

220223-4 Deu 20, War & the Fruit Trees-CThurman

In the 19th chapter there were four things of which Moses reminded the children of Israel:

- Cities of refuge; these were cities for them that had caused the accidental death of another. These cities were not for murderers, then that cause the death of another because of enmity or hatred. These places were not for them that had caused the deaths of others through law enforcement, military service, self-defense and defense of others.
- Removing your neighbor's landmark; once Israel comes to possess the land and every tribe receives their land allotments it was permanent. Remember that the tribes placement in the land of Canaan was by lot. That is, the LORD decided where each tribe would be located in Canaan, but the size of the allotment depended on the size of the tribe. The larger the tribe the larger was that tribe's parcel. But as it concerns dividing the land among each tribe Eleazar, Joshua and a chief of each tribe decided that. When once the land is distributed, the landmarks were set. For certain no land passed from one tribe to another. Whenever a family's landmark for his land was set it was not to be removed.
- Minimum number of witnesses that may witness against another for any sin was two to three witnesses.
- Controversy caused through a false witness was to be judged by what might be the highest court in the land. When a false witness has been found out, whatever the false witness thought to do to his victim the judge, which rendered judgment in the Lord's stead, was to execute that same judgment upon the false accuser; life shall go to pay for life, eye for eye, tooth for tooth, hand for hand, or foot for foot. In this lawful execution of justice sin was put away, eradicated from Israel, and others might hear and fear *and shall henceforth commit no more any such evil among them.*

In the 20th chapter Moses lays down some ground rules for warfare.

- The priest encourages the warriors. (vss. 1-4)
- The overseer scrutinizes his men prior to conflict & selects leaders. (vss.5-9)

- Terms for warfare. (vss. 10-18)
- Don't cut down the fruit trees. (vss.19, 20)

Chapter 20

The priest encourages the warriors. (vss. 1-4)

1 ¶ When thou goest out to battle against thine enemies,

battle, מִלְחָמָה, a fem. noun tss. war (v.12, 20; 21.10; 29.7), battle (vss.1-3, 5-7 [twice]), fight; the verb form is לָחַם, lah-cham, tss. to eat, to devour (Deu.32.24, Qal part. Paul), to fight (Deu.20.4, 10, Niphal infins.), to war (Deu.20.19, Niphal infin.), to overcome, to prevail.

The battle of which Israel was probably instructed is that one which is brought to them. In the last verse of this chapter there is this idea: *the city that maketh war with thee.*

and seest horses, and chariots, and a people more than thou, be not afraid of them: for the LORD thy God is with thee, which brought thee up out of the land of Egypt.

In Deu.17 it was stated that the king of Israel was not, among other things, to multiply to himself horses. The idea seems to be that he would begin to put his trust in war materiel rather than in the LORD.

The Israelites were to always remember what the LORD had done for them to deliver them from their cruel taskmasters in the land of Egypt. Egypt suffered a terrible destruction. Knowing the end of their enemies should greatly encourage them for the fight.

*Ex.14.24 And it came to pass, that in the morning watch the LORD looked unto the host of the Egyptians through the pillar of fire and of the cloud, and troubled the host of the Egyptians,
25 And took off their chariot wheels, that they drave them heavily: so that the Egyptians said, Let us flee from the face of Israel; for the LORD fighteth for them against the Egyptians.*

2 And it shall be, when ye are come nigh unto the battle, that the priest shall approach and speak unto the people,

3 And shall say unto them, Hear, O Israel, ye approach this day unto battle against your enemies: let not your hearts faint, fear not,
be discouraged
be weakened

faint, רַכַּךְ, rah-kak, a Niphal (simple pass.) fut. of the verb tss. to be tender, mollified; see the adj. in v.8.

fear, יִרָא, yah-reh, a Qal fut. verb tss. to fear, to be afraid (v.1), to dread.

and do not tremble, neither be ye terrified because of them;

tremble, חָפַז, cha-phaz, a Qal fut. verb tss. to haste, to haste away, to tremble.

terrified, יִרָצַץ, [g]a-ratz, a verb tss. to oppress, to be terrified, to shake terribly, to dread, to be afraid, to break, to fear.

