

Psalm 106:34-48

This continues the theme of Israel's failure in fully claiming its inheritance.

Psalm 106:34-35 - "They did not destroy the nations, concerning whom the LORD commanded them: But were mingled among the heathen, and learned their works."

The fullest account of this command is in Deuteronomy:

- **Deuteronomy 7:1** - "When the LORD your God brings you into the land which you go to possess, and has cast out many nations before you, the Hittites and the Girgashites and the Amorites and the Canaanites and the Perizzites and the Hivites and the Jebusites, seven nations greater and mightier than you, 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: 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. For they will turn your sons away from following Me, to serve other gods; so the anger of the LORD will be aroused against you and destroy you suddenly."

The command to exterminate any Canaanites that did not leave, which to moderns seems so terribly severe, was undoubtedly based on God's foreknowledge of the fact that otherwise there would be contact, and if contact, then contamination. (For the actual fact, see **Judges 2:11-13, 19; Judges 3:6, 7; Judges 6:25; Judges 10:6**) - *Pulpit Commentary*

What Israel was commanded to do to obtain the physical inheritance in the Promised Land, we do internally, to enter into the "rest." The thing we put to death is our old man, Adam, and specifically:

- **Colossians 3:5** - "Mortify therefore your members which are upon the earth; fornication, uncleanness, inordinate affection, evil concupiscence, and covetousness, which is idolatry: Because of these, the wrath of God is coming on the sons of disobedience."

Or, as stated in the NET translation:

"So put to death whatever in your nature belongs to the earth: sexual immorality, impurity, shameful passion, evil desire, and greed which is idolatry."

"mortify" = *nekroō* - to put to death, make dead, deprive of power

We do this by repentance, and by "reckoning" ourselves as dead, whenever we come face-to-face with our own self-seeking.

- **Romans 6:11** - "Likewise reckon ye also yourselves to be dead indeed unto sin, but alive unto God through Jesus Christ our Lord."

... and "revenge the disobedience"

- **2 Corinthians 10:5-6** - "Casting down imaginations, and every high thing that exalteth itself against the knowledge of God, and bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ; And having in a readiness to revenge all disobedience, when your obedience is fulfilled."

"Revenge" = *ekdikeō* - carrying out justice as an executioner, to defend what is right, to avenge wrongs

We decide minute by minute who we are and what our true identity is, which is manifested by the actions in our "members," guided either by self or by Christ:

- **Romans 7:5** - "For when we were in the flesh, the motions of sins, which were by the law, did work in our members to bring forth fruit unto death."

- **1 Corinthians 6:15** - "Know ye not that your bodies are the members of Christ? shall I then take the members of Christ, and make them the members of an harlot? God forbid."

Once they were mingled among the heathen, they "learned their works." i.e. they were influenced to copy and imitate their values.

- **Proverbs 22:25** - "Do not make friends with an angry man, and do not associate with a hot-tempered man, or you may learn his ways and entangle yourself in a snare."

Paul quotes this to the Corinthians:

- **1 Corinthians 15:32-34** - "If the dead are not raised, 'Let us eat and drink, for tomorrow we die.' Do not be deceived: 'Bad company corrupts good character.' Sober up as you ought, and stop sinning; for some of you are ignorant of God."

The consequences of neglecting this command are dire:

Psalm 106:36 - "And they served their idols: which were a snare unto them."

Allowing the Canaanites to survive led to associations in trade and other ways like intermarriage, which led to watching and learning about Canaanite values and beliefs, which led them to begin to worship (give importance to) their idols.

Idolatry first is set up alongside the true God, and we think we can worship them both. Or we think we're really worshipping God alone in the "form" of the idol. Eventually Yahweh is forgotten.

And even worse:

Psalm 106:37-38 - "Yea, they sacrificed their sons and their daughters unto devils, And shed innocent blood, even the blood of their sons and of their daughters, whom they sacrificed unto the idols of Canaan: and the land was polluted with blood."

See examples **2 Kings 16:3; Ezekiel 16:20; Ezekiel 20:31; Isaiah 57:5.**

These were victims offered to Moloch (**Jeremiah 7:31**), Baal (**Jeremiah 19:5**), and Chemosh (**2 Kings 3:27**) and probably others.

The Canaanite practice of child sacrifice was carried to the Phoenician colony of Carthage and continued there until the Roman's destroyed the city.

"Devils" = *shêdiym* - from a root meaning "to rule." Originally a powerful, violent lord, later a demon or idol (The Arabic equivalent *sidi* meant "my Lord," like in El Cid. Similar to the word Baal - "lord."

Targum: spirits noxious and hurtful

The only other place this word is used:

- **Deuteronomy 32:17** - "They sacrificed unto devils (*shêdiym*) not to God; to gods whom they knew not, to new gods that came newly up, whom your fathers feared not."

Paul refers to this:

- **1 Corinthians 10:19-21** - "Am I suggesting, then, that food sacrificed to an idol is anything, or that an idol is anything? No, but the sacrifices of pagans are offered to demons, not to God. And I do not want you to be participants with demons. You cannot drink the cup of the Lord and the cup of demons too; you cannot partake in the table of the Lord and the table of demons"

And the Mishnah, Aboda Zara 2:

"The flesh which is intended to be offered first of all to idols is allowed, but that which comes out of the temple is forbidden, because it is like sacrifices of the dead," it is observed, fol. 32b: "Whence, said R. Jehuda ben Bethra, do I know that that which is offered to idols (תקרובת לעבדה זרה) pollutes like a dead body? From **Psalm 106:28**. As the dead body pollutes everything that is under the same roof with it, so also does everything that is offered to idols."

Yet this is what Israel ended up doing, with tragic results.

