

1.

CONQUERING, OVERCOMING, & BEING VICTORIOUS!

(DESPITE GIANTS IN THE LAND)

THE Old Testament is full of illustrations about New Testament living. The Old Testament illustrates through its stories how we can live successfully. It also shows us the pitfalls of not living according to the Handbook. The most dramatic picture of the Christian experience is found in the story of Israel coming out of Egypt and entering their Promised Land. As we begin this new year, we want to lay some foundations that will ensure that we live as overcomers, conquerors, and victors. We're not fighting for a geographical place. Our Promised Land is the place where we have fully obeyed God. A place where we enjoy the LORD's presence without any area of compromise in our lives'. A place where we are undivided in our devotion to God. A place where we enjoy a land flowing with milk and honey (peace and blessing despite circumstances). As with Israel's journey out of Egypt and into the Promised Land, we too have a journey where we must "come out" of our old land and then enter a new land. Every step of way presents us with a challenge: will we trust God despite what we see?. This presents us with a choice whether we will view things with eyes of doubt (natural) or eyes of faith.

1. How does the New Testament command us to journey? (2 Cor. 5:7)

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A place where we are undivided in our devotion to God. A place where we enjoy a land flowing with milk and honey (peace and blessing despite circumstances).**

2. What prevented most of the Israelites from entering the Promised Land?
(Heb. 4:2-3)
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Faith is believing when we don't see it. It is not wishful thinking. It is not even positive thinking. It has no power in itself. It is simply living as if God is right. It is trust, not expectation. God told Israel to prepare to leave Egypt suddenly and quickly. They had no weapons with which to conquer Egypt. They were powerless slaves. God told them that their deliverance from Egypt would come through a lamb. It became known as the Passover Lamb. Its blood over their household would assure their deliverance. This required faith on the Israelites part. They didn't know what to expect. This is the essence of trust: accepting someone's instructions though not knowing what to expect. Who would have expected that immediately after dinner, they would plunder the Egyptians' gold and silver and be free? In the same way, we were delivered out of the hands of Pharaoh (Satan), the land of Egypt (the way of the world), and given precious treasure (salvation). All this happened because our Passover Lamb was slain for us. Who would believe that the death of a man could deliver every person in the world who ever lived, who puts their faith and trust in Him (Isa. 53:1)? Israel's deliverance was a step of faith. It marked the beginning of an on-going struggle-

Ask yourself- "Would I walk into a very wide and deep river with all my family, and belongings, while it was flowing swiftly down stream as usual?" Such was the situation for each Hebrew the night of their exodus. Perhaps someone felt like pointing out to God that He was leading them the *long* way round to Canaan when in fact He should have taken them north-east instead of south-east. This

was going to be a *step of faith* if Israel was to trust God. They didn't know what to expect.

3. In the Christian walk what are we constantly doing battle with, that affects the quality of our life with God? (Eph. 6:16)

DOUBTS' BEST FRIEND

When doubt was born he was soon followed by the birth of his brother: *fear*. Doubt and fear are the arch enemies of faith and trust. Doubt always summons fear. As Israel left Egypt, God gave them strict instructions to have courage (Ex. 14:13).

4. Which of the options below is real courage~
 - a) not having fear.
 - b) overcoming fear.
5. Why was the Psalmist not fearing according to Psalm 3?

Amen.

2.

SEVEN 'GIANTS' WHO WON'T LET YOU INTO YOUR 'PROMISED LAND'

IT'S yours. You have every right to it. Someone won't let you have what's yours. This was the case with Israel about to enter their Promised Land. With every achievement, there's a challenge. With every victory there's a battle. After Israel had yielded themselves to God in total obedience, they were to face challenges and battles. While the generation that had refused to go into the Promised Land for fear of giants had now been judged and killed, a new generation had arisen under the leadership of Joshua. They were a generation that were prepared to have faith in God. They knew that the Land was full of giants. But they also knew that with God they could defeat anyone. Their entrance into the Promised Land characterises the challenges and battles that we face when we come to new faith in God. Once they had entered the Land, their battles had really just begun. Once we've come to Christ, our battles have really just begun. Far from being the end of challenges and struggles, it marks the beginning of new ones. The difference is though, that we have God on our side.

