### Deuteronomy

## Chapter 20

1‘And when you go to war against your enemies and find that they have a larger army and more horsemen than you do, don’t be afraid of them, for Jehovah your God who brought you out of the land of Egypt will be with you!  
  
 2‘But, before you go out to fight, the Priests must come and speak to the people, and tell them this:  
  
 3‘Listen, O IsraEl!  
  
 ‘Today you’re going to fight against your enemies, so you must be courageous!  
  
 ‘Don’t be afraid, don’t get confused, and don’t retreat, 4because Jehovah your God is with you and He will fight against your enemies and save you!’  
  
 5‘The scribes must also speak to the people and say:  
  
 ‘If any man has built a new house and he hasn’t consecrated it yet, he should go back home. For he might die in the war, and then someone else would be able to consecrate it.  
  
 6‘And any man who’s planted a vineyard and not yet [enjoyed its wine] should go back home. For he might die in the battle and then someone else would get to enjoy it.   
  
 7‘Also, if any man is engaged [to marry] and he’s not yet taken his woman, he should go back home. For he might die in the battle and then someone else would take her.’  
  
 8‘The scribes should also say to the people:  
  
 ‘If there’s any man who isn’t [brave] and is afraid, he too should go back home, so his fear doesn’t discourage his brothers.’  
  
 9‘And after the scribes have finished speaking to the people, they must appoint generals over the army to lead them.’  
  
  
 10‘Now, whenever you approach a city (before you go to battle against them) you must call out to them peacefully. 11And if they answer you peacefully and open [their gates] to you, all the people who are found there must become your subjects and serve you.  
  
 12‘But if they don’t listen to you and they choose to fight a war against you, then you must [lay siege to the city] 13until Jehovah your God gives it into your hands. And thereafter, you must kill all the men with swords.  
  
 14‘You may spare the women, their possessions, all their cattle, and anything else that’s in that city… You may loot it and take whatever you wish and eat whatever your enemies may have, because Jehovah your God has given it to you.  
  
 15‘Now, that’s what you must do to the distant cities, but not to the cities of these nations that Jehovah your God is giving to you and whose land you’ll inherit... 16You must not leave anything alive there!  
  
 17‘You must curse the:  
  
 • Hittites,  
 • Amorites,  
 • CanaAnites,  
 • Pherezites,  
 • Evites,  
 • Jebusites, and   
 • Gergesites...  
  
 ‘...just as Jehovah your God has commanded you, 18so that they don’t teach you to do all the disgusting things that they’re doing before their gods and cause you to sin before Jehovah your God.’  
  
  
 19‘And whenever you lay siege to a city and you don’t succeed in capturing it right away, you must not cut down and destroy any of its [fruit] trees.  
  
 ‘Rather, [pick the fruit] and eat it… For the trees in the fields aren’t men who must be cut down to capture [the city].  
  
 20‘However, you must cut down and destroy any trees that you know aren’t fruit bearing, and then use them to build a mound against the [walls] of the city that has chosen to battle with you, until it’s captured.’