

Journey Through The Cities Of Refuge

Lesson #24

Spiritual Warfare: Canaanite Spirit

July 8, 2026

Spurgeon: Sin makes many empty promises. It is ruinous. It will devastate you.

"Every sin has to be slaughtered. Not a single sin is to be tolerated.

Off with their head! Drive the sword into their hearts! They are all to die.

Not one of them may be spared."

The whole race is to be exterminated and so buried that not a bone of them can be found."

Deut. 20:16-17 God commanded the Israelites, "In the cities of the nations the

Lord your God is giving you as an inheritance, do not leave alive anything that breathes,

but you shall Utterly Destroy Them: the Hittite and the Amorite and the Canaanite and the Perizzite and the Hivite and the Jebusite, just as the LORD your God has commanded you.

➤ *Canaanites* is used as a broad, umbrella term for all the inhabitants of Canaan.

When God commanded Joshua and Israel to claim their Promised Land, the Canaanites weren't about to simply surrender and leave. Israel had to forcefully depose the Canaanites.

Why would God have the Israelites exterminate entire groups of people, including women and children?

1. To Judge All the Canaanites for Their Abominations.

Gen. 15:13-14, 16 Then God said to Abram: "Know certainly that your descendants will be strangers in a land *that is* not theirs, and will serve them, and they will afflict them

400 years. And also that nation, whom they shall serve, will I judge: and afterward shall they come out with great substance. But in the 4th generation they shall return here,

for the iniquity of the Amorites is not yet complete." [The return of Israel to the promised land from Egypt would correspond with the "completion" of the iniquity of the Amorites.]

Key: God gave the Canaanites 400 years to repent and turn to Him as the One True God.

➤ The wickedness increased from generation to generation.

➤ Can you imagine the presence & power of Satan imbedded & contagiously spreading through the doorway nations of Canaan?

➤ Can you imagine darkness so expansive through a culture that the people who carry God's plan of redemption were at risk of being overwhelmed & destroyed?

The Canaanites were a brutal and wicked culture that frequently engaged in incredibly decadent behavior. Leviticus 18 provides a list of sins that Israel was to avoid at all costs: incest, child sacrifice, homosexuality, and bestiality.

➤ All these sins were practiced by the people of Canaan.

Lev. 18:24-27 warns the Israelites against the sexual and moral practices of the Canaanite nations. It explains that these sins "defiled" the land,

which eventually caused the land to "vomit out" its inhabitants. God warns Israel:

➤ They will face the same expulsion if they adopt these detestable behaviors.

The Canaanites had ample opportunity to recognize that Israel was God's chosen people, but they ignored what they knew to be true. They heard how Egypt had withered under God's terrifying acts of judgment. They knew the drama of how the Red Sea opened and made a highway for Israel's exodus. The Canaanites saw the miracles and knew Israel was coming for their land, but they ignored it and remained stubborn.

The Canaanite Rahab was saved, and so was her family. They are proof that the Canaanites could have avoided destruction if they had repented [Joshua 2]. No person had to die.

God's desire is that the wicked turn from their sin rather than perish [Ezek. 18:31-32; 33:11].

Key Principle: God's Mercy and Patience toward the unrepentant is long but not eternal.

Key Principle: God's delay stems from His kindness meant to lead people to repentance.

2. *To stave off idolatry and compromise.* The Iniquities of Idolatry

Records reveal that over 30 gods were identified in the Canaanites' religion.

- These false gods were made in the image of man.
- The Canaanite religion was heavily centered around the worship of gods like Baal and Asherah, which often involved extreme immorality and practices deeply detested by God.
- Everything was allowed in business, as long as the business was done and everyone prospered. The end justified the means.
- These heathen people had descended into a revolting depth of immorality, gross iniquity, and idolatry that could no longer be tolerated and needed to be destroyed.

Deut. 20:18 lest they teach you to do according to all their abominations which they have done for their gods, and you sin against the Lord your God.

God's order to exterminate the Canaanites was meant to guard His relationship with His people.

Preserve Their Faith: God knew that if any Canaanites remained in the Promised Land, their idolatry and pagan worship would become a "snare" and corrupt the Hebrews.

