

Living as God's Covenant People
Studies in Deut. 1-11, #5

"The Conquest of the Covenant"

Deut. 7

--CEFC 7/9/17; 8/21/88

In March of 1968 nearly 350 Vietnamese civilians
were massacred by US soldiers in a village in South Vietnam.
Pictures taken at the time showed the bodies of people of all ages
strewn across a road and in a ditch,
riddled with bullets.

The responsibility for that atrocity was assigned to Lt. William Calley,
who gave the decisive orders to shoot.
Lt. Calley was convicted of killing 22 persons and was imprisoned for three years./

The Bible tells us that many years before
an Israeli commander named Joshua led his troops
against a small town in Palestine.
After they had defeated the enemy army in the field,
Joshua ordered his troops into the town to kill those who were in it.
**"Twelve thousand men and women fell that day--
all the people of the city,"** we read (Josh. 8:25).

And Joshua?
Was he convicted of misconduct?
Was he court-martialed?
Certainly not!
For you see, the Bible says that Joshua was taking his orders
from the LORD God.

Do you find this disturbing?
If you don't, I'm not so sure you've appreciated the sheer brutality
of the events recorded in the Bible.

We read that Joshua went from city to city waging war,
and in more than one instance, the Biblical writer tells us that
and **"Joshua left no survivors. He totally destroyed all who breathed"**—
men and women, young and old,
cattle, sheep and donkeys (Josh. 6:21).

The Old Testament is a bloody book, a book of war and violence.
Let me warn you--Parental guidance is suggested.
But what is amazing, is that it is God who stands behind it all.
I read again from the Book of Joshua—
**"Joshua left no survivors.
He totally destroyed all who breathed,
just as the Lord, the God of Israel, had commanded"** (10:40).

God commanding war?
 and not just war, but mass annihilation—a massacre--
 wiping out the population of entire cities?
 That's what it says,
 and that is what our text talks about us this morning.

The Lord through his servant Moses is giving commands to Israel
 as they are about to enter into the promised land of Palestine
 about how they were to treat the inhabitants there--

7:1,2—

**"When the LORD your God brings you into the land you are entering to possess
 and drives out before you many nations --. . .
 2 and when the LORD your God has delivered them over to you
 and you have defeated them, then you must destroy them totally.
 Make no treaty with them, and show them no mercy."**

"you must destroy them totally"—

the Hebrew verb there is נָסַח , which means "to devote to destruction
 as something that is an abomination to God."
 What are we to make of this "divinely-mandated massacre"?

Many just reject it--pure and simple.

Either they say that the Old Testament is not really a divine book--
 that it's not a revelation from God
 but is instead a book of nationalistic propaganda—
 the work of violent men,
 justifying their violent deeds.

Or they say that the God the Old Testament reveals is not the real God--
 he is a different God, a foreign God, a primitive God--
 and certainly not the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ.
 No, Jesus preached a God of love—
 quite unlike the violent and wrathful God we see in the Old Testament. /

But when we turn to the New Testament,
 Jesus himself gives us no warrant for either of those opinions--
 The Old Testament Scriptures were his Bible--He cited it often
 as the very Word of God.
 In his view, what the Bible says, God says.

And the God of the Old Testament was his Father--
 he never showed embarrassment with what it said about him.

More than that, the God Jesus preached was every bit a God of judgment,
 as Jesus spoke more about the reality of hell

than anyone in the whole Bible.

No, if we are to be faithful to Jesus—our Lord and Master,
 then rejecting these Old Testament tales is just not an option to us.
 But what, then, are we to make of these passages
 which speak of such God-directed destruction of human lie?

As many of you know,
 my son Will is a professor at a Christian university in Spokane, WA,
 where he regularly teaches
 an introductory course on the Old Testament to undergraduates.
 Toward the end of the semester he invites the students to bring to class
 some text from the Old Testament that they find troubling in some way.

He first asks them how the text they've chosen makes them feel.

Then he asks them how they think the biblical writer would feel about that text.
 Then he challenges them to consider why there should be a difference?
 In other words, what are the values that we bring to a biblical text
 that may be very different from the values of the biblical writer.

You see, troubling texts like this one challenge our assumptions
 and they provide an opportunity to expand our understanding.