4 For the LORD your God is he that goeth with you, to fight for you against your enemies, to save you.

1Sa.17.45 *Then said David to the Philistine, Thou comest to me with a sword, and with a spear, and with a shield: but I come to thee in the name of the LORD of hosts, the God of the armies of Israel, whom thou hast defied.*

46 *This day will the LORD deliver thee into mine hand; and I will smite thee, and take thine head from thee; and I will give the carcasses of the host of the Philistines this day unto the fowls of the air, and to the wild beasts of the earth; that all the earth may know that there is a God in Israel.*

47 *And all this assembly shall know that the LORD saveth not with sword and spear: for the battle is the LORD'S, and he will give you into our hands.*

Is.41.10 ¶ Fear thou not; for I am with thee: be not dismayed; for I am thy God: I will strengthen thee; yea, I will help thee; yea, I will uphold thee with the right hand of my righteousness.

11 Behold, all they that were incensed against thee shall be ashamed and confounded: they shall be as nothing; and they that strive with thee shall perish.

So the priest would encourage the people by reminding them what the LORD had done. Good and enduring encouragement for the children of God comes through recitation of the truths of the word of God.

The overseer scrutinizes his men prior to conflict & selects leaders. (vss.5-9)

5 And the officers shall speak unto the people, saying,

officers, שָׂרֵי, shah-tar, and is a verb tss. officer (19), officers over (1), ruler (1), overseer (1).

Whoever these officers are they evidently had the direct oversight of the children of Israel. They must have been able to examine their men like a shepherd would his sheep, to separate the weak or sick from the rest of the flock. In this case the officers would dismiss them that have several distraction could bring to them and others harm or even death; and they would choose who should lead those under them.

**What man is there that hath built a new house, and hath not dedicated it?
completed**

hath built, (vss.5, 19) Qal pret. of the verb tss. to build (Deu.22.8 & 27.6; 28.30, Qal fut.), to make (Ge.2.22, Qal fut.), to build up (Deu.25.9, Qal fut.), to repair, to set up.

new, שְׁדָּיִם, chah-dash, an Hebrew adj. tss. new, new thing.

dedicated, נָחַק, chah-nak, Qal pret. verb tss. to dedicate, to train up (Pv.22.6); of the wall, Neh.12.27; of David's house, Ps.30.1, Title;

**Nu.7.10, 11, 84, 88; of the altar, Nu.7.11; the temple, 1Ki.8.63;
2Chro.7.5.**

Men for war were aged 20 years and older, able for war. (cf. Nu.1.3; 26.2)

**let him go and return to his house, lest he die in the battle, and another man
dedicate it.**

6 And what man is he that hath planted a vineyard,

planted, נָטַע, nah-ta[g], Qal pret. tss. to plant (oft), to fasten (1).

and hath not yet eaten of it?

made common use

*has ... eaten, חָלַל, chah-lal, a Piel (intensive act.) pret. verb tss. to
wound, to defile, to profane, to pollute, to eat (marg. to make
common), to lay, to break, to prostitute.*

**let him also go and return unto his house, lest he die in the battle, and another
man eat of it.**

make common use

7 And what man is there that hath betrothed a wife, and hath not taken her?

*hath betrothed, אָרַשׁ, ah-ras, a Piel (intensive act.) pret. verb tss. to
betroth, to espouse (to be promised in marriage).*

*hath ... taken, a Qal pret. verb of לָקַח, lah-qach tss. to take, to tetch,
to marry, to receive, to have, to reserve, to receive, etc.*

Betrothal is a promise to marry. To breaking this promise usually required
a writ of divorcement.