Key: The Canaanite culture and the emergent Israel, with its unique vision of a holy God, simply could not co-exist.

If they did not wipe them out, the false gods of the Canaanites would be a snare to the Israelites and lead them to worship these false gods. So, it proved to be.

The Danger of Partial Obedience: Joshua 16:10; 17:12-13; Judges 1:29

- The Israelites failed in their mission and left many Canaanites alive.
- Israel compromised with Canaanite culture and fell into idolatry time and again.
Judges 2:1-3; I Kings 11:5; 14:24; II Kings 16:3-4

3. *To Fulfil The Curse On Canaan: The Origin of the Canaanite Spirit*

Gen. 9:22-27 Canaan, a descendent of Noah, was the 4th son of Ham. A curse was imposed by Noah on Canaan, because of the actions of Ham who looked on his father's nakedness and told his brothers.

- "Cursed be Canaan! The lowest of slaves will he be to his brothers"

4. Protect the Messianic Line: The nation of Israel had to be maintained as a holy, separate people until the promised Messiah could be born.

II Corinthians 2:11 lest Satan should take advantage of us; for we are not ignorant of his devices. Let us examine how they operate and function in us so we will not be ignorant of the enemy's devices. Know Our Enemy!

There was also a specific, localized part of the Canaanites who were called Canaanites.

Canaanite Spirit: Spirit of Greed and Merchandising

Descriptive Words: Humiliation, Shame, Embarrassment; Merchant; Trafficker;

Influence of the world upon the Christian faith; Carnal; Materialistic

- Low Living and Compromise: The Canaanite Spirit symbolizes the fleshly aspects of human nature that dilute faith, compromise integrity, and drag one into worldly living.
- Flesh vs. Spirit: Conquering the Canaanites represents the internal battle to bring subconscious elemental forces such as unbridled instincts, desires, and passions under the guidance of spiritual principles.
- Compromise and Idolatry: Canaanite religion was deeply tied to Baal and Asherah, emphasizing sensuality, convenience, and worldly desires. Spiritually, it tempts people to compromise their morals, embrace immediate fleshly gratification, and conform to the surrounding culture's casual acceptance of promiscuity and excess.
- Materialism This spirit can lead to financial anxiety and bondage. It often lures individuals into pursuing wealth only to trap them in insatiable greed, debt, and eventual economic humiliation or spiritual poverty.
- The Spirit of the Merchant: The Canaanites, known as a seafaring, trading people, were equated with a "merchant" or "trafficker."

This spiritual influence manifests through a lifestyle centered around trade, commerce, and making money at any cost, often prioritizing temporary earthly gain over spiritual well-being.

- The Canaanite spirit turns ministry into business.
- This spirit doesn't steal your temple, but it slowly turns your temple into a marketplace.

- Life Without Divine Guidance: The Canaanites also represent humanity living independently of the Creator, either out of ignorance or active refusal.

Harpers Bible Dictionary: 'The Canaanites enjoyed a reputation as traders.'

They lived within the land & remained there as long as the trading and profit were good!

The spirit of greed and lust for material goods, encouraging man to love mammon.

- Mammon was a Canaanite god of prosperity and wealth.

Matt. 6:24 No one can serve two masters; for either he will hate the one and love the other, or else he will be loyal to the one and despise the other. You cannot serve God and mammon.

The Canaanite Spirit is a "giant" who seeks to ensnare man and keep him from receiving his true inheritance. [Abundant Life; Joint-Heir] He comes to rob, steal and kill.

Beware of this Demonic Spirit: It will test you. It scores many victories in Christians' lives. The Canaanite spirit is the driving force behind all pride and self-esteem.

➤ This is the beginning of back-sliding in most Christians.

1. Jesus addresses this: Mark 4:7,14, 18-19 And some seed fell among thorns; and the thorns grew up and choked it, and it yielded no crop. The sower sows the Word. ¹⁸These are they which are sown among thorns; such as hear the word, and the cares of this world, the deceitfulness of riches, and the desires for other things entering in choke the Word, and it becomes unfruitful. Warning: Be aware of the power of this giant in its ability to destroy the Word of God in the hearts receiving His Word. This giant promises great fulfillment and happiness but usually the end is chaos, destruction, and despair.

