



Canadian CONQUEST

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Confronting Reality

Deuteronomy 2:34 And we took all his cities at that time, and utterly destroyed the men, and the women, and the little ones, of every city, we left none to remain:

It is difficult to read passages of scripture like these without a shudder of horror running through your soul. While some find a way to justify the slaughter of warring males, it is inconceivable to picture an Israelite soldier with a small child impaled on the end of his sword. I don't know about you, but for me it brings a feeling of utter revulsion. What makes this much worse is that the Bible appears to not only condone these actions, but to command them.

Deuteronomy 7:2 And when the LORD thy God shall deliver them before thee; thou shalt smite them, and utterly destroy [seclude, the ban] them; thou shalt make no covenant with them, nor shew mercy unto them:

Joshua 11:12 And all the cities of those kings, and all the kings of them, did Joshua take, and smote them with the edge of the sword, and he utterly destroyed them, as Moses the servant of the LORD commanded.

Joshua 10:40 So Joshua smote all the country of the hills, and of the south, and of the vale, and of the springs, and all their kings: he left none remaining, but utterly destroyed all that breathed, as the LORD God of Israel commanded.

It has been argued that the term *utterly destroy* does not mean what we think it means (in other places it is termed as *the ban*). If a group of people were wiped off the map completely, then why would you give a command not to intermarry with them?

Deuteronomy 7:2-4 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: (3) **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.**

(4) For they will turn away thy son from following me, that they may serve other gods: so will the anger of the LORD be kindled against you, and destroy thee suddenly.

This apparent contradiction might be resolved in the understanding that Israel was commanded to proclaim peace unto a city, and if they made peace then the city was to be made tributary to Israel and their idols and worship system were to be destroyed.

Deuteronomy 20:10-11 When thou comest nigh unto a city to fight against it, then proclaim peace unto it. (11) And it shall be, if it make thee answer of peace, and open unto thee, then it shall be, that all the people that is found therein shall be tributaries unto thee, and they shall serve thee.

Deuteronomy 7:5 But thus shall ye deal with them; ye shall destroy their altars, and break down their images, and cut down their groves, and burn their graven images with fire.

Yet even if we are to allow these points, it still falls far short of the teaching of Christ.

Matthew 26:52 Then said Jesus unto him, Put up again thy sword into his place: for all they that take the sword shall perish with the sword.

Luke 9:54-56 And when his disciples James and John saw this, they said, Lord, wilt thou that we command fire to come down from heaven, and consume them, even as Elias did? (55) But he turned, and rebuked them, and said, Ye know not what manner of spirit ye are of. (56) For the Son of man is not come to destroy men's lives, but to save them. And they went to another village.

A Critical Issue that All Must Face

It really should be no surprise that the issue of understanding the character of God must involve a wrestling of the mind illustrated by the wrestling of Jacob with the Angel. Jacob could not discern the identity of the One with whom he wrestled. He thought the Angel was his enemy sent to destroy him, while in fact it was His loving Saviour sent to save him.

Genesis 32:24-30 And Jacob was left alone; and there wrestled a man with him until the breaking of the day. (25) And when he saw that he prevailed not against him, he touched the hollow of his thigh; and the hollow of Jacob's thigh was out of joint, as he wrestled with him. (26) And he said, Let me go, for the day breaketh. And he said, I will not let thee go, except thou bless me. (27) And he said unto him, What is thy name? And he said, Jacob. (28) And he said, Thy name shall be called no more Jacob, but Israel: for as a prince hast thou power with God and with men, and hast prevailed. (29) And Jacob asked him, and said, Tell me, I pray thee, thy name. And he said, Wherefore is it that thou dost ask after my name? And he blessed him there. (30) And Jacob called the name of the place Peniel: **for I have seen God face to face**, and my life is preserved.

John 1:1, 2, 14, 18 In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. (2) The same was in the beginning with God... (14) And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, (and we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father,) full of grace and truth... (18) **No man hath seen God at any time; the only begotten Son, which is in the bosom of the Father, he hath declared him.**

Jacob saw God face to face in the person of His only begotten Son, but he didn't know that until he had overcome. There was only one reason that Jacob endured that struggle. Christ had asked him "what is thy name?" He brought Jacob to confession since his name means "the Supplanter." He had stolen the birthright from his brother and tricked his father into blessing him. Now Jacob was begging for this heavenly Messenger to bless him. After Christ dislocated Jacob's hip all Jacob could do was lean upon His Saviour for stability while yearning for this blessing. Jacob learned here that God is forever merciful, and he cast himself upon that mercy. Thus Christ changed Jacob's name to "Israel" which means "overcomer" or, "to have power, as a prince."

Only those who cling to the understanding that our God is merciful will have the confidence to hang on to receive the blessing of Christ as did Jacob. This apparent conflict that arises from the stories of the Old Testament with the statements of Christ in the New Testament opens a door in our minds to the

seed planted by Satan that God is not merciful. We are confronted with an apparent contradiction that will result in an extended wrestle with our Saviour if we have not learned to know that our Father is merciful and we can trust in His mercy. The resentment that resides in the soul will manifest in the reading of these stories. Men such as Richard Dawkins, Stephen Fry and others give evidence of this bitter seed born of the lie that Satan has originated. It is a lie that presents God as a merciless dictator, causing many human minds to hate and finally execute Him. The preaching of these new atheists that God is arbitrary, violent, and cruel causes many to cease to believe in His existence altogether.

Conversely, some are quick to defend the character of God as merciful by adding, like our mother Eve, to what the Word of God teaches. Some succumb to deception in the form of universalism which teaches that all will be saved. Others take a higher critical approach and consign the Old Testament to “doing the best that they could at the time.” Either way, confidence in the plain reading of Scripture is eroded and the serpent is allowed to strangle the soul with his coils of deception.

Satan’s Misrepresentation of God

From the beginning Satan has misrepresented the character of God.

John 8:43, 44 Why do ye not understand my speech? even because ye cannot hear my word. (44) Ye are of your father the devil, and the lusts of your father ye will do. **He was a murderer from the beginning**, and abode not in the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he speaketh a lie, he speaketh of his own: **for he is a liar, and the father of it.**

It has been Satan’s design from the beginning to clothe God with his own attributes in order that people would reject Him.

