

Clough Deuteronomy Session 21

Deuteronomy 7:1-5 Moral Relativism; Justification & Procedures for Holy War

Fellowship Chapel; 27 Apr 10

Just to review, if you'll look in the handout, to review the big argument because a book this big there's always the danger that we lose the forest for the trees. So I want to just go back and review the overall argument just for a minute. And that is the first four chapters, there in the outline, chapter 1:6 to 4:40 deals with the first exposition and the heart and the soul of that first exposition is to motivate. And the reason it had to be there is because of the failure of the first generation. Remember they failed in the desert so Moses is now trying to get the second generation prepared for a crucial period because the nation is still wandering around, it hasn't settled, so they really don't have a functioning nation yet. And they have to be motivated to do that.

And then we started the second exposition, chapter 5 thru chapter 26, the major exposition of the book, and we divided that in half, and said that chapters 5-11 deal with the heart and then chapters 12-26 deal with a lot of the policies, protocol, statutes and judgments and so on. And so we want to understand the reason why Moses goes through all this is because he is trying to communicate that at the heart of every generation, the heart of every society, is down here at this level of heart allegiance. And we're going to see a peculiar characteristic, I missed it when I went through chapter 6 the first time and I got dealing with chapter 7 for tonight and I noticed the structure, and I'm going to bring that structure to light. We talked about it a little bit last time but I want you to see it because the structure of Scripture is often as important as the vocabulary. It's nice to do word studies and that sort of thing, and that gives you one level but oftentimes you'll see the text is actually structured in such a way, and we've already seen that in chapter 5, we saw the chiasm, and that chiasm, when you start unpacking the implications you say holy mackerel, this thing shows the whole design of what's going on. And that's ultimately how we got this chart.

We start out with this heart allegiance, and Moses makes a big deal out of this, as we said, 50% of this book deals with mental attitude. And you say well, why... you know, that's pretty extreme, but keep in mind, Moses is going to die soon and he's lived a long life and he's watched failure after failure after failure in that first generation, and you can't help but think that as this man, he's going to pass off the scene, he wants to make very sure that this next generation understands what went wrong with the first generation. So there's an emphasis on the mental attitude, and that's why, oddly enough, of all the Old Testament books this book is the one that is often the basis of devotions, devotional relationships. This is, for example, that Jesus Himself quoted so He must have meditated, in His humanity, on this pretty extensively.

So the design of society means that the only way you have a just and functioning society is to have this flow, from the heart allegiance thru language, thru labor, thru marriage, on to life. You can't get up to the life factor of an abundant life without these other parts of society functioning. And so we said that we want to concentrate, then, on this heart allegiance. So to do that we go back to the slide that we've looked

at several times and from chapter 6:6-9, go back there a moment, I'll show you that structure and we'll come back to that again tonight but for now just notice in 6:6-9 was talking about how to get the Word of God in your heart, gave some procedures, and then he skipped to verse 20-25 as he finished, leaving a chunk of text, from verse 10-19 in there where he's talking about distractions. And remember, we went through five distractions that he lists there, and he discusses that are distractive, disruptive and divert attention away from the Word of God. And all of those five interruptions or five distractions that he lists, all of those have to do with this, and again, without getting into the technical and totally academic side of it, if you'll follow in the outline I'm going to try to show why those distractions are serious and why it's not just a random text.

If you think about the lowest level, this whole thing really depicts what ought to be going on in our hearts, that we have metaphysics, it's just an academic term that refers to existence, and the reason I keep showing this chart here is because in one sense, even though these words are loaded with a lot of academic stuff, the good news is that there are only three or four questions that deal with all of life. And if you can master the three or four basic questions, then you have a powerful conversation piece with other people, particularly with unbelievers because most unbelievers today do not think through these basic fundamental questions; they are all operating up here, in the social realm, and talking about discussions up here and they never get into this area. And the problem is you can't resolve things up here if you don't deal with things down here, and furthermore, people will never appreciate the gospel, the good news of Jesus Christ, if they haven't asked these questions. It's absolutely meaningless to talk about Jesus, people don't want to hear about Jesus because He's irrelevant, they think, to what their life is. So again, a review; the metaphysic here is just the term that academic people use to reality, the study of reality.

And on your outline you'll see ways of asking the basic question for that box, and that is: what is existence all about? You could say what is your life, what is the meaning and purpose of my life? That's a good personal way to ask the question. Now people have to ask that question: what is the meaning and purpose of my life? What's it all about? That is a fundamental question and if people don't ask the question, they don't struggle with trying to answer it, the gospel is just like a clanging symbol off in the periphery somewhere, it's irrelevant because they can't appreciate what Jesus Christ gives if they have never struggled with the question "what is the meaning of my life?"

So, what I've tried to do on the notes tonight is to show you the answer to this question and why that answer is so important. There's only three questions that we're dealing with here, the metaphysic question, the epistemological question and the ethical question—three basic questions. So the first question is: what is the meaning and purpose of my life. Now I've given you two things, there are probably ten I could talk about, but let's think about it, if we believe that God created, what are the implications for the answer to this question. One of them is that if this existence that we live in is a product of the act of creation, we're living in a created reality, that means that every part of it has a design

to it, and when we look at the design that design reveals something of the Creator that made it.

