

Lesson 10

Two weeks ago, we saw God bring the Israelites to the Promised Land. They scouted the land and found giants in the land. Ten of the scouts scared the people with their report about the giants. Two scouts, Caleb and Joshua, were not afraid and said they could take the land and its people.

The Israelites listened to and accepted the fear of the ten scouts and in response God took them out into the wilderness for 40 years as a punishment. There, the disbelieving people who came out of Egypt, and consequently should have known better, died off. What was left after 40 years was their offspring.

After these 40 years, God is again ready to bring the Israelites into the Promised Land. This land is sometimes referred to as the Land of Canaan.

The Canaanites are in for a bad ride. They are the unwelcome inhabitants of God's Promised Land; the land that God promised to Abraham.

[Gen 17:8 NKJV] 8 *"Also I give to you [Abraham] and your descendants after you the land in which you are a stranger, all the land of Canaan, as an everlasting possession; and I will be their God."*

[Lev 25:38 NKJV] 38 *"I [am] the LORD your God, who brought you out of the land of Egypt, to give you the land of Canaan [and] to be your God."*

God is giving the Israelites the land of Canaan. In this process, God commands the Israelites to eliminate the Canaanite people from the land.

[Deu 7:1-2 ESV] 1 *"When the LORD your God brings you into the land that you are entering to take possession of it, and clears away many nations before you, the Hittites, the Girgashites, the Amorites, the Canaanites, the Perizzites, the Hivites, and the Jebusites, seven nations more numerous and mightier than you, 2 and when the LORD your God gives them over to you, and you defeat them, then **you must devote them to complete destruction**. You shall make no covenant with them and show no mercy to them."*

There is a Biblical term we must identify to better understand God's death decree upon the inhabitants of the Promised Land.

The English Standard Version of the Bible zeros in on it. It uses a term that none of the other Bible translations translate as clearly. It is the Hebrew term *kherem*. The word means "to ban, devote, destroy utterly, completely destroy, dedicate for destruction, exterminate."

The King James and New King James translate that word as "utterly destroy." That isn't wrong, but it also does not convey the depth of the word as it should be applied.

The English Standard Version of the Bible translates it as "dedicated to destruction." That would be the best translation of *kherem* in this situation. With that usage comes the concept of a dedication to God that is an act of worship or an offering to God. In the carrying out of this destruction, the destructor is doing it as an offering to God; as an act of obedience.

Leviticus 27 will set the stage for this. This chapter is God giving instructions about things that the people of Israel might dedicate to the Lord as an act of worship.

Read Leviticus 27.

Verse 2 sets the tone.

[Lev 27:2 ESV] 2 "*Speak to the people of Israel and say to them, If anyone makes **a special vow to the LORD** involving the valuation of persons...*

Verse 9 continues the tone.

[Lev 27:9 ESV] 9 "*If the vow is an animal that may be offered as **an offering to the LORD, all of it that he gives to the LORD is holy.***

The term holy means “set apart” or “sanctified.” It does not mean to be morally perfect. If that were the meaning of holy than it could only be applied to God. But God tells us to be holy.¹ We can’t be morally perfect, so it must mean something else. What it means is to be set apart.

More verses show the “dedicated to the Lord” concept in this chapter.

[Lev 27:14, ESV] 14 "*When a man **dedicates his house as a holy gift to the LORD**, the priest shall value it as either good or bad...*

[Lev 27:17 ESV] 17 *If he **dedicates** his field from the year of jubilee, the valuation shall stand...*

The key verses regarding our study are verses 28 and 29.

[Lev 27:28-29 ESV] 28 "*But no devoted **thing that a man devotes to the LORD**, of anything that he has, **whether man or beast, or of his inherited field, shall be sold or redeemed; every devoted thing is most holy to the LORD.** 29 **No one devoted, who is to be devoted for destruction from mankind, shall be ransomed; he shall surely be put to death.***

Here in Leviticus, even the death of a human can be an act of worship to God. NOTE: THIS IS ONLY THE CASE WHEN GOD IDENTIFIES THE INDIVIDUAL OR INDIVIDUALS TARGETED. WARNING: DO NOT TRY THIS AT HOME!!!

Note that this is a structuring within the Levitical law. God is establishing the structure of acts of worship toward Himself.

Did God designate the inhabitants of the Promised Land for *kherem* [a dedication to destruction]?

Note Deuteronomy 7:1-2.

