

# (Through the Bible) Deuteronomy 17-20

by Chuck Smith

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*Chuck Smith's sermon on Deuteronomy emphasizes the importance of true devotion to God, the consequences of disobedience, and the prophetic anticipation of Jesus Christ as the Messiah.*

**Duration:** 52:32

**Scripture:** Numbers 35:9-12, Deuteronomy 17:1, Deuteronomy 18:15-19, Deuteronomy 19:9, 2 Samuel 24:24, Acts 3:22-23

**Topics:** "Old Testament", "Faith And Obedience"

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## Description

In this sermon, Moses is giving his final instructions to the children of Israel before his death. He emphasizes the importance of offering sacrifices that are valuable and not cast-offs. David's desire to buy the threshing floor of Ornan to offer a sacrifice is used as an example of giving a sacrifice that truly costs something. Moses also provides exemptions from battle for those who have recently built houses, planted vineyards, or become engaged to be married. The overall message is that God is with them and will fight for them against their enemies.

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## Transcript

As you've discovered by now, the book of Deuteronomy is sort of a review of the law. The word itself indicates the second law. It is a review by Moses for the people, really a final review because Moses will be dying in just a few days and Joshua will be taking over and leading the children of Israel into the promised land.

So, he is continuing his instructions, his final instructions to them. And in the 17th chapter, again at the beginning, he lets them know that what they give to God should never be castoffs, never give a sacrifice that has blemishes. God really isn't honored when we give to Him the castoffs, that which has no value to us.

The Lord is really honored when we give to Him a sacrifice that really costs something. When David wanted to buy the threshing floor of Ornan in order that he might offer to God a sacrifice there because it was at that point that the angel was stayed and the plague that was upon Israel was stopped, Ornan says, I'll give it to you and here you can have the cattle to offer as a sacrifice. And David said, no, I'll not give unto God that which cost me nothing.

Now, David was called a man after God's own heart. And I think that God is honored when we do give to Him, we give that which cost us something. Otherwise, it really isn't a gift.

Jesus, watching the people putting their money into the treasury, when He saw the widow woman throw in her mite, He said, she's given now. That's true giving. The rest of them were all giving out of their abundance.

She was giving out of her sustenance, out of her livelihood. And so, when we give unto God, not the castoff. And so, you're not to sacrifice unto the Lord any bullock or sheep with blemishes or evil favoredness.

That's an abomination unto the Lord. Then, they were very strict within the law. God was seeking to preserve the nation.

He knew that by allowing certain things within the land that they would have within them incumbent seeds of destruction. As you look at history, you'll find that the majority of the nations that were once great were not really conquered by outside forces, but deteriorated by the rotten politics within the nation itself. Nations, after a period of time, have a tendency to become corrupted.

Nations are built upon certain pillars of righteousness, justice, equity, solid pillars upon which a nation is built. But when these pillars begin to rot, then the nation is in a dangerous condition and will soon fall. One of the rotten planks that God was seeking to guard against was that of idolatrous worship.

And therefore, the penalty that God ordered for anyone who would enter into idolatrous worship, the worship of other gods, the worshiping of God in unprescribed ways, the penalty was to be that of stoning. He's wrought wickedness within Israel. And he's served other gods, worshiped them, the sun, the moon, the host of heaven, which I have not commanded, God said.

Now, you are to inquire diligently to see if the story is true. And if two or three people will witness against that person of the truth of the charges, then he is to be stoned by the congregation of Israel. However, the death penalty was not to be invoked if there were only one witness against the person.

Now, if the matters were brought to the judges, and it was really too hard for them to determine just how to rule in the case, then they were to bring those matters before the priest. And the Levites shall inquire of the Lord and give the sentence of judgment. And again, God speaks of the place that he will choose in the land, which will be the place where men will meet God and worship God.