And I give you an example today because it's a hot topic, the gay issue, the homosexuality issue, and let's just think in a simple way about this. It doesn't require an advanced PhD to understand that men and women are made differently, not only physically but psychologically. There is a sexual difference between man and woman that is far deeper than just the physical, but it does include the physical. So when you see that and you look at the design and you say to yourself, what does that design tell you about sexual distinctions? It tells you that it's involved in and we'll have the underlined part, sexual distinctions surround the generation of life and its nurture, come on, that's what the design... and not to use the gender difference with that purpose is to disregard the design. And that's exactly what the homosexual movement is all about. It ultimately is a hatred for designing me like a man or designing me like a woman, which in effect is saying I'm angry at God for making me this way. So there's a theological problem under all this; this is not just a social issue, there's something else going on underneath. There's an anger and a hatred for God's design. By the way, I missed the first blank on the outline, I'm trying to be a good boy about this, and that is up where it says, "Living in the Word" means an eternal purging of the mind and heart by assimilating divine revelation from childhood in the home... by assimilating divine revelation, that goes back to chapter 6.

Okay, continuing on the metaphysical level; the generation of life and its nurture. Secondly, I either believe in a created existence, so that the meaning and purpose of my life is related to the God who made me, and made all this, I either believe that or I don't believe it, and if I don't believe it, then I've got some consequences that I have to deal and live with. See, people don't want to think about this, but look, if you give up the God of the Scriptures you are left, and I give you three words here, eternal, purposeless, unintelligent chaos. Do you want to live your life that way? That's what you've got.

You can kick the God of the Scriptures out of your life if you want to, but then have the courage to say to yourself, okay, now, not believing the Scriptures, I must believe in a purposeless, unintelligent chaos, how do I live my life in that. And the people who have integrity, Bertrand Russell was a good one, he was an agnostic at the beginning of the 19th century, a brilliant mathematician, and he said, he concluded, he looked this reality in the face, he disregarded the God of the Scriptures but he had the courage to say viewed with a meaningless existence I must build my life on the assumption of a purposeless thing, and he called it the unyielding despair. I will build my life on unyielding despair. Now Bertrand Russell was right. Now it's good when you meet somebody who has a little integrity on the non-Christian side and says I have enough integrity to live consistently with my worldview. So that's the serious issue.

Again, the question, what is existence all about? What is the meaning and purpose of my life? See, what Moses is going to deal with in chapter 7, he's going to talk about holy war and he's going to talk about idolatry, and what we're saying here is that the issue that he's dealing with is the Canaanites had gone completely bazaar in these areas. And we can kind of

unpack the Scripture and get down into a little bit deeper level, but when you go into idolatry mode you are distorting this, and ultimately at the metaphysical level you're doing just exactly, back in the Ancient Near East they did exactly what Bertrand Russell did in the 20th century. You go to a meaningless, purposeless existence, it's just endless cycles of nature, here comes the spring so now we have our fertility rituals, then we have the summer drought and Baal dies, and then we have the fall rains and then Baal is resurrected, and we go through this year after year after year but history is going nowhere, it's just like a rotating ball; there is no forward progress and that's real Baalism; that's what paganism looks like, and modern philosophy is no different, it comes to exactly the same metaphysical conclusion for that question: what is the meaning and purpose of my life.

All right, we come to the second area, the epistemology, which is up a little higher, and that is, okay, given the fact that I exist, the questions is, how do I attain truth? And I've personalized it for you because this is the question that's probably on a more popular level, on a street level, this is the kind of question that emerges: Why is what you are telling me true? People will spout off opinions, you say wait a minute, how do we know that is true? Now when you ask that question you're involved in epistemology, because now what are truth tests, how do you get there?

So now what do we have underlying and under that question is, from a biblical point of view we have the Creator, but now we preface what the Creator does; the Creator speaks and acts. So now we have a personal relationship going on because now He's talking to us and He's acting in history and telling us why He's doing what He's doing. In other words, He's sharing His plan with us. So we don't believe in blind providential progress in history. It's not that God tells us everything as we know from the book of Job, but the idea is He enters into contracts, He signs His name on the dotted line, He tells us He's going to do A, B, C, D, you know, X, Y and Z and you're free to see if I'm true to that contract. So God speaks and He acts. Now this is a radical thing. If you don't believe that, and that essence of the Scripture, the God of the Scriptures, then we have a problem. So that's what we're trying to say here on the outline: "Speaking and acting," it's not a deistic watchmaker that disappeared from history after He created. A deistic watchmaker would be a god who is absentee, he's a deist abscondicus, he's a deity who is in absentia, and if he's in absentia he doesn't converse with me, I have not personal relationship with such a deity.