1. What is our Promised Land based on our last study-

GIANT BATTLES IN LIFE

Ancient peoples had a simple approach to names. They would call people by an obvious trait. Even though a people in a city may have had different family names, their city was named after their reputation. For example, if it was a big city, its name might simply be Big City. If all the people in one city had a reputation for horsemanship, the city might be called Horse City. The seven nations that Israel had to defeat to subdue the Promised Land bore significant names. They are listed in Joshua 3:10.

Canaanites

This name means merchants who humiliate. They were financial giants. The New Testament believer has to learn what God wants done in the area of finance. The devil would love to conquer the believer through bad financial decisions. How does God want us to be conquerors in our finances?

2. Note the following principles of Christian financial handling-

a) Prov. 3:9

b) Mal. 3:10

c) Rom. 13:8

d) Prov. 24:27

Canaanites were motivated by greed and lust for material accumulation.

3. According to Jesus, what affect can a kind of 'Canaanitish' 'spirit' have over the believer? (Mtt. 13:22)

Hittites

This name means terror. Hittites were giants who brought fear, confusion and discouragement. The believer today is challenged by the enemy's bombardment of fear, confusion and discouragement.

4. What were the Israelites told to do in the face of such opposition?
(Numbers 14:9)

5. What assurance of victory over fear, confusion, and discouragement do we have? (Matt. 28:20 and note Joshua 1:5)

This 'giant' wants to conquer us and hinder us from possessing our Promised Land. By looking to God in His Word rather than at the problem we face, we are assured of victory.

Hivites

Hivites claimed to offer a good life by living their lifestyle. Many alternate philosophies and religions today offer to give their adherents "life". The enemy loves to lure people into lifestyles claiming to be the answer to that person's needs and desires. Lifestyles such as "swinging", "if it feels good- do it", "don't worry what other people think", "look out for number one", and "it's about time you did something just for yourself" can all lure people away from the lifestyle that God requires of them.

6. What lifestyle are we told to live? (Lev. 20:23; Rom. 8:4-5, 13; Phil. 3:17; 2Th. 3:6)

Perizzites

Perizzites were people who had been separated and lived in unprotected/unwalled villages. The enemy loves to separate us from God, and thus our protection.

7. How is God described in Psalm 61:3? (Psalm 9:9; Prov. 18:10; 2Sam. 22:31)

Girgashites

Tradition says that after the destruction of their property and possessions, this "giant" fled to Africa. J. Farrar in his "Dictionary of Scripture Names", gives the meaning of the word 'Girgashite' as *one who returns back from a pilgrimage*, while A. Jones in, "The Proper Names of the Old Testament Expounded" translates it as *dwellers in clayey soil, or black mud*.

From- "Giants or Grasshoppers" by R. Klimionok, pg. 120

Therefore, Girgashites are people who go back and are earthy. Backsliding and carnality. The believer must do battle with the spirit of backsliding and carnality. Girgashites battle by degrees. That is, by little compromises. The believer must learn to do battle with the little compromises that this enemy puts before them. No habit or sin is too great that you and God can not overcome it.

AMORITES

Amorites were people who were arrogant and boastful in their speech, who always challenged. We too have a battle with our tongue.

10. What is the mark of a perfect person? (James 3:2)

Jebusites

Jebusites were people who trod on others and polluted them. Power and defilement. Scripture speaks of two areas where people can be defiled: sexually (Gen. 34:5) and religiously (Lev. 18:30; 20:3; Neh. 13:29). The Jebusite spirit seeks to destroy the believer in these two areas. We fight by observing God's Word.

11. First Thessalonians 4:3-7 speaks about this issue. What does it tell us to do?

With God's help we are made more than overcomers! (First John 5:4)

Amen!

