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**The Sovereign Love of God**  
**Deuteronomy 7**  
*Series: Loving God in Every Way*

**Introduction:** Take your Bibles and join me in Deuteronomy 7. We have just had the great privilege of remembering what the Lord Jesus has done to rescue us from our own Egyptian bondage to sin. Through the sacrifice of Himself, his life, his gruesome death, his burial, his resurrection, and his glorious ascension – Jesus Christ has paid the redemption price to rescue us from eternal bondage to our sin. Therefore, we must never forget Him. And yet, this is so easy to do – to forget the Lord of our salvation.

That is what is at issue in Deuteronomy 6, 7, and 8. Moses is preaching to God's people as they prepare to cross over the Jordan River and take possession of the Promised Land. Chapter 6 is the heart of the whole book, and in that chapter we learn the central truth, the central response of God's people, and the central warning to God's people. In 6:4 we learn the central truth – Hear, O Israel; The Lord our God, The Lord is One. And then in 6:5 we learn the central response of God's people in light of that central truth – “You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your might.” And then in 6:12 we learn of the central warning to God's people and that is, “then take care lest you forget the Lord, who brought you out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of slavery.” This central warning is the focus of the next several chapters. In chapter 6 the warning is “Don't forget God in the midst of His abundant blessing.” The warning in chapter 7 is “Don't forget God in the face of an overwhelming enemy.” And the warning in chapter 8 is “Don't forget God in the luxury of abundant provision.

We will give our attention this morning to the warning in chapter 7 – “Don't forget God in the face of an overwhelming enemy.” And this is such a crucial warning to heed for every follower of Christ this morning. Our battle is different than the one we will read about in a minute, but the struggle to walk by faith in God and not by the sight of the enemy is just as real for us. So, like the Israelites who first heard these words, we also must not forget God in the face of an overwhelming enemy. Let's read Deuteronomy 7.

This is one of the most difficult chapters in the Old Testament for many scholars because of this command to carry out holy war on these 7 nations. The concept of God commanding his people to completely annihilate those living in the Promised Land is too difficult a concept for many to grasp. The answer of course must be received by faith, but it is a logical one as well. In Genesis 15 we read that the sin of these nations in the Promised Land was not yet full, and so God would delay giving the land to His people for over 400 years. Like God did with Sodom & Gomorrah and with Nineveh, and with the whole world before the Genesis flood – God delayed just judgment for a time to make known to everyone that when judgment came, it was right and just.

These 7 nations have been given centuries to repent and turn to the one true God, and they have only increased in their idolatrous wickedness. They are wicked and rebellious squatters on the Land which God has set aside as special and holy and to be inhabited by his special and holy people. And like God miraculously and powerfully defeated Egypt to free the Israelites, so too He will miraculously and powerfully defeat these seven nations and give them the land. But the Israelites must enter the land and be used in the Lord's battle to overthrow these nations, and then to finish the job over the next many decades of vanquishing them from the Land. They are facing an overwhelming enemy and a monumental command, and they must not forget the Lord. And in order to make that conquest mentality in God's people that will not forget the Lord, Moses calls them in this chapter to know their calling and their commander and their commission. And so too with us. We who have been redeemed by the sovereign love of the Lord must also know these three truths all the more so that we might walk in the victory of our Lord.