*Mt.1.18 ¶ Now the birth of Jesus Christ was on this wise: When as his
mother Mary was espoused to Joseph, before they came together,
she was found with child of the Holy Ghost.*

19 Then Joseph her husband, being a just man, and not willing to make her a publick example, was minded to put her away privily.

let him go and return unto his house, lest he die in the battle, and another man take her.

take, a Qal fut. verb of לקח, lah-qach.

**8 And the officers shall speak further unto the people, and they shall say, What man is there that is fearful and fainthearted?
weak–**

faint-, רך, an Hebrew adj. tss. tender, tender one, faint, weak, soft; see the verb in v.3.

let him go and return unto his house, lest his brethren's heart faint as well as his heart.

melt

faint, מסס, ma-sas, a Niphal (simple pass.) fut. verb tss. to faint, to melt, to refuse, to melt away, to be discouraged.

9 And it shall be, when the officers have made an end of speaking unto the people,

that they shall make captains of the armies to lead the people.

at the head of [going to war]

they shall make, Qal pret. verb of פקד, pah-qad, to visit, to appoint, to number, to remember, to miss, to count, to charge, to punish, to want, etc.

to lead, ראש, rōsh, a masc. noun tss. head, top, sum, principal, chapters, beginnings, captain, chief, ruler, company, etc.; this has the prefixed preposition ב, in, with, by, at (much like the Gr. ἐν), and so could translate as 'at the head of'.

All of these things pose serious distractions for men that would enter into combat.

Phl.3.13 Brethren, I count not myself to have apprehended: but this one thing I do, forgetting those things which are behind, and reaching forth unto those things which are before,

14 I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus.

15 ¶ Let us therefore, as many as be perfect, be thus minded: and if in any thing ye be otherwise minded, God shall reveal even this unto you.

16 Nevertheless, whereto we have already attained, let us walk by the same rule, let us mind the same thing.

Terms of warfare (vss. 10-18)

There were times when instances called for action, whether preemptive or defensive. Whenever a nation from afar threatened Israel they were to apply these simple rules.

Niphal (simple pass.) infin.

10 ¶ When thou comest nigh unto a city to fight against it,

לְשָׁלוֹם

then proclaim peace unto it.

call to it for peace - -

11 And it shall be, if it make thee answer of peace, and open unto thee,

open, wide, the Hebrew verb פָּתַח, pah-thach, tss. to open, to draw, to draw out, to be wide, to set forth, to loose, to ungird, to go free.

Qal pret., Due.20.11, to open – Qal infin., Deu.15.8, 11, wide – Qal fut., Deu.15.8, 11, to open – Qal fut. Deu.28.12, to open

then it shall be, that all the people that is found therein shall be tributaries for

tributaries, טַבַּע, a masc. noun tss. tribute, task[master], tributary, under tribute, a levy, a discomfiture (to discomfit); the prefixed preposition לְ, for or to.

unto thee, and they shall serve thee.

An example of being made a tributary:

2Ki.3.4 And Mesha king of Moab was a sheepmaster, and rendered unto the king of Israel an hundred thousand lambs, and an hundred thousand rams, with the wool.

5 But it came to pass, when Ahab was dead, that the king of Moab rebelled against the king of Israel.

12 And if it will make no peace with thee, but will make war against thee, then thou shalt besiege it:

assault

shall besiege, Qal pret. of the verb צִוַּר, tzoor, tss. to be an adversary, to bind up, to besiege, to best, to lay siege, to fashion, to distress, to cast, to put up in bags, to fortify, to assault, to enclose.

So the enemy has refused terms of peace. Therefore Israel was to assault the city and overrun it.

13 And when the LORD thy God hath delivered it into thine hands, thou shalt smite every male thereof with the edge of the sword:

males, masc. noun זָכוּר, zah-koor, four times in the OT, Ex.23.17; 34.23, menchildren, Deu.16.16; 20.13; except for the passage in Deu.20.3, it is always with reference to the three times that all the males were to appear before the LORD at the major feasts, Passover, Pentecost, and Booths.