"If our religion is something objective," wrote C. S. Lewis,
 "then we must never avert our eyes from those elements in it
 which seem puzzling or repellent;
 for it will be precisely the puzzling or the repellent
 which conceals what we do not yet know and need to know."¹

Think about it--if the Bible really is the word of God,
 shouldn't we begin with the assumption that there are very likely
 to be differences between our values and those of the Bible—
 values that we need to conform to?
 Otherwise, wouldn't we be tempted to simply use the Bible
 to reinforce what we already believed on other grounds? /

So why should, in this case, Moses not be troubled
 by this command for mass extermination?

¹ From "The Weight of Glory." cf. also "Readers of the Bible who are committed to accepting its authority are inclined simply to assume that their values and the Bible's values must be the same and thus look for ways of conforming the two. ... [It would be] wise to start from the assumption that there are likely to be differences between our values and the Bible's rather than the assumption that they are the same, and thus to look for the differences that will critique us. At the very least, we will be wise to seek to stay in ongoing dialogue with the parts of the Bible that we don't like. And if reading the Bible issues only in providing us with material that reinforces what we already think, our reading is very likely ideological."—John Goldingay, *Do We Need the New Testament*

Two things stand out in my mind--

First, he is not troubled because of his understanding of who God is—
God's person—

his character, his attributes, his nature.

Second, he is not troubled because of his understanding

of why God was acting as was—

that is, God's purpose--

supremely in his purpose to establish his covenant

with his people.

Those two themes will guide our exposition as we look at Deut. 7,

before we consider its application for us--

both in our understanding of War

and in our understanding of Holiness.

Turn with me then to Deut. 7--

as we consider the **Conquest of the Covenant**.

We begin with v. 9--"**Know therefore that the Lord your God is God;**"

Who is the One who dares to take land away from one nation

and give it to another?

How can the Lord say that Israel is to take over Palestine

and drive out its inhabitants and even annihilate them?

What right does he have to say such things?

Who does he think he is anyway?

Quite simply--

He is God.

Perhaps in our criticism of the brutality of the Old Testament's picture of God

we should humble ourselves just for a moment

and consider again who we are talking about--

"**Know therefore,**" Moses says, "**that the Lord your God is God;**"

The Lord who gives this destructive decree

is the sovereign Ruler of heaven and earth.

The land is his to give,

and the land is his to take away.

Life itself is his to give,

and life itself is his to take away.

Every breath we take is only possible because of the sustaining grace of God.

The duration of lives is subject to his will.

Is it not also true for the duration of nations?

As Isaiah the prophet declares--

"Surely the nations are like a drop in a bucket;

they are regarded as dust on the scales;
 Before him all the nations are as nothing;"

"Do you not know?
 Have you not heard?
 Has it not been told you from the beginning?
 Have you not understood since the earth was founded:
 He sits enthroned above the circle of the earth,
 and its people are like grasshoppers.
 He brings princes to naught
 and reduces the rulers of this world to nothing.
 No sooner are they planted,
 no sooner are they sown,
 no sooner do they take root in the ground,
 than he blows on them and they wither,
 and a whirlwind sweeps them away like chaff." (Is. 40)

This is the God we are talking about!

Or consider Paul's words to the Athenians in Acts 17----
 the Lord "**himself gives all men life and breath and everything else.**
From one man he made every nation of men,
that they should inhabit the whole earth;
and he determined the times set for them
and the exact places where they should live."

The Lord is the ruler of history.
 The nations are in his hands--
 he determines their destiny.

It is his right to say that this nation shall live and this nation shall die--
 for he is God./

Before we start complaining too quickly about the ways of God,
 let us stop to consider who we are talking about.

He is not some safe, domesticated creature who must conform to our ideas.

Remember the conversation between Lucy and Mr. Beaver
 in C.S. Lewis' story of *The Lion, the Witch, and the Wardrobe*—
 discussing the impending appearance of the Christ-figure known as Aslan.

"Is--is he a man?" asked Lucy.

"Aslan a man!" said Mr. Beaver sternly. "Certainly not.
 I tell you, he is the King of the wood and the son of the great Emperor-Beyond-the-Sea.
 Don't you know who is the King of Beasts?
 Aslan is a lion--the Lion, the great Lion."

"Oooh!" said Susan, "I'd thought he was a man.
 Is he--quite safe? I shall feel rather nervous about meeting a lion."

"That you will, dearie, and no mistake," said Mrs. Beaver,
 "if there's anyone who can appear before Aslan without their knees knocking,
 they're either braver than most or else just silly."
 "Then he isn't safe?" said Lucy.
 "Safe?" said Mr. Beaver. "Don't you hear what Mrs. Beaver tells you?
 Who said anything about safe? Course he isn't safe."²

Somewhere we get it into our heads that God's ways
 should all be reasonable to us,
understandable,
 always within our grasp.
 We want a God who is "safe."

