

Making Promises

Part 4: The Conquest

Review

- According to the early date of the Exodus (that has been argued in this study) the date of the conquest would have been approximately between the years of 1406 and 1399 BC.
- The Egyptians had political control of the land of Canaan during the time of the conquest, and most of the kings were vassals to Pharaoh.
- The powers in the Mesopotamian region – namely the Hittites, Assyrians, Hurrians, Syrians, and the Kassites – were either too weak to take Canaan from Egypt, or they were preoccupied by fighting off other powers in the area.
- Under the reigns of Amenhotep III and IV, Egypt lost interest in foreign policy therefore paid little attention to what was happening in Canaan until after the conquest.

Ethics of Conquest

- There are few stories in the Old Testament as **challenging** and **troubling** to modern readers as God's command that the Israelites should do away with the Canaanites and take over their land (**Deut. 20:16-18; Josh. 6:17, 21; 10:28; 1 Sam. 15:2-3**).
 - The conquest raises **historical** questions and challenges of interpretation, and it also generates **theological** questions about the character of God. Probably the most difficult part of these commands from God is that God ordered the death of children and infants as well.
 - Further, the **current climate** challenges Christians by saying things like, *"Joshua's destruction of Jericho is morally indistinguishable from Hitler's invasion of Poland, or Saddam Hussein's massacres of the Kurds and the Marsh Arabs."* -**Richard Dawkins**
- The Israelites were told by God to practice **herem** which means **devoted to destruction**. (***Deut. 7:26**)

Responses

- Preliminarily, in order to **understand** the conquest, we must do the following:
 - 1: Recognize that what happens in Canaan is **horrid**.
 - 2: Determine the **feeling** with which we hope to leave the text.

- 3: Determine the **person** and **worldview** to which we're hoping to respond.
- 4: Be willing to **change our assumptions** about God for what the Bible actually says about him.
- As creator of the world and everything in it, God has a **right** to do with **humanity as he pleases** (*Ps. 24:1; 50:10; 115:3; Ex. 19:5; Job. 9:12; Rom. 9:18-23*), including wiping all of humanity off the map (*Gen. 6*).
 - As finite creatures, we are ill-suited to be able to make a **morality judgment** on a being that is all knowing and all powerful (*Isa. 55:8-9; Dan. 4:35*).
- Total annihilation was not practiced everywhere, but only in **Jericho** and **Ai** and the later punishment of the **Amalekites** under Saul (1 Sm 15).
 - In the earlier conquest of the **Midianites**, not all the population was killed (*Num. 31:17-18*).
 - A distinction is drawn between the treatment of the **heterogeneous Canaanites** and other captive peoples (*Deut. 20:10-18; 21:10-14*).
- The conquest of the promised land was an act of **divine judgment** after **incredible patience** (*Gen. 15:16; 1 Kgs. 21:26; Amos 2:9*).
 - The Israelite conquest of Canaan is described as an act of **divine punishment** on an extremely corrupt society (*Lev. 18:24-25; 20:22-24; Deut. 9:5; 12:29-31*).
- Throughout Israel's history, God judges with **divine impartiality** (*Deut. 28:25-26, 49-52, 58-59*).

Lessons to the Christian

- Christians can readily acknowledge that the Old Testament text itself is not claiming an **ideal** or **ultimate ethic** (*Matt. 5:17-48*).
- **God's holiness** and **human sinfulness** are far more central to the Bible's message than our culture is willing to recognize (*1 Sam. 2:2; 1 Pet. 1:15-16; Is. 6:3; Ps. 96:9; Rom. 3:10, 23; 6:23; Rev. 4:8; Lev. 19:2*).
- God took on flesh to face the **fury of his own wrath** on behalf of his people (*2 Cor. 5:21; 1 Pet. 2:24; 3:18; Is. 53:5*).
- All of us deserve **God's justice**; none of us deserve **God's mercy**.
- The conquest is a **recapitulation** of Adam in the Garden of Eden. Ultimately, the new Adam will bring his kingdom to drive out evil, and the church is charged with the same gospel proclamation.
- The destruction of the Canaanites is a **picture** of the **final judgment** (*Acts 10:42; 1 Pet. 4:5; Rev. 14:17-20*).