**I. Know Your Calling – vs. 6-8**

- a. First, we must know our calling. That is really the key section of this entire chapter, in verses 6-8, in which Moses explains to them their calling by the Lord. Every other point in this sermon and in this text is dependent upon this truth. They have been sovereignly elected by God to be His people based merely upon His sovereign love. Moses tells them that the theological foundation which upholds their obedience is the fact of God's choice of them as His people. He tells them that they are a holy people to the Lord, in verse 6. This means that they have been set apart as unique from all the other people groups in the world by the Lord and to the Lord. He has selected them alone to be his treasured possession out of all the peoples alive at that time. They were his most prized possession – a treasure unique to Him.
- b. And we learn in verse 7 that this is true simply because God has chosen to love them. There was nothing in them which made them the best choice or the most rewarding choice or the most obvious choice. In fact, they were the least likely to be chosen. They were the fewest in number, and therefore the fewest in might and power and fame. Notice in verse 7 that God's election of them is the result of God setting his love on them. He chose them because he loved them. Why did He love them? Because He loved them. Not because they were so loveable, but because he was so loving toward them. And this love is in keeping with God's promises to their forefathers in verse 8. God's choice of them as His people has always been His plan and it was a plan He made known to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. And now, this generation is the recipient of that same electing love in keeping with God's promise. And this electing love was most obviously expressed by God when He redeemed them from the slavery of Egypt to make them His own. The logic of the text is that this calling of God upon them by His own sovereign choice should settle their hearts in confidence as they face this overwhelming enemy. The fact that God has redeemed them from Egypt as evidence of His sovereign love should calm their hearts and compel their obedience. This is the Lord's doing and it should be marvelous in their eyes. This is the Lord's doing and they should be confident in His completion of what He

has begun. This is the Lord's doing and they should be humbled by God's sovereign grace and steadfast love for them. Why did He choose them? Because He loved them. Why will He conquer all their enemies? Because He loves them.

- c. And this is the Old Testament root of the doctrine of unconditional election which flowers in the New Testament. What God does with the nation of Israel is the same thing he does with all of those who are to be His people. The only way anyone is made right with God and is adopted into the family of God is by the electing love of God. This truth is spoken all throughout Scripture:
  - i. <sup>22</sup> For the LORD will not forsake his people, for his great name's sake, because it has pleased the LORD to make you a people for himself. (1 Sam. 12:22 ESV)
  - ii. <sup>3</sup> Praise the LORD, for the LORD is good; sing to his name, for it is pleasant! <sup>4</sup> For the LORD has chosen Jacob for himself, Israel as his own possession. <sup>5</sup> For I know that the LORD is great, and that our Lord is above all gods. <sup>6</sup> Whatever the LORD pleases, he does, in heaven and on earth, in the seas and all deeps. (Ps. 135:3-6 ESV)
  - iii. <sup>37</sup> All that the Father gives me will come to me, and whoever comes to me I will never cast out. <sup>38</sup> For I have come down from heaven, not to do my own will but the will of him who sent me. <sup>39</sup> And this is the will of him who sent me, that I should lose nothing of all that he has given me, but raise it up on the last day. <sup>40</sup> For this is the will of my Father, that everyone who looks on the Son and believes in him should have eternal life, and I will raise him up on the last day." (Jn. 6:37-40 ESV)
  - iv. <sup>16</sup> You did not choose me, but I chose you and appointed you that you should go and bear fruit and that your fruit should abide, so that whatever you ask the Father in my name, he may give it to you. (Jn. 15:16 ESV)
  - v. <sup>28</sup> And we know that for those who love God all things work together for good, for those who are called according to his purpose. <sup>29</sup> For those whom he foreknew he also predestined to be conformed to the image of his Son, in order that he might be the firstborn among many brothers. <sup>30</sup> And those whom he predestined he also called, and those whom he called he also justified, and those whom he justified he also glorified. <sup>31</sup> What then shall we say to these things? If God is for us, who can be against us? (Rom. 8:28-31 ESV)
  - vi. <sup>3</sup> Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us in Christ with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places, <sup>4</sup> even as he chose us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and blameless before him. (Eph. 1:3-4 ESV)
  - vii. <sup>13</sup> But we ought always to give thanks to God for you, brothers beloved by the Lord, because God chose you as the firstfruits to be saved, through sanctification by the Spirit and belief in the truth. <sup>14</sup> To this he called you through our gospel, so that you may obtain the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ. (2 Thess. 2:13-14 ESV)