If passages like this one in Deuteronomy shock us--then maybe that's good.
 They remind us that perhaps the Lord we worship
 is not as tame as we thought he was.

But you may say,
 "If God can do whatever he wants,
 doesn't that make him totally fickle and capricious?
 Are his actions totally without principle?"

Not at all--
 The Lord does whatever he wills, yes,
 but whatever he wills is always in conformity with who he is.

For the Lord is not only the sovereign King--
 he is also the righteous Judge--
 And shall not the judge of all the earth do right?

The Lord as God is not accountable to our standards of right and wrong,
 but he is always consistent with his own--
 standards which are always good and right and just and pure.
 They can be no other,
 and one day, you can be sure,
 they will be seen to be so.

And in this case,
 that consistency is clear enough.

In one sense, in this fallen world, no one is righteous--
 we are all united in sin--
 by our very nature subject to God's wrath.

But at this point in history,
 the culture of Canaan was particularly corrupt--to the core;
 it was ripe for judgment.

²p. 77.

In fact, the Lord had been patient with these people for some 400 years.

Back in the 15th chapter of Genesis

the Lord had spoken to Abraham of his future descendants--
they would become slaves in Egypt, he told them,
and it would not be until the fourth generation
that his descendants would return to Palestine,
"for the sin of the Amorites," we read
[using this as a general term for all the inhabitants of Palestine]
"the sin of the Amorites has not yet reached its full measure" (Gen. 15:16).

The Lord waited until the sin of the Amorites had reached its full measure,
and they were ripe for judgment,
and then he used the Israelites as the instrument of his wrath.

Listen to what he tells his people in Deut. 9--

**"It is not because of your righteousness or your integrity
that you are going in to take possession of their land;
but on account of the wickedness of these nations,
the Lord your God will drive them out before you, . . ."**

We must recognize that the idolatrous worship of Baal by these inhabitants of Canaan
centered around the fertility cult--
sexual immorality was glorified as something religious and meritorious.
There were 'holy' prostitutes, male and female,
for the gratification of the worshippers.

And we read in Dt. 18:9-12—

**"When you enter the land the LORD your God is giving you,
do not learn to imitate the detestable ways of the nations there.
Let no one be found among you who sacrifices his son or daughter in the fire,
who practices divination or sorcery, interprets omens, engages in witchcraft,
or casts spells, or who is a medium or spiritist or who consults the dead.
Anyone who does these things is detestable to the LORD,
and because of these detestable practices
the LORD your God will drive out those nations before you."**

Child sacrifice, magic, sorcery, witchcraft--

Canaan was a cauldron of demonic iniquity.

As one historian of the period puts it in understated terms--

"Canaanite religion presents us with no pretty picture."³

The Lord is the righteous Judge--

And the Canaanite culture was ripe for judgment. /

³J. Bright, *History*, p. 108f, cited in Wenham, *Goodness*, p. 125.

Now some people say that this "divinely-mandated war"
 was simply an expression of petty patriotism--
nationalism gone to some absurd extreme.
 It was a justification of Israel's expansionist foreign policy.
 But that's not true.

All along Israel had to realize that
 what the Lord was about to do to the Canaanites,
 he would also do to them, if they followed in their ways.

v.3--"**if your sons turn away from following me to serve other gods,
 the Lord's anger will burn against you and will quickly destroy you.**"

v. 26--"**Do not bring a detestable thing into your house
 or you, like it, will be set apart for destruction.**"

In Leviticus 18,
 after 18 verses listing perverse practices that he prohibited,
 the Lord says to Israel,
**"But you must keep my decrees and my laws. . . .
 And if you defile the land, it will vomit you out
 as it vomited out the nations that were before you."** (18:26ff)

If we are to understand this war against the Canaanites
 we must first appreciate the Lord's character--
 He is a holy God.
 All wickedness arouses his wrath.
 He wouldn't be good otherwise.

This annihilation of these Canaanite cities
 was really no different than the annihilation of the wicked humanity
 by the flood in the days of Noah
 or the destruction of the inhabitants of Sodom and Gomorrah
 with burning sulfur in the days of Abraham--
 only instead of using physical forces as his instrument,
 he used the force of the Israelite army.