1 Peter 5:8 Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour.

It is Satan who seeks to destroy and devour. He will do everything in his deceptive power to blind us to God's mercy and to view Him as a bloodthirsty tyrant.

Ezekiel 36:16-21 Moreover the word of the LORD came unto me, saying, (17) Son of man, when the house of Israel dwelt in their own land, **they defiled it by their own way and by their doings**: their way was before me as the uncleanness of a removed woman. (18) Wherefore I poured my fury upon them **for the blood that they had shed upon the land**, and for their idols wherewith they had polluted it: (19) And I scattered them among the heathen, and they were dispersed through the countries: according to **their way** and according to **their doings** I judged them. (20) And when they entered unto the heathen, whither they went, **they profaned my holy name**, when they said to them, These are the people of the LORD, and are gone forth out of his land. (21) But I had pity for mine holy name, **which the house of Israel had profaned among the heathen**, whither they went.

When God says "they profaned my holy name" He is not saying they were going around pronouncing His name wrong. As we saw in the case of Jacob, the Hebrew concept of "name" is character. They were profaning His character, not only by their idols, but by "the blood that they had shed upon the land." God tells us what His name is:

Exodus 33:18-19 And he [Moses] said, I beseech thee, shew me thy glory. (19) And he [God] said, I will make all my **goodness** pass before thee, and **I will proclaim the name of the LORD before thee**; and will be **gracious** to whom I will be gracious, and will shew **mercy** on whom I will shew mercy.

God's name (character) is revealed by His "goodness," because He is "gracious," and full of "mercy." God revealed this to Moses because he had asked to see God's "glory." Thus God's glory is the revelation of His holy attributes. This is what the house of Israel failed to experience and reveal to the world.

It is Satan who inspires humanity to slaughter without mercy regardless of sex or age. The great test is to know how to read the Scriptures faithfully, without twisting them, to reveal this reality. If we are serious, at times our Saviour will feel like our enemy seeking to do us harm, but if we have come to know the mercy of God, we will hold on until we receive the blessing. It is my deeply held conviction that a failure to understand the character of our God correctly will allow Satan to triumph over those who never made the effort to know the truth. We must know the truth of our Father's character. This is a work of tremendous urgency if we would be sealed under the Latter Rain at the end of time. As it was Satan's first work to misrepresent the character of God, so the last message to the world will be a revelation of the character of His love.

Revelation 18:1 And after these things I saw another angel come down from heaven, having great power; and the earth was lightened with his glory.

This angel that comes down from heaven represents a final message given to the world through God's last-day people. The earth is to be enlightened with "his glory." This glory only comes from our heavenly Father. It is God's glory (character) that will enlighten the whole world as His people proclaim this last message of mercy to a world shrouded in darkness caused by a revelation of God's true character of love. Many are misinterpreting His character.

Isaiah 40:9-10 O Jerusalem, that bringest good tidings, lift up thy voice with strength; lift it up, be not afraid; say unto the cities of Judah, **Behold your God!** Behold, the Lord God will come with strong hand, and His arm shall rule for Him; behold, His reward is with Him, and His work before Him.

We are to say to the people, "Behold your God!" Behold Him as He is meant to be beheld – "merciful and gracious, longsuffering, and abundant in goodness and truth." (Exodus 34:6).

God's Original Plan to Take Canaan

In regard to the possession of Canaan by Israel, the Lord told them how this would be accomplished:

Exodus 23:27-30 I will send my fear before thee, and will destroy [discomfort, disturb, vex] all the people to whom thou shalt come, and I will make all thine enemies turn their backs [stiffen their necks] unto thee. (28) **And I will send hornets before thee, which shall drive out the Hivite, the Canaanite, and the Hittite, from before thee.** (29) I will not drive them out from before thee in one year; lest the land become desolate, and the beast of the field multiply against thee. (30) By little and little I will drive them out from before thee, until thou be increased, and inherit the land.

There is no mention here of the use of the sword. Israel had escaped Egypt and seen the Egyptians defeated without one use of the sword. He told them “I will send hornets before thee, which shall drive out the Hivite, the Canaanite, and the Hittite, from before thee.” He never told them to go up and fight or to instigate any type of warfare.

Israel’s Fear of God

In delivering Israel from Egypt, He intended for them to become acquainted with Him and learn to trust Him. While living in Egypt the Israelites were surrounded by the spirit of tyranny. In the example of the Hebrew children being thrown into the river, and their harsh experience of slavery in Egypt, many were influenced by the notion that God was a tyrant that could turn against them at any time and slay them. We see this fear expressed from the beginning:

Exodus 14:11 And they said unto Moses, Because there were no graves in Egypt, hast thou taken us away to die in the wilderness? wherefore hast thou dealt thus with us, to carry us forth out of Egypt?

This fear goes all the way back to the garden of Eden, when Satan convinced Adam that when God said they would surely die that God was the one coming to kill them.

Genesis 3:10 And he said, I heard thy voice in the garden, and I was afraid, because I was naked; and I hid myself.

Israel hid their fear of the God they imagined in accusing Moses. Yet it was clearly evident that Moses did not bring out the people by his own power. Satan was tempting the people to think that God was wanting to kill them in the wilderness. This temptation was only possible because of their false understanding of the character of God. This fear continues to grow for the Israelites:

Exodus 16:3 And the children of Israel said unto them, **Would to God we had died by the hand of the LORD in the land of Egypt,** when we sat by the flesh pots, and when we did eat bread to the full; for ye have brought us forth into this wilderness, to kill this whole assembly with hunger.

The Israelites express their fear of God and openly state they wished that they had died by the hand of God in Egypt rather than endure their current situation. They clearly did not trust God and their minds were blinded by Satan as to His true character.

A Pivotal Moment with Amalek

In the very next chapter of Exodus the Israelites manifest even further their perverted ideas of God:

Exodus 17:3-4 And the people thirsted there for water; and the people murmured against Moses, and said, Wherefore is this that thou hast brought us up out of Egypt, to kill us and our children and our cattle with thirst? (4) And Moses cried unto the LORD, saying, What shall I do unto this people? they be almost ready to stone me.

They continue to complain and accuse Moses, and therefore God, of wanting to kill them. Their idolatrous view of a violent God begins to translate into threats to kill Moses. By beholding this false idea of a violent God they are changed into that image, and the people plot violent acts against the man that God used to save them from Egypt.

