

Deuteronomy

Lesson 6

Chapter 7

In our last lesson, Moses instructed the nation to tell their children of every coming generations that when their parents were faithful to the LORD and trusted His commands completely, the LORD would be their Caretaker for good and for survival. Trusting Him was righteousness. Righteousness was trusting His commands. All of that followed the restatement of the Ten Commandments which are the foundational commands of the LORD for which all further statutes and ordinances are based.

Here in chapter 7, Moses moves on to give the Nation of Israel specific warnings about how to interact with the tribes they will encounter just beyond the Jordan River.

E. Destroy the Seven Nations

1. Destroy the Nations

The LORD instructed Israel to destroy seven specific nations of people as it moved through the process of taking the Promised Land. If you will remember, as Israel took the land on the east side of the Jordan River controlled by Kings Sihon and Og, both rulers over massive Amorite tribes controlling the land, not either king or one man, woman, boy or girl were left alive after the conflicts. So, too, the LORD wants seven tribal groups destroyed on the east side of the Jordan River as the land is taken for the Promised Land. Chapter 7, verse 1.

¹ “When the LORD your God brings you into the land where you are entering to possess it, and clears away many nations before you, the Hittites and the Girgashites and the Amorites and the Canaanites and the Perizzites and the Hivites and the Jebusites, seven nations greater and stronger than you, ^{2a} and when the LORD your God delivers them before you and you defeat them, then you shall utterly destroy them.

Who were these seven nations?

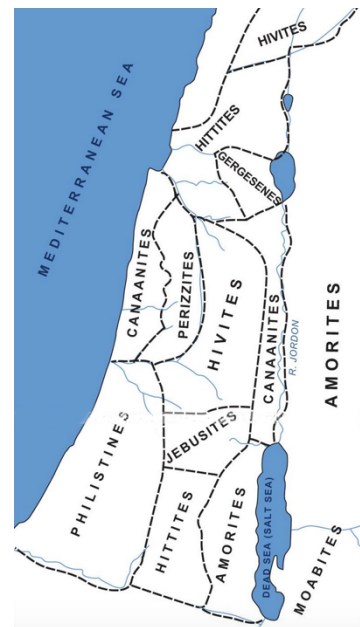
THE HITTITES – were a nation descended from the children of Heth. Who was Heth? Here is a chart of descendants

Noah had a son named Ham.

Ham had a son Canaan.

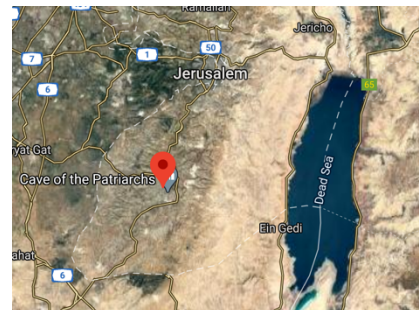
Canaan had a son Sidon.

Sidon had a son Heth



Heth had several nations formed from his descendants.

Heth was Noah's great, great grandson. About five hundred years before this story in Deuteronomy, upon Sarah's death, Abraham purchased a field and a cave near the village of Hebron from Ephron the Hittite. (Genesis 23:19). You can find that cave on the current maps of Israel. It is called the Cave of the Patriarchs. Abraham, Sarah, Isaac, Rebekkah and Jacob are buried there. It is on the eastern edge of the Hittite territory. The Hittites controlled two different land territories. The first was on the land east of the Dead Sea. The second was far to the north, west and north of the Girgahite's land (also identified as Gergesenes). From Heth, several major tribal nations were born.



The GIRGASHITES (Gergesenes) – were a nation descended from the children of Heth, Noah's great great grandchild. That land mass was west of the Sea of Chinnereth (Sea of Galilee).

The AMORITES – were a nation descended from the children of Heth also. Its land was directly east of the Hittite land next to the Dead Sea. It also controlled a major portion of the land on the east side of the Jordan River but at this time in the story, the Nation of Israel had already conquered that land before arriving at the Plains of Moab.