And as with the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah,
 the destruction of the Canaanite cities
 was but a preliminary manifestation of that final judgment day
 when the Lord God will act in an even more terrifying way./

And as we look at our own society--
 as the world's leader in pornography,
 sacrificing a million children a year through abortion
 on the altar of sexual pleasure and convenience,
 a land dominated by a consumer lust for more and more--
 as we look at our own society,
 what do you think we deserve from a holy God?

To paraphrase Thomas Jefferson,
 "We ought to tremble when we realize that God is just;

for his justice cannot sleep forever."

He is a holy God--
 and one day all that is evil will be destroyed before him,
 for nothing that is evil can spoil the goodness
 of the new heavens and the new earth. /

Where does that leave you?
 Apart from God's mercy in the gospel of Jesus Christ,
 we are all subject to God's wrath.
 Without the atoning work of Jesus our Savior,
 who died for our sin on the cross,
 we all deserve exactly what those Canaanites did—
 our only hope is the saving work of our Lord Jesus.

Would you dare to stand before this God in your own righteousness?
 "if there's anyone who can appear before Aslan without their knees knocking,
 they're either braver than most or else just silly."

If we are to understand this "divinely-mandated massacre" against the Canaanites
 we must first appreciate the Lord's person--
 his character, his attributes, his nature.
 He is the sovereign King
 He is the righteous Judge.
 He is holy.

But God's ways must also be seen
 in the light of God's purpose--
 supremely in the establishment of his gracious covenant
 with his people.

We're back to this word 'covenant' again,
 which we've used so often in our study of Deuteronomy--
 A covenant, you remember, is an agreement that establishes the relationship
 between two parties.

The Lord has entered into a relationship with his people Israel,
 and he has established the terms of that relationship--
 And perhaps the key provision of the God's covenant with Israel,
 is the necessity of their absolute and undivided allegiance.

That covenant relationship between the Lord and Israel
 was like a marriage,
 and like a marriage,
 it centered on the command of exclusiveness--
 "**You shall have no other gods before me.**"
 You must forsake all others—
 no mistresses allowed.

We've seen this already--

Last week we looked at the fundamental duty of Israel--
What was it?

"you shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, soul and strength."—
absolute and undivided allegiance.

As v. 6 of our passage this morning tells us--

Israel had become a people holy to the Lord their God.
The Lord had chosen them out of all the peoples on the face of the earth
to be his people, his treasured possession.

They had done nothing to deserve that chose—

v. 7—"The LORD did not set his affection on you and choose you
because you were more numerous than other peoples,
for you were the fewest of all peoples.

**8 But it was because the LORD loved you
and kept the oath he swore to your forefathers
that he brought you out with a mighty hand
and redeemed you from the land of slavery,
from the power of Pharaoh king of Egypt."**

The LORD set his affection on you and choose you
because the LORD loved you—there's no other reason.

They were "**holy to the Lord**"--set apart for him--
belonging exclusively to the Lord--

this was Israel's divine destiny--
and this was Israel's absolute duty.

This was God's purpose for his people--
and their very existence
depended on their faithfulness to this relationship.

It is in this context that we have to understand the utter annihilation
of the wicked nations that occupied the land that Israel was about to enter.

v.2--"**when the Lord your God has delivered them over to you
and you have defeated them, then you must destroy them totally.**
Make no treaty with them, and show them no mercy.

Do not intermarry with them. . .
[and this very command suggests that the command of absolute annihilation
wasn't going to be carried out completely]

**Do not intermarry with them
for they will turn your sons away from following me to serve other gods,
and the Lord's anger will burn against you and will quickly destroy you."**

v.16--"**You must destroy all the peoples the Lord you God gives over to you.**
Do not look on them with pity and do not serve their gods,
for that will be a snare to you."

they could only be a light to the nations,
if they themselves were pure in their devotion to their God.
If they became like the Canaanites,
they would be of no use to anyone.

So now we must ask--
How does this passage apply to us?

Two areas I want to focus on--

1. The first is the most obvious--that is, our view of war--

You see, this passage, and others like it in the Old Testament,
have sometimes been applied by Christians to justify their military exploits.

Perhaps the most terrible illustration of this occurred on July 15, 1099--

On that day Christian Crusaders captured Jerusalem
to liberate it from its heathen lords.
Christian chroniclers of the event record with great joy that
some 10,000 Muslims were beheaded in one day in the great Mosque.
It was a Holy War, they thought, and justice had been done.
I don't think so.

But it hasn't simply been Christians who have been influenced in this way.