14 But the women, and the little ones, and the cattle, and all that is in the city,

Above, if the term *males* applies to all males without distinction then the term *little ones* could only refer to females.

even all the spoil thereof, shalt thou take unto thyself;

shalt thou take, Qal fut. of the verb **זָבַח**, bah-zaz, tss. *to spoil, to take the spoil, to take for a prey, to take away, to catch*; the masc. noun is **זָבַח** of **זָבַח**, and tss. *a prey, the spoil, to booty*.

the spoil thereof and *the spoil of*, the masc. noun **לַשָּׁלַל**, shah-lal, tss. *spoil, prey*.

אָכַל, ah-cal

and thou shalt eat the spoil of thine enemies, which the LORD thy God hath given thee.

15 Thus shalt thou do unto all the cities which are very far off from thee, which are not of the cities of these nations.

So, cities that are of nations that are very far off, not being of the nations being driven out of Canaan, they may take the spoils of war.

In Nu.31.21-31 is an ordinance for war. This regulated the soldier's cleansing after the battle, the purification and distribution of all of the spoils taken in war. (for purification water cf. Nu.19.1-10)

The spoils were divided into two parts: one for the warriors and the other for the congregation. Of the warrior's part they paid a tribute of 1/500th part given to the sons of Aaron. Of the congregation's part they paid a levy of 1/50th part to the sons of Levi. And what this all boiled down to was that the sons of Aaron received what was equivalent to 1/10th of what Levi received.

16 But of the cities of these people, which the LORD thy God doth give thee for an inheritance, thou shalt save alive nothing that breatheth:

17 But thou shalt utterly destroy them; namely, the Hittites, and the Amorites, the Canaanites, and the Perizzites, the Hivites, and the Jebusites; as the LORD thy God hath commanded thee:

These nations were first mentioned 80 years ago. (cf. Ex.3.8) Though their judgment has lingered it was certain. They were judged by the LORD for the wickedness they had committed on His land.

De 9:5 Not for thy righteousness, or for the uprightness of thine heart, dost thou go to possess their land: but for the wickedness of these nations the LORD thy God doth drive them out from before thee, and that he may perform the word which the LORD sware unto thy fathers, Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob.

The LORD said that He would cut them off if only Israel would obey His voice.

Ex.23.22 But if thou shalt indeed obey his voice, and do all that I speak; then I will be an enemy unto thine enemies, and an adversary unto thine adversaries.
23 For mine Angel shall go before thee, and bring thee in unto the Amorites, and the Hittites, and the Perizzites, and the Canaanites, the Hivites, and the Jebusites: and I will cut them off.

In Deuteronomy chapter 7 there are seven nations named there. At this time I can't say anything about why the **Girgashites** are not mentioned in the other texts. In any event they were all greater and mightier nations than Israel. (cf. Deu.7.1)

18 That they teach you not to do after all their abominations, which they have done unto their gods; so should ye sin against the LORD your God.

The purpose for utterly destroying these nations which had former possession of the land of Canaan is stated: to cut off occasion for the Israelites learning their abominable practices and thereby sin against the LORD in the same things. (cf. Ps.106.34-42)

Deu.7.2 And when the LORD thy God shall deliver them before thee; thou shalt smite them, and utterly destroy them; thou shalt make no covenant with them, nor shew mercy unto them:

3 Neither shalt thou make marriages with them; thy daughter thou shalt not give unto his son, nor his daughter shalt thou take unto thy son.

4 For they will turn away thy son from following me, that they may serve other gods: so will the anger of the LORD be kindled against you, and destroy thee suddenly.