The CANAANITES – were a nation descended from Ham, Noah's son. We must be careful with the name "Canaanites." It is used in two senses in the Old Testament. First, the whole land of Israel was first called Canaan's land. After the Tower of Babel, the people were scattered throughout the world. Canaan, Ham's son, took the land that would one day be called the Promised Land or Israel. As you will see in the descriptions of these seven nations, they were all descendants of Canaan who moved his family into the land after the Tower of Babel. Second, in the sense of the context in many passages, as we see here in Deuteronomy, Canaan was the original family that moved into the area. All the other nations were then formed by descendants of the original Canaanite nation as strong leaders among them emerged in the new family units. The Canaanites lived by the water. One group was next to the Great Sea (Mediterranean Sea), and the other group lived next to Jordan River on its west side.

The PERIZZITES – were a nation descended from Canaan. Its specific origin is not known. However, their land was west of the Hivite land.

The HIVITES – were a nation descended from the children of Heth. The Hivites controlled two land areas. The first was located north of the Jebusite land. The second was located far to the north near Mount Hermon.

The JEBUSITES - were a nation descended from the children of Heth. Jebu was man whose father was an Amorite and his mother was a Hittite. (Ezekiel 16:3). The land of the Jebusites included the city named Jebu which would later be called Jerusalem. The land was located directly north of the Amorite and Hittite land.

2. Make No Covenant with the Nations

a) No Favor with Them

The LORD was specific about these seven nations. No covenant was to be made with these nations. No favor was to be shown to them. Verse 2b. *"You shall make no covenant with them and show no favor to them"* (7:2b).

The word "covenant" means *a sacred kinship bond between two parties*. None of that was to be done. "Favor" means *good will or kind regards*. None of that was to be done.

b) No Marriages with Them

The LORD also warned Israel to not enter marriages with any of these seven nations. Verse 3. *“Furthermore, you shall not intermarry with them; you shall not give your daughters to their sons, nor shall you take their daughters for your sons. ⁴ For they will turn your sons away from following Me to serve other gods; then the anger of the LORD will be kindled against you and He will quickly destroy you.”* (7:3-7).

c) No Religion with Them

The LORD further warned Israel to not adopt any religion with them. Verse 5. *“But thus you shall do to them: you shall tear down their altars, and smash their sacred pillars, and hew down their Asherim, and burn their graven images with fire. ⁶ For you are a holy people to the LORD your God; the LORD your God has chosen you to be a people for His own possession out of all the peoples who are on the face of the earth.”* (7:5-6).

You might ask, “What is an Asherim?” An Asherim was a carved wooden pole that symbolized a Canaanite fertility goddess named Asherah. All the Canaanite descendant nations worshiped this goddess. In the Ten Commandments, the LORD warned about worshipping other gods. This was another warning against breaking that command.

F. The LORD’s Love for Israel

1. His Love

Why did the LORD give these warnings to the Nation of Israel? It was because of the LORD’s love for Israel. Verse 7. *“The LORD did not set His love on you nor choose you because you were more in number than any of the peoples, for you were the fewest of all peoples, ...”* (7:7).

The LORD did love Israel because it was a great nation. Israel was a small nation compared to any of the seven He had listed.

2. His Oath

But the LORD loved Israel because of His oath. Verse 8. *“but because the LORD loved you and kept the oath which He swore to your forefathers, the LORD brought you out by a mighty hand and redeemed you from the house of slavery, from the hand of Pharaoh king of Egypt.”* (7:8).

The LORD has made a promise to Abraham, Isaac and Jacob and He would keep His promise as He always does. He had made an oath with them.

3. His Faithfulness

The LORD keeps the promise of his oath because of His faithfulness. Verse 9. *“Know therefore that the LORD your God, He is God, the faithful God, who keeps His covenant and His lovingkindness to a thousandth generation with those who love Him and keep His commandments; ...”* (7:9).

The LORD promised to be faithful to everyone who was faithful to Him, love Him, and kept His commandments.

4. His Wrath

But while the LORD loved those who loved Him, He also hated those who hated Him and He would destroy them with His wrath. Verse 10. *“... but repays those who hate Him to their faces, to destroy them; He will not delay with him who hates Him, He will repay him to his face.”* (7:10).

