

Was God Fair to the Egyptians and the Canaanites?

Questions to be Answered:

1. What is the evidence in this case? What are our reliable sources? What do we know for sure about the conquest of Canaan and the exodus from Egypt? Who appeared to do most of the killing? (Joshua 10:11)
2. Collect **all** the data. See Genesis 12:7; 13:14-17; 15:5,13-21; 17:3-14; 22:15-18; 26:2-5,24; 28:4,10-16; 35:9-12; 48:4). After possessing this land, the children of Israel were to be a blessing to all nations: Genesis 12:3; 22:18; 26:4; 28:14; Galatians 3:8 compare Exodus 23:20-33. See Exodus 23:20-33; 33:1,2; 34:10-16; Leviticus 18:24-30; 20:24-28; 26:14-46; Numbers 33:50-56; **Deuteronomy 4:5,6,15-40**; 7:1-11,16-26; 8:20; 9:1-6; **20:10-18**; Genesis 15:16-21; Acts 7:2-8.
3. Do we have any archaeological or historical evidence that is helpful? What does it mean?
4. What happened during the 430 years between Abraham and Moses? (See Genesis 15:13,16; Exodus 12:40,41; Acts 7:6; Galatians 3:17)
5. Does God ever want to destroy His children? (See #27 - Does God Discipline His Children?)
6. Which was ultimately more serious: What the Israelites did to the Canaanites, or what the remaining Canaanites did to the Israelites? (See Matthew 10:28; Luke 12:5)
7. Who was responsible for the deaths of all the people who died in the wilderness? Was it God?

Other Commentators:

“Some assert that the Israelites were commanded by God to commit a primitive and barbarous act of murder against innocent people when they were directed to annihilate the Canaanites (v. 6, 8, 10). Such a notion does not take into account these considerations: (1) Unlike murder, justified killing is not based on hatred (Gen. 9:6; 14:13–16; Ex. 22:2; Rom. 13:1–4; cf. Ex. 20:13; 21:12). (2) The Canaanites were not innocent (Gen. 9:25; Lev. 18:25; Deut. 12:29–31). Ugaritic texts found at Ras Shamra in Syria have filled in our picture of the infamous degradation not only of Canaanite society, but of their religion as well. (3) God waited over 400 years before executing judgment on their unrighteousness (Gen. 15:16; Lev. 18:24; 20:1–5; Deut. 20:17, 18; cf. 2 Pet. 3:9). Nevertheless, they refused to respond to the judgment of Sodom and Gomorrah or to the mercy presented by Abraham, Melchizedek and perhaps others (Gen. 12:8; Josh. 2:9–13; 9:24). (4) God had chosen Abraham’s descendants on the basis of grace rather than their own merits (Deut. 9:4, 5), and He gave to them the land of Canaan as an inheritance (Gen. 15:18–21). At that time Israel was a theocracy (ruled directly by God), and the extermination was God’s direct and explicit command (cf. Ex. 23:27–30; Deut. 7:3–6; Josh. 8:24–26). Israel was God’s instrument of judgment against the Canaanites (Deut. 9:4, 5). As the world is to be purified by a “great and dreadful day of the LORD” before the coming kingdom (Mal. 4:5), so Israel’s land was to be purified by the fires

of His judgment through Israel.” *Believer’s Study Bible*

“The Samaritan Pentateuch reads, “Now the sojourning of the children of Israel, and of their fathers in the land of Canaan and in the land of Egypt, was 430 years.” The Alexandrine copy of the LXX. has the same reading; and the same statement is made by the apostle Paul, in Ga 3:17, who reckons from the promise made to Abraham to the giving of the law. That these three witnesses have the truth, the chronology itself proves; for it is evident that the descendants of Israel did not dwell 430 years in Egypt; while it is equally evident, that the period from Abraham’s entry into Canaan to the Exodus, is exactly that number. Thus, from Abraham’s entrance into the promised land to the birth of Isaac, was 25 years; Isaac was 60 at the birth of Jacob; Jacob was 130 at his going into Egypt; where he and his children continued 215 years more; making in the whole 430 years. See Kennicott’s Dissertation on the Hebrew Text. sojourning. Ac 13:17 Heb 11:9 four hundred. Ge 12:1-3 15:13 Ac 7:6 Ga 3:16,17” *The Treasury of Scripture Knowledge*.

“The discussion on Gen. 15:13 points out that Paul’s statement in Gal. 3:17 and other evidence make it clear that this 430 years includes the period from Abraham’s call to leave Haran to Jacob’s actual descent into Egypt 215 years later, and that the interval between Jacob’s entry into Egypt and the Exodus was another 215 years. Since in the time of Moses, Palestine was considered a part of the Egyptian empire, it is not strange to find an author of that period including Canaan in the term “Egypt.” Not being familiar with the political situation in Moses’ time, but feeling that the 430 years included the patriarchal sojourn in Canaan, the translators of the LXX specifically included within this period the time of their sojourn “in the land of Egypt and the land of Canaan.” The prophecy that the fourth generation of those who had entered Egypt would leave it (Gen. 15:16), and its recorded fulfillment (Ex. 6:16–20), make impossible any other explanation of the 430-year period.” *SDA Bible Commentary*

The land of Canaan (named after Ham’s son, Canaan: Genesis 10:15-18) was later promised to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob (Genesis 12:7; 13:14-17; 15:5, 13-21; 17:3-14; 22:15-18; 26:2-5, 24; 28:4, 10-16; 35:9-12; 48:4). After possessing this land, the children of Israel were to be a blessing to all nations (Genesis 12:3; 22:18; 26:4; 28:14; Galatians 3:8 compare Exodus 23:20-33).