- viii. <sup>8</sup> Therefore do not be ashamed of the testimony about our Lord, nor of me his prisoner, but share in suffering for the gospel by the power of God, <sup>9</sup> who saved us and called us to a holy calling, not because of our works but because of his own purpose and grace, which he gave us in Christ Jesus before the ages began, (2 Tim. 1:8-9 ESV)
- d. Beloved, the testimony of Scripture is obvious. God has elected some to be his treasured possession. And He has done this not because of any merit in them, but totally and completely based upon His sovereign love and grace. And this is not something which provokes pride in those who are His people, but rather a deep humility and eternal gratitude. And this deep humility informs and compels us to obey the Lord who has called us from the kingdom of darkness into His marvelous light. The children of Israel could confidently enter into the Promised Land and obey the Lord in the face of an overwhelming enemy because they knew God was finishing what He started. He who called them out of Egypt would surely lead them into the Promised Land. And so too for you Christian. If God has called you out of the Egypt of your bondage to sin, you can be assured that he will lead you safely home to the Promised Land. He who called you is faithful, surely He will do it!

## II. Know Your Commander – vs. 9-10, 17-24

- a. Not only must we know our calling, but chapter 7 is filled with statements about the character and nature of God. We must know our commander if we are to have this conquest mindset against our spiritual enemies. This is the conclusion that Moses draws in verses 9-10 – Know therefore that the Lord your God is God. They have been called to be the treasured possession of the God who is alone the one true God. Because He is God alone He can truly and fully keep His Word of promise. He has made this covenant with their forefathers and He is in the midst of keeping that covenant promise to this generation, if they will but love him and keep his commandments. But if they will fearfully disobey and walk away from their covenant commitment to this God, then they will be judged like their parents and grandparents were in the wilderness. If they enter into the Promised Land and start to live like the nations that are already there, they will be vomited out of the Land by the same faithful God who is leading them in to dispossess these seven nations. They must know God if they are going to be full of faith in God.
- b. This is especially the focus of that last section of chapter 7. Moses anticipates in verse 17 that they will be greatly afraid in their hearts as they approach entering the land. They will wonder to themselves, how in the world is this going to work? There is no way we can win! Take careful notice of Moses' answer to their fearful hearts. He points them to the Lord their God. In verse 18 he tells them that their fear is a result of their forgetfulness. They are fearing their enemies because they have failed to remember their God. And specifically he points them to remember what God has done, where God is, and what God has promised to do.
- c. What God has done is that He has rescued them from slavery out from under the oppressive rule of the greatest nation of their day. God used miraculous and

terrible plagues to overthrow the obstinacy of Pharaoh. And they had a front row seat to the oppressive darkness and the flies and the boils and the water turning to blood and the frogs and the hail stones and ultimately to the death of the firstborn in Egypt. So, the conclusion in verse 19 is that they can be confident that the God who has done this in Egypt will stretch out His mighty arm and do it again. His arm is not shortened here. He has not lost power. He has not had suffered a recent bout of illness which has affected His power. He has not grown disinterested all of a sudden and will now leave them to their own devices. No, God is faithful, and they must remember what He has already done.

- d. They must also remember where He is. He is in their midst, a great and awesome God. That Hebrew word for awesome has at its root the word for fear. They need not fear their great and massive enemies because they have in their midst the great and fearful God. No god and no nation of any other god has any power or majesty or greatness that can stand for even a moment in the way of their God who is in their midst. Like that cricket that stands between you and the entrance to your house are the nations before them and the glorious God who is in their midst. You've never been fearful that somehow that cricket is going to overpower you and take your keys and enter your house and live there in your place. Rather, you confidently move forward and squash the cricket with the mere weight of your presence. Or maybe, you send your dad or husband to do it! But you certainly don't let the fear of the cricket stand in your way to entering your house. This great and glorious God is with His people, and therefore they must not fear. This is the second of 4 times in the book of Deuteronomy that they people will be told to not tremble before their enemies because God is with them. And then the book of Joshua opens with the same idea as Joshua is called by God to lead the people into the Promised Land. God says to Him, "Have I not commanded you? Be strong and courageous. Do not be frightened, and do not be dismayed, for the Lord your God is with you wherever you go." They must never forget where the Lord is.
- e. They must also not forget what the Lord has promised to do. In verse 20 He promises to send hornets into the land and root out the last hideouts and bring them to destruction. In 22 God promises to do this conquest little by little so that the Land doesn't get overrun by wild beasts. And in 23 he promises to cause great confusion among them until they are destroyed. And in 24 this destruction promised is a complete destruction – no one will be able to withstand.
- f. Think about this promised destruction from the Lord for a minute. God has promised to do this by His great and glorious power. And we know from reading the book of Joshua that the initial conquest was pervasive and complete – meaning that all the nations and all the kings were defeated by Israel. Their will was broken and the land was given to the tribes of Israel to inhabit. But we also know that there was much more to do to rid them out of their land – to complete the process of annihilation. This conquest by the power of God was promised to be a process. So, in verse 22 the promise is that God will clear out these nations little by little. In other words, they were going to have to be on the offensive long