[Deu 7:1-2 ESV] 1 "*When the LORD your God brings you into the land that you are entering to take possession of it, and clears away many nations before you, the Hittites, the Girgashites, the Amorites, the Canaanites, the Perizzites, the Hivites, and the Jebusites, seven nations more numerous and mightier than you, 2 and when the LORD your God gives them over to you, and you defeat them, then **you must devote them to complete destruction [kherem]**. You shall make no covenant with them and show no mercy to them.*

¹ [Lev 11:45 ESV] 45 *For I am the LORD who brought you up out of the land of Egypt to be your God. You shall therefore **be holy**, for I am holy.*

So, the Israelites have been instructed that their military actions in regards to taking the Promised Land are acts of worship to God. God has identified these people groups as amoral. Therefore, He wants them gone when the Israelites inhabit the land.

An Israelite hears this and will stomach their role in the destruction as an act of obedience and an offering to the Lord their God.

Did the Israelites agree to devote the Promised Land peoples to *kherem* [complete destruction]?

[Num 21:2-3 ESV] 2 *And Israel vowed a vow to the LORD and said, "If you will indeed give this people into my hand, then I will devote their cities to destruction."* 3 *And the LORD heeded the voice of Israel and gave over the Canaanites, and **they devoted them and their cities to destruction.** So, the name of the place was called Hormah.*

Let me give you an example of the seriousness of *kherem* in God's eyes.

[Jos 6:18-19 ESV] 18 *But you, **keep yourselves from the things devoted to destruction**, lest when you have devoted them you **take any of the devoted things and make the camp of Israel a thing for destruction and bring trouble upon it.*** 19 *But all silver and gold, and every vessel of bronze and iron, are holy to the LORD; they shall go into the treasury of the LORD."*

Joshua 7 shows what happens when these commands of God are not followed.

Joshua 6:17-19

Joshua 7

The next city in line to be taken out is Ai. It was small, and the Israelites were feeling so confident after Jericho that they only sent a small group up to Ai. They in turn were routed by the men of Ai.

After Joshua's crying and whining from this setback, God tells Joshua why they got beat. One of the Israelites kept some of the possessions he came across during the destruction of Jericho. He kept some of the articles that were dedicated to destruction.

After God singled him out, he admitted his sin. He and his family then became devoted to destruction before God and were eliminated. Only then did God return Himself to the favor of the Israelites and they then continued their conquest of the Promised Land.

This episode shows the seriousness of *kherem* in God's eye.

What about the Canaanites? How do we justify this happening to these unfortunate people?

The Canaanites; who are they; from whom did they come? Why are they destined for this destruction?

Genesis 10

[Gen 10:15-19 ESV] 15 *Canaan fathered Sidon his firstborn and Heath, 16 and the Jebusites, the Amorites, the Girgashites, 17 the Hivites, the Arkites, the Sinites, 18 the Arvadites, the Zemarites, and the*

Hamathites. Afterward the clans of the Canaanites dispersed. 19 And the territory of the Canaanites extended from Sidon in the direction of Gerar as far as Gaza, and in the direction of Sodom, Gomorrah, Admah, and Zeboiim, as far as Lasha.

We see in Genesis 10 that Canaan was one of the sons of Ham. Ham was one of Noah's three sons who went onto the Ark. Canaan gets some descriptive dialogue in this genealogical chapter when most others do not. It speaks about the peoples who are attributed as his descendants. It also speaks about the breadth and boundaries of the Canaanite land. It is not a common thing to profile a nation in this manner in this chapter, so it must be done to make light of something special.

The names of the peoples that we will see that are driven out or destroyed from the Promised Land are all descendants of Canaan. In the genealogy of the peoples within the Promised Land, Canaan came first. His descendants are throughout the land; thus, they are all covered by the general term "the Canaanites."

Genesis 9:18-27

Notice the singling out twice that *Ham was the father of Canaan*. (vs. 18, 22). Note further that in verse 22, the notation that Ham was the father of Canaan is said in the same breath that mentions that Ham saw his father's nakedness.

We see an event where Noah gets drunk sometime after the Flood. Ham sees his "father's nakedness" and tells his brothers. His brothers take whatever is going on here in what seems a counter reaction than how Ham acted or expected his brothers to react. They walk in backwards to not only cover their "father's nakedness," but to also turn their faces away to not gaze upon their "father's nakedness."

Noah comes out of his condition, finds out that Ham "saw the nakedness of his father," and then in a peculiar response, he curses one of Ham's sons—Canaan. The same Canaan that we saw singled out twice in verses 18 and 22.

What exactly is going on here? What is so bad about "seeing his father's nakedness" that Noah would proclaim a curse upon one of Ham's sons?

Leviticus 18:1-19

The key is verses 7 and 8. The uncovering of your "father's nakedness" is actually the uncovering of either your own mother's nudity (vs.7), or your father's wife's nudity if she is not your mother (v.8).

