

Numbers 33:52

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

Then ye shall drive out all the inhabitants of the land from before you, and destroy all their pictures, and destroy all their molten images, and quite pluck down all their high places:

Analysis

The command to 'drive out all the inhabitants of the land' and destroy their religious objects ('destroy all their pictures, and destroy all their molten images, and quite pluck down all their high places') required comprehensive removal of idolatry's enticements. This demonstrates that partial obedience in removing sin's sources leads to future compromise. The thoroughness demanded—pictures, images, high places—shows that tolerating any evil influence creates footholds for larger apostasy. Spiritual victory requires complete commitment, not half-measures.

Historical Context

Israel's failure to fully implement this command led to centuries of syncretism and idolatry, as Judges repeatedly documents. The Canaanite 'high places' (worship sites on hills) continually tempted Israel, with even good kings like Asa and Jehoshaphat failing to remove them completely. Solomon's later marriages to foreign wives who turned his heart to other gods (1 Kings 11:1-8) exemplified the danger Moses warned against. Complete obedience would have prevented much subsequent misery.

Related Passages

Matthew 25:31 — Final judgment

Romans 2:1 – Judging others

Genesis 1:1 – Creation of heavens and earth

Colossians 1:16 — All things created through Christ

Study Questions

1. What spiritual 'high places' or idolatrous influences do you tolerate rather than completely removing from your life?
2. How does partial obedience in dealing with sin create ongoing vulnerability to temptation?

Interlinear Text

מִפְנִיכָם	בְּאַרְצָה	וְשָׁבָה	כָּל	אֶת	וְבָשַׂת	מְ
Then ye shall drive out	H853	H3605	all the inhabitants	of the land	from before	
H3423			H3427	H776		H6440

אֶלְמָם וְכָלְמָם יְמִשְׁכִּתְמָם תַּאֲבֵד וְכָלְמָם יְמִשְׁכִּתְמָם תַּאֲבֵד
and destroy all their pictures H853 H3605 H4906 H853 H3605 H6754

מְפַכְּתָם	וְאֵת	תִּזְבְּחֶה	כָּל	בְּמָוֹת	בְּמָוֹת
all their molten	and destroy	H853	H3605	all their high places	

תְּשִׁמְדֹן
and quite pluck down
H8015

Additional Cross-References

Exodus 23:24 (Parallel theme): Thou shalt not bow down to their gods, nor serve them, nor do after their works: but thou shalt utterly overthrow them, and quite break down their images.

Leviticus 26:1 (Parallel theme): Ye shall make you no idols nor graven image, neither rear you up a standing image, neither shall ye set up any image of stone in your land, to bow down unto it: for I am the LORD your God.

Judges 2:2 (Parallel theme): And ye shall make no league with the inhabitants of this land; ye shall throw down their altars: but ye have not obeyed my voice: why have ye done this?

Joshua 23:7 (Parallel theme): That ye come not among these nations, these that remain among you; neither make mention of the name of their gods, nor cause to swear by them, neither serve them, nor bow yourselves unto them:
