



## Daily Verse and Comment

### Deuteronomy 13:6-11

(6) If your very own brother, or your son or daughter, or the wife you love, or your closest friend secretly entices you, saying, "Let us go and worship other gods" (gods that neither you nor your fathers have known, (7) gods of the peoples around you, whether near or far, from one end of the land to the other), (8) do not yield to him or listen to him. Show him no pity. Do not spare him or shield him. (9) You must certainly put him to death. Your hand must be the first in putting him to death, and then the hands of all the people. (10) Stone him to death, because he tried to turn you away from the LORD your God, who brought you out of Egypt, out of the land of slavery. (11) Then all Israel will hear and be afraid, and no one among you will do such an evil thing again.

*New International Version*

If someone tried to draw another person away from [God](#) and entice him to serve other gods, the penalty was death. Whole cities could be destroyed for this (verses 12-18). The same principle is at work with the Canaanites, just on a much larger scale. Being stronger and more numerous than Israel ( [Numbers 13:31](#); [Deuteronomy 9:1](#); [20:1](#)), it required an entire *army* to enforce God's law against idolatry rather than just a local judge or magistrate. Every able-bodied, non-Levite above the age of 20 had to participate in carrying out God's justice in the land He had given them.

This action was not at all synonymous with a man murdering another because of the evil intent of his heart. It is about God executing wrath on evildoers, commissioning Israel to be the governing authority to carry out His justice. This is not to say that Israel was above reproach—far from it. Israel was simply the tool God used to carry out His law.

God did not tell Israel to wage war on the idolaters *beyond* their borders. He did not tell them to take the army back to Egypt and “finish the job” or to

march on Babylon or Assyria and wipe them out, even though those nations were great idolaters, too. Rather, He told them to carry out His law *within the borders that He had set*. Due to the size of the job, an army was required. God's command to Israel to go to war was to enforce God's law, not because there is any variableness in Him!

— David C. Grabbe

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