Now, in the 14th verse, it is interesting as God now anticipates a future deterioration of the land. You see, God intended that the nation Israel be a theocracy, that it be a nation that was governed by God. They were to have the most unusual form of government of any nation of the world, where other nations may have had monarchies or dictatorships or democracies or other forms of government.

Theirs was to be unique because they were to be a theocracy, a nation that was ruled over by God. Not as Iran is today. Comene sort of tries to give an aura of divine approval or, you know, God's government, but surely what he has installed is far from God's government.

But God knew that one day these people would insist upon a king. And therefore, even though at this point there was not to be any king ruling over them by God's divine ideal, yet knowing that the day would come when they would no longer adhere to God's ideal plan for them as a nation and would insist upon a king. God, therefore, in the law gave certain rules when a king would rise to rule over them, then he gave rules for the kings here in the laws.

Though it was to be 400 years or so before they would have a king, yet God already anticipating the demand for a king is now giving the rules when a king does rise to rule over them. And so, to me it is interesting that God in anticipation of their future demand for a king throws in here, even in the law, certain rules to govern the king when they ultimately have a king. And the very reason that they would give for having a king is anticipated by God.

When you want to have a king like the other nations. When the people came to Samuel, they said, set up a king over us like the other nations. And they demanded that they have a king.

And so, God anticipating this demand of the people. When it comes to pass, you're in the land which the Lord gives you. You're dwelling there.

And you shall say, I will set a king over me like all the nations that are about me. Thou shalt in any wise set him king over thee, whom the Lord thy God shall choose. One from among your brothers shalt thou set king over thee.

Thou mayest not set a stranger over you, which is not your brother. Now, here are the rules for the king. First of all, he's not to multiply horses to himself or to go down to Egypt in order to trade for horses.

The second was that he was not to multiply wives unto himself. And the reason for this was given, lest his wives turn his heart away from God. Now, it is interesting when Solomon became king, he failed on all three counts.

First of all, Solomon began to multiply horses unto himself. And the stables of Solomon are still to be found throughout Israel. Not only did he multiply horses, but he went down to Egypt in order to do horse trading.

The second, disobedience. And finally, he multiplied wives unto himself. Now, it is interesting that God said, you're not to multiply wives, lest their hearts, lest they turn your heart away from me.

And Solomon's wives turned his heart away from the Lord and brought the failure to Solomon. So God anticipated the evil. He anticipated the results of the evil.

He warned about it. And yet Solomon disregarded the warnings of God, did exactly what God said he should not do and exactly what God said would happen, did happen. In other words, God knows what he's talking about.

We so often feel that we know better. Well, that doesn't apply to me. Well, I can do it and get by with it.

Oh, that'll never change me. Wives could never change my attitude towards God. And that may apply to some others, but that really doesn't apply to me.

And we think that somehow we have some private exclusion from the rules or the laws that God establishes. Not so. God has set the rules.

He has set the punishment or the things that would transpire if the rules are violated. You think you can get by with it? You can't. You can be sure that even as God has stated, so shall it be.

And you can be sure that God doesn't warn you about anything needlessly. Whatever God warned you about is the thing that you're in danger of violating or doing. So God was warning concerning the king.

Solomon disregarded the warning. And even as God declared, so did it take place in Solomon's life. Now the king actually was to make his own copy of the law and he was to read it daily.

Now, how marvelous that would be if you had a president who would have to write his own copy of the word of God, because in writing it, you're reading into it all the time and then have to read it daily. When Moses turned the charge over to Joshua, he gave to him the law and he says, now thou shalt diligently consider the law. Thou shalt meditate in it and thus shalt thou make thy way prosperous and thus shalt thou have good success.

David spoke of his own delight in the law of the Lord, which he meditated in day and night. He was a man after God's own heart because of the respect that he gave to God's word as a king. David was the kind of king that God wanted.

God wanted a shepherd king. God always wants shepherds to rule. He wants all of the rulers to have the hearts of a shepherd.

