

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** (פָּנָקֵד מִמֶּנּוּ, 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 תְמַרֵּם מִתְמַרֵּם מִתְמַרֵּם בְּחַתִּים
H3588 **But thou shalt utterly** **But thou shalt utterly** **them namely the Hittites**
 H2763 H2763 H2850

וּבְאֹמְרִים כְּחֹתְם וּבְפְרִזִּים כְּפִתְעָנִים וּבְיְבוּסִים
and the Amorites the Canaanites and the Perizzites the Hivites and the Jebusites
H567 H3669 H6522 H2340 H2983

כִּאֵשׁ רָאָז הַיְהוָה אֱלֹהֵיכֶם
H834 **hath commanded** **as the LORD** **thy God**
 H6680 H3068 H430