The land was given to the descendants of Canaan until they filled up their cup of iniquity (Genesis 15:16-21; Acts 7:2-8), as a fulfillment of God’s 400-year prophecy. God sent them His first “missionary” to see if He could convert them to the worship of the one true God. But if they did not accept God’s plan, then God would replace them with another group of people who had been chosen to do what He wanted them to do. God was thus choosing Abraham’s descendants primarily for a special responsibility.

God not only sent Abraham to the Canaanites as the first “missionary”, He left six of Abraham’s seven sons to live among them to be “missionaries” to them. Unfortunately, these sons and their families adopted the ways of the Canaanites instead of serving to convert the

Canaanites as they should have. God took Isaac, one of the sons of Abraham, and blessed his two sons. God finally selected the younger of Isaac's two sons to be the ancestor of His promised Messiah. But God could not trust even Jacob His chosen patriarch to remain faithful to Him while continuing to live among the people of Canaan. So God allowed a famine to come and Jacob (Israel) and his children traveled down to Egypt to stay there for a while.

In Egypt they were despised by the Egyptians because of their occupation (Genesis 46:33) and their type of worship. This allowed them to multiply in relative seclusion with a minimum of mixing with heathen nations. But finally He had to take them out of Egypt because they were being cruelly oppressed. (Exodus 3:7-10)

"Gods" were rated in those days primarily according to how their worshipers did in battle. Thus there would be almost no respect for the "God" of a nation of slaves. Even among the descendants of Abraham, Yahweh, their God, had lost a great deal of respect after leaving them in Egyptian slavery, to suffer even the killing of their sons, for so many years. God (Yahweh) had to do something quite dramatic to gain some respect once again.

God started by showing that He was in fact superior to the Egyptian "gods". (Exodus 12:12; Numbers 33:4) He actually turned their "gods" into plagues! (See Exodus 7-12) This got everybody's attention and actually resulted in some of the Egyptians following the Israelites out of Egypt.

At the foot of Mt. Sinai, after giving them the Ten Commandments, He gave them a lot of other instructions. One of the key instructions was about how they were to deal with the Canaanites. (See **Exodus 23:20-33**; 33:1,2; 34:10-16; Leviticus 18:24-30; 20:24-28; 26:14-46; Numbers 33:50-56; **Deuteronomy 4:5,6,15-40**; 7:1-11,16-26; 8:20; 9:1-6; **20:10-18**; Genesis TG #12; Joshua TG #14; 1 Samuel TG #8; Nehemiah TG #3; see also PP 436,437 and PP 543) He made it very clear that if they would exercise faith in Him, they would not have to fight at all. God told them that He would use the forces of nature to drive the Canaanites out of the land. This was absolutely essential because if they mixed with these people and intermarried with them they would be led to worship their corrupting "gods". God told them this would prove to be a fatal trap.

Unfortunately, they did not exercise the necessary trust in God, and later (Deuteronomy 20:16-18) they were told that they would have to utterly destroy these nations.

Different words are used to describe what God would do with these inhabitants of Canaan. In the earlier passages the typical word is:

Strong's # 1644 garash (gaw-rash'); (Exodus 12:39; **23:28-31**; 33:2; 34:11; Leviticus 21:7,14; Numbers 22:6,11; 30:9; Deuteronomy 33:27; Joshua 24:12,18; Judges 2:3; 6:9; 9:41; 11:2; 1 Samuel 26:19; 1 Kings 2:27; 1 Chronicles 17:21; etc

a primitive root; **to drive out from a possession**; especially to expatriate or divorce:

KJV-- cast up (out), divorced (woman), drive away (forth, out), **expel**, X surely put away, trouble, thrust out. (DIC)

Def: to drive out, expel, cast out, drive away, divorce, put away, thrust away, trouble, cast

up

Strong's # 3582 kachad (kaw-khad'); a primitive root; to secrete, by act or word; hence (intensively) to destroy: Genesis 47:18; Exodus 9:15; 23:23; Joshua 7:19; 1 Samuel 3:17
KJV-- **conceal, hide, cut down (off)**, desolate. (DIC)

Def: to hide, conceal, cut off, cut down, make desolate, kick

But in the later passages it changes to:

Strong's # 2763 charam (khaw-ram'); a primitive root; to seclude; specifically (by a ban) **to devote to religious uses (especially destruction)**; physical and reflexive, to be blunt as to the nose.

