

THRU THE BIBLE EXPOSITION

Deuteronomy: Moses' Great Appeal For Israel To Obey God For Blessing

Part IV: The General Call For Loyal Obedience, Deuteronomy 4:44-11:32

D. Heeding God's Pattern For Overcoming Strong, Evil Peer Pressure

(Deuteronomy 7:1-26)

Introduction: (To show the need . . .)

After our morning worship service last Sunday, three Church members told me of concerns they or others they know have over strong, evil peer pressure they face in various realms. These concerns are very real as we can show:

(1) Recent reports of alleged abuses by the IRS and Justice Department to intimidate American citizens into yielding to the administration's agenda have been so profuse, Republican U. S. Senator Rand Paul, in his June 11, 2013 op-ed, "Big Brother Really Is Watching Us," The Wall Street Journal, p. A15 reacted to the President's defense of the National Security Administration's surveillance of American citizens' electronic activities by writing: "Is this administration seriously asking us to trust the same government that admittedly targets political dissidents through the Internal Revenue Service and journalists through the Justice Department? . . . This is an absurd expectation."

Accordingly, Daniel Henninger's article, "The Sum of All Fears," *Ibid.*, June 13, 2013, p. A15 noted: "In January the pollsters at the Pew Research Center reported that for the first time a majority of Americans -- 53% -- now agree that 'the federal government threatens your own personal rights and freedoms.'"

(2) Many Christians face errant peer pressure from their leaders: Tammy K. of Campton, New Hampshire, in a letter to the editor of Answers (April-June, 2013, p. 7), wrote: "I am gravely concerned about the church leaders who choose not to believe the straightforward history God has . . . made clear to us. My husband and I find ourselves swimming amid ever-increasing torrents of evolutionary debris that threaten to destroy the fabric of the church itself."

(3) We face such ungodly peer pressure locally: not only last Sunday with three members reporting of ungodly peer pressure issues as we noted earlier in this introduction, I myself can count *twenty* stands I have been forced to take over the years at Nepaug Church to offset unbiblical peer pressures from other evangelical groups or leaders.

Need: *Thus, we ask, "How can I personally deal with strong, evil peer pressure in today's world?!"*

- I. **Moses' general Deuteronomy 4:44-11:32 call for loyal obedience to God in the suzerain treaty format of Deuteronomy directs Israel in Deuteronomy 7:1-6 to OVERCOME EVIL FOES who were FAR MORE POWERFUL than Israel, and SEPARATE herself as a nation FROM their EVIL:**
 - A. God had Moses tell Israel she would invade nations "more numerous and mightier" than her, Deut. 7:1 ESV.
 - B. The Lord directed that as He turned these nations over for defeat, Israel must "utterly destroy" (Deut. 7:2 KJV) them: the infinitive absolute of *haram*, "exterminate" comes before its finite verb form, strengthening the verb to mean "utterly exterminate," B. D. B., A Heb.-Eng. Lex. of the O. T., p. 355-356; net.bible.org, Deut. 7; Gesenius' Heb. Gram., 2nd ed., 1970, p. 342. Israel was thus to make no covenant with these pagan nations nor intermarry with them lest she go after their false gods and God would have to punish her, Deut. 7:2-4.
 - C. In addition, Israel was to eradicate even the Canaanite cult worship objects, for she was to be completely intolerant of idolatry as a people treasured by God above all the other peoples of the earth, Deut. 7:5-6.
- II. **Just HOW Israel was to gain victory over this evil peer pressure is explained in Deuteronomy 7:7-24:**
 - A. First, Israel was to realize that **God's character demanded** she **RESIST** Canaanite wickedness, that **heeding Him** instead led to *great blessing* while **disobeying Him** led to *severe discipline*, Deuteronomy 7:7-16:
 1. God was **gracious**, so He had loved and chosen Israel for no reason in Israel herself, Deuteronomy 7:7.
 2. God was **faithful** to *fulfill* His Abrahamic Covenant to lead Israel from Egypt with great power, Deut. 7:8.
 3. God was **righteous**, so Israel should know (a) He would greatly bless her if she heeded Him (b) but severely punish her if she disobeyed (Deut. 7:9-10), leaving Israel no option but to obey, Deut. 7:11-15. Israel was thus to destroy the Canaanites without pity and not serve their gods, Deuteronomy 7:16.
 - B. Second, Israel was to *defeat* her humanly superior Canaanite foes by *faith* in **GOD**, Deuteronomy 7:17-24:
 1. The Lord knew the people of Israel could easily be tempted to feel intimidated by having to defeat nations "more numerous and mightier" than her, so He voiced a question expressing such a fear, Deut. 7:17.
 2. In answer to the fear, Israel was to be **CAREFUL** to **RECALL** God's *past precedents of help*, Deut. 17:18:
 - a. The words "Thou . . . shalt well remember" (Deut. 7:18 KJV), similar to the case of *haram* back in Deuteronomy 7:2, utilize the infinitive absolute form of *zakar*, "remember" before its finite verb form to strengthen it (*Ibid.*, B. D. B., p. 269-271; net.bible.org, Deuteronomy 7; *Ibid.*, Gesenius' Heb. Gram.)