The continual murmuring and complaining and distrust of God places Him in a position where He is less able to protect them. They are choosing Satan as their master, and Satan is demanding access to destroy them. We see the

connection between the complaints about water and the attack of the Amalekites as follows:

Exodus 17:7-8 And he called the name of the place Massah, and Meribah, because of the chiding of the children of Israel, and because they tempted the LORD, saying, Is the LORD among us, or not? (8) **Then** came Amalek, and fought with Israel in Rephidim.

Because of their unbelief, they placed themselves outside of God's protective hedge and this brought warfare from their enemies. God allows this to happen in order to humble His people (to dislocate their spiritual hip if you will) and, like Jacob, cause them to lean solely upon Him during their distress.

The "chiding" of the children of Israel, i.e. their contention and strife towards God, opened a door for Satan to stir up the Amalekites to attack them. This would not have happened if Israel had trusted the Lord. The Amalekites would have been too afraid to touch them. There is no evidence that Israel repented of their sin against God. They had a false view of God as a tyrant intent on killing them. There is no evidence of gratefulness in receiving the water. There is no apology to Moses or any statement of thanks to him for pleading for the water. Nothing is recorded to indicate this. The Israelites had threatened to kill Moses. Can we imagine how much this would have hurt Moses? He could have stayed in the calm realm of his desert home looking after his family and caring for his flocks. He may also have felt the base ingratitude they were showing to God. It would have been a real trial for him. Then within this frame of mind, he receives word that the Amalakites are attacking and picking off the weak. What happens next is pivotal. It is a decision made under discouraging circumstances and under pressure.

Exodus 17:9 And Moses said unto Joshua, Choose us out men, and go out, fight with Amalek: to morrow I will stand on the top of the hill with the rod of God in mine hand.

The Inherited Sword

It does not say, "And the Lord commanded Moses." It does not say that Moses went into the sanctuary and pled with the Lord. It just said that Moses told

Joshua to go and fight. As I picture the scene of Moses walking towards Joshua, everything goes into slow motion and my thoughts divert to the night that Abraham rescued his nephew Lot through the means of warfare.

Generally Abraham was a man of peace. Genesis 20 outlines how Abraham lied about his wife, saying she was his sister, in order not to cause confrontation between himself and the kings of Egypt. In Genesis 13 there arose a conflict between Abraham's shepherds and Lot's. Notice how Abraham proposed a peaceful solution:

Genesis 13:8-9 And Abram said unto Lot, **Let there be no strife**, I pray thee, between me and thee, and between my herdmen and thy herdmen; for we be brethren. (9) Is not the whole land before thee? separate thyself, I pray thee, from me: if thou wilt take the left hand, then I will go to the right; or if thou depart to the right hand, then I will go to the left.

However, in Genesis 14 we read about warfare among the surrounding areas where Lot resided. As a result, Lot was taken captive.

Genesis 14:14-16 And when Abram heard that his brother was taken captive, **he armed his trained servants**, born in his own house, three hundred and eighteen, and pursued them unto Dan. (15) And he divided himself against them, he and his servants, by night, and **smote them**, and pursued them unto Hobah, which is on the left hand of Damascus. (16) And he brought back all the goods, and also brought again his brother Lot, and his goods, and the women also, and the people.

Again, we do not read, "And the Lord commanded Abraham." Was the Lord pleased at Abraham's actions? One would think so seeing that the high priest Melchizedek came to Abraham and blessed him. But was the blessing for a reward or to comfort Abraham's disturbing thoughts of how many men have died by his hand? Melchizedek is said to be the "king of Salem" which means "peace." It may be an early name for "Jerusalem" which means "city of peace." Would this king of peace bless Abraham for violent warfare? When Abraham came nigh the cities to fight, did he first proclaim peace unto them? Did

Abraham defile the land by “the blood that they had shed upon the land?” If Abraham were more patient here, would God have sent hornets into the land to drive away his enemies, or would He have sent angels down to rescue Lot as He did later in Genesis 18 and 19? One thing for sure is, when describing all the things Abraham did by faith, Hebrews chapter 11 never mentions the rescue of Lot.

Abraham, who occupied a position similar to Adam, set the course of inherited tendencies for generations to come. The lifting of the sword by Abraham would cause a horror of great darkness to fall upon his descendants, and he tasted it that frightful night as he contemplated a fearful future having taken the sword into his hand.

Genesis 15:12 And when the sun was going down, a deep sleep fell upon Abram; and, lo, an horror of great darkness fell upon him.

Notice the guilt that Elijah felt after using the sword against the prophets of Baal:

1 Kings 19:1-4 And Ahab told Jezebel all that Elijah had done, and withal **how he had slain all the prophets with the sword.** (2) Then Jezebel sent a messenger unto Elijah, saying, So let the gods do to me, and more also, if I make not thy life as the life of one of them by to morrow about this time. (3) And when he saw that, he arose, and went for his life, and came to Beersheba, which belongeth to Judah, and left his servant there. (4) But he himself went a day's journey into the wilderness, and came and sat down under a juniper tree: and **he requested for himself that he might die; and said, It is enough; now, O LORD, take away my life; for I am not better than my fathers.**

The seventh chapter of the book of Hebrews tells us that Jesus, the Prince of Peace, is High Priest after the order of Melchizedek. As mentioned earlier, Jesus rebukes Peter for his use of the sword. They had misunderstood the true meaning of His words when He said: “But now, he that hath a purse, let him take it, and likewise his scrip: and **he that hath no sword, let him sell his garment, and buy one.**” (Luke 22:36). They thought He was speaking of a literal

sword. Notice how the *International Standard Version* (ISV) translates verse 38: “So they said, ‘Lord, look! Here are two swords.’ He answered them, ‘Enough of that!’” The *King James Version* quotes Jesus as saying, “That is enough.” A superficial reading of this may lead the reader to believe Jesus accepted their use of the sword by simply saying two swords were enough. What comes next, however, reveals Jesus’ true attitude toward the sword:

Luke 22:49-51 When those who were around Jesus saw what was about to take place, they asked, “Lord, should we attack with our swords?” (50) Then one of them struck the high priest’s servant, cutting off his right ear. (51) **But Jesus said, “No more of this!” So he touched the wounded man’s ear and healed him.** (ISV).