after they entered the land. They were going to have to continue to battle. The war would be over, but the battles to clear out the resistance would remain.

- g. And this is so often how the Lord works against our enemies. We long for the dramatic and obviously miraculous defeat of our spiritual foe. We long for God to drop the spiritual atomic bomb in our lives and force the complete surrender of our sinful flesh, the world around us, and the Devil who accuses us. But God's plan is to bring small gains over long stretches. The battle is the Lord's, and the war is won. We fight from victory, not for victory. But we still must fight. Hence the reason we are given the spiritual armor of salvation and truth and righteousness and faith and the Gospel of peace and the Sword of the Spirit. God doesn't give us those realities so that we will just look nice all dressed up in our battle gear. He gives us these powerful weapons because there is still a battle raging within us and around us as we seek to be conformed to the image of Christ more and more.
- h. And so, believer, as you face the ongoing and never-ending battle against your flesh and against the devil and against the world around you, you must know that God gives victory little by little. Be on guard, watch and pray, and walk forward in humble obedience – confident in God's past work, conscious of God's presence with you, and committed to seeing the battle through based on God's promise.

### III. Know Your Commission – vs. 1-5, 11-16, 25-26

- a. We must know our commander. And lastly we must know our commission – know your commission. This is the main thrust of this chapter built upon the great truth of God's calling and God's character. This knowledge of God and all He has done to make them His own people should compel them to be willing to do anything He asks. Full obedience to this fully glorious God is the only logical choice.
- b. *Careful Obedience to the Lord*
  - i. And that is the flow of verses 11-12. Built upon the foundation of God as God, verse 11 says that you must then be careful to do all that God says. Careful obedience to the Lord is the necessary result of being made God's people by His great grace. Like bees to honey, so are the people of God to obedience. This is what we were made for – careful obedience to the Lord which glorifies Him as His plans and purposes are carried out in the world. Always built upon the foundation of His grace to make us His own, the people of God must ever pursue loving obedience to their loving Lord.
- c. *Complete Destruction of the enemy*
  - i. And for the children of Israel this looked like complete destruction of the enemy. That is what they are called to in verse 2. They must devote these 7 nations to complete destruction. This idea of devoting is to set them apart as an offering to the Lord. In other words, their military campaign and their ongoing defeat of the enemy was pleasing to the Lord and was to be given as an act of worship to the Lord.

ii. And the same is true for the believer today. We have been rescued from the grip of the enemy and now we have the unique calling to walk in the holiness of life that has been secured for us in Christ. We can now say no to sin and yes to God. And this is pursuit of obedience is to be relentless as we put the enemy to complete destruction. And this is all an offering of worship to the Lord who has saved us. Your pursuit of the enemy to put it to death wherever you see it is right and good and pleasing in the sight of the Lord.

d. *No Compromise through covenants*

i. This complete destruction is accompanied by no compromise through covenants. They were to destroy their enemies, not make peace with them. God knew that if they tolerated their presence in the land and played nice with them that over time, their evil influence would draw the Israelites away. There was to be no compromise with them. And that is the pattern given throughout Scripture. We are not to play nice with the enemies of our soul. We are not to give an inch of residence to our sinful passions, for they will always take a mile. We are not to draw up a peace agreement to end the hostilities between us and the world that demands complete submission to its agenda and godless worldview. We must graciously, kindly, gently, and yet courageously contend for the faith once for all delivered to the saints!