But that's not the God of the Scriptures. The God of the Scriptures is a God who speaks and acts, so therefore where does He speak and act? Does He speak and act in a mystical feeling in my heart? Or does He speak and act in overt history? Well, He speaks and acts in overt history, Mount Sinai being the chief example that if you had a video tape you could have taped the conversation. So here we have a God who speaks. That means sometimes He doesn't speak, most of the time He doesn't speak. Sometimes He speaks through the prophets, Moses and the prophets, but the problem is that that doesn't happen in every generation. So now I have to remember history; I have to know history and I have to remember it. That's why biblical believers are centered on history, not mysticism. There is a mystical element in Christianity, how the Lord leads you and He impresses

upon you different things, but you can never elevate that mystical part of your Christian life to make it equal to the revelation of Scripture, because the revelation of Scripture is the measuring stick so you can tell, as John Warwick Montgomery said years and years ago, to tell the difference between Christ and the heart and heartburn; how you do that is whether it fits the Scripture.

So that's why mysticism does not rate as historical revelation, and that's why we emphasize history being remembered. And this is why paganism demeans history; paganism always demeans history. It's very interesting to watch this. You see it in the secular education. History is downgraded. Today the historians say well, we can't even tell what went on in history, we don't know where history is going, those are abstract, those are academic questions. Well, they're not academic questions; I'm sitting here and I have to have meaning for my life and what's going to happen to me 40 years from now, or my family. That's not an academic question, that's something that I have to have answered to live.

So following this, a speaking and acting Creator, that has something to do, since He speaks, that tells us a lot about language. And if there's one area today that is under serious, serious assault it's language. The whole post-modernist idea is language is only an expression of your personal being or something, and there's no such thing as real truth. But if we have a speaking and acting Creator look at this: look at the implications here. Language is rooted in the intra-Trinity eternal conversation; Jesus, as the Son of God and the Father, God the Father, had an eternal conversation, prior to the creation of the universe. That means that language is embedded in the very nature of a personal Triune God. Furthermore, it means that it is the linguistic cause of created existence. How did God create the universe? Did He use a hammer, or did He use words? He used words. So that means that language is at the base, not only in the Trinity itself but language underlies every part of reality.

When you look at the DNA, I mean, of all the generations we've got more evidence of the linguistic nature of reality than any other generation has ever had and we're all screwed up. Think of the findings in DNA, four letters, every living thing is made up of a code of only four letters. Now if that doesn't tell you something about design and language embedded in the very nature of you and your genes, their linguistic expressions, you can decode the DNA and write it on a piece of paper or put it in a computer. So there's language for you, God spoke it into existence. And so words, the conclusion to all that, to get down to a practical thing, is words ought to fit reality. And that's the ninth commandment and the second commandment or the third actually-words ought to fit reality. They're not for some manipulation purpose, but if you monitor the political dialogue today it's name-calling. I mean, little kids call each other names and that's what we do politically, let's brand somebody as a Nazi we don't like, never mind whether actually you have studied Hermann Goering and you have read Hitler's Mein Kampf and you know what you're talking about when you label someone as a Nazi, or are you just throwing out the terms so you can get 'em. That's manipulation, it goes all the way back to the Greeks; it's the Sophist's view of language.

Now we come to ethics, the third level; now we are closing in on the areas where people dialogue and socialize and have conflicts and reconciliation

and so on. And ethics, of course, depends on the answers you've given down here to these questions: What is the nature of reality? How do I know truth? Now the issues is: Who are you to tell me how to live my life? And I think that's a question we ought to ask. If you run across someone who pooh-pooh's your faith in the God of the Scripture, you say fine, but let me ask you a question. If the God of the Scriptures is not your moral authority, I want to know what is your moral authority, because you're making judgments, you're making value judgments and I just want to know... you explain to me, where's your moral authority. And I bet you they haven't even asked the question. I bet you no one has ever asked them that question. So provoke a conversation, press down a little bit, find out what their answers are. I mean it's fine to sit and throw rocks at somebody else but wait a minute now, let's knock the tennis ball in their part of the court and see what happens.

So what do we have about God that's relevant to ethics? We said the first two questions, it's God as Creator God as the speaking, acting Creator. Now we come to the God who is Judge. God is our Creator, God is our Judge and God is our Savior. The Savior comes later, if you're not clear on God as Judge and God as Creator you will never be clear on what it means to say God is Savior. But here God is Judge, that means there is an absolute standard and by absolute standard what do we mean? It's not an academic word here, "absolute standard" means it doesn't depend on you or me. So if you or me pass off the scene, the standard would still be there, it doesn't go away because we go away, and it was there before we came on the stage. That's what we mean by an absolute standard. The Judge also means He behaves in history consistent with His integrity, consistently with His righteousness and justice.

The first one, we have a standard, it does not depend upon individual or societal opinion. The second one, He behaves in history consistently with His righteousness and justice, and to doubt that is to assault His character and bring Him into the dock, as C. S. Lewis said in his famous book, *God in the Dock*, and that was the incident that Moses brought out in chapter 6, the Meribah incident where they argued that God really wasn't present and if you want me to believe that You're present, You'd better show Yourself here, it's that daring, that God has to stoop down and respond to our cry for justification.

