt (see [An](#) - Isra'el's Lack of Faith). The Israelites were to concentrate not on the strength of their enemies but on the greatness of their LORD, and how He had already provided for them, especially their deliverance from Egypt.²³³ Suppose you say in your heart, "These nations are more numerous than I - how can I drive them out?" You are not to be afraid of them. You are to be sure to remember what ADONAI your God did to Pharaoh and to all Egypt: the great trials that your eyes saw, the signs and wonders, and the mighty hand and outstretched arm by which ADONAI your God brought you out. So will ADONAI your God do to all the peoples you fear. Moreover, YHVH would cause Isra'el's enemies to run from her in battle as if they were attacked by a swarm of hornets. ADONAI your God will send the hornets against them, until the survivors and those in hiding perish before you. There would be no hiding place from the victorious pursuit of God's people. The enemies of Isra'el were already afraid of them (Exodus 15:15; Numbers 22:3; Joshua 2:9-11 and 24, 5:19:24). You should not be terrified of them, since ADONAI your God is in your midst - a great and awesome God (7:17-21). Therefore, far from being afraid of the enemy, it was God Himself that the enemy needed to fear!

C. ADONAI will remove the nations before you (7:22): The process of settlement and complete control of **the Land** would be gradual. **ADONAI your God will drive away those nations before you little by little - you will not be able to put an end to them all at once, or else the beasts of the field will multiply on you (7:22). The enemies of YHVH** would be driven out only gradually, so that **the wild beasts** might be kept under control. Practical reasons would also slow down the speed with which **Isra'el** could separate themselves from **the Canaanites**. On the one hand, **she** was separated from the world. But, on the other hand, **she** could not live outside the world. The conquest would take time.²³⁴ According to the book of **Joshua**, it took **Isra'el** about seven years to control the whole **Land**. First, **Joshua** cut straight across **Canaan** and divided **the Land (Joshua Chapters 1-8)**; then **he** conquered **the nations** in the **south (Joshua Chapters 9-10)**; and then **those** to the north (**Joshua Chapter 11**). But this left “mopping up” operations for the individual **tribes**, some of **them** never did eliminate **the enemy** from **their territory (Judges Chapters 1-2)**.²³⁵

B. ADONAI will destroy them (7:23-24): But **ADONAI your God will give them over to you, and He will throw them into great confusion until they are destroyed**. A divinely inspired **panic** would overwhelm **the Canaanites** and render **them** helpless in battle (**Exodus 23:28; Joshua 24:12; Judges 7:17-24**). **He will hand over their kings to you, and you will blot out their name from under the heavens (see 12:2-3). No man will stand up to you, until you have destroyed them all (7:23-24)**. The historical reality ended up somewhat differently, but the clear message is the conquest of **Canaan** was the act of **God**, a holy war, not merely an arbitrary territorial aggression. However, **Isra'el's** eventual inability to conquer **the Canaanites** completely does not reflect on **Isra'el's God**, but on **the nation's** unwillingness to take **their God** at **His** word.²³⁶

A. You must utterly destroy all the idols of the Canaanites (7:25-26): Finally, the chapter returns to its opening concern (see [Ca - Warning Against Idolatry](#)), the vital importance that **Isra'el** remain unimpressed, untempted, unsnared, and uncontaminated by **the idolatry** of **Canaan**. It was a very serious matter. Not only were the memory of **the kings** to be **wiped out**, but also **the carved images of their gods** were to be **burned with fire**. **You are not to covet the silver or gold on them or take it for yourself - or you could be**

snared by it, for it is an abomination to ADONAI your God. **Coveting silver and gold is something which brings a curse. Far from the silver and gold bringing prosperity, they will lead to the destruction of legitimate possessions. You are not to bring an abomination into your house - for you, like it, will be a banned thing.** It wasn't enough for the Jews to merely obey the command to destroy what God had condemned. They needed to obey from their hearts. **You must utterly detest and utterly abhor it;** otherwise, the Israelites themselves would become the objects of the LORD's holy war, for the idols of Canaan were **devoted to destruction (7:25-26).**

A telling illustration of what would happen if **the thing devoted to destruction** was kept for one's self is provided in the story of **Achan** at **Ai**. This is the concept of *the cherem judgment*, which means **to be devoted to destruction**. Even though **Jericho** was **devoted to destruction**, when **Achan** took a beautiful robe from **Shin'ar**, five pounds of silver shekels and one-and-a-quarter-pound wedge of gold (**Joshua 7:21**), *he became devoted to destruction*. He chose the spoils of war over the blessings of obeying **God's Word (Psalms 119:14, 72, 127, 162)**. As a result, **Joshua, together with all Isra'el, took Achan, with the silver, the robe, the gold wedge, his wife, his sons, his daughters, his cattle, his donkeys, his sheep, his tent, and everything he had, and brought them up to the Achor Valley . . . then all Isra'el stoned him to death and burned them to ashes. Over him they piled a great mound of stones. Finally, ADONAI turned away from His fierce anger (Joshua 7:24-26a).** Those **seven nations** who occupied the **Land** promised to **Isra'el** were to be **utterly destroyed**, which meant they were **devoted to destruction**, and were to be dealt with just like **Achan** was dealt with. **The Israelites** were supposed to deal with **them** like **they** had done when they defeated **Og** earlier. **They captured all his cities and killed everyone who was devoted to destruction - men, women and children. They left no survivors (2:34).** Little **Canaanites** would grow up to be big **Canaanites**. **They were to show no pity.**

*Dear Holy Heavenly **Father, You** are 100% Holy - perfectly pure! In today's world nothing is a sin and everyone thinks they are right to do whatever they want to do. That is just like the time of the judges. **In those days there was no king in Israel; every man did what was right in his own eyes. (Judges 17:6, 21:25).** Mankind is so full of pride at their own success that they worship themselves, instead of bending the knee to **You**. They do not realize that there is safety and joy in making **You the King** of our lives. **So now, O kings, be wise, take warning,***

O judges of the earth! Serve Adonai with fear, and rejoice with trembling. Kiss the Son, lest He become angry, and you perish along your way - since His wrath may flare up suddenly. Happy is everyone taking refuge in Him (Psalms 2:10-12)! We joyfully give You our total obedience and willing suffer any mocking or derision that others may give us for following You. For I consider the sufferings of this present time not worthy to be compared with the coming glory to be revealed to us (Romans 8:18). We love You and delight in worshiping and praising You. In Yeshua's holy name and power of His resurrection. Amen