And it hasn't all been in the past--

Today in some sects of Islam,
which was greatly influenced by the Old Testament,
the jihad--or holy war⁴--as we all know, is alive and well.
They use it to justify blowing up planes and busses
killing innocent people in the name of Allah.

As one 19th C. French philosopher of war put it:

"religious wars are above all the most deplorable."⁵

Or as Pascal said, "Men never do evil so completely and cheerfully
as when they do it from religious conviction."

But didn't our God sanction a devastating war--

that is, a war in which he pledges himself to fight on the side of his people?

Yes, he did--at a particular time, in a particular place,
to a particular people for a particular purpose--
and it was sanctioned through a prophet of God—Moses.

But we must not use this text to justify our wars,

⁴For a more nuanced understanding of the term *jihad*, see Craigie, *War*, pp. 22f.

⁵Baron de Jomini, , cited in Craigie, *War*, p. 47.

for it is no longer possible for us, or anyone else,
to engage in a war of the type we have read about in our passage today.

You see, warfare is properly an activity of nation-states.
And many would say it is a necessary activity of nation-states--
for in this fallen world nations must use force and violence
(or at least threaten to)
to maintain their very existence.

In the Old Testament, God chose to embody his kingdom in a nation--Israel.
It was a theocracy--the Lord himself was their King.
As a nation, warfare would necessarily be a part of her existence--
and the Lord would use warfare--
even though war is a horrible result of the fallenness,
the sinfulness of this world.
The Lord would use warfare to bring Israel into being,
and he would use warfare to judge her as well.

But since the coming of Jesus, we live in a new era.
God's people no longer comprise one nation-state--
they are a world-wide community of the Crucified and Risen Christ.

And in this new community, Jesus has revealed to us
a new understanding of force and violence--the tables have been turned.

As Peter Craigie puts it--
"Whereas the old kingdom was established by the use of violence,
the new Kingdom was established in the [reception] of violence.
God the Warrior becomes the Crucified God,
the one who on the cross
receives in himself the full force of human violence. . . ."⁶
And it is in that humble act of submission to violence
that the conquest of evil takes place.

This is the model and this is the mission of the church--
to take up our cross and follow Christ.

Now, I do not believe that such a view necessarily requires
that one becomes a pacifist--though some would hold that view,
and I can respect them for it.
I believe there are still grounds for holding to the traditional Christian view--
Nations can engage in such a thing as a "just war"--
that some wars, under certain conditions,
can be justified as the lesser of two evils,
but that is not something the church would ever engage in.

And what this view does require

⁶Craigie, *War*, pp. 99f.

is the elimination of any false talk about "holy war"—
a divinely-mandated war and any notion of מָלְכָה—
total destruction.

War is a function of the nation, of the state, not the church.
And no nation is God's nation
in the same way that Israel of the Old Testament was--
not even the secular state of Israel today.

No matter how much we in America may feel
that we have a special role to play in international affairs,
No matter how much our forefathers and our various Presidents
have spoken of us as "a city on a hill,"
Americans are not God's chosen people.

Therefore neither America, nor any other nation, can engage in a 'holy war'--
for no nation can claim God as their God.

And I would urge us all to be wary of anyone
who would seek to use this text in that way.

For the real application of this text to us lies elsewhere---

That is, in our view of holiness.

This gets at the very core of this passage--
The Lord is holy, he is righteous and pure.
He takes moral evil, sin, seriously—deadly seriously.

His commands to Israel in this text
reveal his determination to see the judgment of the wicked,
and they reveal his passion for the purity of his people.

He commands drastic measures--make no mistake about it.
Extreme measures.
But don't you see--God's holiness is more important than even life itself.

And you know--this God has not changed.
His strategies may very,
but his character remains the same--always and forever.

This is the very same God revealed to us in Jesus Christ--
For it was Jesus who said--
**"If your hand causes you to sin, cut it off.
It is better for you to enter life maimed
than with two hands to be thrown into hell.
And if your foot cause you to sin, cut it off.**

**It is better for you to enter life crippled than to have two feet
and be thrown into hell.**
And if your eye cause you to sin, pluck it out.
**It is better for you to enter the kingdom of God half-blind
than to have two eyes and be thrown into hell,
where the worm does not die,
and the fire is not quenched."**

Do you think Jesus is not concerned with holiness!

God's holiness is an absolute value in the Bible--
it is more valuable than even human life itself.
The New Testament book of Hebrews tells us,
"without holiness no one will see the Lord" (Heb. 12:14).

