

Deuteronomy 20:1-20 **Israel – Rules of Warfare**

When You Go To War

1 "When you go out to battle against your enemies, and see horses and chariots and people more numerous than you, do not be afraid of them; for the LORD your God is with you, who brought you up from the land of Egypt.

Priests Encourage the Soldiers

2 So it shall be, when you are on the verge of battle, that the priest shall approach and speak to the people. **3** And he shall say to them, 'Hear, O Israel: Today you are on the verge of battle with your enemies. Do not let your heart faint, do not be afraid, and do not tremble or be terrified because of them; **4** for the LORD your God is He who goes with you, to fight for you against your enemies, to save you.'

Soldiers Released From Duty

5 "Then the officers shall speak to the people, saying: 'What man is there who has built a new house and has not dedicated it? Let him go and return to his house, lest he die in the battle and another man dedicate it. **6** And what man is there who has planted a vineyard and has not yet eaten of it? Let him go and return to his house, lest he die in the battle and another man eat of it. **7** And what man is there who is betrothed to a woman and has not married her? Let him go and return to his house, lest he die in the battle and another man marry her.'

Release of the fearful

8 "The officers shall speak further to the people, and say, 'What man is there who is fearful and fainthearted? Let him go and return to his house, lest the heart of his brethren faint like his heart.'

Appointing Leaders

9 "And so it shall be, when the officers have finished speaking to the people, that they shall make captains of the armies to lead the people.

Offer of Peace and Tribute

10 "When you go near a city to fight against it, then proclaim an offer of peace to it. **11** And it shall be that if they accept your offer of peace, and open to you, then all the people who are found in it shall be placed under tribute to you, and serve you.

War Against a City – Spoils of War

12 Now if the city will not make peace with you, but makes war against you, then you shall besiege it. **13** And when the LORD your God delivers it into your hands, you shall strike every male in it with the edge of the sword. **14** But the women, the little ones, the livestock, and all that is in the city, all its spoil, you shall plunder for yourself; and you shall eat the enemies' plunder which the LORD your God gives you. **15** Thus you shall do to all the cities which are very far from you, which are not of the cities of these nations.

Destroy Cities of Your Inheritance

16 But of the cities of these peoples which the LORD your God gives you as an inheritance, you shall let nothing that breathes remain alive, **17** 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, [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.

Do Not Destroy Fruit Trees

[19](#) "When you besiege a city for a long time, while making war against it to take it, you shall not destroy its trees by wielding an ax against them; if you can eat of them, do not cut them down to use in the siege, for the tree of the field is man's food. [20](#) Only the trees which you know are not trees for food you may destroy and cut down, to build siegeworks against the city that makes war with you, until it is subdued. NKJV

Facts Revealed:

When You Go To War against cities far from you which are not among the nations appointed by God for destruction [\[Deuteronomy 20:1\]](#)

- ◊ Do not fear enemy forces no matter how numerous their soldiers, their horses, and chariots.
- ◊ Remember the Great things Yehowah Eloheyk (the Lord your God) has done for Israel from the time He began to bring them out of Egypt.
- ◊ The Same God is with you now.

Priests Encourage the Soldiers [\[Deuteronomy 20:2-4\]](#)

- ◊ When you are on the verge of battle, the Priests shall approach and speak to the people.
 - ◊ 'Hear, O Israel: Today you are on the verge of battle with your enemies.
 - ◊ Do not let your heart faint, do not be afraid, and do not tremble or be terrified because of them.
 - ◊ For the LORD your God is He who goes with you, to fight for you against your enemies, to save you.

Soldiers Released From Duty [\[Deuteronomy 20:5-7\]](#)

- ◊ Officers weed out the unfit.
 - ◊ Those who have not yet dedicated their new house.
 - ◊ Those who have planted a vineyard and have not yet eaten of it.
 - ◊ Those who are engaged to a woman and have not yet married her. [\[Deuteronomy 20:7, 24:5\]](#)
- ◊ Lest they die in the battle and another will enjoy their property or their wife.

Release of the fearful [\[Deuteronomy 20:8\]](#)

- ◊ Fear is contagious.
 - ◊ Release the fearful, lest they cause the heart of their brethren to be discouraged.

Appointing Leaders [\[Deuteronomy 20:9\]](#)

- ◊ When the officers have finished speaking to the people, that they shall make captains of the armies to lead the people.

Offer of Peace and Receive Tribute [\[Deuteronomy 20:10-11\]](#)

- ◊ When you go near a city to fight against it, then proclaim an offer of peace to it.
 - ◊ If they accept your offer of peace, and open to you, then all the people who are found in it shall be placed under tribute to you, and serve you.

War Against a Distant City – Spoils of War [\[Deuteronomy 20:12-15\]](#)

- ◊ If the city will not make peace with you, but makes war against you;
 - ◊ Besiege the city.
- ◊ When Yehowah Eloheyk (the Lord your God) delivers it into your hands;
 - ◊ Strike every male with the edge of the sword.
 - ◊ You may take for yourselves as plunder;
 - ❖ The Women.
 - ❖ The Little Ones.

- ❖ The Livestock.
- ❖ All that is in the city.
- ✧ You shall eat the enemies plunder which Yehowah Eloheyk (the Lord your God) gives you.
- ✧ Thus you shall do to all the cities which are very far from you, which are not of the cities of these nations which are appointed for destruction whom you are displacing in the Land of your inheritance.

Destroy Cities of Your Inheritance [Deuteronomy 20:16-18] [Exodus 23:20-24, 31-33, 34:10-17, Leviticus 18:24-30, Numbers 33:50-56, Deuteronomy 7:1-5, 16, 20:16-18, 25:17-19]

- ✧ But of the cities of these peoples which the LORD your God gives you as an inheritance:
 - ✧ You shall let nothing that breathes remain alive.
 - ✧ You shall utterly destroy them:
 - ❖ The **Hittite** and the **Amorite** and the **Canaanite** and the **Perizzite** and the **Hivite** and the **Jebusite**.
 - ✧ Just as Yehowah Eloheyk (the LORD your God) has commanded you.
 - ✧ Lest they teach you to do according to all their abominations which they have done for their gods, and you sin against Yehowah Eloheyk (the LORD your God).

Do Not Destroy Fruit Trees [Deuteronomy 20:19-20]

- ✧ When you besiege a city for a long time, while making war against it to take it:
 - ✧ Do not destroy the Fruit Trees if you can eat of them.
 - ✧ Do not cut them down to be used in the siege mound.
 - ❖ The trees of the field are for man's food.
 - ✧ The only trees that may be used in your siegeworks are the trees you know are not for food.
 - ✧ Lay Siege against the city that makes war with you, until it is subdued.