- b. This idiomatic expression that literally reads, "to remember you will remember" we thus translate in English as "you will surely remember" or "you will be careful to remember," Ibid., net.bible.org.
3. Thus, Israel was to **counter** the temptation to *feel intimidated* by her pagan foes by being **CAREFUL** to **RECALL** God's powerful work to **crush all Egypt**, the **most powerful nation** in that part of the world, when He rescued Israel from Egypt as the *precedent* for what **He** would do to the **Canaanites**, Deut. 7:19!
- C. In addition, God claimed that in view of Israel's own **human limitations**, He would **NOT** clear her Canaanite foes out of the Promised Land all at once lest the wild animals take over the country, but He would *gradually* give Israel victory, using even **hornets** to help drive out the enemy, and put Israel's Canaanite foes into mental confusion to make Israel's conquest of them more easy to achieve, Deuteronomy 7:20-23!
- D. God would give Canaan's kings into Israel's hand, and she was to terminate their legacies in the land so that no one would be able to stand against Israel until she had totally destroyed her Canaanite opponents, Deut. 7:24!
- III. In summary, God EMPHATICALLY called Israel AGAIN to SEPARATE from the Canaanites, to STAND STRONGLY in such separation from them and their wickedness, Deuteronomy 7:25-26:**
- A. In Deuteronomy 7:25, the Lord told Israel she was to destroy even the Canaanite religious images by fire, not to covet so as to save the silver and gold that might adorn them lest doing otherwise lead Israel into idolatry, ensnaring the nation in sin and resulting in God's severe judgment, Deuteronomy 7:25.
- B. Also, Israel was not to bring these cult objects into her homes lest it result in divine judgment, Deut. 7:26a.
- C. Then, in a final, **forceful** call (Deut. 7:26b), God gave Israel *two* commands, *both again using the infinitive construct before the finite verb for emphasis* as in Deuteronomy 7:2 and 18: (1) Israel was "to detest you will detest [utterly detest]" (*shaqar*, abhorring in cultic worship) and (2) "to abhor you will abhor [utterly abhor]" (*ta'ab*, general abhorrence due to inconsistency with God's nature) Canaan's cult objects, Ibid., net.bible.org.

Lesson: *Israel was to resist humanly overwhelming evil peer pressure by (1) motivation to do so from her need to align with God's gracious, faithful and righteous character to know His blessing, by (2) trusting God to help her defeat the Canaanites, by (3) being careful to recall His precedents of deliverance from formidable foes as hope for His help to defeat the Canaanites in the future, (4) being careful en route to resist all evil in line with God's will!*

Application: *May we (1) trust in Christ for salvation to become indwelt by the Holy Spirit for power to obey God, John 3:16; Rom. 8:9b; Gal. 5:16. (2) Then may we resist humanly potent peer pressure by (a) recalling God's gracious, faithful and righteous character demands it for blessing, by (b) trusting Him to help us, by (c) recalling His past help in regard to handling strong foes, (d) all while resisting all evil in line with God's will!*

Conclusion: (To illustrate the message . . .)

To illustrate this sermon, here is a **true** "Tale of Two Pastors And Two Churches":

Thirty years ago, an evangelical pastor in Avon, Connecticut loaned another pastor in New Hartford, Connecticut a book on church ministry. However, when the New Hartford pastor read it, he saw that it taught a form of idolatry, that it taught pastors to rely on human political theory instead of following Scripture and trusting in God!

This created a big trial for the New Hartford pastor: the Avon pastor's Church was starting to grow in number and program in line with his book, so if the New Hartford pastor did not apply its ideas in his own ministry, he risked strong adverse reactions by people who would compare his ministry with the Avon work. Yet, he knew he should heed the Bible if he was going to give a good account to God, so he rejected the book's teaching and chose to return it.

When he drove to Avon to return the book, the Avon pastor asked the New Hartford pastor what he thought of the book, so the New Hartford pastor explained its failings. The Avon pastor just looked at him, saying nothing, so the New Hartford pastor laid the book down on the Avon's pastor's office desk, thanked him for the loan, and left!

In a few years, the Avon pastor moved elsewhere, and the Church he started in Avon has since grown greatly. However, its worship is like a rock concert versus what Colossians 3:15-17 directs, one of its leaflets has taught we must hold to "foundational truths" but let people believe what they want on "lesser" doctrines versus 1 Timothy 3:15 and the Church has had a joint worship service with a Roman Catholic Church versus Galatians 1:8-9! A woman who had an "at risk" unborn fetus and attended that Church was advised by an M. D. there to get an abortion, and a lady who attended a ladies Bible study for several years there while unsaved reports she never then heard the Gospel there.

As for the New Hartford Church, to obey Scripture, it does the opposite of such practices.

Two pastors thirty years ago chose different ministry paths, and now their churches face the effects. By what Deuteronomy 7 says on resisting idolatrous peer pressure, the New Hartford man should have no regrets. He doesn't.

For blessing, may we counter strong, errant peer pressure in God's might, especially regarding idolatry!