And David had the heart of the shepherd for God's people, nurturing them, caring for them, loving them, concerned with their needs. And so the requirement that the king write his own copy of the scriptures and read it. Now, again, he repeats how the tribe of Levi is not to be given any portion of the land, but they will eat the offerings that were given unto the Lord made by fire as their inheritance for the Lord is their inheritance.

And thus the priest, when he offered a sacrifice, they were to give the priest the shoulder and the two cheeks and the maw. Also, they were to give to the priest, the first fruit of their corn and of their wine and of their oil and the first of the fleece of thy sheep shalt thou give to him. Now God required really a tent.

He considered that as his. And the tent was always to be the first tent was to go unto God. Now, when you would bring an offering that the priest would sacrifice the offering for you, the priest always got the shoulder and the cheeks and the maw.

That was his that was his sort of fee or not really a fee, but that was just his his allotted share from the sacrifice. Now, later on in their history, when Eli was the priest. He had some greedy sons and the people would come to offer sacrifices and hey, these greedy sons, they would put their hooks in and grab the tenderloins, the sirloins and the and the finest of the steaks and everything else.

And and if the people would go to object, you know, then they'd order them out of the place so that they actually, by their greed. Caused people to begin to resent. Sacrificing unto God.

And Eli would not actually correct his sons and thus God dealt very harshly with Eli and his sons because of their greediness in the ministry caused people really to resent God, seeking the best for themselves. Looking out for themselves and more concerned with their own wants and selves than they were really the people. And thus God dealt very severely with Eli and his sons.

But there was a portion that was to be given to the priest. And then the first fruits of their fields, the first fruits of their grapes and so forth, there were to be given unto the priest. For the Lord thy God hath chosen men out of the tribes to minister in the name of the Lord and thus they shall have like portions to eat.

Now again, God forbids that the people follow after the abominations and the practices of those people that were already living in the land that they were to drive out. The practices were using divination or an

observer of times. The observer of times is actually the practice of astrology, the use of horoscopes or an enchanter or a witch or a charmer or a consulter with familiar spirits.

So spiritism or a wizard or a necromancer or all that do these things are an abomination unto the Lord. And it's because of these abominations that God is driving the people out of the land. Thou shalt be perfect with the Lord thy God.

The word perfect there is thou shalt be completely towards the Lord. You're not to have other gods in your life, so to speak. Your heart is to be completely towards God, not to be divided with these other interests and issues, but just a heart that is completely towards God.

For the nations which you are going to possess, they hearkened unto these observers of times, to the diviners. But as for thee, the Lord thy God has not allowed thee to do it. Now here we find a great prophecy concerning the coming of Jesus Christ.

The Lord thy God will raise up unto thee a prophet from the midst of thee of your brothers like unto me. Unto him shall ye hearken according to all that you desire of the Lord thy God in Horeb in the day of the assembly, saying, Let me not hear again the voice of the Lord my God, neither let me see this great fire anymore that I die not. And the Lord said unto me, They have well spoken that which they have spoken.

I will raise them up a prophet from among their brethren. And I will like unto thee and will put my words in his mouth and he shall speak unto them all that I shall command him. And it shall come to pass that whosoever will not hearken unto my words, which he shall speak in my name, I will require it of him." Peter in his message in the third chapter of the book of Acts declares that this was a prophecy concerning Jesus Christ.

Now the Jews knew the prophecy of Moses and thus they were looking for their Messiah. They believe that this is a prophecy of the coming Messiah. That God is going to raise up another spokesman to speak God's word to them.

I'll raise up another prophet like unto myself so that when they came to John the Baptist saying, Who art thou? They said, Art thou that prophet? And they were referring to this particular prophecy. Are you that prophet? The prophet that we are to look for like unto Moses through whom God will speak his word to the people. John said, I am not.

Are you the Messiah? No. Who are you? I'm just the voice of one in crying in the wilderness. Prepare you the way of the Lord.