When it comes to dealing with sin,
our holy God demands drastic action.
Even to the point of sending his own Son into the world
to die for the sins to redeem a people for himself.

Have you entered into this covenant relationship with God
through Jesus Christ?

Do you confess him as your Savior and your Lord?
And he saves us by his grace so that we may share in his holiness.

If the conquest of this covenant relationship is to be complete in your life,
what potential rival will you have to search out and destroy?

Are there still remnants of a false religion, of a false life,
still residing in your soul?

**"Make no treaty with them,
and show them no mercy."**

Paul says, "**Put to death whatever belongs to your earthly nature:
sexual immorality, impurity, lust evil desire and greed.**
Because of these the wrath of God is coming.
You used to walk in these way, in the life you once lived.
**But now you must rid yourselves of all such things as these:
anger, rage, malice, slander and filthy language from your lips."**
(Col. 3:5-8)

This is the holy war you ought to be engaged in--

**"Make no treaty with them,
and show them no mercy."**

Put these things to death!
Annihilate them!

But I'm afraid we too often want to negotiate with them
and make treaties with the sources of temptation within us and around us.

As Augustine did as a youth,
we are all tempted to pray--
"Lord, give me chastity, give me purity of soul . . . but not yet."

We fail to search our lives and break down the altars,
smash the sacred stones,
cut down the Asherah poles,
and burn the idols in the fire.

Instead of destroying sin in our lives,
we dabble in it.

We toy with temptation when the Bible says 'flee'.
That man is only kidding himself if he vows to quit looking at pornography,
but then refuses to put safeguards on his computer or phone.
They will be a snare to you.
You must destroy them utterly.

We relish our bitterness and harbor our hard feelings
when the Bible says confess it and forgive.

We wallow in our greed or covetousness or envy,
when the Bible says set your hearts on things above where Christ is.

If the conquest of the covenant is to take place in your life
you must destroy everything that might be a snare to you,
everything that might draw your allegiance away from your God.

The sin within us--
v.26--"Utterly **abhor and detest it**,
for it is חרף --set apart for destruction."

But you may say to yourself, "These things are stronger than I am.
How can I drive them out?"

Do not be afraid of them.
The Lord is bigger,
he is stronger--
He will give you the power you need, if you will call out to him;
if you will but trust his promises, and obey him.

The Lord your God who is among you is a great and awesome God.

He is willing to wage a holy war
to ensure the conquest of the covenant.

Are you?

Prayer--

You have "saved us and called us to a holy life—
not because of anything we have done
but because of his own purpose and grace.
This grace was given us in Christ Jesus before the beginning of time,
but it has now been revealed through the appearing of our Savior, Christ Jesus,
who has destroyed death
and has brought life and immortality to light through the gospel."

Closing Hymn: *The Name of Jesus*

Benediction:

Jude 24,25 To him who is able to keep you from falling
and to present you before his glorious presence without fault and with great joy--
to the only God our Savior be glory, majesty, power and authority,
through Jesus Christ our Lord, before all ages, now and forevermore! Amen.

Living as God's Covenant People
Studies in Deut. 1-11, #5
July 9, 2017

"The Conquest of the Covenant" Deuteronomy 7

Sometimes biblical passages that are the hardest for us to understand are the ones that have the most to teach us. Our passage this morning has hard things to say about warfare that we can only understand in the light of what it teaches us about the God who says them.

The "Divinely-Mandated Massacre" of Deut. 7—

I. Seen in the light of God's Person--

A. He is the Sovereign King

B. He is the Righteous Judge

II. Seen in the light of God's Purpose--

The establishment of his covenant.

The Application—

1. Our view of War--

2. Our view of Holiness--

Putting our old nature to death

Sermon Discussion:

"The Conquest of the Covenant"
Deuteronomy 7

- How do you deal with "troubling texts"—passages that are perplexing and hard to understand? How can such texts be helpful to us?
- Is the God you worship "safe" Why or why not? How can easily "domesticate" God? How does this passage keep us from doing that?
- Look at vv. 7,8--What is the basis of the Lord's covenant with Israel? Why were they chosen by God? How are we to understand our own election by God?
- Why is it improper to use Old Testament texts in which God instructs Israel in war as instructions for our country (or any country)?
- How do God's instructions to Israel as they take the land apply to our quest for holiness? What does it mean to put our old nature "to death"?
- Pair up and pray about area in your life that need to be "put to death."