e. *No Compassion for the enemy*

i. This no compromise is coupled with no compassion for the enemy. They are to be shown no mercy in verse 2. And in verse 16 their eye is not to pity them in any way, nor serve their gods for that will become a snare to them. And as time went on that is exactly what happened. They were to see these 7 nations as the evil opponents of a righteous God. They were not to be weak or grow weary of well-doing. They were to see the battle through to their dying breath and finish the job God had called them to.

ii. This does not mean for us that we get to hate the people around us and stay in our holy huddle and refuse to reach out in the loving compassion of Gospel witness. But it does mean what John says in 1 John 2 – Do not love the world or the things in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him. For all that is in the world – the desires of the flesh and the desires of the eyes and the pride of life – is not from the Father but is from the world. And the world is passing away along with its desires, but whoever does the will of God abides forever.” (1 John 2:15-17)

f. *No Co-Mingling through marriage*

i. This is followed by the commission to have no co-mingling through marriage. If they give their sons or daughters in marriage to these godless nations, they can be assured that the next generation will fall away from the Lord and will bring about their own judgment. That is exactly what

happened in Judges 3 when the generation of Joshua died off and the next generation loosened up their pursuit of conquering the enemy. They started to have compassion and pity and they started co-mingling with their neighbors and giving their children in marriage to these nations who remained. And what was the result? Judges 3:6 says, “And their daughters they took to themselves for wives, and their own daughters they gave to their sons, and they served their gods.”

- ii. Young people – let this teach you well that it matters greatly who you choose to marry. If you marry an unbeliever you can bet that either your faith won't last, or your marriage won't last. When you marry someone you are becoming one with them, and by nature of that union you are accepting everything about them, even the god they serve. So, if you tolerate their worship of a false god, then you can be sure of your own heart being pulled to worship that god as well, just like the next generation after this did. As 1 Corinthians 6 so clearly says, we must not be unequally yoked with an unbeliever, for what does Christ have to do with Belial, and what does light have to do with darkness?

g. *Complete Annihilation of false worship*

- i. And then, lastly, this commission given in this chapter is one of complete annihilation of false worship. In verse 5 they are to break down and dash in pieces and burn with fire all of the objects used in worship by these idolatrous nations. He repeats the command at the end of the chapter in case they missed it. They are not even to take the gold or silver off of these idols and bring it into their house. They are to utterly detest and abhor it.
- ii. The point here should be self-evident, but just to be sure we don't miss it, think about what is being commanded here. These representations of idols were filled with graphic sexual imagery and were used in sexually explicit expressions of worship. These pagan people thought that their worship in these ways would gain the favor of Baal and Dagon and Ashtoreth, to name a few. And this favor would result in these gods granting them fertility and long life for them and their livestock, and an abundance of crops to sustain life.
- iii. So God says to His people – when you go in and destroy these nations, destroy their false worship as well. In other words, if the idols cannot defend themselves against your conquest of the people then they will not withstand your annihilation of the idols themselves. What real power do they have if you will be able to cut them down, destroy them, and burn them in the fire? Just think of the idol that couldn't stand in the presence of the Ark of the Covenant later in Israel's history. Or think of the prophets of Baal on Mt. Carmel who were completely unable to call down fire from their god. Or think of Gideon and his tearing down of the idol of Baal in obedience to the Lord. What happened in each of those cases? Nothing because those gods have no power.

- iv. And so God says, go in and completely annihilate them so that you have zero temptation to think that those gods will be the gods who will bless you and multiply you. And look at what God promises in verses 13-15 – the very things which those pagans are looking for from their idols. Health and long life and abundant blessing of crops – all of this comes only from the God of their salvation!

**Conclusion:** So, they must know their calling and their commander and their commission if they were going to go in and successfully conquer the enemy. And the same is true for you today beloved. Let's pray!