

Do Not Intermarry with Them (Deuteronomy 7)

Expository Lessons from the Book of Deuteronomy

I. Background / Review

- a. The **Book of Deuteronomy** consists of a few speeches Moses gave to the Israelites near the end of their 40 years of wandering in the Wilderness.
- b. The second of those begins in **Deuteronomy 5**, with Moses recounting the Lord giving the 10 Commandments at Mount Sinai.
- c. In **Deuteronomy 7**, this speech by Moses to the Israelites continues. Here, Moses reminds them that they were chosen to be God's holy people and warns them of what will happen if they become like the nations that will surround them in Canaan.

II. Make No Covenants with Them; Do Not Intermarry with Them

- a. Read **Deuteronomy 7:1-4**.
- b. When they cross over into Canaan, they will encounter seven nations that are larger and more powerful than they are. However, if the Israelites stay faithful to the Lord, they will defeat all of them.
- c. Warnings, for after they defeat their enemies:
 - i. Make no covenants with them.
 - ii. Do not show them mercy.
 - iii. Do not intermarry with them.
 1. Otherwise, they will corrupt the Israelites to follow the 'gods' of the Canaanites.
 2. Then the Lord will quickly destroy the Israelites, His people.
 - iv. Obliterate all their corrupt pagan altars, groves, pillars, idols, etc.
- d. Solomon, about 400 years later, is the classic example of what will happen to them when they disobey this instruction. Keep in mind that as a young man, Solomon was extraordinarily strong spiritually.
 - i. Read **1 Kings (3 Kingdoms) 3:4-14**.
 1. At the beginning of his reign, Solomon has the wisdom and humility to ask the Lord for great wisdom (rather than wealth,

fame or victory over his enemies) so that he can govern the people wisely.

ii. Read **1 Kings (3 Kingdoms) 11:1-12.**

1. Solomon loved foreign women, who ultimately corrupted him into pagan idolatry.
 - a. He did exactly what Moses told the people NOT to do in **Deuteronomy 7** (marrying the women of the other nations).
 - b. The tragic consequence: his kingdom is torn in two after his death. The kings descended from Solomon lose ten of the twelve tribes of Israel.
2. **Question:** If someone who had been *as strong spiritually as Solomon* could be led into idolatry over time through the influence of his pagan wives, *what does that say to the rest of us?*
 - a. “Do not be deceived: *‘Evil company corrupts good habits.’*” (**1 Corinthians 15:33**, NKJV)

e. Paul makes a similar point to the Christians in Corinth.

i. Read **2 Corinthians 6:14-7:1.**

1. “Do not be unequally yoked together with unbelievers.”
2. This is reminiscent of an unusual directive in **Deuteronomy 22:10**: “You shall not plow with a young bull and a donkey together”.
3. This principle certainly applies to marriage, but likely extends to our other close relationships as well.

ii. Paul ties this back to the principle that we are God’s *holy* people (meaning *set apart* from all the others *for a special purpose*).

iii. **Practical Application for Unmarried Christians:**

1. You may marry *only* another Christian. No other option is on the table. Let us all settle this one in our hearts, now!
 - a. Guard your heart, just as you would toward someone already married to another person.
2. Similarly, a Christian whose spouse predeceases them is generally free to remarry, but with one restriction:

- a. “A wife is bound by law as long as her husband lives; but if her husband dies, she is at liberty to be married to whom she wishes, *only in the Lord.*” (**1 Corinthians 7:39**, NKJV)
- b. The expression “only in the Lord” limits the widow or widower to remarrying only *another Christian*.
- 3. This was part of “counting the cost” for me as a young single man when contemplating becoming a Christian.
- 4. Those who come to faith after marrying an unbeliever should remain in that married state, as Paul said in **1 Corinthians 7:12-16** and as Peter alludes to **in 1 Peter 3:1-6**.

III. You are a Holy People. No Compromise with Evil.

- a. Read **Deuteronomy 7:5-11**.
- b. A call to radical repentance: to uproot sin and cast the pagan idols into the fire to be burned up.
- c. What God expects from them (and us).
 - i. He did not choose them because they were powerful, impressive, fast-growing, numerous, or in any other way that was outwardly impressive.
 - 1. They were “the least of all the nations”.
 - ii. God chose us to be *His own special* people, above all the nations of the earth.
 - iii. We are to be *His holy people*.
 - 1. “Pursue *peace* with all people, and *holiness, without which no one will see the Lord*: looking carefully lest anyone fall short of the grace of God; lest any root of bitterness springing up cause trouble, and by this many become defiled;” (**Hebrews 12:14-15**, NKJV)
 - a. John Wesley, a famous Anglican priest who preached in the 1700s in Britain, wrote a blistering address on how unpopular this passage from **Hebrews 12** was, specifically stating that without holiness, “no one will see the Lord”. Wesley’s message is timeless and rings just as true today. He explained how so many Christian churches tried to find some other way to be saved (participating in religious rituals, saying special prayers,

burning candles...or claiming that Christ's righteousness was imputed to us, so we don't need to live according to righteousness ourselves!).