- **Jeremiah 7:30-31** - "For the people of Judah have done evil in My sight, declares the LORD. They have set up their abominations in the house that bears My Name, and so have defiled it. They have built the high places of Topheth in the Valley of Hinnom so they could burn their sons and daughters in the fire— something I did not command, nor did it enter My mind."

These passages lay out the progression of how by degrees we can become morally numbed and are eventually able - for the sake of our idolatry - to do things that once would have caused us to shudder. Our moral compass becomes so pulled out of alignment that we become truly lost. One blade of grass at a time, and soon the sheep can't find its way back to the flock.

The Wisdom of Solomon describes the lot of an idolator:

- **Wisdom 13:10, 18** - "But miserable are they, and in dead things is their hope, who call them gods, which are the works of men's hands, gold and silver, to shew art in, and resemblances of beasts, or a stone good for nothing, the work of an ancient hand.... "For health he calleth upon that which is weak: for life prayeth to that which is dead; for aid humbly beseecheth that which hath least means to help: and for a good journey he asketh of that which cannot set a foot forward: And for gaining and getting, and for good success of his hands, asketh ability to do of him, that is most unable to do any thing."

The Promised Land became "polluted with blood" i.e. "with the sins of murder" as the Targum has it; which only can be cleansed with the blood of the murderers.

The "innocent blood" shed in the land is often declared to have been the especial cause of God's anger against Israel, and of his final casting away of his inheritance (**2 Kings 24:4; Isaiah 59:7; Jeremiah 7:6; Jeremiah 22:3, 17**)

Psalm 106:39 - "Thus were they defiled with their own works, and went a whoring with their own inventions."

They could no longer blame the Canaanites for their misdeeds. By the end, they were implementing sin of their own devising.

Psalm 106:40 - "Therefore was the wrath of the LORD kindled against his people, insomuch that he abhorred his own inheritance."

This is the verse that links to our Torah reading in **Numbers 36**. The half tribe of Manasseh was concerned about about the loss of their inheritance if the daughters of Zelophehad married outside the tribe. That faith was commended by God.

Now, though, the opposite is pictured. Israel was so estranged from God that He abhorred His own inheritance, i.e. the people of Israel, whom He had chosen for his inheritance, and were his portion, and the lot of his inheritance.

- **Deuteronomy 32:9** - "For the LORD'S portion is his people; Jacob is the lot of his inheritance."

Psalm 106:41-42 - "And he gave them into the hand of the heathen; and they that hated them ruled over them. Their enemies also oppressed them, and they were brought into subjection under their hand."

Rashi - in the days of the Judges between one judge and another, e.g. Eglon, Cushan-rishathaim, Sisera, the Philistines, and Midian.

This was prophesied before if they failed to keep God's Law:

- **Leviticus 26:17** - "And I will set My face against you, so that you will be defeated by your enemies. Those who hate you will rule over you, and you will flee when no one pursues you."

Psalm 106:43 - "Many times did he deliver them; but they provoked him with their counsel, and were brought low for their iniquity."

"Many times did he deliver them" By means of the judges, Othniel, Ehud, Barak, Gideon, Jephthah, Samson, and others.

Psalm 106:44-45 - "Nevertheless he regarded their affliction, when he heard their cry: And he remembered for them his covenant, and repented according to the multitude of his mercies."

Rashi - On account of repentance.

The covenant mentioned is not the one at Sinai, which the people failed to keep, but the covenant with Abraham (Genesis 15), in which He put Abram to sleep while He completed the required ritual. God upholds both sides of His covenant.

Psalm 106:46 - "He made them also to be pitied of all those that carried them captives."

- **2 Chronicles 36:22-23** - "And in the first year of Cyrus, king of Persia, at the completion of the word of the Lord in the mouth of Jeremiah, the Lord aroused the spirit of Cyrus the king of Persia, and he issued a proclamation throughout all his kingdom, and put it also in writing, saying: So said Cyrus the king of Persia: All the kingdoms of the earth has the Lord God of the heavens delivered to me, and He commanded me to build Him a House in Jerusalem, which is in Judea. Who among you is of all His people, may the Lord his God be with him, and he may ascend."

And Cyrus' successors later helped Ezra and Nehemiah in rebuilding.

Psalm 106:47 - "Save us, O LORD our God, and gather us from among the heathen, to give thanks unto thy holy name, and to triumph in thy praise."

"Gather us from among the heathen" - a cry of the church into which Jews and gentiles were included.

- **Micah 4:2** - "And many nations will come and say, 'Come, let us go up to the mountain of the LORD, to the house of the God of Jacob. He will teach us His ways, so that we may walk in His paths.' For the law will go forth from Zion and the word of the LORD

from Jerusalem.”

Regarding the faith of the Roman Centurion:

- **Matthew 8: 10-11** - "When Jesus heard it, he marveled, and said to them that followed, Verily I say unto you, I have not found so great faith, no, not in Israel. And I say unto you, That many shall come from the east and west, and shall sit down with Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob, in the kingdom of heaven."

Psalm 106:48 - "Blessed be the LORD God of Israel from everlasting to everlasting: and let all the people say, Amen. Praise ye the LORD."

Rashi - "from everlasting to everlasting": From this world to the world to come.

Isaac Arama (rabbi of the 1400s in Spain) explains this refers to the days of Messiah.

"Amen. Hallelujah" - these two words are also joined in **Revelation 19:4** - "And the twenty-four elders and the four living creatures fell down and worshiped God who sits on the throne, saying: 'Amen, Hallelujah!'"

The psalm ends as it began; for though the greatest part of it is taken up in relating the sins of the people of Israel; yet as the Lord was merciful to them and forgave them, and notwithstanding bestowed great mercies on them, there was reason for praise and thanksgiving. **Here ends the fourth part of the book of Psalms.** - *Gill's Exposition*