

Deuteronomy 7:16

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

And thou shalt consume all the people which the LORD thy God shall deliver thee; thine eye shall have no pity upon them: neither shalt thou serve their gods; for that will be a snare unto thee.

Analysis

The command to 'consume' (akal, 'devour, destroy') the Canaanite peoples continues the herem (devoted destruction) theme. 'Thine eye shall have no pity' prohibits sentimental mercy that enables evil. This is judicial hardness, not personal cruelty—executing God's judgment requires overcoming natural compassion that would spare the guilty. The warning 'that will be a snare unto thee' shows that incomplete obedience leads to spiritual compromise. A 'snare' (moqesh) is a trap—seemingly harmless at first but deadly in result. Israel's history validated this warning: spared Canaanites became thorns (Judges 2:3) leading to apostasy. In spiritual warfare, believers must be ruthless with sin, showing no mercy to patterns that ensnare (Romans 8:13; Colossians 3:5).

Historical Context

Israel's failure to completely execute this command resulted in centuries of spiritual struggle. Judges 1-2 records numerous Canaanite groups that were not driven out, who subsequently 'became thorns in your sides' and led Israel into idolatry. The Philistines, though not Canaanites, exemplified how unconquered enemies became ongoing threats. Solomon's marriages to foreign women (1 Kings 11:1-8) demonstrated how 'pity' and political alliance with pagan nations led

directly to idolatry. The northern kingdom's syncretism with Canaanite Baal worship fulfilled this warning exactly.

Related Passages

John 15:13 — Greatest form of love

1 Corinthians 13:4 — Characteristics of love

Study Questions

1. What sins or temptations are you showing 'pity' to that God commands you to destroy completely?
2. How does incomplete obedience to God's commands become a 'snare' leading to greater compromise?
3. In what ways should you be more ruthless in putting to death the deeds of the flesh?

Interlinear Text

וְאֶכְלָתָ	את	כל	בְּעֵמָ	ימָ	רַ	אֲשֶׁ	הָ	יְהִ
And thou shalt consume	H853	H3605	H5971		H834		which the LORD	H3068
H398								
לֹא	לְ	גַ	נָתַ	נָתַ	תַחַ	וְ	עִינָ	בָ
אֵל	הִיָּה	מָ			שְׁ		תְּ	תְּ
their gods	shall deliver	H0	H3808	shall have no pity	H2347	thee thine eye	H5869	
H430	H5414							
וְלֹ	אֵ	עַלְיָה	מָ	תַּעֲבֹד		אֲתָ	מָ	כִ
H5921	H3808	upon them neither shalt thou serve	H5647		H853	their gods	H3588	
						H430		
לְהָ	הָ	אֵ	מוֹקֵ	שָׁ				
for that will be a snare	H1931	H0						
H4170								

Additional Cross-References

Exodus 23:33 (References God): They shall not dwell in thy land, lest they make thee sin against me: for if thou serve their gods, it will surely be a snare unto thee.

Judges 8:27 (Parallel theme): And Gideon made an ephod thereof, and put it in his city, even in Ophrah: and all Israel went thither a whoring after it: which thing became a snare unto Gideon, and to his house.

1 Corinthians 15:33 (Parallel theme): Be not deceived: evil communications corrupt good manners.

Deuteronomy 19:21 (Parallel theme): And thine eye shall not pity; but life shall go for life, eye for eye, tooth for tooth, hand for hand, foot for foot.

Deuteronomy 25:12 (Parallel theme): Then thou shalt cut off her hand, thine eye shall not pity her.

Deuteronomy 13:8 (Parallel theme): Thou shalt not consent unto him, nor hearken unto him; neither shall thine eye pity him, neither shalt thou spare, neither shalt thou conceal him:

Deuteronomy 19:13 (Parallel theme): Thine eye shall not pity him, but thou shalt put away the guilt of innocent blood from Israel, that it may go well with thee.

Psalms 106:36 (Parallel theme): And they served their idols: which were a snare unto them.

Deuteronomy 7:2 (References God): And when the LORD thy God shall deliver them before thee; thou shalt smite them, and utterly destroy them; thou shalt make no covenant with them, nor shew mercy unto them:

Jeremiah 21:7 (References Lord): And afterward, saith the LORD, I will deliver Zedekiah king of Judah, and his servants, and the people, and such as are left in this city from the pestilence, from the sword, and from the famine, into the hand of Nebuchadrezzar king of Babylon, and into the hand of their enemies, and into the hand of those that seek their life: and he shall smite them with the edge of the sword; he shall not spare them, neither have pity, nor have mercy.