

A A matter of iniquity

- ❖ Archaeology has revealed that Canaan's religion was exactly what the Bible says: sorcery, divination, communication with the dead, spiritism... and child sacrifice! (Deut. 18:9-12). Added to this was the rite of "sacred prostitution"—which had little to do with the sacred—practiced by both priests and priestesses.
- ❖ Although these practices were already common in Abraham's time, God gave them more than 400 years to rectify their behavior.
- ❖ Finally, these aberrant rites, which lowered people's morality and fostered all kinds of vices, had to be put to an end. The extermination of the Canaanites would prevent—at least for a time—the moral degradation of humanity.

B A matter of justice

- ❖ Love and justice are the foundation of God's character. This makes Him a just and impartial judge, who postpones punishment so that the sinner may be converted, but who will not tolerate evil forever.
- ❖ The war to conquer Canaan was not waged for imperialist reasons, but by divine order to carry out the punishment that its wicked inhabitants deserved.
- ❖ God's desire was to establish a just government in that territory, which would be an example to all nations, motivating them to elevate their moral concepts, and thus achieve a state of peace and justice worldwide (Dt. 4:5-6).

C The biblical concept of war

- ❖ Biblically, wars were to be limited to specific situations and were defined by God Himself. These are the rules that governed wars authorized by God:
 - A professional army was not allowed
 - The soldiers were not paid and sometimes could not even take loot
 - Warfare was only permitted for the conquest or defense of the Promised Land at that particular historical moment
 - They were led by prophets inspired by God (such as Moses or Joshua)
 - Spiritual preparation was required before the battle
 - Any Israelite who did not comply with the rules of war was treated as an enemy
 - On many occasions, God intervened directly in the battle

D Destroyed by their own choice

- ❖ The entire territory of Canaan was declared anathema, that is, dedicated to destruction. Every living thing was to die (Deut. 20:16-18; Josh. 10:40). However, there were exceptions:
 - Those destined for destruction who obeyed God could live (e.g., Rahab)
 - Israelites who disobeyed God were to be put to death (e.g., Achan).
- ❖ Before God, Canaanites and Israelites were viewed equally: impartially. The difference was that some chose to persist in their rebellion against God, while others chose to obey Him.
- ❖ Now, the decision is still ours. When Jesus comes, we will be saved or destroyed by our own choice.

E Seek peace

- ❖ Jesus is called the "Prince of Peace" (Isaiah 9:6). He came to bring peace, and he will reign in peace (John 14:27; Isaiah 60:17). But until his kingdom of peace becomes a reality, we remain in war-torn territory, immersed in the cosmic conflict between good and evil.
- ❖ When the Syrian army besieged Dothan to capture the prophet Elisha, he didn't ask God to have the heavenly army surrounding him destroy the Syrians. Instead, he asked to lead the blinded Syrian army to Samaria so that, once there, he could bring peace between the two warring nations (2 Kings 6:12-23).
- ❖ This is the example Jesus taught us: to always seek peace in conflict. To overcome evil with good (Rom. 12:20-21).