

Deuteronomy 9:5

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

Not for thy righteousness, or for the uprightness of thine heart, dost thou go to possess their land: but for the wickedness of these nations the LORD thy God doth drive them out from before thee, and that he may perform the word which the LORD sware unto thy fathers, Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob.

Analysis

Moses continues: 'Not for thy righteousness, or for the uprightness of thine heart, dost thou go to possess their land.' The doubled negation—'not for thy righteousness... not for uprightness'—emphatically refutes any merit-based claim. Instead, two reasons are given: God's judgment on Canaanite wickedness and God's faithfulness to patriarchal promises. The phrase 'perform the word which the LORD sware unto thy fathers, Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob' grounds the conquest in covenant faithfulness spanning centuries. God's character and promises, not Israel's worthiness, drive redemptive history.

Historical Context

God's covenant with Abraham (Genesis 12:1-3; 15:18-21; 17:1-8) promised land and descendants. God's oath to Isaac (Genesis 26:3-5) and Jacob (Genesis 28:13-15) renewed this promise. The Egyptian sojourn and exodus fulfilled part of the promise—deliverance and multiplication. The conquest would complete it—land possession. Throughout, Israel's unfaithfulness (golden calf, rebellion, murmuring) proved their unworthiness, yet God remained faithful. This pattern

anticipates the New Covenant in Christ, secured entirely by God's faithfulness, not human merit.

Related Passages

John 15:13 — Greatest form of love

1 John 4:8 — God is love

Study Questions

1. How does understanding salvation as God's gracious work (not human merit) shape your confidence and humility?
2. What does God's faithfulness to centuries-old promises teach about His covenant reliability?

Interlinear Text

ל א	בְּצִדְקָתְךָ	וּבִי שְׁר	לִבְךָ	אֶת ה	
H3808	Not for thy righteousness	or for the uprightness	of thine heart	H859	
	H6666	H3476	H3824		
ב א	בְּרַשָׁע תו	אֶת	אֶרֶץ מ	כִּי י	בְּרַשָׁע תו
dost thou go	doth drive them out	H853	their land	H3588	doth drive them out
H935	H3423		H776		H3423
הַגּוֹיִם	הֵא לָהּ	יְהוָה	אֱלֹהֶיךָ	מִזִּמְיוֹן	
of these nations	H428	the LORD	thy God	but for the wickedness	
H1471		H3068	H430	H7564	
מִפְּנֵי יְ	וּלְמַעַן	הֵקֵן יִם	אֶת	הַדָּבָר	אֲשֶׁר
from before	H4616	thee and that he may perform	H853	the word	H834
H6440		H6965		H1697	
נִשְׁבַּע ע	יְהוָה	לְאֲבֹתֶיךָ	לְאַבְרָהָם	לְיִצְחָק	וּלְיַעֲקֹב:
sware	the LORD	unto thy fathers	Abraham	Isaac	and Jacob
H7650	H3068	H1	H85	H3327	H3290

Additional Cross-References

Titus 3:5 (Righteousness): Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to his mercy he saved us, by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost;

Genesis 26:4 (Parallel theme): And I will make thy seed to multiply as the stars of heaven, and will give unto thy seed all these countries; and in thy seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed;

Genesis 17:8 (References God): And I will give unto thee, and to thy seed after thee, the land wherein thou art a stranger, all the land of Canaan, for an everlasting possession; and I will be their God.

Genesis 12:7 (References Lord): And the LORD appeared unto Abram, and said, Unto thy seed will I give this land: and there builded he an altar unto the LORD, who appeared unto him.

Genesis 13:15 (Parallel theme): For all the land which thou seest, to thee will I give it, and to thy seed for ever.

Genesis 15:7 (References Lord): And he said unto him, I am the LORD that brought thee out of Ur of the Chaldees, to give thee this land to inherit it.

Exodus 32:13 (References Abraham): Remember Abraham, Isaac, and Israel, thy servants, to whom thou swarest by thine own self, and saidst unto them, I will multiply your seed as the stars of heaven, and all this land that I have spoken of will I give unto your seed, and they shall inherit it for ever.

Genesis 28:13 (References God): And, behold, the LORD stood above it, and said, I am the LORD God of Abraham thy father, and the God of Isaac: the land whereon thou liest, to thee will I give it, and to thy seed;

Ezekiel 20:14 (Parallel theme): But I wrought for my name's sake, that it should not be polluted before the heathen, in whose sight I brought them out.