In the book of Matthew we have this additional line:

Matthew 26:52 Jesus told him, “Put your sword back in its place! Everyone who uses a sword will be killed by a sword.” (ISV).

The name “Melchizedek” means “king of righteousness.” John sees Jesus in vision riding a white horse and says, “in righteousness he doth judge and make war.” (Revelation 19:11). How does Jesus judge and make war in righteousness? Not by violence, but by His word:

John 12:47-48 And if any man hear my words, and believe not, **I judge him not:** for I came not to judge the world, but to save the world. (48) He that rejecteth me, and receiveth not my words, hath one that judgeth him: **the word that I have spoken, the same shall judge him in the last day.**

The warfare that God is involved with is a war of words – Satan’s word against God’s. God does nothing outside of righteousness. Judging in righteousness does not inflict harm or death upon another:

Proverbs 11:4-6 Riches profit not in the day of wrath: **but righteousness delivereth from death.** (50) The righteousness of the perfect shall direct his way: but the wicked shall fall by his own wickedness. (6) The righteousness of the upright shall deliver them: but transgressors shall be taken in their own naughtiness.

Proverbs 12:28 **In the way of righteousness is life; and in the pathway thereof there is no death.**

How does God conquer His enemies in war? Not by inflicting punishment, torture, or killing them, but by converting His enemies into friends. Righteousness doesn't destroy the person, it kills "the old man" of sin (Deuteronomy 32:39; Romans 6:6-11) and "delivereth from death." God conquers and gets His "revenge" upon evil by always doing good.

Romans 12:17-21 Recompense to no man evil for evil. Provide things honest in the sight of all men. (18) If it be possible, as much as lieth in you, live peaceably with all men. (19) Dearly beloved, avenge not yourselves, but rather give place unto wrath: for it is written, Vengeance is mine; I will repay, saith the Lord. (20) **Therefore if thine enemy hunger, feed him; if he thirst, give him drink:** for in so doing thou shalt heap coals of fire on his head. (21) Be not overcome of evil, but **overcome evil with good.**

God judging in righteousness will result in peace, not war.

Isaiah 2:4 **And he shall judge among the nations,** and shall rebuke many people: and they shall **beat their swords into plowshares,** and their spears into pruninghooks: **nation shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war any more.**

My mind then shifts to the village of Shechem, where the sword bursts forth in the hands of Abraham's great grandsons Levi and Simeon in revenge for their raped sister. They had deceitfully negotiated a peace treaty promising that if Hamor, his son Shechem, and all the males of the house became circumcised, then they could have the Hebrew daughters in marriage. They would all be able to intermarry and become one house.

Genesis 34:25-29 And it came to pass on the third day, when they were sore [from the circumcision], that two of the sons of Jacob, Simeon and Levi, Dinah's brethren, took each man his sword, and came upon the city boldly, and slew all the males. (26) And they slew Hamor and Shechem his son with the edge of the sword, and took Dinah out of Shechem's house, and went out. (27) The sons of Jacob came upon the slain, and spoiled the city, because they had defiled

their sister. (28) They took their sheep, and their oxen, and their asses, and that which was in the city, and that which was in the field, (29) And all their wealth, and all their little ones, and their wives took they captive, and spoiled even all that was in the house.

The seed of Abraham's act to save his nephew burst forth in greater measure in the lives of Levi and Simeon aided by the deceit of their other brothers in asking the Shechemites to be circumcised. Truly Jacob could lament that his descendants would stink in the eyes of the Canaanites and Perizzites and that, as they had taken the sword, the sword would follow them down the generations. Notice Jacob's rebuke:

Genesis 34:30 And Jacob said to Simeon and Levi, Ye have troubled me to make me to stink among the inhabitants of the land, among the Canaanites and the Perizzites: and I being few in number, they shall gather themselves together against me, and slay me; and I shall be destroyed, I and my house.

Did the telling and retelling of the story of their patriarch rising up in behalf of his sister to slay the Shechemites have an effect on the children of Levi? Would some of the children of Levi be tempted to be proud of what their father had done in protecting his sister? Would not Satan suggest to them that he was justified in his actions as self-defence? Wouldn't accepting this interpretation of history be easier than explaining that your forefather was a cold-blooded killer and carry the shame of this down the generations?

All of this history is now walking in the footsteps of Moses towards Joshua. My thoughts shift to earlier in the life of Moses. A similar temptation to protect "one of your own" had come before to Moses when he saw an Egyptian slave master beating one of his Jewish relatives. The siren call of his father Levi rises up with indignation; Moses kills the Egyptian and his fury is satisfied. But Moses acted in haste. He presumed that God raised him up to deliver His people as a conquering warrior. But the Lord never designed to accomplish His work by force or warfare.

Zechariah 4:6 ... This is the word of the LORD unto Zerubbabel, saying, Not by might, nor by power, but by my spirit, saith the LORD of hosts.

Had forty years in the wilderness released Moses from the temptation to protect his own through his own decisions? Had Moses possibly learned that Amalek had already slain some of the weak in the camp? Just before the time of his death Moses recalled:

Deuteronomy 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.

Did all of this come together as Satan had designed in order to lead Israel to once again take the sword, thereby making Israel stink in the eyes of the world? Had Satan planned this in order that the character of God might be misrepresented down through the ages of time? The Israelites themselves misunderstood the character of God, so could it be that taking up the sword simply was a manifestation of the God that Israel had imagined? If this supposed God could not even get them water when it was needed, how would He be in the least bit concerned about them dying at the hands of the Amalekites?

We have seen that God never intended to use warfare to take the Promised Land. Is it therefore safe to conclude that this uncommanded and un-prayed about action to call Joshua to fight the Amalekites with the sword was not one that He had planned? It is evident in the great struggle that took place and the long earnest prayers that were needed to help Israel defeat the Amalekites that this was not what God originally intended. Yet God allowed them to walk this path because most of them imagined God as someone violent and warlike. When Satan was allowed to slaughter the Egyptians, he was all the while telling

the Israelites that their God was doing these things. For an explanation of the events of the plagues in Egypt, see the booklet *Calvary in Egypt*.