2. The Canaanite spirit promotes a lack of contentment and prompts an insult to God.

This giant caused the destruction of many Israelites by causing them to lust and complain. Exodus 16:2-9 Then the whole congregation of the children of Israel complained against Moses and Aaron in the wilderness. ³ And the children of Israel said to them,

"Oh, that we had died by the hand of the LORD in the land of Egypt, when we sat by the pots of meat and when we ate bread to the full!

For you have brought us out into this wilderness to kill this whole assembly with hunger."

Wait! What about the slavery and the whip? They only recalled the food and how good they had it in Egypt. They expressed their discontent with God's plan and their circumstances.

➤ This attitude showed their lack of faith and confidence in the LORD.

God sent leanness into their soul. They begin to crave other things as their source of happiness which led to an erroneous belief that the things they craved would satisfy, bring joy, security and satisfaction. [Other passages: Numbers 11:1-6, 8, 31-33; Ps. 78:17-22; 25-42 Ps. 106:6-15]

➤ Became rebellious, stiff-necked, hard-hearted

Warning: Discontentment erodes your abundant life.

Solution: Phil. 4:11b for I have learned, in whatsoever state I am, therewith to be content.

Stanley: The only thing that can fill the human heart is a personal relationship with Jesus Christ.

Ps. 107:9 For He satisfies the longing soul, and fills the hungry soul with goodness.

3. The Canaanite spirit likes to strike when you lag behind and are weak. [Ex. 17:8-9]

Deut. 25:17-19 Remember what Amalek did unto thee by the way, when ye were come forth out of Egypt; ¹⁸ How he met thee by the way, and smote the hindmost of thee, even all that were feeble behind thee, when thou wast faint and weary; and he feared not God. Therefore, it shall be, when the LORD thy God hath given thee rest from all thine enemies round about, in the land which the LORD thy God giveth thee for an inheritance to possess it, that thou shalt blot out the remembrance of Amalek from under heaven; thou shalt not forget it. [Kill The Flesh]

4. Seduces your selfish desires Gen. 13:1-18

Gen. 13:10a-12b And Lot lifted up his eyes, and beheld all the plain of Jordan, that it was well watered everywhere, even as the garden of the LORD, ...pitched his tent toward Sodom.

➤ Chose to live next to Sodom > burning with covetousness or fettered by covetousness

- Seduced by the selfish desire for material gain and prosperity
- He placed himself and his family in danger. In the end, he lost everything.

The Canaanite spirit is adept in slaying young Christians by showing them the lack of things and money in the natural realm they do not own or possess.

The Heavenly treasures have no comparison in this realm until people are grounded in the Word and can delay receiving their treasures until the Judgment Seat of Christ.

Tozer: If God takes away from us the old, wrinkled, beat-up dollar bill we clutch so desperately, it is only because He wants to exchange it for the whole federal mint, the entire treasury!

He is saying, "I have in store for you all the resources of heaven. Help yourself!"

Heb. 6:12 That ye be not slothful,

but followers of them who through faith and patience inherit the promises.

5. The Canaanite spirit deals with money and how it can BETRAY you.

A. I Timothy 6:9-10 But those who desire to be rich fall into temptation and a snare, and into many foolish and harmful lusts which drown men in destruction and perdition.

For the love of money is a root of all kinds of evil, for which some have strayed from the faith in their greediness and pierced themselves through with many sorrows.

We are admonished to keep our focus on seeking treasures of eternal value. [Matt. 6:33]

B. Joshua 7:18-21;25 Story of Achan

Joshua 7:20-21 And Achan answered Joshua, and said,

Indeed I have sinned against the LORD God of Israel, and thus and thus have I done:

²¹ When I saw among the spoils a goodly Babylonish garment, and two hundred shekels of silver, and a wedge of gold of fifty shekels weight, then I coveted them, and took them; and, behold, they are hid in the earth in the midst of my tent, and the silver under it.