Make straight his path. Now the Jews today are still looking for their Messiah and they're anticipating that he is coming very soon. But they told me we believe that the Messiah will be just like Moses.

That's this prophecy they're referring to. That he will not be the son of God. They say now you say the Messiah or that Jesus was the son of God.

We do not believe that the Messiah will be the son of God. We believe that the Messiah will be a man just like Moses was a man. A man from amongst us that God will raise up to speak God's word to us.

And so the Jews today are looking for a man, a Jew, who will be able to come and to help them to rebuild their temple and to bring them peace. And the minute that man arises on the scene and brings them

peace and helps them build their temple, they are all of them ready to acclaim him as their Messiah. Now of course there are other scriptures that refer to the Messiah being God with us.

Thou shalt call his name Emmanuel, which being interpreted as God with us. Behold I'll give you a sign. A virgin shall conceive and bear a son and call his name Emmanuel, God with us.

But the Jews are not looking for the son of God, they are looking for a man. Now that man is coming and he is coming very soon and he will arise out of western Europe. He will make a covenant with the nation Israel whereby he will help them to rebuild their temple and they will acclaim him as their Messiah.

We're right on the borders of these events. It's tragic but Israel will acknowledge this false leader as their Messiah. Jesus said I've come in my own name, you did not receive me.

I mean he said I have come in my father's name, you did not receive me. There's another one who's going to be coming in his own name and him you will receive. They're going to be deceived for three and a half years but after three and a half years when they have rebuilt their temple, started again their daily prayers and sacrifices, he is going to come to Jerusalem.

He's going to stand in that rebuilt temple in the Holy of Holies and he's going to proclaim to them that he is God. He's going to stop their daily sacrifices, their daily prayers. He's going to claim that he himself is God and demand that they worship him as God.

At that point the Jews will realize that they have been deceived by this man, that he is not the Messiah and those who are sharp in the scriptures will flee to Jordan to the rock city of Petra where God will preserve them for three and a half years. Those that do not flee will be put under terrible persecution by this leader who comes to Jerusalem at this point. So it is interesting that if you talk to an Orthodox Jew today about his Messiah, he'll tell you that the Messiah is not the Son of God, he is a man.

He'll be like Moses that God will raise up from among the people, but not the Son of God, just a man like Moses. And that's who they are looking for today to come and to lead them out of this current dilemma. Now God declares if a prophet presumes to speak a word in my name which I have not commanded or that shall speak in the name of other gods, that prophet shall die.

And if you say in your heart, how shall we know the word which the Lord has not spoken? Very easy. If a prophet prophesies something in the name of the Lord and it doesn't come to pass, he's a false prophet. It's very easy to point out a false prophet.

The simple rule, just see if what he says come to pass. If it doesn't come to pass, then just mark him as a false prophet. Now there are some people that are so gullible that even though the Jehovah Witnesses have prophesied about three or four different times when the Lord was going to come, and he hasn't come on any of those prophesied dates, yet they still don't have enough sense to realize that these leaders in New York are false prophets.

Now my heart goes out to these people that come around door to door. These people are very sincere. I wish that many times Christians were as dedicated as they are.

They are sincere in their dedication to God, but they have been deceived by their leaders in New York. And I cannot help but believe that it is deliberate deception by their leaders in New York because the mistranslations of the scriptures could not just be accidental. They are deliberate mistranslations of the

scriptures by which they are deceiving these people.

And thus my heart goes out to the people who come door to door because of the fact that they've been deceived. Oh that they would see the truth that is in Christ Jesus and they would come to know the grace of God and the love of God through Jesus Christ our Lord and would come to trust in Jesus for their salvation rather than their works for Jehovah. Now Peter gives us another sign of the false prophet.