Now we showed this chart before but because later we're going to go through some different views of ethics to train ourselves to think about our own society, I want to review this one because this... 90% of the problem out there today is this, so you might as well get used to it, might as well understand it, so let's think about this. This is the principle of subjectivism in ethics, the idea that there's a more relativism, and their arguments, you will hear in daily conversation, they're in the media, they're in the talk shows and so forth, and you see people interviewed and so on.

The first one is circumstances differ from person to person, a generation differs. Like if you see some young writers, somebody in Hollywood or somebody in the media and they're... say 25, 26, and they're discussing a moral question, you'll hear them say "oh, that's old school." Now it may be invalid, in other words the previous generation might have just held it because of custom and tradition, that's fine, but to kiss off something

because it's old school you almost want to ask them, oh, you mean you're measuring ethics by the calendar, so we flip the calendar from month to month, the ethics change with it, is that what you mean? See, that's ethics by calendar.

But this is a more common one, and this sounds very pious and you'll hear this again and again: it is intolerant to impose one's values on others. Now when you hear that watch what they're saying; see if you can spot the problem, right in the middle of that statement, "it is intolerant to impose one's values on others." Why is that begging the question? "Begging the question" means you haven't answered the question that's really going on here. Does anybody see in that sentence? [someone answers] Okay, there you've got one thing right there, it somehow it's absolutely intolerant. And then there's a second thing right here, when we're talking about absolute values we're not imposing our personal opinion on someone else, are we? So if you think that when we articulate an absolute ethic we're imposing our position on something else, that begs the question, because we're not saying it's our opinion, we're saying it's subjective opinion. It's like me saying that the solution to the algebraic equation is this. It's not Clough's solution, it's the algebraic solution.

So finally, if you deal with this sooner or later they'll come up with the issue well, gee, what are you going to do when two people disagree, you have your opinion, I have mine, doesn't that invalidate your position and the defense in this is usually this: two person's conflicting judgments can both be true because they both accurately reflect the individual attitudes. Now that's a legitimate defense except notice what it does; in order to defend they have moved the discussion away from an action over to an attitude. So this is why we say, when we come down to the next slide, it says nothing about the actions themselves, only autobiographical expressions. So now ethics has become just mere autobiography, it just means how you feel about something. Of course, they don't like to do that but this is in effect what's happening because they've already done that when they've tried to defend against your objection, what do you do when two people disagree.

Then it's self-refuting, it's self-refuting since every person inevitably judges others actions, especially towards themselves. Man, you judge them and all of a sudden you've just committed an absolute judgment. And finally and politically it always leads to totalitarianism. And the sad thing is, when it does lead to totalitarianism, now you have a very serious thing because now you have personal opinions of powerful people imposing themselves on poor people weak people, shoving them around the political, military power. So that's where that whole thing winds up.

So now we want to come to Deuteronomy 7 and here's the structure parallel between 6 and 7 and I just noticed this after I started in 7, as I said, seeing this earlier in chapter 6 where we had, like a sandwich, Moses starts talking about procedures, then he concludes with procedures, about training in the Word. But then in the middle he has all those different things that can distract you, different things that take away from your relationship with the Lord. So on one hand, in chapter 6 you have verses 1-9 and 20-25, just like two pieces of bread here, the commands and the procedures of learning the Word well. That was the procedures of the

parent and the child and the home and working and doing it in the work place and doing it in the home and so forth. Then in verses 10-19 he was dealing with a heart relationship, with Yahweh.

Now why do you suppose he's doing this? I think it has to do with the fact that the first half of this book is dealing with a mental attitude of the heart that was missing in the first generation; I think we've got another restructure here that's coming out. In other words, as Moses is speaking this he starts in with the procedures, then he stops and he goes after the relationship, then after he goes after the relationship he comes back to where he was going through the procedures. Apparently he's doing that twice.

So in Deuteronomy 7 he's going to deal with holy war, so verses 1-5 and 17-26 deal with the procedures of executing it. Look at it, notice in chapter 1, the first verse, "When the LORD your God brings you into the land which you go to possess, and has cast out many nations before you..., "front view, so there's the future things, it goes on, [2] "You shall not make any covenant...." Verse 3, "you shall not make marriages with them...." Verse 4, "For they will turn your sons away from following Me...." Verse 5, "But thus you shall deal with them, you shall destroy their altars and break down their sacred pillars....," and so on. Now if you'll skip down to verse 17, "If you should say in your heart, 'These nations are greater than I; how can I dispossess them? [18] You shall not be afraid of them, but you shall remember well what the LORD your God did to Pharaoh and to all Egypt." Verse 20, "the LORD will send the hornet among those who are left.... Verse 22, "The LORD your God will drive them out of those nations...." Verse 23, "But the LORD your God will deliver them to you...." Verse 24, "He will deliver their kings into your hand...." Verse 25, "You shall burn the carved images of their gods with fire..." and so forth and so forth. So those are all the procedures of holy war.