KJV-- make accursed, **consecrate, (utterly) destroy, devote**, forfeit, have a flat nose, utterly (slay, make away). (DIC): Exodus 22:20; Leviticus 21:18; 27:28,29; Numbers 21:2,3; Deuteronomy 2:34; 3:6; 7:1; 13:15; **20:17**; Joshua 2:10; 6:18,21; 8:26; **10:1,28,35,37,39,40**; 11:11,12,20,21; Judges 1:17; 21:11; 1 Samuel 15:3; 7-9,15,18; 1 Kings 9:21

Def: to ban, devote, destroy utterly, completely destroy, dedicate for destruction, exterminate to split, slit, mutilate (a part of the body)

Strong's #2040 harac (haw-ras'); a primitive root; to pull down or in pieces, break, destroy:

KJV-- beat down, break (down, through), destroy, **overthrow**, pluck down, pull down, ruin, throw down, X utterly: Exodus 15:7; 19:21,24; 23:24; Judges 6:25; 2 Samuel 11:25; 1 Kings 18:30; 19:10,14.

Def: to tear down, break down, overthrow, beat down, break, break through, destroy, pluck down, pull down, throw down, ruined, destroyer, utterly

Strong's #5221 nakah (naw-kaw'); a primitive root; **to strike** (lightly or severely, literally or figuratively):

KJV-- beat, cast forth, clap, give [wounds], X go forward, X indeed, kill, make [slaughter], murderer, punish, slaughter, slay (-er, -ing), **smite** (-r, -ing), strike, be stricken, (give) stripes, X surely, wound: Genesis 4:15; 8:21; 14:5,7,15,17; 19:11; 32:8,11; 34:30; 36:35; 37:21; Exodus 2:11-13; 3:19; 5:14,16; 7:17,20,24; 8:16,17; 9:15,25,31,32; **12:12,13,29**; 17:5,6; 21:12,15,18-20,26; 22:2; Leviticus 24:17,18,21; 26:24; Numbers 3:13; 8:17; 11:33; 14:12,45; **20:11; 21:24,25**; 22:6; 22:23,25,27,28,32; 25:14,15,17,18; 32:4; 33:4; 35:11,15-18,21,24,30; Deuteronomy **1:4; 2:33; 3:3; 4:46; 7:2**; 13:5; 19:4,6,11; **20:13**, 21:1; 25:2,3,11; 27:24,25; 28:22,27,28,35; 29:7; Joshua 7:3,5; **8:21,22,24; 9:18, 10:4,10,20,26,28,30,32,33,35,37,39,40; 8:10-12,14,17; 12:1,6,7; 13:12,21; 15:16; 19:47; 20:3,5,9; Judges 1:4,5,8,10,12,17,25**, etc.

Def: to strike, smite, hit, beat, slay, kill

Strong's #3423 yarash (yaw-rash'); or yaresh (yaw-raysh'); a primitive root; **to occupy (by driving out previous tenants, and possessing in their place)**; by implication, to seize, to rob, to inherit; also to expel, to impoverish, to ruin: Genesis 15:3,4,7,8; 21:10; 22:17; 24:60; 28:4; 45:11; Exodus 15:9; 34:24; Leviticus 20:24; 25:46; Numbers 13:30; 14:12,24; 21:24,32,35; 27:11; 32:21,39; 33:52,53,55; 36:8; Deuteronomy 1:8; 21,39; 2:12,21,22,24,31; 3:12,18,20; 4:1,5,14,22,26,38,47; 5:31,33; 6:1,18; 7:1,17; 8:1; 9:1,3-6,23; 10:11; 11:8,10,11,23,29,31; 12:1,2,29; 15:4; 16:20; 17:14; 18:12,14; 19:1,2,14; 21:1; 23:20; 25:19; 26:1; 28:21,42,63; 30:5,16,18; 31:3,13; 32:47; 33:23; Joshua 1:11,15; 3:10; 8:7; 12:1; 13:1,6,12,13; 14:12; 15:14; 15:63; 16:10; 17:12; etc

KJV-- cast out, consume, destroy, **disinherit, dispossess**, drive (-ing) out, enjoy, expel, X without fail, (give to, leave for) inherit (-ance, -or) + magistrate, be (make) poor, come to poverty, (give to, make to) possess, **get (have) in (take) possession**, seize upon, succeed, X utterly.

Def: to seize, dispossess, take possession off, inherit, disinherit, occupy, impoverish, be an heir

Strong's #6 'abad (aw-bad'); a primitive root; properly, to wander away, i.e. **lose oneself**; by implication to perish (causative, destroy): Exodus 10:7; Leviticus 23:30; 26:38; Numbers 16:33; 17:12; 21:29,30; 24:19; 33:52; Deuteronomy 4:26; 7:10; 20:24; 8:19,20; 9:3; 11:4,17; 12:2,3; 22:3; 26:5; 28:20,22,51,63; 30:18; 32:28; Joshua 7:7; 23:13,16; Judges 5:31; 1 Samuel 9:3, etc.

KJV-- break, destroy (-uction), + not escape, fail, **lose**, (cause to, make) perish, spend, X and surely, take, be undone, X utterly, be void of, have no way to flee.

Def: perish, vanish, go astray, be destroyed

It should be clear from what we have said so far that a fundamental change came in God's instructions to them. If they had exercised adequate trust and faith, the heathen nations would have been driven out of the land, but may have survived among the nearby nations to learn later the truth about Jehovah. (Deuteronomy 4:6) It is only fair, however, to note that they had had the witness and testimony of Abraham (the first and only foreign missionary of his day!), Isaac, and Jacob and their entire families (including hired workers, slaves etc.) for hundreds of years and had not been converted yet!