- b. For more on this, see John Wesley, *"A Blow to the Root or Christ Stabbed in the House of his Friends"*, c. 1762.
2. One can't reduce *holiness* to merely following a set of rules. It is a way of life totally devoted to being *set apart* to follow the Lord.
- iv. God keeps His covenant. He is faithful to what He promised (in this case, the promises He made to their forefathers).
 1. He keeps His covenant with those who love and obey Him, but
 2. He will quickly repay those who hate Him.
 - a. **Note:** Just because God had chosen them, they did not have a "blank check". He warned them that they needed to remain faithful to Him over time, to the end.
 - i. Many Christians today, particularly those influenced by Protestant Reformers like Luther and Calvin, claim that once a person is "saved", they cannot lose that relationship no matter what they do (regardless of whether they remain faithful to Christ or not).
 - ii. That position is refuted in an excellent Bible teaching documentary: *"Once Saved, Always Saved? A Documentary Film"* featuring Michael Brown, Jesse Morrell, Zac Poonen, David Bercot, and several other teachers from different backgrounds. Access to this video (which I highly recommend and which, based on online comments, has clearly 'triggered' many Evangelical Protestants) is freely available on YouTube:
 1. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MflvMTd5ufE>
 - b. "And because lawlessness will abound, the love of many will grow cold. But he who endures to the end shall be saved." (**Matthew 24:12-13**, NKJV)

- c. “Therefore do not cast away your confidence, which has great reward. For you have need of endurance, so that after you have done the will of God, you may receive the promise: ‘For yet a little while, And He who is coming will come and will not tarry. Now the just shall live by faith; But if anyone draws back, My soul has no pleasure in him.’ But we are not of those who draw back to perdition, but of those who believe to the saving of the soul.” (**Hebrews 10:35–39**, NKJV)
 - i. This important concept is developed further through many examples of saving faith provided in **Hebrews 11**.

IV. Blessings from Obedience

- a. Read **Deuteronomy 7:12-16**.
- b. However, this is a principle but not the “prosperity gospel”.
 - i. Consider the lives of the prophets, as well as
 - ii. Abel,
 - iii. Job,
 - iv. Jacob (20 years suffering and persevering under Laban),
 - v. Joseph, and
 - vi. The other heroes of faith in **Hebrews 11**.
 - 1. “They were stoned, they were sawn in two, were tempted, were slain with the sword. They wandered about in sheepskins and goatskins, being destitute, afflicted, tormented—of whom the world was not worthy. They wandered in deserts and mountains, in dens and caves of the earth.” (**Hebrews 11:37–38**, NKJV)
 - vii. From David: “The righteous cry out, and the LORD hears, And delivers them out of all their troubles. The LORD is near to those who have a broken heart, And saves such as have a contrite spirit. Many are the afflictions of the righteous, But the LORD delivers him out of them all.” (**Psalms 33/34:17–19**, NKJV)
 - viii. Jesus and the apostles.

V. Don't Fear Other Nations; God Will Send Hornets (or Wasps)**a. Read Deuteronomy 7:17-19.**

- i. The paralyzing impact of fear in the face of an overwhelming enemy.
 1. Recall the reaction of 10 of the 12 spies in **Numbers 13**, who explored Canaan nearly 40 years earlier. They saw the strength of the nations and despaired. (While Joshua and Caleb remained faithful.)
 2. Recall the reaction of the Israelite army in the face of the challenges of Goliath, the giant Philistine warrior, in **1 Samuel 17**. (In contrast, David believed the Lord could deliver Goliath into his hand.)
 3. **Question / Challenge:** Are you facing a challenge that is *utterly daunting* in life (whether an opponent/enemy attacking you or something else that seems way beyond your ability)?
- ii. Moses calls them to be courageous and not give way to fear, because:
 1. Remember what the Lord did to the Egyptians.
 - a. The 10 Plagues the Lord brought to devastate and humble Egypt.
 - b. The parting of the Red Sea and subsequent destruction of the mighty Egyptian army.
 2. Moses reassures the Israelites that the Lord will do the same to the enemies they are about to face, in Canaan.

b. Read Deuteronomy 7:20-23.

- i. He will send in the wasps (or hornets) first.
 1. I hate wasps and hornets!
- ii. The Lord says he will send "wasps/hornets" upon the Canaanites. Did he mean that *literally* or *figuratively*?
 1. This is also mentioned in **Exodus 23:28** and **Joshua 24:12**.
 2. This is more fully discussed in **Wisdom of Solomon 12** as a wonderful illustration of God's mercy toward all people.
 3. Read **Wisdom of Solomon 11:23-12:11**.

- a. Note that this book, sometimes referred to as the **Book of Wisdom**, is found in the Catholic and Orthodox Bibles, and also was in the original King James Version (until it was removed, about about 120 years ago).
 - b. Yes, these *were* literal insects (wasps or hornets) that God sent upon the Canaanites before they were attacked by the Israelite army.
 - c. Note that the Canaanites were incredibly corrupt: involved in murder, sorcery, child sacrifice, cannibalism, etc.
 - d. Yet *even for people this wicked*, God gave them an opportunity to repent. He sent the wasps in first, before the army, as a forerunner and warning. This was to judge them “little by little” at first, to give them an opportunity to repent.
4. In the face of overwhelming enemies, remember that the Lord can send in the wasps first!
- c. Read **Deuteronomy 7:24-26**.
- i. No one shall be able to stand before the Israelites.
 - ii. **The Lesson:** Our job is to be righteous and holy people before the Lord. That is always our number one focus and challenge. If we are, the Lord will take care of our enemies, one way or another.
 1. Read **Psalm 33/34:5-18** (note that the apostle Peter quotes from this passage in **1 Peter 3**).
 2. Read **Matthew 6:25-34**.
 - a. Jesus said that *we should not worry about the things of this world*.
 - b. If we focus *on seeking first God’s kingdom and His righteousness*, He will take care of the rest.
 - i. This is to be our primary focus in life.
 - ii. If we do that (the narrow and difficult, but not impossible road, which few take), the Lord will fight our battles for us. We will have nothing to fear.

- iii. Obviously, this is not an excuse for being lazy or lacking diligence. We must be seeking the righteousness of the Lord, as well.
- c. While this directive may be simple and timeless, it is nevertheless very challenging to put into practice!