Once having taken this step it would be very hard not to resort to the use of the sword again. God appealed to them after the events with Amalek that He had a different approach that did not require the use of the sword (Ex 23:27-30), but until Israel could see the true character of God they would be tempted again and again to use it.

In the story of Korah, Dathan and Abiram and the 250 princes we see how this fear of a God who wants to kill them in the wilderness drives them to seek other leadership than Moses and Aaron. Then when they came up to the borders of Canaan they gave an evil report of the land because they were not able to believe that God loved them and would do good for them. They ignored all of His protection and care and focused on anything negative. Satan could easily tempt them on these things because they believed in a God who wanted to kill them and could change His mood at any time. Every time Satan was allowed to break through the hedge of protection and harm the Israelites, he would tell them that God was directly punishing them Himself with His own hand. How sad it must have been for God to have His people willing to believe such lies about Him.

Numbers 14:2-3 And all the children of Israel murmured against Moses and against Aaron: and the whole congregation said unto them, Would God that we had died in the land of Egypt! or would God we had died in this wilderness! (3) **And wherefore hath the LORD brought us unto this land, to fall by the sword, that our wives and our children should be a prey?** were it not better for us to return into Egypt?

Numbers 14:22-23 Because all those men which have seen my glory, and my miracles, which I did in Egypt and in the wilderness, **and have tempted me now these ten times, and have not hearkened to my voice;** (23) Surely they shall not see the land which I swear unto their fathers, neither shall any of them that provoked me see it:

When Israel was told they could not go up to possess the land because of their sin, they rebelled again and determined to go up and fight, when God had not commanded them to fight.

All That the Lord Has Spoken, We will Do

Another indication that it was not God's desire to take the Land of Canaan by warfare was the response Israel gave to God at Mt Sinai just before the giving of the Ten Commandments.

Exodus 19:5-8 Now therefore, if ye will obey my voice indeed, and keep my covenant, then ye shall be a peculiar treasure unto me above all people: for all the earth is mine: And ye shall be unto me a kingdom of priests, and an holy nation. These are the words which thou shalt speak unto the children of Israel. And Moses came and called for the elders of the people, and laid before their faces all these words which the LORD commanded him. And all the people answered together, and said, **All that the LORD hath spoken we will do.** And Moses returned the words of the people unto the LORD.

While the Israelites were back in Egypt, God had promised to do everything for them in bringing them out of the land of Egypt. He promised to do seven things for them.

Exodus 6:6-8 Wherefore say unto the children of Israel, I am the LORD, and [1] I will bring you out from under the burdens of the Egyptians, and [2] I will rid you out of their bondage, and [3] I will redeem you with a stretched out arm, and with great judgments: And [4] I will take you to me for a people, and [5] I will be to you a God: and ye shall know that I am the LORD your God, which bringeth you out from under the burdens of the Egyptians. And [6] I will bring you in unto the land, concerning the which I did swear to give it to Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob; and [7] I will give it you for an heritage: I am the LORD.

There is nothing in these promises that indicate that God would help them to destroy their enemies in the land of Canaan. This offer from God was absolutely amazing. How did the Israelites respond?

Exodus 6:9 And Moses spake so unto the children of Israel: but they hearkened not unto Moses for anguish of spirit, and for cruel bondage.

They refused to believe God would do this for them. They believed that God had let them go into slavery and they blamed Him for their suffering, therefore they did not trust God to deliver them.

God went forward anyway and took them out of Egypt as He promised Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. At the foot of Mt Sinai the Israelites could see that they were free, and God once again laid out before them His promise to bless them.

Their response was that everything God promised to do for them, they actually would do themselves. "All that the Lord has spoken, WE will do." God had said that "I will" do it, but Israel said that they would do it.

Instead of resting in the grace of God, they told the Lord they would complete the task that God had promised to do for them. What could God do when they turned His promises around on Him? In His great love, He bore with them and let them follow their own way to try and take the land by warfare. It was not His plan, but He went with them and tried to teach them important lessons through their incorrect understanding.

Forty Years Later...

The Israelites had repeatedly stated that they feared that God would kill them in the wilderness. As we will explore a little later on, God allowed their own view of God to judge them. A whole generation died in the wilderness by the hand of the destroyer who had deceived them into the idolatry of believing in a god who wanted to kill them in the wilderness.

Job 3:25 For the thing which I greatly feared is come upon me, and that which I was afraid of is come unto me.

Job greatly feared that calamity would befall him. Could part of the reason for his calamity be because of the fear Job had? Could a constant fear of the New

World Order and death camps actually contribute to allowing Satan to bring it about?

When the forty years had passed and a whole generation had gone to their death, they came again up to the border. The sins of the fathers were still in the mouths of their children:

Numbers 21:5 **And the people spake against God, and against Moses, Wherefore have ye brought us up out of Egypt to die in the wilderness?** for there is no bread, neither is there any water; and our soul loatheth this light bread.

By continually dwelling on the dark side of their experiences, they separated themselves farther and farther from God. After bringing trouble upon themselves, making their lot altogether harder than God designed, they charged all their misfortunes upon Him. Every day of their travels they had been kept by a miracle of divine mercy as He led them “through that great and terrible wilderness, wherein were fiery serpents, and scorpions, and drought, where there was no water.” (Deuteronomy 8:15).

Deuteronomy 29:2-5 And Moses called unto all Israel, and said unto them, Ye have seen all that the LORD did before your eyes in the land of Egypt unto Pharaoh, and unto all his servants, and unto all his land; (3) The great temptations which thine eyes have seen, the signs, and those great miracles: (4) Yet the LORD hath not given you an heart to perceive, and eyes to see, and ears to hear, unto this day. (5) And I have led you forty years in the wilderness: your clothes are not waxen old upon you, and thy shoe is not waxen old upon thy foot.

If with all these tokens of His love the people still continued to complain, the Lord would withdraw His protection, by allowing them to step out of His protective hedge, until they should be led to appreciate His merciful care, and return to Him with repentance and humiliation. God does this in respect to our free will; He will not force His protection upon us – but He will not completely let us go; He will mediate the consequences of our action in a way that brings us to a recognition of our condition.

Ecclesiastes 10:8 He that diggeth a pit shall fall into it; [see, Numbers 16] and whoso breaketh an hedge, a serpent shall bite him [see, Numbers 21].

