

Deuteronomy 20:15

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

Thus shalt thou do unto all the cities which are very far off from thee, which are not of the cities of these nations.

Analysis

Thus shalt thou do unto all the cities which are very far off from thee, which are not of the cities of these nations—This verse distinguishes warfare categories: **very far off** (distant, non-Canaanite) versus **these nations** (the seven Canaanite peoples, Deuteronomy 7:1). Distant cities receive peace offers and mercy if they surrender; Canaanite cities face total herem (next verses) because their proximity threatens Israel's covenant fidelity through idolatrous influence.

Proximity determines danger—not ethnicity but spiritual contagion risk. Paul warns: **Evil communications corrupt good manners** (1 Corinthians 15:33). The principle applies spiritually: **Come out from among them, and be ye separate** (2 Corinthians 6:17). We engage distant culture (missions, evangelism) but guard against intimate spiritual compromise (close fellowship with unbelief). Jesus ate with sinners (evangelism) but didn't adopt their practices (sanctification).

Historical Context

Israel's geographical position between Egypt and Mesopotamia meant frequent interaction with distant empires (Assyria, Babylon, Persia). God's law permitted peaceful relations with distant nations while requiring complete separation from neighboring Canaanites whose religious practices posed immediate, daily temptation.

Related Passages

Romans 2:1 — Judging others

Matthew 25:31 — Final judgment

Genesis 1:1 — Creation of heavens and earth

Psalms 19:1 — Heavens declare God's glory

Study Questions

1. How do you distinguish 'distant' engagement (missions, evangelism) from 'neighboring' compromise (intimate fellowship with unbelief)?
2. What modern 'Canaanite' influences (entertainment, relationships, philosophies) are dangerously 'near' and require radical separation?
3. How did Jesus model engaging sinners (distant) while maintaining holiness (separation from sin)?

Interlinear Text

כִּי	תַעֲשֶׂה	לְכָל	יַמְעַר י	הַרְחֵק ת	מִמֶּנּוּ
H3651	Thus shalt thou do	H3605	are not of the cities	far off	H4480
	H6213		H5892	H7350	
מְאֹד	אֲשֶׁר	לֹא	יַמְעַר י	הַגּוֹיִם	הָאֵל לָהּ
which are very	H834	H3808	are not of the cities	of these nations	H428
H3966			H5892	H1471	
הֵנָּה:					
from thee which					
H2007					