Oh, how quickly the Canaanite descendants had forgotten the ability of the LORD to repay evil for evil. The evil that occurred at the Tower of Babel was just after the exit from Noah’s Ark ninety-eight years before. Canaan’s family had a new language in an instance at Tower of Babel and they moved to their new homeland between the Great Sea and the Jordan River and quickly forgot their One God. They created their own gods and goddesses. It was time for the Canaanites to be repaid by the LORD face to face.

G. Israel's Duty

1. If You will Keep Commandments

But the LORD's love for the individuals who made up the Nation of Israel did have a condition. Verse 11. *"Therefore, you shall keep the commandment and the statutes and the judgments which I am commanding you today, to do them."* (7:11).

It was Israel's duty that each individual had to keep the commandments of the LORD in order to be kept by the LORD as Moses was reminding them on that day.

2. Then He will Keep You

If the people kept the commands of the LORD, the LORD would keep them. Verse 12. *"Then it shall come about, because you listen to these judgments and keep and do them, that the LORD your God will keep with you His covenant and His lovingkindness which He swore to your forefathers."* (7:12).

It was the promise from the LORD. He would show His love for Israel. How?

a) The LORD's Multiplying You

The LORD would show His love for Israel by multiplying them. Verse 13a. *"He will love you and bless you and multiply you; ..."* (7:13a). What a blessing.

b) The LORD's Blessing You

The multiplication of many offspring and the bounty of their agriculture would be a blessing. Verse 13b. *"He will also bless the fruit of your womb and the fruit of your ground, your grain and your new wine and your oil, the increase of your herd and the young of your flock, in the land which He swore to your forefathers to give you."* ¹⁴ *You shall be blessed above all peoples; there will be no male or female barren among you or among your cattle.* ¹⁵ *The LORD will remove from you all sickness; ..."* (7:13b-15a).

What a blessing. No barren wombs of humans or animals. No barren ground or herd or flock. Best of all, no sickness. What could be better for a nation of people living on the earth.

c) The LORD's Protecting You

Well, for humans of any nation, it could get better. We see that in the LORD's protection. Verse 15b. *"... and He will not put on you any of the harmful diseases of Egypt which you have known, but He will lay them on all who hate you."* (7:15b). For forty years, the LORD had protected the people of Israel from the diseases they had known for four hundred and thirty years in Egypt. But now, as they head off to live in the Promised Land, the LORD promised to protect them from all the diseases they had seen, and no doubt experienced, while living in the Promised Land.

d) The LORD's Delivering You

All of that the LORD was willing to do but it was based on the faithfulness of the people of the nation when they took the Promised Land and continued to live on it. The LORD's delivery was based on them following of His instructions. Verse 16. *"You shall consume all the peoples whom the LORD your God will deliver to you; your eye shall not pity them, nor shall you serve their gods, for that would be a snare to you."* (7:16).

The command was harsh. The seven nations were to be totally consumed with no pity for the people as Israel destroyed them. Why? The reason was found in this verse when it says *"... nor shall you serve their gods, for that would be a snare to you."* It was because of the great danger of being introduced to their gods, becoming accustomed to their gods, and the rituals of their gods ensnaring the nation of Israel.

(1) From Greater Nations

But these seven nations were not weak. They were much greater nations than Israel. Nevertheless, the LORD would deliver Israel. Verse 17. *"If you should say in your heart, 'These nations are greater than I; how can I dispossess them?'"* ¹⁸ *you shall not be afraid of them; you shall well remember what the LORD your God did to Pharaoh and to all Egypt:* ¹⁹ *the great trials which your eyes saw and the signs and the wonders and the mighty hand and the outstretched arm by which the LORD your God brought you out. So shall the*

LORD your God do to all the peoples of whom you are afraid. ²⁰ Moreover, the LORD your God will send the hornet against them, until those who are left and hide themselves from you perish. ²¹ You shall not dread them, for the LORD your God is in your midst, a great and awesome God.” (7:17-21).