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Deut. 20:16– 18	16 But in the cities of these peoples that the Lord your God is giving you for an inheritance, you shall save alive nothing that breathes, 17 but you shall devote them to complete destruction, the Hittites and the Amorites, the Canaanites and the Perizzites, the Hivites and the Jebusites, as the Lord your God has commanded, 18 that they may not teach you to do according to all their abominable practices that they have done for their gods, and so you sin against the Lord your God.
Josh. 6:17	And the city and all that is within it shall be devoted to the Lord for destruction. Only Rahab the prostitute and all who are with her in her house shall live, because she hid the messengers whom we sent.
Josh. 6:21	Then they devoted all in the city to destruction, both men and women, young and old, oxen, sheep, and donkeys, with the edge of the sword.
Josh. 10:28	As for Makkedah, Joshua captured it on that day and struck it, and its king, with the edge of the sword. He devoted to destruction every person in it; he left none remaining. And he did to the king of Makkedah just as he had done to the king of Jericho.
1 Sam. 15:2–3	2 Thus says the Lord of hosts, 'I have noted what Amalek did to Israel in opposing them on the way when they came up out of Egypt. 3 Now go and strike Amalek and devote to destruction all that they have. Do not spare them, but kill both man and woman, child and infant, ox and sheep, camel and donkey.' "
Ps. 24:1	The earth is the Lord's and the fullness thereof, the world and those who dwell therein,
Ps. 50:10	For every beast of the forest is mine, the cattle on a thousand hills.
Ps. 115:3	Our God is in the heavens; he does all that he pleases.
Ex. 19:5	Now therefore, if you will indeed obey my voice and keep my covenant, you shall be my treasured possession among all peoples, for all the earth is mine;
Job 9:12	Behold, he snatches away; who can turn him back? Who will say to him, 'What are you doing?'
Rom. 9:18– 23	18 So then he has mercy on whomever he wills, and he hardens whomever he wills. 19 You will say to me then, "Why does he still find fault? For who can resist his will?" 20 But who are you, O man, to answer back to God? Will what is molded say to its molder, "Why have you made me like this?" 21 Has the potter no right over the clay, to make out of the same lump one vessel for honorable use and another for dishonorable use? 22 What if God, desiring to show his wrath and to make known his power, has endured with much patience vessels of wrath prepared for destruction, 23 in order to make known the riches of his glory for vessels of mercy, which he has prepared beforehand for glory—
Is. 55:8–9	8 For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways, declares the Lord. 9 For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways and my thoughts than your thoughts.
Daniel 4:35	all the inhabitants of the earth are accounted as nothing, and he does according to his will among the host of heaven and among the inhabitants of the earth; and none can stay his hand or say to him, "What have you done?"
Numbe rs 31:17– 18	17 Now therefore, kill every male among the little ones, and kill every woman who has known man by lying with him. 18 But all the young girls who have not known man by lying with him keep alive for yourselves.

<p>Deut. 20:10– 18</p>	<p>10 “When you draw near to a city to fight against it, offer terms of peace to it. 11 And if it responds to you peaceably and it opens to you, then all the people who are found in it shall do forced labor for you and shall serve you. 12 But if it makes no peace with you, but makes war against you, then you shall besiege it. 13 And when the Lord your God gives it into your hand, you shall put all its males to the sword, 14 but the women and the little ones, the livestock, and everything else in the city, all its spoil, you shall take as plunder for yourselves. And you shall enjoy the spoil of your enemies, which the Lord your God has given you. 15 Thus you shall do to all the cities that are very far from you, which are not cities of the nations here. 16 But in the cities of these peoples that the Lord your God is giving you for an inheritance, you shall save alive nothing that breathes, 17 but you shall devote them to complete destruction, the Hittites and the Amorites, the Canaanites and the Perizzites, the Hivites and the Jebusites, as the Lord your God has commanded, 18 that they may not teach you to do according to all their abominable practices that they have done for their gods, and so you sin against the Lord your God.</p>
<p>Deut. 21:10– 14</p>	<p>10 “When you go out to war against your enemies, and the Lord your God gives them into your hand and you take them captive, 11 and you see among the captives a beautiful woman, and you desire to take her to be your wife, 12 and you bring her home to your house, she shall shave her head and pare her nails. 13 And she shall take off the clothes in which she was captured and shall remain in your house and lament her father and her mother a full month. After that you may go in to her and be her husband, and she shall be your wife. 14 But if you no longer delight in her, you shall let her go where she wants. But you shall not sell her for money, nor shall you treat her as a slave, since you have humiliated her.</p>
<p>Gen. 15:16</p>	<p>And they shall come back here in the fourth generation, for the iniquity of the Amorites is not yet complete.”</p>
<p>1 Kng. 21:26</p>	<p>He acted very abominably in going after idols, as the Amorites had done, whom the Lord cast out before the people of Israel.)</p>
<p>Amos 2:9</p>	<p>“Yet it was I who destroyed the Amorite before them, whose height was like the height of the cedars and who was as strong as the oaks; I destroyed his fruit above and his roots beneath.</p>
<p>Lev. 18:24– 25</p>	<p>24 “Do not make yourselves unclean by any of these things, for by all these the nations I am driving out before you have become unclean, 25 and the land became unclean, so that I punished its iniquity, and the land vomited out its inhabitants.</p>
<p>Lev. 20:22– 24</p>	<p>22 “You shall therefore keep all my statutes and all my rules and do them, that the land where I am bringing you to live may not vomit you out. 23 And you shall not walk in the customs of the nation that I am driving out before you, for they did all these things, and therefore I detested them. 24 But I have said to you, ‘You shall inherit their land, and I will give it to you to possess, a land flowing with milk and honey.’ I am the Lord your God, who has separated you from the peoples.</p>
<p>Deut. 9:5</p>	<p>Not because of your righteousness or the uprightness of your heart are you going in to possess their land, but because of the wickedness of these nations the Lord your God is driving them out from before you, and that he may confirm the word that the Lord swore to your fathers, to Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob.</p>
<p>Deut. 12:29– 31</p>	<p>29 “When the Lord your God cuts off before you the nations whom you go in to dispossess, and you dispossess them and dwell in their land, 30 take care that you be not ensnared to follow them, after they have been destroyed before you, and that you do not inquire about their gods, saying, ‘How did these nations serve their gods?—that I also may do the same.’ 31 You shall not worship the Lord your God in that way, for every abominable thing that the Lord hates they have done for their gods, for they even burn their sons and their daughters in the fire to their gods.</p>
<p>Deut. 28:25– 26</p>	<p>25 “The Lord will cause you to be defeated before your enemies. You shall go out one way against them and flee seven ways before them. And you shall be a horror to all the kingdoms of the earth. 26 And your dead body shall be food for all birds of the air and for the beasts of the earth, and there shall be no one to frighten them away.</p>
<p>Deut. 28:49– 52</p>	<p>49 The Lord will bring a nation against you from far away, from the end of the earth, swooping down like the eagle, a nation whose language you do not understand, 50 a hard-faced nation who shall not respect the old or show mercy to the young. 51 It shall eat the offspring of your cattle and the fruit of your ground, until you are destroyed; it also shall not leave you grain, wine, or oil, the increase of your herds or the young of your flock, until they have caused you to perish. 52 “They shall besiege you in all your towns, until your high and fortified walls, in which you trusted, come down throughout all your land. And they shall besiege you in all your towns throughout all your land, which the Lord your God has given you.</p>