In 2nd Peter chapter 2, warning there of false prophets said, who through feigned words will seek to make merchandise of you. So whenever any man seeks to make merchandise of you, seeks through gimmicks to encourage you to give, through pressure, through various antics, gets on big money kicks, he's a false prophet who uses computerized typewriters for their mailing lists so that it appears like the letter has been written personally to you with statements such as, I have been thinking about you lately, wondering how you are. Those are feigned words and the purpose is to make merchandise of you and I have no hesitation declaring they are false prophets according to the word of God.

You say, oh but they've done so much good. I may have a counterfeit \$20 bill and someone may come to me and say, Chuck my family needs help. I lost my job.

We don't have any money and my children are hungry. So I give him this counterfeit \$20 bill not knowing that it's counterfeit. So he goes down to the store and he uses the \$20 bill to buy some hamburger and some bread and some milk and he feeds his hungry children.

And the merchant, the store who takes his \$20 bill for the merchandise, goes down to the electric company and he pays his electric bill with the \$20 bill. And the electric company gives that \$20 bill in change to you when you pay your electric bill. And you in turn use that \$20 bill to go down and buy yourself a new sweater.

And that merchant gives the \$20 bill to the gas company to pay his gas bill. And the gas bill, I mean the gas company goes to the bank to deposit the \$20 bill and the teller says, I'm sorry I can't take this \$20 bill, it's counterfeit. Wait a minute, that bill has done a lot of good.

It's fed the poor, it's paid the light and gas bill and it's bought a new sweater. Look how much good it's done. What do you mean you can't take it, it's counterfeit? Well, it's counterfeit.

The argument that it has done so much good is not a valid argument. Now this is the argument that a lot of people use for false prophets or even false religious systems. But look how much good they've done, they're counterfeit.

When it comes to the final deposit, not going to make it. So God is warning against the false prophets. God had very little, well really God doesn't appreciate it when a person comes along and says, thus saith the Lord and he speaks out of his own heart and really isn't saying God's Word.

I don't know. You know, I think that the days of computerized typewriters were a great curse to the church. I've gotten more computerized letters from these, someone's put me on a mailing list.

I don't know who it was, but you got my name in the pot. And these guys buy mailing lists from each other. And if they have a mailing list that they get a certain amount of percentage of returns, then they sell your name at a, if you write in a check, then your name is sold at a premium price to the others.

And I got this letter the other day, some guy named Popoff and hear a personal prophecy in the thing, thus saith the Lord, I am pleased with thee and I am going to bless thee, you know, and just share the blessing kind of a thing, you know, and all of this stuff. Well, I wrote him back a letter and I said, thus saith the Lord, I am against the false prophets that prophesy in my name saying, thus saith the Lord, when I have not spoken. And I knew that the Lord was saying it because I was just quoting him right out of the word.

But then I added my own little appendage. I didn't put this under the thus saith the Lord, but I put under my own little appendage. Thy name has been Popoff, but even as the name of Saul was changed to Paul, so your name is to be changed from Popoff to Ripoff.

No doubt my name will be deleted from his mailing list shortly. But there are a lot of ripoff artists who are going around disguising themselves as prophets of God. And as I said, God doesn't appreciate a person speaking for him when he hasn't spoken.

And thus the false prophets in those days were to be put to death. Now in the 19th chapter, again, they are told to establish the cities of refuge. Three of them, when they come into the land, three had already been established on the other side of Jordan.

But when you come into the land, God would appoint three cities as cities of refuge. Again, the idea being that if you killed someone accidentally, if you and your friend were out chopping wood and your axe head should fly off of the handle and hit him in the head and kill him, and as the avenger of blood would be angry because you killed his brother and he's chasing you, you could flee to the city of refuge and there you could be saved from the avenger of blood. He could not come into the city to take you or to kill you.

However, the cities of refuge were never to be a refuge for those who were guilty of first-degree murder. Now again, in verse 9, God just gives chapter 19 some commandments. If thou shalt keep all these commandments to do them, which I command thee this day, to love the Lord thy God and to walk ever in His ways, then thou shalt add three cities more for thee beside these three.