C. II Kings 5:20-27 Greed > Lying > Traitor

Gehazi, the servant of the prophet Elisha, was struck with leprosy as a punishment for greed and dishonesty. After Elisha miraculously healed Naaman of leprosy and refused payment, Gehazi chased after Naaman, lied to get silver and clothes, and hid them.

²⁷The leprosy therefore of Naaman shall cleave unto thee, and unto thy seed forever.

And he went out from his presence a leper as white as snow.

6. The Canaanite spirit will cause MANY to be destroyed in these last days.

Many will seek what the world offers and thus will be carried away with it to destruction.

Richard Wurmbrand - "He who masters his passions is a king even while in chains.

He who is ruled by his passions is a slave even while sitting on a throne."

7. This spirit is king over the prosperity message.

Many are deceived thinking that God wants them to be rich and healthy.

Many who proclaim this false teaching are motivated by money and gain for themselves.

II Cor. 2:17 For we are not like many, [acting like merchants] peddling God's word [shortchanging and adulterating God's message]; but from pure [uncompromised] motives, as [commissioned and sent] from God, we speak [His message] in Christ in the sight of God.

II Tim. 3:12 that "all who desire to live godly in Christ Jesus will suffer persecution."

Telling sinners that God's purpose is to give mankind happiness, health and wealth and allow them to get the best out of life is a perversion of the true Gospel message.

That message cannot be found in Scripture, yet it is the essence of the modern proclamation.

This false message leaves the sinner ignorant of the fact that he is a sinner and that God is his Judge. You have proclaimed a recipe for a false convert.

8. When you [preacher, teacher, worker, etc.] allow this spirit to cause you to compromise the Word of God for money (prestige, position, popularity), that person who has caused you to compromise, will then control you. When you are controlled by a spirit such as that, you will begin to preach (teach, proclaim) a watered-down Gospel which will cause God to judge you along with the one you have chosen to be one spirit with.

This will cause those that hear you to also be destroyed and thus God will judge you for allowing others to live according to a watered-down message.

Prov. 11:1 Dishonest scales are an abomination to the LORD, but a just weight is His delight.

Hosea 12 The merchants are warned against using deceitful balances and exploiting the vulnerable for profit.

In Hosea 12:7-9, the prophet rebukes Israel (Ephraim) for turning their back on God in pursuit of dishonest wealth.

He warns that because they act like corrupt merchants rather than God's people, the Lord will strip them of their material security and force them into exile and wandering.

Hosea 12:7 A cunning Canaanite! Deceitful scales *are* in his hand; He loves to oppress.

Dishonest Business: The prophet compares Israel's conduct to that of deceitful "Canaanite" merchants who use false scales and love to exploit others.

- Represents systemic greed, where clever deception and financial oppression of the vulnerable have replaced mercy and justice.
- They were becoming rich through deceitful means, fraud, excess, over pricing, under rewarding, oppression, manipulation, lying, crooked dealings, and the merchandising of men's souls for profit. All while claiming their increase was because of God's favor.

Hosea 12:8 Ephraim boasts, "I am rich! I've made a fortune all by myself!

No one has caught me cheating! My record is spotless!"

Their prosperity led to pride: the kind of self-sufficiency that says, "We don't need God."

The people are stubbornly unrepentant, mistakenly believing that material wealth equals God's favor or moral innocence.

Hosea 12:9 But I am the LORD your God, who rescued you from slavery in Egypt.

And I will make you live in tents again, as you do each year at the Festival of Tabernacles.

Divine Judgment: Because they had chosen greed over their covenant with Him, God would humble them. Warning of Exile: When the Assyrians were through with Israel, the Jews would be grateful even for the booths they lived in for a week during the Feast of Tabernacles. Key Lesson: Wealth amassed through deceit and a false sense of self-sufficiency will inevitably result in judgment and spiritual destitution. Must learn true dependence on God.

BEWARE OF THIS DEMON. IT WILL COME TO TEST YOU.

Spiritual Warfare

Each nation represents a territorial spirit or inner stronghold believers must conquer. Canaanites which represent greed and worldliness must be cast down through contentment and holiness.