God's instructions were spelled out in the following passages:

1) **Exodus 23:20-33**

20 "I will send an angel ahead of you to protect you as you travel and to bring you to the place which I have prepared. 21 Pay attention to him and obey him. Do not rebel against him, for I have sent him, and he will not pardon such rebellion. 22 But if you obey him and do everything I command, I will fight against all your enemies. 23 My angel will go ahead of you and take you into the land of the Amorites, the Hittites, the Perizzites, the Canaanites, the Hivites, and the Jebusites, and I will destroy (kachad) them. 24 Do not bow down to their gods

or worship them, and do not adopt their religious practices. Destroy (harac) their gods and break down their sacred stone pillars. 25 If you worship me, the LORD your God, I will bless you with food and water and take away all your sicknesses. 26 In your land no woman will have a miscarriage or be without children. I will give you long lives.

27 **“I will make the people who oppose you afraid of me; I will bring confusion among the people against whom you fight, and I will make all your enemies turn and run from you. 28 I will throw your enemies into panic;^x I will drive out the Hivites, the Canaanites, and the Hittites as you advance. 29 I will not drive them out within a year’s time; if I did, the land would become deserted, and the wild animals would be too many for you. Instead, I will drive them out little by little, until there are enough of you to take possession of the land. 31 I will make the borders of your land extend from the Gulf of Aqaba to the Mediterranean Sea and from the desert to the Euphrates River. I will give you power over the inhabitants of the land, and **you will drive them out as you advance.** 32 Do not make any agreement with them or with their gods. 33 Do not let those people live in your country; if you do, they will make you sin against me. If you worship their gods, it will be a fatal trap for you.”** (GNB)

^xI will...panic; or I will send hornets among your enemies.

2) Exodus 34:11,12:

11"Obey the laws that I am giving you today. **I will drive out the Amorites, the Canaanites, the Hittites, the Perizzites, the Hivites, and the Jebusites, as you advance.** Do not make any treaties with the people of the country into which you are going, because this could be a fatal trap for you.” (GNB)

3) Leviticus 18:24-30:

24 “Do not make yourselves unclean by any of these acts, for that is how the pagans made themselves unclean, **those pagans who lived in the land before you and whom the LORD is driving out so that you can go in.** 25 Their actions made the land unclean, and so the LORD is punishing the land and making it reject the people who lived there. 26-27 They did all these disgusting things and made the land unclean, but you must not do them. **All of you, whether Israelites or foreigners living with you, must keep the LORD’s laws and commands, 28 and then the land will not reject you, as it rejected the pagans who lived there before you.** 29 You know that whoever does any of these disgusting things will no longer be considered one of God’s people.

And the LORD said, <Obey the commands I give and do not follow the practices of the people who lived in the land before you, and do not make yourselves unclean by doing any of these things. I am the LORD your God.” (GNB)

4) Leviticus 20:24-28:

22 “The LORD said, <**Keep all my laws and commands, so that you will not be**

rejected by the land of Canaan, into which I am bringing you. 23 Do not adopt the customs of the people who live there. I am driving out those pagans so that you can enter the land. They have disgusted me with all their evil practices. 24 But I have promised you this rich and fertile land as your possession, and I will give it to you. I am the LORD your God, and I have set you apart from the other nations. 25 So then, you must make a clear distinction between animals and birds that are ritually clean and those that are not. Do not eat unclean animals or birds. I have declared them unclean. 26 You shall be holy and belong only to me, because I am the Lord and I am holy. I have set you apart from the other nations so that you would belong to me alone.

“Any man or woman who consults the spirits of the dead shall be stoned to death; any of you that do this are responsible for your own death.” (GNB)

Just as God warned the Canaanites and gave them a period of probation, He also warned the Israelites and spelled out to them what would happen to them if they were no more faithful than the former inhabitants of the land.

5) Leviticus 26:14-46:

14 “But if you will not hearken to me, and will not do all these commandments, 15 if you spurn my statutes, and if your soul abhors my ordinances, so that you will not do all my commandments, but break my covenant, 16 I will do this to you: I will appoint over you sudden terror, consumption, and fever that waste the eyes and cause life to pine away. And you shall sow your seed in vain, for your enemies shall eat it; 17 I will set my face against you, and you shall be smitten before your enemies; those who hate you shall rule over you, and you shall flee when none pursues you. 18 And if in spite of this you will not hearken to me, then I will chastise you again sevenfold for your sins, 19 and I will break the pride of your power, and I will make your heavens like iron and your earth like brass; 20 and your strength shall be spent in vain, for your land shall not yield its increase, and the trees of the land shall not yield their fruit.

21 “Then if you walk contrary to me, and will not hearken to me, I will bring more plagues upon you, sevenfold as many as your sins. 22 And I will let loose the wild beasts among you, which shall rob you of your children, and destroy your cattle, and make you few in number, so that your ways shall become desolate.

23 “And if by this discipline you are not turned to me, but walk contrary to me, 24 then I also will walk contrary to you, and **I myself will smite (nakah) you sevenfold for your sins.** 25 And I will bring a sword upon you, that shall execute vengeance for the covenant; and if you gather within your cities I will send pestilence among you, and you shall be delivered into the hand of the enemy. 26 When I break your staff of bread, ten women shall bake your bread in one oven, and shall deliver your bread again by weight; and you shall eat, and not be satisfied.

