



No Pity

Deuteronomy 7:16-26

Structure **of Deuteronomy 7**

It begins and ends with the destruction of the Canaanites and their idols (vv.1-6, 16-26).

“You must destroy them totally.” (v.2)

“No one will be able to stand up against you; you will destroy them.” (v.24)

The center of the chapter is a description of who God is (vv.9-10).

“Know therefore that the Lord your God is God; he is the faithful God, keeping his covenant of love to a thousand generations of those who love him and keep his commandments. But those who hate him he will repay to their face by destruction; he will not be slow to repay to their face those who hate him.” (vv.9-10)

Deuteronomy 7:16-

26

God knew the fears of the Israelites.

You may say to yourselves, “These nations are stronger than we are. How can we drive them out?” (v.17)

God's response to their fears: Remember who He is

“But do not be afraid of them; *remember well what the Lord your God did to Pharaoh and to all Egypt.* You saw with your own eyes the great trials, the signs and wonders, the mighty hand and outstretched arm, with which the Lord your God brought you out. *The Lord your God will do the same to all the peoples you now fear.*” (vv.18-19)

Who God is – His Presence & Power

“Do not be terrified by them, for the Lord your God, *who is among you, is a great and awesome God.*” (v.21)

Emphasis of Deuteronomy 7:17-24: Initiative and Power of God

“The Lord your God will send the hornet among them until even the survivors who hide from you have perished... The Lord your God will drive out those nations before you, little by little... the Lord your God will deliver them over to you, throwing them into great confusion until they are destroyed. He will give their kings into your hand, and you will wipe out their names from under heaven. No one will be able to stand up against you; you will destroy them.”

“And when the Lord your God has delivered them over to you and you have defeated them, then you must ***destroy them totally***. Make no treaty with them, and ***show them no mercy***.” (v.2)

“You must ***destroy all the peoples*** the Lord your God gives over to you. ***Do not look on them with pity*** and do not serve their gods, for that will be a snare to you.” (v.16)

Holiness

The command to destroy the Canaanites and their idols was meant to protect Israel's holiness.

“For you are a people holy to the Lord your God. The Lord your God has chosen you out of all the peoples on the face of the earth to be his people, his treasured possession.” (v.6)

Exodus 19:4-6

‘You yourselves have seen what I did to Egypt, and how I carried you on eagles’ wings and brought you to myself. Now if you obey me fully and keep my covenant, then out of all nations you will be my treasured possession. Although the whole earth is mine, you will be for me ***a kingdom of priests and a holy nation.***’
These are the words you are to speak to the Israelites.”

“A holy nation”

To represent God and bring the knowledge of God to the nations.

“A kingdom of priests”

To bring people to God by enabling them to find atonement and restored fellowship with God through the sacrifices.

“Distinct from the world, for the world.”

(Timothy Keller)

**How to reconcile the character of
God and the identity of His
people with the command to
destroy the Canaanites?**

The extreme wickedness of the Canaanite nations

“After the Lord your God has driven them out before you, do not say to yourself, “The Lord has brought me here to take possession of this land because of my righteousness.” No, ***it is on account of the wickedness of these nations*** that the Lord is going to drive them out before you.”
(Deuteronomy 9:4)

“In the fourth generation your descendants will come back here, *for the sin of the Amorites has not yet reached its full measure.*” (Genesis 15:6)

Other references:

**Leviticus 18: 24-30; 20:22-24 and
Deuteronomy 12:31; 18:12.**

“The fact that God would ultimately use the Israelites as the vehicle of God’s blessing for the nations did not disqualify them from also being the agent of God’s judgment on wicked and idolatrous nations. As a matter of fact, God even used the Assyrians and Babylonians in later centuries as the agents of judgment upon Israel itself.”

(Christopher Wright)

The extreme wickedness of the Canaanite nations

Preservation of Israel as God's witness to the nations

- The holiness of Israel is the theological basis for the command to destroy the Canaanites and their idols.

But you are a chosen people, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, God's special possession, that you may declare the praises of him who called you out of darkness into his wonderful light.

(1 Peter 2:9)

Idolatry

Eradicate every form of idolatry

“The images of their gods you are to burn in the fire. Do not covet the silver and gold on them, and do not take it for yourselves, or you will be ensnared by it, for it is detestable to the Lord your God. Do not bring a detestable thing into your house or you, like it, will be set apart for destruction. Regard it as vile and utterly detest it, for it is set apart for destruction.”

(vv.25-26)

Eradicate every form of idolatry

**“This is what you are to do to them:
Break down their altars, smash their
sacred stones, cut down their Asherah
poles and burn their idols in the fire.”**

(v.5)

“Put to death, therefore, whatever belongs to your earthly nature: sexual immorality, impurity, lust, evil desires and *greed, which is idolatry.*”

(Colossians 3:5)

An idol is anything that you depend on besides Jesus Christ for your satisfaction, sense of purpose, significance, security and salvation.

It is not enough for the Israelites to remove the enemies that surround them; they have to remove the enemies that could destroy them from within (the idols of Canaan).