Now if you look back in the section from verse 6 to 16, "For you are a holy people to the LORD your God; the LORD your God has chosen you to be a people for Himself, [a special treasure above all the peoples on the face of the earth]." Verse 9, "Therefore know that the LORD your God, He is God, the faithful God...." Verse 12, "And it shall come to pass, because you listen to these judgments, you keep them and do them, that the LORD your God will keep" you," so there's the personal relationship again. So not only do chapters 5 and 11 emphasize the heart and the personal relationship with God, each individual chapter seems to do this.

So in order to make that simpler tonight, what we'll do tonight is we're just going to take half of chapter 7, we're going to just look at the first part, we're going to look at the procedures of executing holy war, verses 1-5, verse 17-26, next week we'll deal with this because that's what's in-between the sandwich pieces. So if you'll turn to Deuteronomy 7:1 we'll look at the first five verses. And we get immediately here with holy war, we've already talked holy war before, divinely authorized genocide, it's a controversial portion of the Bible and you'd better have a defense ready because somebody is going to pull this on you someday and say well, look at this, look at the nasty things that are in the Old Testament. And this is, you know, they've never read it, they've probably that in some commentary somewhere, but nevertheless we have to have our

defenses ready to answer that question when it comes up. So what do we do.

All right, lesson 9, which is now posted on Bible Framework.com gives the whole thing where I went into the genocide policies, but summarizing them here on the outline, what is the justification for holy war. And we want to grab hold of this because holy war is put in here in order to prepare us in the church age for mental attitude conflict in the spiritual realm of the demonic powers. They are non-redemptive, the Canaanites are unredeemable. And so we ourselves face a spiritual battle with non-redeemable entities and we have to have the same imprecatory attitude. So that's why God preserves this. The justification is it's the end of divine grace. It's a very serious thing in the Scripture, that this divinely authorized genocide, the only way we can explain it and defend it is that it's the ethics of judgment versus the common grace ethic we normally have in history.

In other words, the common grace ethic has been suspended during genocide; the genocide is to remove the damned. Divine justice existed from all eternity. Grace existed in the sense God was always a God of love, but grace was never seen by the angels; Satan fell, he never saw grace; the fallen angels have never seen grace. The elect angels that never fell, they hadn't seen grace until God exercised grace toward the sons of Adam. At that point grace is now revealed in history but grace isn't going to always be revealed in history because sooner or later the day of grace and the day of common grace comes to an end and then grace is no longer actually operational. In eternity there's no grace, maybe you hadn't thought about that before, but grace stops at the end of history. So this is a sobering moment in history. The lake of fire that is given in Scripture was originally created, Matthew 25:41 says for the angels who had fallen. The fact that human beings wind up in the lake of fire is a tragedy, and it's a tragedy because they have chosen to join the rebellion against God. And they, therefore, share the destiny of such a rebellion.

Holy war in the conquest period was against a population that had become totally demonized, Genesis 9 tells you about the curse on Canaan, chapter 15:16 God explicitly says... explicitly, there's an explanation, we don't have to guess at this, this is not speculation, this is not some third decimal place of theology, it's a simple passage in Genesis 15:16 where God says that the iniquity of the Amorites, or the people that occupy Canaan is going to become full in four generations. And then, when the iniquity is full, I want you to come in and we're going to eliminate those people from the human race. So there was a development of evil; God Himself saw that. Holy war, by the way, was limited, it's not like the Muslims with their holy war against the western civilization; this was a time and place limited to a locality.

So it says Deuteronomy 7:1, "When the LORD your God brings you into the land which you go to possess, and has cast out..." now notice the past tense, ask yourself, when you read verse 1 right now, ask yourself what portion of Old Testament history is he talking about? Can he be talking about, in verse 1, Joshua? I don't think so because Joshua starts off and there had been no nations kicked out. Verse 1 is talking about when in the future there "has cast out many nations from among you," that has to

be the conclusion of Joshua's initial campaigns, when he established the beachhead in the conquest of the period.

And that means that verse 2, when he goes on, the end of that verse actually, notice what it says, when all that happens, "when the LORD your God delivers them over to you, you shall conquer them and utterly destroy them. You shall make no covenant with them nor show mercy to them." It's a very dangerous period because they have had an initial series of victories, stunning victories. The problem is that after they're victorious and they've still got a lot to do there's a tendency to let go, there's a tendency to give up, there's a tendency that you just yield to fatigue. The second generation is going to go through battle after battle after battle after battle and it's going to be fatiguing to them, and what God is saying here is I want you to finish the job, I don't want you to stop just because you've had initial success, you keep on, keep on, keep on, until the war is over.

Now you know and I know from the Old Testament what happened? What's the book of the Bible that's describing the violation of this. Think chronologically, Deuteronomy, what comes after Deuteronomy? The book of Joshua. Joshua ends with a series of conquests. What happens after Joshua? The book of Judges, and it's a mess, because they do exactly what God tells them not to do. So this is a forecast of failure, but it's an explanation in one sense of why they're going to experience failure. And, of course, the reason is because God says if you don't clean out the idolatry that is answering these basic questions of life falsely you are going to have trouble up here; these people that I have sent you against are locked down in an answer down here which dooms them up here. And so God is going to go after them and try to root out the religious issue.