In other words, three more cities when you get into the land. Now, the commandment is to love the Lord and to walk ever in His ways. They were not to touch the landmark of their neighbors.

Now, in those days, they would set up little piles of stones. These stones would be landmarks. When you go through the land of Israel today, you can still see out in the fields these little piles of stones, which are landmarks, which they have set up in the Arab territory.

In the Jewish territory, they don't practice this, but in the Arab territory, in the land of Israel, there on the West Bank, you'll see all these little piles of stones out in the fields, which are the landmarks. Now, you're not to go out at night and move those stones over 10 feet or so. You're not to remove your neighbor's landmark.

That was a crime that was looked on with great disfavor. Now, if a man would rise up and bear false witness against his neighbor, and it was proved that he had perjured himself in his false witness, his sentence would be whatever kind of a crime he is trying to get pinned on his neighbor. In other words, if you got up and lied and said, well, I saw this man steal that cow, and it was proved that you were lying, you didn't see him, you were just trying to get him in trouble, then you would get the sentence of a cow thief.

Whatever sentence would have been meted out against the fellow whom you were trying to incriminate, that sentence would be yours. And if you're trying to incriminate him in a capital offense, then you would be put to death. So, whatever you were seeking to have done unto him shall be put onto you.

And thus, God wanted them to have a healthy fear of lying as a witness, the perjury. Now, when they went to war, chapter 20, against your enemies, and you see the horses and chariots, don't be afraid, for the Lord is with you who brought you out of Egypt. Now, there was among these people, they were, remember, just slaves, and they did have fears, fears of battle.

They weren't trained fighting men. And in those days, the children of Israel did not have any horses for battle, neither did they have chariots. And having a chariot was like having a tank against infantry in modern warfare.

And thus, when they'd see these chariots and these horses and prancing horses and all pulling these chariots towards them, it would strike fear into the heart. And the Lord said, don't be afraid when you see those, because I'm going to be with you. David said, yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil, for thou art with me.

You know, the consciousness of the presence of God is one of the most fear-dispensing things in the world. It's so glorious to realize God is with me when there are frightening situations that I'm facing. I oftentimes forget that God is with me, and that's when I really get scared.

But it's always a comfort when you're faced with some difficult situation to remember, oh well, God is with us, because if God before us, who can be against us? Now they're to go out to the men as they're getting ready to fight, and you're to say unto the troops, don't let your hearts faint, don't fear, do not tremble, don't be terrified, for the Lord your God is going before you to fight for you against your enemies and to save you. And the officers are to speak to the people and say, has any man built a new house yet and hasn't had a chance to live in it? Then that fellow could go home. He wouldn't have to fight, because if he were killed in battle, then it would mean he built a house and someone else lived in it, and he never got a chance to live in it.

So he would be excused from battle. How many of you have planted vineyards and you haven't picked the grape shed? You can all go home, because it wouldn't be fair for you to do all the work of planting a vineyard and perhaps be killed in battle and never be able to eat of your vineyard. So those that had built new houses and not lived, how many have been engaged to a wife, betrothed, and you haven't yet fulfilled that time of betrothal, and the marriage hasn't yet taken place? Those that were engaged to be married were dismissed from battle and were able to go home.

And finally, how many of you are afraid to fight? You can go on home too. So by the time you were left in your army, you had a pretty good group of really fighting men, you know. They weren't afraid, and they were ready to go, and they didn't have any, you know, distractions like some girlfriend that they're engaged to, and looking forward to the wedding, or these kind of things.

The fellows that remained to fight were those that were really ready to go. Now the idea, and it was a very good idea, of sending home those that were fearful is that in the midst of the battle, because they're afraid they might panic and start to run, and that has a kind of a infecting effect upon the other troops. And so those that were fearful were sent home.

They didn't want fellows there who were apt to panic in the midst of the battle, and thus create a panic among the troops. So it was a very wise kind of a move indeed. It left you with just really quality fighting men.