Egypt was a great nation and the LORD delivered Israel from that nation. The two Amorite nations were great nations, much greater than Israel, nevertheless, the LORD delivered Israel from those two nations. The seven nations on the westside of the Jordan River were great nations, greater than Israel, yet the LORD was promising to deliver Israel from them just as He did from Egypt and the Amorites. The great and awesome God would do the work of cornering the people of those seven nations so Israel could kill them.

(2) Little by Little

But the process of taking the Promised Land would not be quick. I would be little by little.

Verse 22. *“The LORD your God will clear away these nations before you little by little; you will not be able to put an end to them quickly, for the wild beasts would grow too numerous for you. ²³ But the LORD your God will deliver them before you, and will throw them into great confusion until they are destroyed. ²⁴ He will deliver their kings into your hand so that you will make their name perish from under heaven; no man will be able to stand before you until you have destroyed them.” (7:22-24).*

What does Moses mean when he says “*you will not be able to put an end to them quickly, for the wild beasts would grow too numerous for you?*” As Hebrew and Aramaic began to lose its place in the Greek world the century before the birth of Christ, Jewish scholars struggled to translate the Scripture to non-Hebrew, Aramaic, and Greek Jewish audiences. The answer to the problem was a professional translator in the language of the people who read the Scripture to them. The Jews called these translations *Targums*. In the Targum of Jonathan Ben Uzziel. He was one of the eighty sages who studied with Hillel the Elder (born 110 BC, died 10 AD at the age of 120) during the Roman rule of Judea and during the time of Jesus’ life on earth. In his work on Deuteronomy, Jonathan said the following about these beasts.

“...when they shall come to devour their carcasses, the carcasses of the slain Canaanites; who, if destroyed at once, would be so many, that they would lie unburied, which would invite the beasts of the field to come out of their lurking places to feed upon them, and which might lead them on to mischief among the Israelites.”

The seven Canaanite nations were great and powerful and more numerous than the Israelites, and although they owned their land, they did not populate all of it. There were vast uninhabited areas in Canaan Land. Taking Jonathan’s point. If the Israelites moved too quickly to destroy all the nations and did not take the time to bury the dead, the animals would come in masses to eat the dead and may, at the same time attack the people of Israel. Therefore, the capture of the Promised Land would proceed only as fast as Israel could handle the dead.

But the LORD would help with that too. This passage says, “*But the LORD your God will deliver them before you, and will throw them into great confusion until they are destroyed.*” The Hebrew word for *confusion* is *mehumah* and it means *panic*. We think of *confusion* as the inability to process thoughts in our brains. That is not the meaning here. Our best word to translate the Hebrew today would be *panic* – the sudden uncontrollable fear or anxiety, often causing wildly unthinking behavior. The LORD would send that on the Canaanite nations and Israel would be able to prevail. And in that panic, the kings of the nations would be taken and they would be killed with all their people. But why?

3. Destroy Their Religions

The whole issue of why the LORD wanted every Canaanite king and his nation destroyed was because of their religions. The only way to destroy the religions was to destroy the people who

worshiped in those religions. Verse 25. *“The graven images of their gods you are to burn with fire; you shall not covet the silver or the gold that is on them, nor take it for yourselves, or you will be snared by it, for it is an abomination to the LORD your God. ²⁶ You shall not bring an abomination into your house, and like it come under the ban; you shall utterly detest it and you shall utterly abhor it, for it is something banned.”* (7:25-26).

Notice that the LORD would not allow the Israelites to reclaim the gold and silver overlaid on the wooden images of their Canaanite gods. That gold and silver was banned from the Israelites by the LORD.

Chapter 8

Chapter 7 contained the strong and powerful instructions to destroy all the people of the seven Canaanite nations for whom the LORD was about to take their land and give it to the nation of Israel. To do so, those seven nations were destroyed. But as we come to chapter 8, Moses turns to summarize God’s gracious dealings with Israel in the past and the future.

V. Moses’ Summary of God’s Gracious Dealings

The commands that Moses just delivered to the Nation of Israel from the LORD were for a reason. Verse 1. *“All the commandments that I am commanding you today you shall be careful to do, that you may live and multiply, and go in and possess the land which the LORD swore to give to your forefathers.”* (8:1).

