

Drive Out, Destroy, Demolish

Now the LORD spoke to Moses in the plains of Moab by the Jordan, across from Jericho, saying, "Speak to the children of Israel, and say to them: 'When you have crossed the Jordan into the land of Canaan, then you shall drive out all the inhabitants of the land from before you, destroy all their engraved stones, destroy all their molded images, and demolish all their high places; you shall dispossess the inhabitants of the land and dwell in it, for I have given you the land to possess'" (Numbers 33:50-53).

Such were the instructions God gave to Moses and Israel concerning Canaan. If the nation of Israel was to be established on firm footing, then the pagans were to be wiped out. God said get rid of them and all that is connected with their sinfulness. He warned, that if this was not done, the inhabitants would be irritants, and Israel would experience the same fate God intended for the idolaters (Numbers 33:55-56).

The New Testament does not authorize us to conquer land or to engage in carnal warfare for the advancement of the kingdom (cf. 2 Corinthians 10:3-5). However, the church is the holy nation of God and its territory is to be defended with all diligence (1 Peter 2:9). Our war is no less critical than Israel's, in fact, ours has greater stakes: the souls of men and a home in heaven. Therefore, the Lord does teach us to fight with single-mindedness: destruction of the enemy and all the sinfulness connected to him.

Our chief enemy is the devil. He is described as our adversary who desires to devour our souls (1 Peter 5:8). He does not rest in his diabolical designs, but is ever seeking to corrupt us, individually and collectively. Sadly, the devil is not alone in his evil pursuits.

Satan enjoys the help of those who willingly or unwittingly contribute to his cause. Usually, they are in disguise, appearing as ministers of righteousness (2 Corinthians 11:13-15). They are detected by examining what they teach and practice in the light of God's word (1 John 4:1-6).

The nation of God is to take new territory. The Lord commanded the gospel to be taught in all nations, baptizing men and teaching them to observe all things He commands (Matthew 28:19-20). Doing this is a constant battle with the devil and his legions. Therefore, Christians must put on the armor of God (Ephesians 6:10-17). With this armor comes God's help, so we should not be shy about attacking the citidels of error

(cf. 2 Corinthians 10:3-5).

Further, it is the duty of faithful Christians to keep the nation of God pure. When men begin to teach or practice error, it must be exposed and they must be rejected, if they will not repent (Ephesians 5:11; Galatians 1:8-9; 2 John 9-11). Error on the plan of salvation, the church, Christ, hell, creation, fellowship or divorce and remarriage cannot be tolerated. If error or its promoters are tolerated, they will become an irritant and spread (cf. 2 Timothy 2:16-18).

No doubt, the battle for Canaan was daunting and difficult. Still, God commanded Israel to go in and take it, ridding the land of unrighteousness. Our fight for the souls of men and purity of the church is, at times, overwhelming, but rewarding. Remember, it can be done with God's help.

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