Psalms 80:12,14-15 Why hast thou then broken down her hedges, so that all they which pass by the way do pluck her? (14) Return, we beseech the, O God of hosts: look down from heaven, and behold, and visit this vine; (15) And the vineyard which thy right hand hath planted, and the branch that thou madest strong for thyself.

Moses Strikes the Rock in Disobedience

The Israelites were moving further and further away from God, and their capacity to appreciate His character grew less and less. After forty years Israel once again passed over the same ground in regard to complaining about having enough water, and they once again gave a similar response, only more direct.

Numbers 21:5 And the people spake against God, and against Moses, Wherefore have ye brought us up out of Egypt to die in the wilderness?

Satan had been working on Moses all this time encouraging him to give up on these miserable wretches. God had tested Moses on this point for his own sake when Moses was on the Mount with God and the Israelites were worshipping the golden calf (Exodus 32:9-14), and thankfully Moses responded to the Spirit of Christ and asked God to pardon the people, which He graciously did. Yet now, seeing that Israel was even worse than before, Moses gives in to temptation.

Numbers 20:10-11 And Moses and Aaron gathered the congregation together before the rock, and he said unto them, Hear now, ye rebels; must we fetch you water out of this rock? (11) And Moses lifted up his hand, and with his rod he smote the rock twice: and the water came out abundantly, and the congregation drank, and their beasts also.

When Moses gave in to this temptation, it gave Satan greater access to the minds of the Israelites. He had prayed for them and stood between them and

Satan in so many ways. Yet this step gave Satan the advantage. Satan rejoiced to be able to take Aaron's life as a result of this failure.

Numbers 20:24 Aaron shall be gathered unto his people: for he shall not enter into the land which I have given unto the children of Israel, because ye rebelled against my word at the water of Meribah.

Israel takes a Vow

With greater access to the minds of the Israelites, Satan induced them to make a bargain with God, the God they imagined who was willing to kill people. They had been attacked by another tribe for their sins, and now in their desperation they made a vow:

Numbers 21:1-3 And when king Arad the Canaanite, which dwelt in the south, heard tell that Israel came by the way of the spies; then he fought against Israel, and took some of them prisoners. (2) **And Israel vowed a vow unto the LORD, and said, If thou wilt indeed deliver this people into my hand, then I will utterly destroy their cities.** (3) **And the LORD hearkened to the voice of Israel,** and delivered up the Canaanites; and they utterly destroyed them and their cities: and he called the name of the place Hormah.

God did not ask the Israelites to slaughter their enemies. Their false view of God caused them to believe that He would desire them to make such a bloodthirsty vow, and that this would gain His approval and He would help them. It says that God hearkened unto their voice. Why did God hearken unto their voice? Would this not only cement them in the idea that God desired them to kill their enemies? The answer is found in the parable of the talents:

Luke 19:20-23 Then the other servant came and said, "Sir, look! Here's your coin. I've kept it in a cloth for safekeeping (2) because I was afraid of you. You are a hard man. You withdraw what you didn't deposit and harvest what you didn't plant." (22) The kings told him, **"I will judge you by your own words, you evil servant!** You knew, did you, that I was a hard man, and that I withdraw what I didn't deposit and harvest what I didn't plant? (23) Then why didn't you put

my money in the bank? When I returned, I could have collected it with interest.” (ISV).

The lazy servant imagined the Lord to be “a hard man” or as the KJV says, “an austere person.” According to this belief, he received judgment. As the Scripture says:

James 2:12-13 So speak ye, and so do, as they that shall be judged by the law of liberty. (13) For he shall have judgment without mercy, that hath shewed no mercy; and mercy rejoiceth against judgment.

God allowed the man who had a false view of Him to be judged according to his own ideas. How does God do this?

Galatians 6:7 Be not deceived; God is not mocked: for whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap.

Exodus 34:7 Keeping mercy for thousands, forgiving iniquity and transgression and sin, and that will by no means clear the guilty; visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children, and upon the children's children, unto the third and to the fourth generation.

The nations around Israel had passed well beyond the boundary of God’s protection. Israel refused to accept the truth of the loving character of God. They persisted in thinking He wanted to harm them and everybody else. When Israel came to the place of making a vow with God to slaughter their enemies, He hearkened unto their voice, not as a reward for faithfulness but rather to let them have their false view of God and punish sin with sin (in this case, punish the sin of the Canaanites with the sin of the Israelites). “Evil shall slay the wicked ...” (Psalm 34:21). He visited the iniquities of the fathers upon the children as He said He would do. Allowing Israel to defeat their enemies in this context was the Lord allowing them to hold fast their conviction that God is an executioner. He tried for a long time to show them His true character of love by showering them with many blessings but in the end, He allowed them to maintain their cruel false beliefs and let them be judged by this. This is just as he did later to the unbelieving Jewish leaders:

Acts 13:46 Then Paul and Barnabas waxed bold, and said, it was necessary that the word of God should first have been spoken to you: but seeing ye put it from you, and **judge yourselves** unworthy of everlasting life, lo, we turn to the Gentiles.

God Giving Israel what They Desired

Before Israel's first failure on the borders of Canaan we find Israel complaining about their desire for meat. They are weeping in their tents because they want flesh to eat. At this point Moses complains to the Lord about the burdens he has to carry.

Numbers 11:10-11 Then Moses heard the people weep throughout their families, every man in the door of his tent: and the anger of the LORD was kindled greatly; Moses also was displeased. (11) And Moses said unto the LORD, Wherefore hast thou afflicted thy servant? and wherefore have I not found favour in thy sight, that thou layest the burden of all this people upon me?

This test for Moses reveals elements in his character that still reflect a wrong understanding of the character of God.

Numbers 11:14-15 I am not able to bear all this people alone, because it is too heavy for me. (15) And if thou deal thus with me, kill me, I pray thee, out of hand, if I have found favour in thy sight; and let me not see my wretchedness.

Moses asks God to kill him to release him from the burden. We saw earlier that Elijah had a similar experience in dealing with Jezebel. Anyone who has felt completely overwhelmed by circumstances can understand Moses' feelings; yet they reveal a lack of trust in God and His dealings. To help Moses, God commanded:

Numbers 11:16 And the LORD said unto Moses, Gather unto me seventy men of the elders of Israel, whom thou knowest to be the elders of the people, and officers over them; and bring them unto the tabernacle of the congregation, that they may stand there with thee.