Only by keeping the commands would the Nation of Israel be granted the land as their own. Only by keeping the commands would the Nation of Israel be allowed to live on the land as their own.

A. Remember the Forty Years

1. The LORD’s Past Provision of Israel’s Needs

To prove that point, Moses asked them to remember the past forty years and the LORD’s past provision of Israel’s needs. Verse 2. *“You shall remember all the way which the LORD your God has led you in the wilderness these forty years, that He might humble you, testing you, to know what was in your heart, whether you would keep His commandments or not. ³ He humbled you and let you be hungry, and fed you with manna which you did not know, nor did your fathers know, that He might make you understand that man does not live by bread alone, but man lives by everything that proceeds out of the mouth of the LORD. ⁴ Your clothing did not wear out on you, nor did your foot swell these forty years. ⁵ Thus you are to know in your heart that the LORD your God was disciplining you just as a man disciplines his son.”* (8:2-5).

The LORD allowed the people to become hungry so He could feed them manna, a new food, never seen by their ancestors. It was like a bread, but it was not a bread. But for forty years, they could only collect enough manna each day for that day. If any was left over, it spoiled. With the manna, the people had to rely on the LORD each day for their food. They had to rely on the LORD’s promise that He would feed them. The clothing that they wore for forty years never wore out. No problems among the people with their feet for forty years. It was the LORD’s way of testing the people so they could see what was in their own hearts and trust in the heart of their LORD at the same time.

2. The LORD’s Future Provision of Israel’s Needs

If the people would continue to trust Him, they would see the LORD’s future provisions as well. Verse. 6. *“Therefore, you shall keep the commandments of the LORD your God, to walk in His ways and to fear Him. ⁷ For the LORD your God is bringing you into a good land, a land of brooks of water, of fountains and springs, flowing forth in valleys and hills; ⁸ a land of wheat and barley, of vines and fig trees and pomegranates, a land of olive oil and honey; ⁹ a land where you will eat food without scarcity, in which you will not lack anything; a land whose*

stones are iron, and out of whose hills you can dig copper. ¹⁰ *When you have eaten and are satisfied, you shall bless the LORD your God for the good land which He has given you.*" (8:10).

What a promise. Everything Israel needed was in the Promised Land, even copper ore that could be smelted into tools. The three original metal ages were copper, followed by bronze, followed by iron. Tools were originally made of copper because it was the easiest to process. Copper ore was crushed and heated in a fire. The impurities rose to the top and were scraped away. The copper was left to pour in sand molds to form pots, tools, and other things. Bronze was harder to make. It required copper and either nickel or zinc. The metal was harder than copper but similar in look. Iron was first discovered in China about one hundred years before the time of the Exodus. Iron is rarely found at the surface of the earth. It must be dug. It is highly susceptible to rust because of the oxygen in our breathing air. But it was hard. Moses says, *"a land whose stones are iron."* We might think that this means the stones were hard "like" iron. That is not the case. Israel has several deposits of iron ore and produces as much as 15,000,000 tons each year. When Moses says, *"a land whose stones are iron,"* he means *iron ore*.

But look at the rest of the list besides the metals – water, grains, grapes, figs, pomegranates, olive oil, honey and more "without scarcity." The LORD's promise was good to Israel. He had taken care of them in the past and He would take care of them in the future.

B. Remember the Commandments

1. Not to Become Proud and Forget

But once again, the LORD had a condition for His care and provision. The nation had to remember the commandments. In addition, they could not become proud and forget. Verse 11. *"Beware that you do not forget the LORD your God by not keeping His commandments and His ordinances and His statutes which I am commanding you today;* ¹² *otherwise, when you have eaten and are satisfied, and have built good houses and lived in them,* ¹³ *and when your herds and your flocks multiply, and your silver and gold multiply, and all that you have multiplies,* ¹⁴ *then your heart will become proud and you will forget the LORD your God who brought you out from the land of Egypt, out of the house of slavery."* (8:11-14).