27 “And if in spite of this you will not hearken to me, but walk contrary to me, 28 then **I will walk contrary to you in fury, and chastise you myself sevenfold for your sins. 29 You shall eat the flesh of your sons, and you shall eat the flesh of your daughters. 30 And**

I will destroy your high places, and cut down your incense altars, and cast your dead bodies upon the dead bodies of your idols; and my soul will abhor you. 31 And I will lay your cities waste, and will make your sanctuaries desolate, and I will not smell your pleasing odors. 32 And I will devastate the land, so that your enemies who settle in it shall be astonished at it. 33 And I will scatter you among the nations, and I will unsheathe the sword after you; and your land shall be a desolation, and your cities shall be a waste.

34 “Then the land shall enjoy its sabbaths as long as it lies desolate, while you are in your enemies’ land; then the land shall rest, and enjoy its sabbaths. 35 As long as it lies desolate it shall have rest, the rest which it had not in your sabbaths when you dwelt upon it. 36 **And as for those of you that are left, I will send faintness into their hearts in the lands of their enemies; the sound of a driven leaf shall put them to flight, and they shall flee as one flees from the sword, and they shall fall when none pursues. 37 They shall stumble over one another, as if to escape a sword, though none pursues; and you shall have no power to stand before your enemies. 38 And you shall perish among the nations, and the land of your enemies shall eat you up. 39 And those of you that are left shall pine away in your enemies’ lands because of their iniquity; and also because of the iniquities of their fathers they shall pine away like them.**

40 “But if they confess their iniquity and the iniquity of their fathers in their treachery which they committed against me, and also in walking contrary to me, 41 so that I walked contrary to them and brought them into the land of their enemies; if then their uncircumcised heart is humbled and they make amends for their iniquity; 42 then I will remember my covenant with Jacob, and I will remember my covenant with Isaac and my covenant with Abraham, and I will remember the land. 43 But the land shall be left by them, and enjoy its sabbaths while it lies desolate without them; and they shall make amends for their iniquity, because they spurned my ordinances, and their soul abhorred my statutes. 44 Yet for all that, when they are in the land of their enemies, I will not spurn them, neither will I abhor them so as to destroy them utterly and break my covenant with them; for I am the LORD their God; 45 but I will for their sake remember the covenant with their forefathers, whom I brought forth out of the land of Egypt in the sight of the nations, that I might be their God: I am the LORD.”

46 These are the statutes and ordinances and laws which the LORD made between him and the people of Israel on Mount Sinai by Moses. (RSV)

6) Numbers 33:50-56:

50 “There in the plains of Moab across the Jordan from Jericho the Lord gave Moses 51 the following instructions for Israel: <When you cross the Jordan into the land of Canaan, 52 **you must drive out (yarash) all the inhabitants of the land.** Destroy all their stone and metal idols and all their places of worship. 53 Occupy the land and settle in it, because I am giving it to you. 54 Divide the land among the various tribes and clans by drawing lots, giving

a large piece of property to a large clan and a small one to a small clan. 55 But if you do not drive out the inhabitants of the land, those that are left will be as troublesome as splinters in your eyes and thorns in your sides, and they will fight against you. **56 If you do not drive them out, I will destroy you, as I planned to destroy them.**” (GNB)

7) Deuteronomy 7:1-11:

1 **“The Lord your God will bring you into the land that you are going to occupy, and he will drive many nations out of it. As you advance, he will drive out seven nations larger and more powerful than you: the Hittites, the Girgashites, the Amorites, the Canaanites, the Perizzites, the Hivites, and the Jebusites. 2 When the LORD your God places these people in your power and you defeat them, you must put them all to death. Do not make an alliance with them or show them any mercy. 3 Do not marry any of them, and do not let your children marry any of them, 4 because then they would lead your children away from the LORD to worship other gods. If that happens, the LORD will be angry with you and destroy you at once. 5 So then, tear down their altars, break their sacred stone pillars in pieces, cut down their symbols of the goddess Asherah, and burn their idols. 6 Do this because you belong to the LORD your God. From all the peoples on earth he chose you to be his own special people.**

7”The LORD did not love you and choose you because you outnumbered other peoples; you were the smallest nation on earth. 8 But the LORD loved you and wanted to keep the promise that he made to your ancestors. That is why he saved you by his great might and set you free from slavery to the king of Egypt. 9 Remember that the LORD your God is the only God and that he is faithful. He will keep his covenant and show his constant love to a thousand generations of those who love him and obey his commands, 10 but he will not hesitate to punish those who hate him. 11 Now then, obey what you have been taught; obey all the laws that I have given you today.”...

