**Driving out the Nations**

Last week Steve and I were discussing his music and how people learn at different speeds. Much of the responsibility or success or failure lies with the student rather than the teacher. While the teacher provides the student with instruction, it is repetition by the student that develops the skill required to master a musical instrument. A substantial amount of time in practice outside the classroom is necessary for improvement and a lack of it will limit a student’s progress. Doing work outside the classroom is not limited to music, teachers of all disciplines know that students who limit their exposure to a subject to just the classroom time are likely to fail. A teacher can do his or her part but the students have to do their part as well. In our study of Deuteronomy we see Moses telling the Israelites that God had done and continued to do His part but they were responsible for their part of the covenant.

Chapter 7 begins with Moses telling the people that God would drive out before them people who lived in Canaan but that they would have to finish the work. God would hand them over to them and they were to destroy them totally. They were to make no treaties with them and Moses forbade them to intermarry with them. He warned that if they gave their sons and daughters to them then they would turn them away from God and towards the false gods that the Canaanites worshipped. They could not just leave the Canaanites alone, Moses instructed them to break down their altars, smash their sacred stones, cut down their Asherah poles and burn their idols.

Moses told the people that God did not choose them because they were more numerous than of peoples. God made His covenant with Abraham and 2 generations later Jacob’s family that became the foundation for the Israelite nation numbered a mere 70 people (see Gen. 46:27). Moses reminded them that God had kept His promise made to their forefathers by bringing them out of Egypt and He would extend His covenant to 1000 generations of those who love Him and keep His commands. Those who hated him were destined for destruction. Moses told the people that if they would follow the laws he gave them then God would keep His covenant with them and bless them with abundant crops, flocks and good health.

Knowing their history, Moses proactively brought up the argument some would make that the Canaanites were too strong for them. He reminded them of how God had destroyed Pharoah and the Egyptian army and had performed miracles. Moses told them that God would send hornets ahead of them to drive out the nations before them. It would be gradual but they would succeed in driving them all out if the obeyed God. He warned them not to take any gold or silver as plunder or they might be ensnared by the possession of it.

In chapter 8, Moses reminded the people how God had led them in the desert for 40 years. God had first humbled them and tested them by withholding food and water after which He provided both so that they would learn to depend on Him. God was about to reward them with treasures that He had for them in Canaan. It was a diverse land of hills, valleys and plains with abundant fruits and grains where they would lack nothing. Moses then warned them about the risk of complacency when they had gold and silver, large flocks and plenty of food. They might become proud thinking they were responsible for what they had, forgetting that it was God who had provided for them. The chapter ends with a warning that if they followed other gods then the true God would destroy them as He had destroyed other nations.

God could have destroyed all the Canaanite nations by Himself at any time He chose but instead His plan was for the Israelites to finish the job themselves. As we know, they failed to uphold their part of the covenant and allowed themselves to be drawn into the sins of the Canaanite nations. They fell so low that God told them that even the daughters of the Philistines were shocked by their lewd conduct (see Ez. 16:27).