Deut. 28:58–59	58 “If you are not careful to do all the words of this law that are written in this book, that you may fear this glorious and awesome name, the Lord your God, 59 then the Lord will bring on you and your offspring extraordinary afflictions, afflictions severe and lasting, and sicknesses grievous and lasting.
1 Sam. 2:2	“There is none holy like the Lord: for there is none besides you; there is no rock like our God.
1 Pet. 1:15–16	15 but as he who called you is holy, you also be holy in all your conduct, 16 since it is written, “You shall be holy, for I am holy.”
Is. 6:3	And one called to another and said: “Holy, holy, holy is the Lord of hosts; the whole earth is full of his glory!”
Ps. 96:9	Worship the Lord in the splendor of holiness; tremble before him, all the earth!
Rom. 3:10	as it is written: “None is righteous, no, not one;
Rom. 3:23	for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God,
Rom. 6:23	For the wages of sin is death, but the free gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.
Rev. 4:8	And the four living creatures, each of them with six wings, are full of eyes all around and within, and day and night they never cease to say, “Holy, holy, holy, is the Lord God Almighty, who was and is and is to come!”
Lev. 19:2	“Speak to all the congregation of the people of Israel and say to them, You shall be holy, for I the Lord your God am holy.
2 Cor. 5:21	For our sake he made him to be sin who knew no sin, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God.
1 Pet. 2:24	He himself bore our sins in his body on the tree, that we might die to sin and live to righteousness. By his wounds you have been healed.
1 Pet. 3:18	For Christ also suffered once for sins, the righteous for the unrighteous, that he might bring us to God, being put to death in the flesh but made alive in the spirit,
Is. 53:5	But he was pierced for our transgressions; he was crushed for our iniquities; upon him was the chastisement that brought us peace, and with his wounds we are healed.
Acts 10:42	And he commanded us to preach to the people and to testify that he is the one appointed by God to be judge of the living and the dead.
1 Pet. 4:5	but they will give account to him who is ready to judge the living and the dead.
Rev. 14:17–20	17 Then another angel came out of the temple in heaven, and he too had a sharp sickle. 18 And another angel came out from the altar, the angel who has authority over the fire, and he called with a loud voice to the one who had the sharp sickle, “Put in your sickle and gather the clusters from the vine of the earth, for its grapes are ripe.” 19 So the angel swung his sickle across the earth and gathered the grape harvest of the earth and threw it into the great winepress of the wrath of God. 20 And the winepress was trodden outside the city, and blood flowed from the winepress, as high as a horse’s bridle, for 1,600 stadia.