Yet it was not God's original plan to ordain these seventy men. These men would never have been chosen had Moses manifested faith corresponding to the evidences he had witnessed of God's power and goodness. Had he relied fully upon God, the Lord would have guided him continually and would have given him strength for every emergency.

One of the first issues that arose from this process was that Aaron and Miriam felt slighted by Moses in appointing the seventy elders without consulting them (Numbers 12). This led to more problems.

The Lord then gave to the Israelites the desire of their hearts for flesh food.

Numbers 11:18-20 And say thou unto the people, Sanctify yourselves against to morrow, and ye shall eat flesh: for ye have wept in the ears of the LORD, saying, Who shall give us flesh to eat? for it was well with us in Egypt: therefore the LORD will give you flesh, and ye shall eat. (19) Ye shall not eat one day, nor two days, nor five days, neither ten days, nor twenty days; (20) But even a whole month, until it come out at your nostrils, and it be loathsome unto you: because that ye have despised the LORD which is among you, and have wept before him, saying, Why came we forth out of Egypt?

Psalms 78:26-29 He caused an east wind to blow in the heaven: and by his power he brought in the south wind. (27) He rained flesh also upon them as dust, and feathered fowls like as the sand of the sea: (28) And he let it fall in the midst of their camp, round about their habitations. (29) So they did eat, and were well filled: **for he gave them their own desire.**

In like manner God hearkened unto the vow that Israel made to slaughter Arad the Canaanite king. He gave them that which was not for their best good because they would have it. Just as He did later when Israel desired a king to judge them like all the other nations:

1 Samuel 8:4-9 Then all the elders of Israel gathered themselves together, and came to Samuel unto Ramah, (5) And said unto him, Behold, thou art old, and thy sons walk not in thy ways: now **make us a king to judge us like all the nations.** (6) But the thing displeased

Samuel, when they said, Give us a king to judge us. And Samuel prayed unto the LORD. (7) And the LORD said unto Samuel, **Hearken unto the voice of the people in all that they say unto thee: for they have not rejected thee, but they have rejected me, that I should not reign over them.** (8) According to all the works which they have done since the day that I brought them up out of Egypt even unto this day, wherewith **they have forsaken me**, and served other gods, so do they also unto thee. (9) Now therefore **hearken unto their voice**: howbeit yet protest solemnly unto them, and shew them the manner of the king that shall reign over them.

Hosea 13:9-11 O Israel, thou hast destroyed thyself; but in me is thine help. (10) I will be thy king: where is any other that may save thee in all thy cities? and thy judges of whom thou saidst, Give me a king and princes? (11) **I gave thee a king in mine anger**, and took him away in my wrath.

We see in appointing the seventy elders and in sending the quail that God was giving to Israel things that they wanted but which He knew was not best for them.

Releasing the Idol of Terror

Through Ezekiel God makes this most amazing proclamation:

Ezekiel 14:4-5 Therefore speak unto them, and say unto them, Thus saith the Lord GOD; Every man of the house of Israel that setteth up his idols in his heart, and putteth the stumblingblock of his iniquity before his face, and cometh to the prophet; **I the LORD will answer him that cometh according to the multitude of his idols**; (5) That I may take the house of Israel **in their own heart**, because they are all estranged from me through their idols.

Commenting on Ezekiel chapter 14 Adam Clarke writes:

“I have often had occasion to remark that it is common in the Hebrew language to state a thing as done by the Lord which he only suffers or permits to be done; for so absolute and universal is the government of God, that the smallest occurrence cannot take place without his will or permission.” (Adam Clarke’s Commentary).

We see the principle described in Ezekiel 14 regarding God answering men according to their idols applied in the following situation.

Exodus 23:27 I will send [loose] my fear [fright, idol] before thee, and will destroy [discomfit, vex] all the people to whom thou shalt come, and I will make all thine enemies turn their backs [stiff necked] unto thee.

The surrounding nations in Canaan all had a view of God that was vengeful and murderous. The fact that some nations would sacrifice their children to their gods revealed how they viewed the tyrannical, murderous nature of their gods. The word for *fear* in Exodus 23:27 can be translated *idol*, as is the case in Jeremiah 50:38.

Jeremiah 50:38 A drought is upon her waters; and they shall be dried up: for it is the land of graven images, and they are mad upon their **idols**.

As the nations worshipped gods of terror and death, God allowed the sin of Israel to bring upon these nations what they feared and believed. In speaking of the heathen, Paul states:

Romans 1:32 Who knowing the judgment of God, that they which commit such things are worthy of death, not only do the same, but have pleasure in them that do them.

The guilt resulting from the sins of the Canaanites caused them to fear death and destruction. After Satan had secured the heart of Israel in believing that God wanted them to slaughter people, he then was able to inspire Israel to vow to slaughter these nations since God had ceased to protect them because their cup of iniquity was full. So as God predicted, the terror of the false gods they worshipped came upon them. But this came upon them through the Israelites, rather than by self-destructive means.

Judgment Without Mercy

One of the evident signs that God was giving to Israel what they desired is this statement in Deuteronomy 7:2.

Deuteronomy 7:2 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:

The instruction to utterly destroy their enemies without mercy, while being in harmony with a god that Israel had imagined, was not reflective of the true God of heaven. The Bible says that judgment is given without mercy to those who have showed no mercy.

James 2:13 For he shall have judgment without mercy, that hath shewed no mercy; and mercy rejoiceth against judgment.

This verse can read two ways. Those who show no mercy will judge others without mercy, and also those who show no mercy will receive none when they are judged. This idea of merciless justice reflects the mind of Satan.

The Scriptures reveal that God is ever merciful:

Exodus 34:6 And the LORD passed by before him, and proclaimed, The LORD, The LORD God, merciful and gracious, longsuffering, and abundant in goodness and truth,...

1 Chronicles 16:34 O give thanks unto the LORD; for he is good; for his mercy endureth for ever.

God's justice is never to the exclusion of His mercy. This is an invention of Satan. We see this in the common Hebrew thought pattern known as *Hebraic Parallelism*. The two bold words below mean the same, as do the two underlined words.

Psalms 89:14 **Justice** and judgment are the habitation of thy throne: **mercy** and truth shall go before thy face.