You notice again in this passage that it's not talking about morals so much as it's talking about religion. Look at it, what it says. You will make no treaty or co with them, in other words, you'll have no business dealing with them, [3] "You will not make marriages with them, you will not give your daughter to their son, nor take their daughter for your son. [4] For they will turn your sons away from following Me, to serve other gods...." Now what does it mean to serve other gods? It means to give the wrong answers down here, and in a marriage relationship, God is saying I'm the One that designed marriage and I'm telling you what's going to happen; you can't have two people living in an intimate relationship and not share this; sooner or later this will be shared. And I don't want you sharing that part of your heart with your mate that is on the other side of this battle. To "serve other gods" is to execute plans that are hostile in this area. And by the way, "to serve other gods" is basically an act of treason if you think of God as the King.

So he explains [4] "For they will turn your sons away...," and then verse 5, and verse 5 sounds very, very harsh until you put two and two together, and that's why I keep showing this chart. This sounds harsh so let me go through verse 5; here's what you will do to them. You will "destroy their altars," the Hebrew says you will pull down their altars, and presumably these are rocks that are not cemented together, you pull them down, and these altars, later on we know, in Baalism, this is where they gave human sacrifices and not just animals, on these altars. And then it says, "...you will break down their sacred pillars," the stone pillar, as far as

we can tell in archeology, it was a stone pillar and it would be very much like the Roman Catholic Church has these shrines where the virgin Mary supposedly shows up; well, wherever the gods had a demonic manifestation, which they thought it was a divine manifestation, they would mark it with a pillar, and so God says I want those out of here; clean it off, none of these. Why? Because He's dealing with this, you've got to straighten around this, that metaphysical and epistemology thing that goes along with it.

Then, "cut down their images," means their Asherahs, their wooden poles, now the Old Testament, it's sort of funny in places, and I remember a lady back years and years ago who came to me one time in the church we were in and she was against Christmas trees in the house, and I wonder, what's wrong with a Christmas tree, I mean, Martin Luther had them, what's the problem? Oh, I just... and she pulled out this passage from one of the prophets, I think it was Jeremiah, it was talking about Asherahs, and I didn't have the heart to tell that lady but what was going on in the text of Jeremiah is a phallic symbol, it wasn't a Christmas tree. So the point was that these were basically a piece of the male anatomy sticking up and that was where they worshipped because that was the source of fertility and so forth; that was called the Asherah and it was a symbol that always went along with Asherah because Asherah was the female consort of the male deities. And of course that was the fertility, that's how Asherah was impregnated, and that's the story behind that little episode.

I have here, you can come up later and see it, but here's an archeological dig in northern Israel, pull this out, this is actually a replica of it, but here's what these people, the Jewish people, this is pulled out of a Jewish tel, this shows you the corruption because what this is is a small statue of the god, of the bull god that was coming out of Egypt, and you'll see it's a bull god because it's the bull that impregnates the female cows, and it gets to be the fertility, and that's why, remember, we showed a few lessons back, what was it all about. We think of it in a sex way but it wasn't, it was production, it was the agribusiness, they had to have fruitful herds. So they worshiped this. And here's a little thing and what was significant about this little statuette was that it wasn't in the Canaanite levels, this was in the Jewish levels, which shows you the corruption that continued, even though they had prophets, even though they had Scripture, they were still into this stuff. And it's a good picture of the Old Testament.

Okay, so in your text I point out that the application in the church age is 2 Corinthians 10:3-5. Gary pointed out Sunday, "Be not conformed," Romans 12:2, that's another verse that deals with the same thing. The battle is in our minds, in our hearts and Moses wants us to understand that. All the rest of it is just external stuff, but it's the mind where the battle happens. And you can't trust the God of the Scriptures if you tolerate false views of natural and human history.

So let's skip all the way down to verse 17 and we'll look at the other side of the sandwich. We've already looked at the first five verses that deal with procedures, you won't do this, you won't do that, you won't do this and you won't do that. So now he's going to deal with some more procedures that have to be used in combat. So verse 17, obviously verse 17 is in a combat situation. "If you should say in your heart, 'These

nations are greater than I; how can I dispossess them?'" , so he's going to deal with mental attitude fear because one of the problems in conflict, whether it's personal conflict, whether it's a debate conflict, or whether it's an internal thing going on, there's always the factor of intimidation and fear. There is fear in real battle, in real spiritual battle. And so Moses knows that, he had to go through that, he knew what fear was, good night, he had to walk into Pharaoh and take on the super power of his generation. So here's a man who understands fear and he said I know you're going to be afraid second generation, when you get out there and you go into these battles you're going to look at these people and there's going to be an army out there with pointed swords, pointing at you. So now when you get in that situation, and you have this mental thought to yourself, oh, the nations are greater than I, how can I dispossess them, now here's the procedure. He's going to deal with the mental attitude and he's going to take them through what they need to do to apply the faith-rest drill.

