

Deuteronomy 20:17

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

But thou shalt utterly destroy them; namely, the Hittites, and the Amorites, the Canaanites, and the Perizzites, the Hivites, and the Jebusites; as the LORD thy God hath commanded thee:

Analysis

But thou shalt utterly destroy them; namely, the Hittites, and the Amorites, the Canaanites, and the Perizzites, the Hivites, and the Jebusites; as the LORD thy God hath commanded thee—The seven nations listed represent complete Canaanite civilization. **Utterly destroy** (הָחָרֵם תַּחֲרִימֶם, hacharem tacharimem, intensive doubling: 'you shall certainly devote to destruction') emphasizes non-negotiable obedience. The phrase **as the LORD thy God hath commanded** anchors this in divine authority, not human cruelty.

This isn't genocide (ethnic elimination) but theocide (false-god elimination). Rahab and the Gibeonites survived by embracing YHWH (Joshua 2, 9)—proving ethnicity wasn't the issue, idolatry was. Similarly, God demands spiritual herem: **Mortify therefore your members which are upon the earth; fornication, uncleanness, inordinate affection, evil concupiscence, and covetousness, which is idolatry** (Colossians 3:5). No quarter given to indwelling sin.

Historical Context

These seven nations formed Canaan's dominant cultures. Israel conquered under Joshua (1406-1399 BC) but failed to complete the herem, leaving pockets of

Canaanite population. Judges records the predictable result: **The anger of the LORD was hot against Israel** for serving Baals and Ashtoreths (Judges 2:13-14).

Related Passages

John 3:16 — God's love and salvation

Romans 10:9 — Confession and belief for salvation

Study Questions

1. How does Rahab's salvation (ethnic Canaanite who embraced YHWH) prove God's target was idolatry, not ethnicity?
2. What sins are you 'managing' rather than 'devoting to destruction' (mortifying completely)?
3. How does Colossians 3:5's 'mortify' (put to death) demand the same ruthlessness toward personal sin that Israel applied to Canaanites?

Interlinear Text

כִּי	תַּחֲרִימֶם	תַּחֲרִימֶם	הַחִתִּי	
H3588	But thou shalt utterly	But thou shalt utterly	them namely the Hittites	
	H2763	H2763	H2850	
וְהָאֱמֹרִי	הַכְּנַעֲנִי	וְהַפְּרִזִּי	הַחִוִּי	וְהַיְבוּסִי
and the Amorites	the Canaanites	and the Perizzites	the Hivites	and the Jebusites
H567	H3669	H6522	H2340	H2983
כָּאֲשֶׁר	צִוָּה	יְהוָה	אֱלֹהֶיךָ:	
H834	hath commanded	as the LORD	thy God	
	H6680	H3068	H430	