At the time that Israel made a vow to God to slaughter the Canaanite king they were ruled by the spirit of Satan. They had murmured and complained against God and rebelled against Him at every opportunity. God warned them and encouraged them to follow His commandments:

Deuteronomy 4:1 Now therefore hearken, O Israel, unto the statutes and unto the judgments, which I teach you, for to do them, that ye may

live, and go in and possess the land which the LORD God of your fathers giveth you.

Deuteronomy 8:1 All the commandments which I command thee this day shall ye observe to do, that ye may live, and multiply, and go in and possess the land which the LORD sware unto your fathers.

Yet Israel refused to obey God and therefore Satan was enabled to control their desires for judgment without mercy. God gave to them what they desired even though it was not His plan. He also gave to the heathen nations what they feared as they were no longer protected; thus Satan used Israel to slaughter the Canaanites. In doing this Satan would lead millions to their deaths through a false understanding of the character of God as one who murders and slaughters people. Satan would forever use this example to encourage believers of Jehovah to wage physical warfare against their enemies, well pleased that blood is spilled by believers and God's name is hated by nonbelievers.

Glimpses of Glory

We do obtain glimpses of God's plan to deal with their enemies without weapons in verses like these:

Joshua 24:11-12 And ye went over Jordan, and came unto Jericho: and the men of Jericho fought against you, the Amorites, and the Perizzites, and the Canaanites, and the Hittites, and the Girgashites, the Hivites, and the Jebusites; and I delivered them into your hand. (12) And I sent the hornet before you, which drave them out from before you, even the two kings of the Amorites; **but not with thy sword, nor with thy bow.**

2 Chronicles 20:17-23 Ye shall not need to fight in this battle: set yourselves, stand ye still, and see the salvation of the LORD with you, O Judah and Jerusalem: fear not, nor be dismayed; to morrow go out against them: for the LORD will be with you. (18) And Jehoshaphat bowed his head with his face to the ground: and all Judah and the inhabitants of Jerusalem fell before the LORD, worshipping the LORD. (19) And the Levites, of the children of the Kohathites, and

of the children of the Korhites, stood up to praise the LORD God of Israel with a loud voice on high. (20) And they rose early in the morning, and went forth into the wilderness of Tekoa: and as they went forth, Jehoshaphat stood and said, Hear me, O Judah, and ye inhabitants of Jerusalem; Believe in the LORD your God, so shall ye be established; believe his prophets, so shall ye prosper. (21) **And when he had consulted with the people, he appointed singers unto the LORD, and that should praise the beauty of holiness, as they went out before the army, and to say, Praise the LORD; for his mercy endureth for ever.** (22) And when they began to sing and to praise, the LORD set [delivered up] ambushments against the children of Ammon, Moab, and mount Seir, which were come against Judah; and they were smitten. (23) For the children of Ammon and Moab stood up against the inhabitants of mount Seir, utterly to slay and destroy them: and when they had made an end of the inhabitants of Seir, every one helped to destroy another.

So when Israel was enabled to take the land of Canaan by warfare it was not what God had originally intended. Since Israel had constantly feared that God was trying to kill them and they doubted His loving care, Satan was enabled to seduce them into vowing to God to slaughter the Canaanites and other heathen nations. Israel was granted to be victorious in battle, but Satan won the war against God's character. Israel was defeated by their victory and enslaved to a false view of God.

Seeing God in the Light of Christ

In these last days we are granted the opportunity to see the character of God as it truly is. In the face of Jesus Christ we can begin to uncover the true intentions of our heavenly Father.

John 14:8-10 Philip saith unto him, Lord, shew us the Father, and it sufficeth us. (9) Jesus saith unto him, Have I been so long time with you, and yet hast thou not known me, Philip? **he that hath seen me hath seen the Father;** and how sayest thou then, Shew us the Father? (10) Believest thou not that I am in the Father, and the Father in me? the words that I speak unto you I speak not of myself: but the Father that dwelleth in me, **he doeth the works.**

John 17:3-4 And this is life eternal, that they might know thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom thou hast sent. (4) **I [Jesus] have glorified thee on the earth:** I have finished the work which thou gavest me to do.

Jesus is “the image of the invisible God.” (Colossians 1:15); the very “brightness of His glory, and the express image of His person.” (Hebrews 1:3). How many people did Jesus kill with the sword? How many did He burn with fire? How many children did He impale with a spear? Absolutely none! For all those who entertain ideas that God came to destroy men’s lives, remember the words of Jesus:

Luke 9:55-56 But he turned, and rebuked them, and said, Ye know not what manner of spirit ye are of. (56) For the Son of man is not come to destroy men's lives, but to save them.

As long as we continue to believe the lie that God will personally kill those who resist Him, we will find Jesus comes to us in the time of Jacob’s trouble as an enemy and we will let go before we receive His blessing. Only those who find our Father to be truly merciful will be enabled to hang on and be sealed against the lie of Satan that God is a tyrant that we should fear. It will take the events of Jacob’s trouble to fully surface this human wickedness against God (Jeremiah 30:7); this fear that conceives of God as a personal murderer to those who think differently of Him.

Will Satan defeat you in the victory of Israel over Canaan with the sword, or will you see our merciful Father letting men have their own wishes and following their own course to its completion? Choose you this day whom you will serve; as for me and my house we will serve the ever-merciful God, who will by no means clear iniquity but let the wheat and tares come to harvest that every man’s heart will be revealed.

Canaan

Conquest

How do we reconcile the wholesale slaughter of nations by Israel with the sword against the words of Christ?

Matthew 26:52 ...for all they that take the sword shall perish with the sword.

Not only men, women and children also:

Deuteronomy 2:34 And we took all his cities at that time, and utterly destroyed the men, and the women, and the little ones, of every city, we left none to remain:

Were the Israelites truly in tune with the character of God? Why were they regularly afraid that He had brought them out into the desert to kill them? Was the deep darkness that fell upon Abraham in any way related to his taking of the sword to save his nephew and family?

Did the slaughter of the Shechemites by Levi and Simeon have any influence on the vow of Israel to utterly destroy their enemies?

Do you need to know? If you didn't, might Christ come to you as He did to Jacob in his trouble and be perceived as an enemy? Only trusting in the mercy of God did Jacob overcome as the true Israel of God.