Now when you come to a city to take it, first of all, proclaim peace upon the city. And if they open their gates and surrender, then fine, take over the city. But if they fight against you, then go in, kill all the men, and leave the women and children alive, and then you can use the women and children as servants.

And this cattle and the spoil you may take for your own to eat of it. And thus you shall do to all the cities that are far off, but those cities that are in the land where the Hittites, the Amorites, the Canaanites, the Perizzites, and the Jebusites are dwelling, then these nations you're to utterly destroy, not to make any peace treaties. You're to wipe these people out completely.

That they teach you not to do after their abominations which they have done unto their gods, so should ye sin against Jehovah your God. When thou shalt besiege a city a long time, and making war against it to take it, thou shalt not destroy the trees of it. Now the purpose of the total eradication of these nations was the horrible lascivious practices that were going on in these nations, lest they would pollute you.

Now the people did not obey the Lord in this. They did save some of the cities, and thus became polluted, and ultimately were driven out of the land themselves because of the pollutions that they practiced after the manner of the nations that they were to have destroyed. Again, you must see it from God's standpoint to understand it, because people always have difficulty when God has ordered the total eradication of a city, of a people.

People have a difficulty understanding God's command of the total eradication, wiping out everything, everybody. The reason why God commanded this is the vile, horrible practices of these people. It would not be proper in mixed company to tell you of some of the normal practices of these people, especially in their worship.

They were beyond help, so vile, so low, there was no recovering. By their very practices, they would be in time eradicating themselves. By the incestuous practices, by the bestiality, and all of these things that they were practicing, they would have soon become just a group of idiotic kind of people, and would have destroyed themselves.

Thus, God ordered their destruction, lest by their being alive, they would pollute His people, and thus bring these polluting, destructive practices among His own people. It would be much like you being a guard at a school, watching over the kindergartners, and seeing them out there in the playground, and observing a little dog running up the street with foam coming out of its mouth, yipping and nipping at everything. And you immediately recognize the symptoms of this dog, its actions.

You know that it has hydrophobia, rabies. Now, would you be justified in killing that little rabid dog before it could get on the school grounds? Or should you just sit there and say, oh, look at that dog. I think it has rabies.

Look at it biting all of the children. My, that isn't nice. Little dogs shouldn't bite children like that.

Man, I'd fire you so fast. The dog is rabid. It's going to die.

It can't live. If it's got rabies, it's doomed to die. But if you don't protect those children, many of those innocent little children will also die because they'll be infected by that rabid dog.

Therefore, you would be totally justified in killing that rabid dog. In fact, you would be at fault if you didn't kill that rabid dog. You would be responsible if you allowed that dog to bite the children.

You would be responsible for the children's death. Therefore, for the sake of the innocent children, your obligation is to kill the rabid dog, lest it infect the children. Now, these people were like rabid dogs in that their practices were self-destructive.

They were destroying themselves and would have destroyed themselves. Yet the practices, because of their nature, were infectious. And there was a danger if God's people would come in and see these vile, abominable practices, that they too might enter into some of these practices and thus become infected with this deadly sin by which God would have to then judge and eradicate His own children.

So, God was seeking to protect His innocent children from these destructive practices of these people, and thus He ordered their eradication. Where the nations weren't involved so deeply, God didn't order that kind of eradication. It was only among these people where these vile, horrible practices were going on.

Thus, God was protecting His innocent children, trying to keep them from being infected by these deadly practices of the nations that inhabited this land. So, God tells them when they are besieging a city, they are not to cut down any fruit trees to use as a bulwark against the city. Just cut down the trees that don't bear fruit to use, you know, to build your bulwarks and so forth.

Cut down the eucalyptus and the oak and trees like that, but don't cut down the olive trees or the apricot trees or those that bear fruit, because they will be food for you in time to come.

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Audio: <https://sermonindex1.b-cdn.net/6/SID6330.mp3>

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