Here's the deal. The first generation has failed, so the nation is going to get retested, and when God does this... and He does it to Israel but He also does it to us, you know, we pass test one, we pass test two, we get to test three and we blow it. Okay, what God does, He gives us test number four to retest the problem of faith. And so what's going to happen here is the second generation of Israel is going to get retested. They're going to have to go through the same tests that the first generation went through, and that's why in verse 17 he's talking about something that reminds you of what? The incident at Kadesh. Remember, they sent the spies ahead and what did the spies, 90% of the group come back... what did they say? The nations are greater than we are.

So here we are, this is the retest, it's the same mental test all over again. So Moses says now look, this time when you get into this thing here's how I want you to handle it. This was the slide we showed way back in lesson 4 and remember what happened? The facts were the land was as God has promised; there was going to be a fight ahead. Those are the facts. Everybody agreed to the facts of the case. The problem was it's the interpretation of the facts. Over here, remember, we had the grasshopper interpretation-the opponents are stronger than we are, we're going to die, our families are going to be destroyed, we are as grasshoppers in their sight. That's their interpretation of the facts. That's how in their heart they are mentally handling this trial. They're going to pieces here, they're falling apart because of their mental attitude and they've forgotten how to do the faith-rest drill which is what do you do first? You go get a fragment of truth. There's no fragment of truth in here; over here, Caleb and Joshua, they got it together-the Lord is stronger than they are, we can be victorious if we obey.

Now they didn't explicitly tell us back then what Caleb and Joshua are doing up here, but what Moses is going to do now, the next few verses, he's going to review what goes on in here, and he says next time you guys go into this test you're going to get hit the same place, it's going to be the same thing, and you're going to have the same fear and the same intimidation. So I don't want you to fall apart like happened the first time. So here's what you're going to do. So now he explains the procedures mentally they go through. Look what he does. [18] "You shall"

what? What did we say? "You shall remember," historical revelation. You can't go to an abstraction, you've got to go back to something that actually happened in history. "You shall remember well," notice "well," you will dwell on this, part of the faith-rest drill, remember, is that you grab a fact or a truth of Scripture.

Well, here's what he's doing, I want you to remember and I want you to remember one particular historical incident, an incident, by the way, the first generation lived through and forgot about when they got in the middle of a trial. So he says look, you "remember well what the LORD your God did to Pharaoh and to all Egypt." Egypt was the super power of the generation and so he's emphasizing this. Look, he took down Pharaoh and all Egypt, now you guys are up against the guys that are going to be these little twitty tribes all over the place in northern Israel. Now these tribes don't hold a candle to what Pharaoh and Egypt was like. So what is he doing? He's arguing from the greater to the lesser, back to memory. What you want to do and this gets the idea of what I call envelopment, the amoeba, instead of the amoeba swallowing you, you choke down on the amoeba, you get a piece of truth that is like a vice and then you just sit there and you squeeze it, and squeeze it, and squeeze it and squeeze it until you get out all the truths that you can get out of that truth. And so what he's going to do is this; here he's squeezing that historical event for every single piece of truth he can get until he has a thought that is so powerful that it will overwhelm the intimidation and fear.

So he begins to list this. I want you to remember what "God did to Pharaoh and to all Egypt; [19] the great trials which your eyes saw," actually it wasn't the second generation but "your eyes" in the sense nationally, it was part of your national history, your eyes saw this; we're not talking academic abstraction, "your eyes saw, the signs and the wonders, the mighty hand and the out-stretched arm, which the LORD your God brought you out. So shall the LORD your God do to all the peoples of whom you are afraid." And he applies, particularly he's going to do this to every single one of those people that are intimidating you, that you are fearful of, God is going to wipe them clean. If He could do it to Pharaoh, the greater, He could do it to these little nitpicky kings. And He will "do it to all the peoples of whom you are afraid. [20] Moreover the LORD your God will send the hornet among them," now the hornet is a problem exegetically, there's a difference in what this means, it's the word "hornet," it could be literal hornets, it could be a metaphor of terror or discouragement, it seems like, and I give you the verses there that if you look at the verse chain there was a fear put into the hearts of the people in the land.

And what's ironic about this, it was fear from an event that happened forty years ago. So that means the Canaanites, who are still afraid in the land, those Canaanites are the sons and daughters of their dads and moms; it was their dad and mom that lived at the time of the Exodus. So whatever those Canaanite families did they sure told their children about what happened in our day, and man, when you see those Jews coming you'd better watch out, they cleaned Pharaoh's whistle, and they're going to clean yours. So there's a fear; that's what I think is going on here with the hornet. It may be literal hornets too. "...those who are left, who hide themselves from you, are destroyed." Look at that. In other words,

He will send the hornet among them "until those who are left, who hide themselves from you, are destroyed."

In other words, these people, mental attitude fear, are running for their lives. See, it's the reverse. In other words Moses is saying it's not you that are being intimidated, they are the ones that are intimidated. [21] "You shall not be terrified of them; for the LORD your God, the great and awesome God, is among you." Now that's an expression, on your handout I point out it is a neat little thing in the Hebrew here, I just want you to see it real quick. It says "Yahweh, your God is among you," the idea there is an intimate thing, God is walking with you. God is going to be with you, He is among you.