16 **“Destroy every nation that the LORD your God places in your power, and do not show them any mercy. Do not worship their gods, for that would be fatal...**

17 “Do not tell yourselves that these peoples outnumber you and that you cannot drive them out. 18 Do not be afraid of them; remember what the LORD your God did to the king of Egypt and to all his people. 19 Remember the terrible plagues that you saw with your own eyes, the miracles and wonders, and the great power and strength by which the LORD your God set you free. **In the same way that he destroyed (abad) the Egyptians, he will destroy all these people that you now fear.** 20 He will even cause panic^a among them and will destroy those who escape and go into hiding. 21 So do not be afraid of these people. The LORD your God is with you; he is a great God and one to be feared. 22 Little by little he will drive out these nations as you advance. You will not be able to destroy them all at once, for, if you did, the number of wild animals would increase and be a threat to you. 23 **The LORD will put your enemies in your power and make them panic until they are destroyed. 24 He will put**

their kings in your power. You will kill them, and they will be forgotten. No one will be able to stop you; you will destroy everyone. 25 Burn their idols. Do not desire the silver or gold that is on them, and do not take it for yourselves. If you do, that will be fatal, because the LORD hates idolatry. 26 Do not bring any of these idols into your homes, or the same curse will be on you that is on them. You must hate and despise these idols, because they are under the LORD's curse." (*GNB*)

^a cause panic; or send hornets, or send plagues.

Deuteronomy 7:20:

"Moreover the LORD your God will send hornets among them, until those who are left and hide themselves from you are destroyed." (*RSV*)

8) **Deuteronomy 11:22-25:**

23 **"Then he will drive out all those nations as you advance, and you will occupy the land belonging to nations greater and more powerful than you.** 24 All the ground that you march over will be yours. Your territory will extend from the desert in the south to the Lebanon Mountains in the north, and from the Euphrates River in the east to the Mediterranean Sea in the west. 25 Wherever you go in that land, the LORD your God will make the people fear you, as he has promised, and no one will be able to stop you." (*GNB*)

9) **Deuteronomy 20:1-20**

1 "When you go out to fight against your enemies and you see chariots and horses and an army that outnumbers yours, do not be afraid of them. The LORD your God, who rescued you from Egypt, will be with you. 2 Before you start fighting, a priest is to come forward and say to the army, 3 Men of Israel, listen! Today you are going into battle. Do not be afraid of your enemies or lose courage or panic. 4 The LORD your God is going with you, and he will give you victory.'

5 "Then the officers will address the men and say, 'Is there any man here who has just built a house, but has not yet dedicated it? If so, he has to go home. Otherwise, if he is killed in battle, someone else will dedicate his house. 6 Is there any man here who has just planted a vineyard, but has not yet had the chance to harvest its grapes? If so, he is to go home. Otherwise, if he is killed in battle, someone else will enjoy the wine. 7 Is there anyone here who is engaged to be married? If so, he is to go home. Otherwise, if he is killed in battle, someone else will marry the woman he is engaged to.'

8 "The officers will also say to the men, 'Is there any man here who has lost his nerve and is afraid? If so, he is to go home. Otherwise, he will destroy the morale of the others.' 9 When the officers have finished speaking to the army, leaders are to be chosen for each unit.

10 "When you go to attack a city, first give its people a chance to surrender. 11 If they open the gates and surrender, they are all to become your slaves and do forced labor for you. 12 But if the people of that city will not surrender, but choose to fight, surround it with your army. 13 Then, when the LORD your God lets you capture the city, kill every man in it. 14 You may,

however, take for yourselves the women, the children, the livestock, and everything else in the city. You may use everything that belongs to your enemies. The LORD has given it to you. 15 That is how you are to deal with those cities that are far away from the land you will settle in.

16 “But when you capture cities in the land that the LORD your God is giving you, kill everyone. 17 Completely destroy (charam) all the people: the Hittites, the Amorites, the Canaanites, the Perizzites, the Hivites, and the Jebusites, as the LORD ordered you to do. 18 Kill them, so that they will not make you sin against the LORD by teaching you to do all the disgusting things that they do in the worship of their gods.” (GNB)

Deuteronomy 20:16-18.

“However, in the cities of the nations the Lord your God is giving you as an inheritance, **do not leave alive anything that breathes**. Completely destroy them--the Hittites, Amorites, Canaanites, Perizzites, Hivites and Jebusites--as the Lord your God has commanded you. **Otherwise, they will teach you to follow all the detestable things they do in worshiping their gods, and you will sin against the Lord your God.” (NIV)**

vss. 16-18.

“In the cities of these nations whose land the Lord your God is giving you as a patrimony, **you shall not leave any creature alive**. You shall annihilate them--Hittites, Amorites, Canaanites, Perizzites, Hivites, Jebusites--as the Lord your God commanded you, **so that they may not teach you to imitate all the abominable things that they have done for their gods and so cause you to sin against the Lord your God.” (NEB)**

(See Ellen White comment below)

10) Psalms 106:34-41:

34 They did not kill the heathen,
As the LORD had commanded them to do,
35 but they intermarried with them
And adopted their pagan ways.
36 God’s people worshiped idols,
And this caused their destruction.
37 They offered their own sons and daughters
As sacrifices to the idols of Canaan.
38 They killed those innocent children,
And the land was defiled by those murders.
39 They made themselves impure by their actions
And were unfaithful to God.
40 So the LORD was angry with his people;
He was disgusted with them.

41 He abandoned them to the power of the heathen,
And their enemies ruled over them. (GNB)

Some feel that these destructive ideas are found only in the Old Testament, but what do you think of Luke 20:18?