What has happened back in Genesis 9 is that Ham went into Mrs. Noah while Mr. Noah was drunk (Mrs. Noah was probably drunk also) and had sexual relations with Mrs. Noah. This resulted in a pregnancy, which resulted in the birth of Canaan.

That is why Ham is singled out twice as the father of Canaan, and also why Noah cursed Canaan.

Ham is trying to usurp the patriarchal power of his father Noah by sleeping with Noah's wife. This is a forerunner action like Ruben did to his father Jacob by sleeping with Jacob's concubine (Gen. 35:22), This is a cultural thing of that time.

Ham's action (trying to usurp his father's patriarchal position) will only be successful if Ham's two brothers, Shem and Japheth, acknowledge and approve of Ham's usurping. Because if they approve, then Noah will have lost his patriarchal power. His patriarchal power is over his family, and his family is his boys. So, Shem and Japheth hold the cards as to whether Ham's action will have succeeded or not.

The fact that the brothers walked in backwards and covered up their father's nakedness" and did not gaze upon their "father's nakedness" tells us that the two brothers did not buy into Ham's act. Ham's power grab failed.

But Canaan did come about from this intercourse, and Noah cursed Canaan. The curse is that Canaan and his offspring would serve the brothers (and their offspring) who did not rebel.

Did Ham have sex with his own mother? We do not know for certain. She is referenced four times in the Flood story.

[Gen 7:7 NKJV] 7 So Noah, with his sons, **his wife**, and his sons' wives, went into the ark because of the waters of the flood.

[Gen 7:13 NKJV] 13 On the very same day Noah and Noah's sons, Shem, Ham, and Japheth, and **Noah's wife** and the three wives of his sons with them, entered the ark—

[Gen 8:16 NKJV] 16 "Go out of the ark, you and **your wife**, and your sons and your sons' wives with you.

[Gen 8:18 NKJV] 18 So Noah went out, and his sons and **his wife** and his sons' wives with him.

In these four mentions, we cannot tell with certainty whether she is the mother of the three boys or if she is just Noah's current wife and not the mother of the boys. (If not, we would then assume that their mother had died, and Noah remarried or had a second wife).

It ultimately does not make a difference to us, or God, which it is. It was obviously wrong. I only mention the dual possibilities as to see the possible motivation of Ham. He may have been more motivated to do what he did if it was not his mother but was instead his stepmother. Maybe she was young and attractive. Not to condone Ham's actions, but to only conjecture as to what would motivate him to such action.

One thing is certain though is that there was sin before the Ark, sin went on the Ark, and sin came off the Ark. Ham was the first recorded perpetrator of sin on the other side of the Ark.

This lets us know that it was something other than the elimination of sin that motivated God to bring about the Flood. As we have been studying, that motivation was the corruption and manifestation of sin spawned by the angelic realm—it was the sin of the Watchers.

This all comes back to an explanation as to why the Canaanites are singled out and fall under the destructive eye of God.

When God made his covenant with Abraham in Genesis 15, he made mention to Abraham that it would be 400 more years before His promise would begin to take shape because “the iniquity of the Amorites is not yet complete.” (The Amorites were one of Canaan’s children).

[Gen 15:13, 16, 18-21 ESV] 13 *Then the LORD said to Abram, "Know for certain that your offspring will be sojourners in a land that is not theirs and will be servants there, and they will be afflicted for four hundred years. ... 16 And they shall come back here in the fourth generation, **for the iniquity of the Amorites is not yet complete.**" ... 18 On that day the LORD made a covenant with Abram, saying, "To your offspring I give this land, from the river of Egypt to the great river, the river Euphrates, 19 the land of the Kenites, the Kenizzites, the Kadmonites, 20 the Hittites, the Perizzites, the Rephaim, 21 the Amorites, the Canaanites, the Girgashites and the Jebusites."*

The Bible is somewhat loose in its phraseology surrounding the nations in the Promised Land. Sometimes it uses Canaanites as the general classification. Sometimes it uses Amorites as the general classification.

All of the nations mentioned here are descendants of Canaan—even the Amorites. The Rephaim mentioned in verse 20, we will see, are specifically mentioned in Joshua and other Bible books as “the giants.” They themselves are not a nation but are instead a classification of a people type—and that type is Nephilim.

So, the next group of rebellious angels, who repeated the sexual interaction as learned from Genesis 6 and mentioned by the “and also afterwards,” found willing recipients within the Canaanites.

[Gen 6:4 NKJV] 4 *There were giants on the earth in those days, **and also afterward**, when the sons of God came in to the daughters of men and they bore [children] to them. Those [were] the mighty men who [were] of old, men of renown.*