Don't cut down the fruit trees. (vss.19, 20)

רַבִּים יָמִים

19 When thou shalt besiege a city a long time,
many days

long, the Hebrew adj. רַב, and here in the plural number, tss. *great, many, enough, multitude, abundant, long, long time, greater, increased*; here, lit. *many*.

time, a masc. sing. noun יוֹם, yōhm; pl. is יָמִים, days, tss. in many ways, *days* (1167), *time/s* (65), *today* (30), *age* (6), *year/s* (9), etc.

in making war against it to take it,
capture

to take it, Qal infin. of the verb תָּפַח, tah-phas, tss. *to hold, to hold on, to lay hold, to take (marg, apprehend), to catch, to handle, to lay over*; Deu.21.19, *lay hold* (Qal pret.); Deu. 22.28, *lay hold on* (Qal pret.).

thou shalt not destroy the trees thereof by forcing an axe against them:
mar

thou shalt ... destroy (**Deu.20.19, 20**), Hiphil (causative act.) fut. of the verb שָׁחַח, shah-chath, tss. *to corrupt* (**Deu.32.5**, Piel (intensive

act.) pret.; **Deu.31.29**, Hiphil (causative act.) fut.), to mar, to spill, to perish, to destroy.

by forcing, Qal infin. of the verb נָדַח, nah-dach, tss. *to force* (Deu.20.19), *to expel, to drive, to fetch, to draw away, to drive quite, to go astray* (Deu.22.1), *to drive out* (Deu.30.4), *to banish, to cast out, to be outcast, to cast down, to thrust, to thrust away, to withdraw, to compel, to be chased*.

אָכַל

for thou mayest eat of them, and thou shalt not cut them down (for the tree of the field is man's life) to employ [them] in the siege:

go for [making] bulwarks

in the siege, מְצֹר, mah-tzōhr, a masc. noun tss. *in the siege, a bulwark, besieged places, fenced, defence, strong, fortress, fortified, tower, strong hold*; Deu.20.19 *in the siege, 20, bulwarks; 28.53, 57, in the siege*.

20 Only the trees which thou knowest that they be not trees for meat,

meat, masc. noun מֵאֲכָל, mah-^{ah}-kal, tss. *food, meat, victual*.

thou shalt destroy and cut them down; and thou shalt build

mar

shalt build, (vss.5, 19) Qal pret. of the verb tss. to build (Deu.22.8 & 27.6; 28.30, Qal fut.), *to make* (Ge.2.22, Qal fut.), *to build up* (Deu.25.9, Qal fut.), *to repair, to set up*.

bulwarks against the city that maketh war with thee, until it be subdued.
fortifications
towers

bulwarks, מְצֹר, mah-tzōhr, a masc. noun tss. *in the siege, a bulwark, besieged places, fenced, defence, strong, fortress, fortified, tower*,

strong hold; Deu.20.19 in the siege, 20, bulwarks; 28.53, 57, in the siege.

it be subdued, Qal infin. of the verb יָרַד, yah-rad, tss. to come down, to go down, to descend, to subdue, to run down, to bring down, to put down; Deu.20.20, it be subdued (Qal infin.); Deu.28.52, came down (Qal infin.); Deu.26.5, and he went down (Qal fut.); Deu.28.24, shall it come down (Qal fut.); Deu.28.43, thou shalt come down (Qal fut.); Deu.21.4, shall bring down (Hiphil pret.).

Even in war men have to eat. In the field there were trees. Some trees could be useful for building war machines, but others were for food. Even there the LORD provided food for his warriors. They were not to cut down those trees which were good for food (nuts and fruits). Those trees could help to support men while they were in the conflict.

The children of God are in a continuous battle. It never seems to let up. It is everywhere they go. Be careful not to cut down the *fruit trees*. These are the trees that LORD has planted in this field for our food. In this place we should eat of the trees which produce fruits of love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance, forbearance, patience, etc. In this way we fight according to the will of God; we *fight the good fight of faith*. (1Ti.6.12) Don't cut down the fruit trees!