

Numbers 33:51

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

Speak unto the children of Israel, and say unto them, When ye are passed over Jordan into the land of Canaan;

Analysis

The command to 'drive out all the inhabitants of the land' and 'destroy all their pictures, molten images, and high places' demonstrates that total eradication of idolatry was required for Israel to possess the land safely. Coexistence with Canaanite religion was impossible; it would inevitably corrupt Israel. This teaches that compromising with sin leads to spiritual disaster. The Reformed doctrine of mortification—putting sin to death completely, not managing it—is illustrated. Half-measures in dealing with sin are insufficient.

Historical Context

Canaanite religion included fertility cults, child sacrifice, temple prostitution, and other abominations. God commanded total destruction not from ethnic hatred but from moral necessity. The high places were hilltop shrines where these practices occurred. Israel's later failure to completely obey this command led to centuries of syncretism and apostasy, validating God's warning.

Related Passages

Ephesians 2:8 — Salvation by grace through faith

Romans 10:9 — Confession and belief for salvation

Romans 1:17 — The righteous shall live by faith

Study Questions

1. How does God's command for complete eradication of idolatry inform Christian approach to sin?
2. What does Israel's later failure to fully obey teach about the danger of compromise?
3. In what ways must Christians be uncompromising regarding sin while being gracious toward sinners?

Interlinear Text

אָל	בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל	וְאָמַרְתָּ	אֵלֶיָּהּ	כִּי	אֶתְּ
Speak	unto the children	of Israel	and say		
H1696	H413 H1121	H3478	H559	H413	H3588 H859
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עֲבַר יֵם	אֶת הַיַּרְדֵּי	אֶל	אֶרֶץ	כְּנָעַן:	
unto them When ye are passed over	Jordan	into the land	of Canaan		
H5674	H853 H3383	H413	H776	H3667	

Additional Cross-References

Joshua 3:17 (References Israel): And the priests that bare the ark of the covenant of the LORD stood firm on dry ground in the midst of Jordan, and all the Israelites passed over on dry ground, until all the people were passed clean over Jordan.

Deuteronomy 9:1 (References Israel): Hear, O Israel: Thou art to pass over Jordan this day, to go in to possess nations greater and mightier than thyself, cities great and fenced up to heaven,

Deuteronomy 7:1 (Parallel theme): When the LORD thy God shall bring thee into the land whither thou goest to possess it, and hath cast out many nations before thee, the Hittites, and the Girgashites, and the Amorites, and the Canaanites, and the Perizzites, and the Hivites, and the Jebusites, seven nations greater and mightier than thou;