- 11) **Luke 20:18.** “Everyone who falls on that stone will be cut to pieces; and **if that stone falls on someone, it will crush him to dust.**” (GNB) [see also Matthew 21:44]

Ellen White:

- 12) “The utter destruction of the people of Jericho was but a fulfillment of the commands previously given through Moses concerning the inhabitants of Canaan: “Thou shalt smite them, and utterly destroy them.” Deuteronomy 7:2. “Of the cities of these people, . . . thou shalt save alive nothing that breatheth.” Deuteronomy 20:16. **To many these commands seem to be contrary to the spirit of love and mercy enjoined in other portions of the Bible, but they were in truth the dictates of infinite wisdom and goodness. God was about to establish Israel in Canaan, to develop among them a nation and government that should be a manifestation of His kingdom upon the earth. They were not only to be inheritors of the true religion, but to disseminate its principles throughout the world. The Canaanites had abandoned themselves to the foulest and most debasing heathenism, and it was necessary that the land should be cleared of what would so surely prevent the fulfillment of God’s gracious purposes.**

“The inhabitants of Canaan had been granted ample opportunity for repentance. Forty years before, the opening of the Red Sea and the judgments upon Egypt had testified to the supreme power of the God of Israel. And now the overthrow of the kings of Midian, of Gilead and Bashan, had further shown that Jehovah was above all gods. The holiness of His character and His abhorrence of impurity had been evinced in the judgments visited upon Israel for their participation in the abominable rites of Baalpeor. All these events were known to the inhabitants of Jericho, and there were many who shared Rahab’s conviction, though they refused to obey it, that Jehovah, the God of Israel, “is God in heaven above, and upon the earth beneath.” Like the men before the Flood, the Canaanites lived only to blaspheme Heaven and defile the earth. And both love and justice demanded the prompt execution of these rebels against God and foes to man.” *Patriarchs and Prophets* p. 492 (1890)

- 13) “The Lord does not delight in vengeance, though he executes judgment upon the transgressors of his law. **He is forced to do this, to preserve the inhabitants of the earth from utter depravity and ruin. In order to save some, he must cut off those who have become hardened in sin.** Says the prophet Isaiah: “The Lord shall rise up as in mount Perazim, he shall be wroth as in the valley of Gibeon, that he may do his work, his strange work, and bring to pass his act, his strange act.” [Isaiah 28:21] The work of wrath and destruction is indeed a strange, unwelcome work for Him who is infinite in love.” *The Signs*

of the Times August 24, 1882

- 14) "Though God is strict to mark iniquity and to punish transgression, He takes no delight in vengeance. **The work of destruction is a <strange work' [Isaiah 28:21] to Him who is infinite in love.**" *Patriarchs and Prophets* 139 (1890); compare GC 627
- 15) "**The rabbis had a saying that there is rejoicing in heaven when one who has sinned against God is destroyed**¹; but Jesus taught that **to God the work of destruction is a strange work.** That in which all heaven delights is the restoration of God's own image in the souls whom He has made." *The General Conference Bulletin* December 1, 1895; *Christ's Object Lessons* 190 (1900)
- 16) "At this time even [on the border of Canaan near Kadesh Barnea], had they shown true and sincere repentance, God might have given them another trial, as he did the ancient Ninevites; but instead of this they sank down in utter despondency. They knew that God was in earnest with them. They passed a sleepless night, but with the morning came a hope. They determined to redeem their cowardice. They would not look toward the wilderness, or the Red Sea, but they would equip themselves for war, and would seize the land and possess it by their might, peradventure their works might be accepted of God. They confessed saying, "We have sinned against the Lord, we will go up and fight, according to all that the Lord our God commanded us." [Deuteronomy 1:41] Here again their transgressions had turned their light into darkness. **The Lord had never told them <to go up and fight.' He did not design that they should gain the land of promise by warfare, but through submission and unqualified obedience to his commands.**" *The Signs of the Times*, September 2, 1880
- 17) "God had made it their privilege and their duty to enter the land at the time of His appointment, but through their willful neglect that permission had been withdrawn. Satan had gained his object in preventing them from entering Canaan; and now he urged them on to do the very thing, in the face of the divine prohibition, which they had refused to do when God required it. Thus the great deceiver gained the victory by leading them to rebellion the second time. They had distrusted the power of God to work with their efforts in gaining possession of Canaan; yet now they presumed upon their own strength to accomplish the work independent of divine aid. 'We have sinned against the Lord,' they cried; 'we will go up and fight, according to all that the Lord our God commanded us.' Deuteronomy 1:41. So terribly blinded had they become by transgression. **The Lord had never commanded them to <go up and fight.' It was not His purpose that they should gain the land by warfare, but by strict obedience to His commands.**" *Patriarchs and Prophets* 392 (1890); RH November 5, 1903 (second article)
- 18) "Though God had granted the prayer of Moses in sparing Israel from destruction, their

apostasy was to be signally punished. The lawlessness and insubordination into which Aaron had permitted them to fall, if not speedily crushed, would run riot in wickedness, and would involve the nation in irretrievable ruin. By terrible severity the evil must be put away....In the name of <the Lord God of Israel,' Moses now commanded those upon his right hand, who had kept themselves clear of idolatry, to gird on their swords and slay all who persisted in rebellion. <And there fell of the people that day about three thousand men.' [Exodus 32:27,28] Without regard to position, kindred, or friendship, **the ringleaders in wickedness were cut off; but all who repented and humbled themselves were spared.**

"Those who performed this terrible work of judgment were acting by divine authority, executing the sentence of the King of heaven....