And then he gives a name for God and it's like a dash in the sentence, it's disconnected in the English translation it's going to run together, but "the great and fear inspiring El." El is sort of the generic term for God, in other words he's saying Yahweh is going to be with you, He's "the great and fear inspiring God." In other words, any intimidation that's going to go on, El, the God of intimidation is going to be and He's on your side. So this is the encouragement he has. And that's why he's saying you don't want to be terrified.

[22] "The LORD your God will drive out those nations before you little by little; you will be unable to destroy them at once, lest the beasts of the field become too numerous for you." And I don't have time, some day we'll go into this. This verse 22 is a verse on ecology and it's a very interesting verse because it shows you the biblical attitude toward greenness. The Sierra club would welcome, they would just go absolutely hilarious, wonderful enjoyment of a preservation of the wilderness, untouched by man. The Bible doesn't treat it that way, the Bible always treats an untouched wilderness as something yet to be developed by man. It's very offensive, there's a fundamental collision here between how we view nature versus how the ecology movement views nature. But notice, he doesn't want the animals and the beasts of the field to become too numerous. I want this conquest to be slowly so that you won't be overwhelmed by this. In other words, you've to exercise dominion. This doesn't mean abuse of nature, that's the caricature of the ecology movement always likes to paint every time we talk about dominion, but that's not what the Scripture is meaning. So it's a very slow thing.

And then verse 24, "He will deliver their kings into your hand, and you will destroy their name from under heaven: no one shall be able to stand against you until you have destroyed them." Sadly we know from the book of Judges that never happened. The book of Judges tells you about a degenerate people, a rebellious people, a people that abandoned the basis of their whole faith. They, in other words, failed at the point of... down here at the... well, you know, the metaphysical and epistemological area, they just failed.

So we continue then, to the end of this chapter, "You will burn," see, this gets back now, verse 25, 26, this gets back in conclusion to what we are talking about in verses 1-5. So here's that sandwich construction again. These are procedures. "You shall burn the carved images of their gods with fire; you will not covet the silver or the gold that is on them," see, there's a lot of silver and gold on these images, and usually

in the Ancient Near East the invading army got paid by the booty of the conquest. And God says there's a difference here, and we're going to see a term that's used, and this term is the word charem, from which we get the word harem. And it means a dedication, and what God is saying is, this battle is My battle. That's why David could say against Goliath, "the battle is the LORD's," he wasn't thinking just in terms that this is a battle and God's on our side. What he meant by that statement, "the battle is the LORD's," is this war is the Lord's, it's not Israel's, it's not mine, it's Yahweh's battle and I'm an enlisted soldier, and I am joining His battle. So that's why in verse 25 he says you will burn them, you will not "take it for yourselves, lest you be ensnared by it, for it is an abomination to the LORD your God." They have to remember charem.

This is just like the marriage, remember in verses 1-5, don't marry with these people, don't get them involved in a personal relationship with you because they'll contaminate you every time. Now look what he says here, even the booty, even the material substance of these people, [26] You will not "bring an abomination into your house lest you be doomed to destruction like it. You shall utterly detest it and utterly abhor it, for it is an accursed thing." The word "accursed" there again is the word charem. But this last verse, we want to finish verse 26, notice that if you have New King James translation, some of you have a different translation, that's fine, but check the two verbs; you will "detest it" and "abhor it," you'll see that in the New King James it's prefaced with "utterly." And that's because this is one of the strongest statements you can possibly get in the Hebrew language.

Unfortunately "utterly" doesn't send it very far, for me anyway. So in the Hebrew the idea is they attach to the main verb, they attach the infinitive, so you're reading along, boom, boom, boom, boom, boom, boom, you see infinitive, then you see the main verb. Normally you don't see that, you just see dot dot dot dot dot dot dot, there's a verb, dot dot dot dot dot. But here you come along and the infinitive pops up, then the verb pops up and they're locked, and when that happens that's the way they have in the Hebrew of making certain and forceful that verb. So the two verbs, the first one is shaqqets, which you "detest it," and the other one, to tahev is to abhor it." Both of them, they're sort of synonyms, but they are the strongest expression possible in the language. Don't mess with it.

Now those of you who have studied the book of Joshua where was this command violated? Remember? Achan. So every one of these passages in the Scriptures the Holy Spirit has preserved these. Does God mean what He says? Yes, because later on we're going to see what happens when we violate them.

So this concludes, then, the part of the procedures of holy war; you can see it was Jehovah's war, it was His battle, He wanted these people exterminated completely and He didn't want them to fatigue out, phase out, He wanted them to finish it off. The application for us as believers is that mentally we live in Satan's world, we have demonic forces influencing the ideas that are prevalent out there, and your mind and my mind are the battleground. You're not fighting physical people. That's why Paul says the weapons of our warfare are not carnal, we're not fighting flesh and blood but we're fighting spiritual principalities and powers every single

day of our life. We are constantly in hostile territory and that's why God's Word saves these neat pictures. You can picture this war, this conquest, this holy war, and maybe if you can transfer that to your mind, think of the battle going on in your mind, and put the holy war concept into that.