Human nature never changes. It is the way God made us. When we are in a terrible place, instinctively, we seek the LORD. The Gideon Bible organization understands this. It is why they put a Bible in the drawer of every hotel and motel room in America if the facility will let them. More lonely, desperate, and needy people end up in hotel rooms than you would image. I have buried more than three dozen who brought an end to their lives in ratty twenty-dollar motel rooms. Some I cut down. Some I helped clean the mess. But far more have come into my life that went to such a motel rooms and found the Bible in the drawer and it changed their lives. In their desperation, they cried out to the LORD and He heard them. But then, I have seen some of those same folks grow and watched as the LORD blessed them and some forgot the LORD. In their wealth, He was not needed any longer. They were proud of what they had accomplished. They had done none of the such. Everything they had was from the LORD and they did not know it. "Beware" Moses said, *"that you do not forget the LORD your God by not keeping His commandments."* He promised to bless Israel but Israel had to keep in His commands.

Nebuchadnezzar, who lived eight hundred and fifty years after the message in this book of Deuteronomy took place, is the classic example of this kind of pride. The LORD chose Nebuchadnezzar and led the way in all his campaigns. The LORD warned Nebuchadnezzar to not claim all his successes as his own. Yet, one year after the warning, Nebuchadnezzar walked out on his balcony and looked out on all his kingdom and said, *"Is this not Babylon the great, which I myself have built as a royal residence by the might of my power and for the honor of my majesty?"* (Daniel 4:30). In an instance, while his words were still in his mouth, *"a voice came from heaven, saying, 'King Nebuchadnezzar, to you it is declared sovereignty has been removed from you, and you will be driven away from mankind, and your dwelling place will be with the animals of the field. You will be given grass to eat like cattle, and seven periods of time*

will pass over you until you recognize that the Most High is ruler over the realm of mankind and bestows it on whomever He wishes.” (Daniel 4:31-32).

Nebuchadnezzar was not Jewish, but the LORD had warned him just as the LORD had warned Israel before they entered the Promised Land. The LORD has provided and they were not to forget in their pride.

2. Not to Forget His Care

Once again, Moses reminded them of all the LORD had done for them over the past forty years. Verse 15. *“He led you through the great and terrible wilderness, with its fiery serpents and scorpions and thirsty ground where there was no water; He brought water for you out of the rock of flint. ¹⁶ In the wilderness He fed you manna which your fathers did not know, that He might humble you and that He might test you, to do good for you in the end.”* (8:15-16).

There it is at the end of verse 16. It is the reason the LORD put the nation in the wilderness for forty years, *“that He might humble you and that He might test you, to do good for you in the end.”* The LORD forced His nation to rely on Him for forty years, for their every need for forty years, when they could not help themselves for forty years, so He could prove to them that He would keep His promises to them to the end. Here the LORD promised that “in the end” it would be good for the nation.

3. Not to Forget His Power

Why did the LORD take forty years to prove His point? He did not want Israel to forget His power. Verse 17. *“Otherwise, you may say in your heart, ‘My power and the strength of my hand made me this wealth.’ ¹⁸ But you shall remember the LORD your God, for it is He who is giving you power to make wealth, that He may confirm His covenant which He swore to your fathers, as it is this day.”* (8:17-18).

The LORD knew that Israel needed a major, supernatural event in its history that the people could always look back to remember His power so they would never forget. The Exodus coupled with the forty-year journey at Mount Sinai was that event.

4. Not to Forget and Perish

Like the example we mentioned above with Nebuchadnezzar who faced the penalty, Israel dare not forget and perish by forgetting the LORD. Verse 19-20. *“It shall come about if you ever forget the LORD your God and go after other gods and serve them and worship them, I testify against you today that you will surely perish. ²⁰ Like the nations that the LORD makes to perish before you, so you shall perish; because you would not listen to the voice of the LORD your God.”* (8:19-20).

What a stern warning. If, when Israel was settled in the land, if they forget the LORD, they would perish like the Canaanites were going to perish at the hands of Israel in the next few years. Why? *“...because you would not listen to the voice of the LORD your God,”* and keep His commandments.

Moses is not through with this part of his message. He must address the memory of when Israel provoked the LORD with her fear of the “people great and tall” and the golden calf. But that will have to wait until our next lesson.