"It was necessary that this sin should be punished, as a testimony to surrounding nations of God's displeasure against idolatry....

"Love no less than justice demanded that for this sin judgment should be inflicted. God is the guardian as well as the sovereign of His people. He cuts off those who are determined upon rebellion, that **they may not lead others to ruin.** In sparing the life of Cain, God had demonstrated to the universe what would be **the result of permitting sin to go unpunished.** The influence exerted upon his descendants by his life and teaching led to the state of corruption that demanded the destruction of the whole world by a flood....

"So with the apostasy at Sinai. Unless punishment had been speedily visited upon transgression, the same results would again have been seen. The earth would have become as corrupt as in the days of Noah. Had these transgressors been spared, evils would have followed, greater than resulted from sparing the life of Cain. **It was the mercy of God that thousands should suffer, to prevent the necessity of visiting judgments upon millions. In order to save the many, He must punish the few.** Furthermore, as the people had cast off their allegiance to God, they had forfeited the divine protection, and, deprived of their defense, the whole nation was exposed to the power of their enemies." *Patriarchs and Prophets* 324,325 (1890); RH February 11, 1909; contrast 4SP 195; Compare PP 706; CC 176; #12

Historically what happened is recorded in the books of Numbers, Deuteronomy and especially Joshua.

19) Numbers 21:32:

"The Israelites captured it and its surrounding towns and drove out the Amorites living there....³⁴ The Lord said to Moses, 'Do not be afraid of him, I will give you victory over him, all his people, and his land. Do to him what you did to Sihon, the Amorite king who ruled at Heshbon.' ³⁵ So **the Israelites killed Og, his sons, and all his people, leaving no survivors,** and then they occupied his land." (*GNB*)

20) Deuteronomy 2:34:

"At the same time **we captured and destroyed every town, and put everyone to death, men, women, and children. We left no survivors.**" (*GNB*)

21) **Deuteronomy 3:3,6:**

“So the LORD also placed King Og and his people in our power, and we slaughtered them all...6 **We destroyed all the towns and put to death all the men, women, and children, just as we did in the towns that belonged to King Sihon of Heshbon.**” (*GNB*)

22) **Joshua 10:40:**

“So Joshua smote all the country of the hills, and of the south, and of the vale, and of the springs, and all their kings: he left none remaining, but **utterly destroyed all that breathed**, as the LORD God of Israel commanded.” (*KJV*)

vs. 40. “So Joshua massacred the population of the whole region--the hill-country, the Negeb, the Shephelah, the watersheds--and all their kings. He left no survivor, **destroying everything that drew breath**, as the Lord the God of Israel had commanded.” (*NEB*)

23) **Joshua 11:11:**

“And they smote all the souls that were therein with the edge of the sword, **utterly destroying them**: there was **not any left to breathe**: and he burnt Hazor with fire.” (*KJV*)

24) **Joshua 11:14.**

“ And all the spoil of these cities, and the cattle, the children of Israel took for a prey unto themselves; but every man they smote with the edge of the sword, until they had destroyed them, **neither left they any to breathe.**” (KJV)

25) **Joshua 24:12.**

“And **I sent the hornet** before you, which drove them out before you, the two kings of the Amorites; it was not by your sword or by your bow.” (RSV)

Summary:

It should be clear from these passages that God granted the peoples of Canaan a period of probation amounting to 430 years. He sent them “missionaries”—His friends Abraham, Lot, Job and Melchizedek—but they continued to grow more and more wicked. At the end of their period of probation, because of their wickedness, God’s plan was to drive them out or to hand them over to the Israelites.

In the same way, God gave the land to the Israelites for a period of about 600-700 years. They turned out to be just as wicked as their predecessors in the land. After 600 years, the northern kingdom of Israel was thus allowed to go into oblivion or death at the hands of the Assyrians. The southern kingdom of Judah remained for about 130 years longer until they were conquered three times in a row by Nebuchadnezzar. Their land was totally destroyed and they were taken off to captivity. Later they came back, but only as a nation in subjection to the ruling powers.

Those who chose to come back were given another 500+ years to try to learn the lessons God wanted them to learn. At that point after rejecting Jesus and crucifying Him, their nation was totally destroyed by the Romans. They have never again fully possessed the land.

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Appendix:

1. Not all rabbis felt this way. Rabbi J.H. Hertz in his commentary on Exodus 14:30 says: *the Egyptians dead upon the sea shore*. The fact that the Egyptians had to perish mars the completeness of Israel’s victory. “When the Egyptian hosts were drowning in the Red Sea,” say the Rabbis, “the angels in heaven were about to break forth into songs of jubilation. But the Holy One, blessed be He, silenced them with the words, ‘My creatures are perishing, and ye are ready to sing!’” In the same spirit, a medieval rabbi explained why a drop of wine is poured out of the wine-cup on Seder eve at the mention of each of the plagues that were inflicted on the Egyptians. Israel’s cup of joy, he said, cannot be full if Israel’s triumph involves suffering even to its enemies.” *The Pentateuch and Haftorahs*, edited by THE CHIEF RABBI (J. H. Hertz); Oxford University Press, 1930