Hebrews 13:5 *Let your conduct be without covetousness; be content with such things as you have.*

"Never will I leave you; never will I forsake you".

1. Lordship of Christ: signifies exclusive allegiance to Christ.

Affection for wealth rivals devotion to God [Matt. 6:24].

2. Stewardship: Resources are viewed as entrusted by God for kingdom purposes [Luke 16:9-13]. Freedom from greed liberates believers to invest in eternal dividends.

3. Contentment: The promise "I will never leave you. I will never forsake you," grounds satisfaction in relationship, not possessions.

Defenses Against the Canaanite Spirit

A. Prayer is our first line of defense against the Canaanite spirit.

Genesis 12:1-6 God gave Abraham a revelation of the land of Canaan.

When Abraham arrived to look the land over, the Canaanite was in the land. Abraham built an altar and called on the name of the LORD.

B. Pathway To Holiness

Ps. 66:18 If I regard iniquity in my heart, The LORD will not hear.

Consistent confession and cleansing are the primary ways we maintain a Spirit-filled life, grow and become conformed to the image of Christ.

Consider: The depth and power of my prayer life will never be greater than the depth of my daily confession and cleansing.

Ask the Holy Spirit to reveal sin in me in the following 2 areas of my life.

[1] Sins of Thoughts & Attitudes: Where sin begins

In II Cor. 10:5, we are commanded to "take every thought captive to the obedience of Christ."

Questions to ponder: Are there unclean or lustful thoughts, thoughts that are consumed with earthly pursuits, thoughts of anger and bitterness; unloving thoughts; thoughts of fear & doubt; attitudes of pride & prejudice; attitudes of lukewarmness toward God.

➤ Immediately confess and forsake these sins of the heart.

[2] Sins of Speech

Matt. 12:36 But I say unto you, that every idle word that men shall speak, they shall give account thereof in the day of judgment.

Ex: profane words, gossip, slander, unkind or unloving words to or about others, speech that is overly critical, words that are exaggerations or untruths

B. Defense against the Canaanite spirit: Seek God always when you have sinned.

Genesis 38:2 After Judah sold Joseph, he took a Canaanite woman to be his wife.

Instead of running to God for repentance and forgiveness, he ran to a Canaanite (flesh).

Joined his spirit to the flesh! His marriage was one of shame and trouble. Two of his sons were so wicked that God himself slew them. Joining your spirit to a wrong thing will hurt you.

C. Recognize the NAME of the LORD GOD

Exodus 3:8, 13-17 "I am that I am"... meaning... "I am one who is existing always in the present and what I am I will always be, life to my people and wrath to my enemies."

Proverbs 18:10 "The name of the Lord is a strong tower; the righteous run into it and are safe."

Ps. 61:3 For thou hast been a shelter for me, and a strong tower from the enemy.

Jesus has gone before us and defeated our foes...

Colossians 2:15 And having spoiled principalities and powers,

He made a shew of them openly, triumphing over them in it.

Galatians 5:24 Those who are Christ's have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires.

Major Ian Thomas: "The flesh will threaten, shout, strut, domineer, sulk, plot, creep, beg, plead or sob - whatever the situation may demand in the interests of its own survival..."

The flesh hates to be exposed for what it is and will fight desperately to avoid that awful moment of truth - that moment when the Holy Spirit rips the mask from its sickly face!"

Many will say, "Well, that's just me. I can't help it. That's who I am."

II Cor. 5:17 Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature:

old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new.

Truth: As I yield to the Holy Spirit, He will give me victory over this evil spirit.

He will impart the victorious life of Jesus Christ in me.

Gal. 5:16 Walk in the Spirit, and ye shall not fulfil the lust of the flesh.

Promise > Reckon > Yield > Thank

D.L. Moody "You know when a man is going up in a balloon, he takes in sand as a ballast, and when he wants to mount a little higher, he throws out a little of the ballast, and then he will mount a little higher. He throws out a little more ballast, and he mounts still higher.

The higher he gets the more he throws out. The nearer we get to God the more we have to throw out the things of this world. Let go of them; do not let us first set our hearts and affections on them but do what the Master tells us - lay up for ourselves treasures in heaven."