3.

VICTORIOUS BY SUBDUING

GOD had appointed Joshua to take Israel into the Promise Land. Through spontaneously dried up rivers, fortified obstacles, and seven nations of giants, Joshua completed his divine mission. God had commissioned him to bring Israel into Canaan. He completed the task.

1. Note the reason Joshua gives for his success in Joshua 23:3, 9-10 :

2. Although Joshua had completed his mission, what is the implication in his statements in 23:5-6?

3. Because of this, he gave strong instructions to the people. What are some of these? (Joshua 23:7-13)

The picture of Israel conquering these seven giant nations is an illustration to the modern believer of the struggles they face. Paul said in 1Cor. 10:6 and 11 that the

things that occurred to Israel were recorded as examples for us. Certainly when we look at the battles that Israel had firstly with God, His leaders, and then their enemies, we see a progression that is relevant to us. Before we were saved we fought against God (James 4:4). When we accepted God, we were put under the authority of His leaders. Israel murmured and grumbled continually about Moses not doing a good enough job for them when he didn't pamper to their every want (1Cor. 10:10). When they had learned to trust their leader, they then did battle with their enemies. The seven nations that they did battle with characterised by traits that represent to the modern believer distinct battles on the road to maturity.

Canaanites - ones who tried to dominate and humiliate through finance and merchandise. The believer must learn Kingdom principles of finance, but be on guard against the enemy's destructive tactics of using money and materialism to choke a believer's walk with the Lord (Mk. 4:19).

Hittites - ones who used fear and confusion. The believer must recognise that the enemy will use fear and confusion to destroy a believer's relationship with God.

Hivites - ones who claimed to give life. The believer must do battle with the enemy who bombards the believer with alternate lifestyles that falsely promise meaning and purpose in life.

Perizzites - ones who have been separated and dwell in unprotected places. The enemy will seek to separate the believer and lure them into unprotected areas. The believer must battle against the enemy who continually seeks to separate the believer from his church fellowship. He will seek to do this by thoughts of bitterness or neglect.

Girgashites - ones who start out and then return. They are earthly. The enemy seeks to drag the believer back into carnality and worldliness.

Amorites - ones who misused their tongues. They spoke arrogantly. The believer must tame his tongue. The enemy will try to destroy the believer through his speech.

Jebusites - ones who tread down and pollute. Scripture speaks of defilement in only two areas- sexual conduct, and religious practise. We must put to death the works of the flesh and earnestly study good doctrine to ensure that our conduct is pleasing to God.

After the seven nations were defeated, to the point that Israel took possession of the Promised Land, there was still much to be done. The land had not been completely subdued.

Our Promised Land is the place where we have fully obeyed God. A place where we enjoy the LORD's presence without any area of compromise in our lives. A place where we are undivided in our devotion to God. A place where we enjoy a land flowing with milk and honey (peace and blessing despite circumstances).

4. But during the conquest of the land, what do we notice? (Joshua 13:13)
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Like our conversion, Israel had to come to terms with the fact that their possession of the land would be a long battle. But the promise of the LORD was that He would be with them and give them victory as they obeyed and loved Him. We too will know victory as we take steps of faith to trust and obey God. Therefore, while we do battle with our enemy, in this life we will never fully overcome them.

5. This leaves us with two options. Which is the best one?
- a) Give up, because we can't fully win anyway.
 - b) Do the best we can with God's help.
6. According to Second Chronicles 15:2, where does the responsibility for our relationship with God lay? (NB James 4:8)
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Joshua foresaw the need before Israel. He was about to die. He urged Israel to completely strive to subdue the land. In this way, we recognise that when we have

made great strides in our relationship with God, we still have a long way to go. How intimately do we know God's Word? How passionately do we pray? What steps are we taking to win the lost? Is our body in subjection to the Lordship of the Holy Spirit within us? Have we done all that God has asked us? For all these modern tasks, Joshua foresaw a military task for Israel. While the great battle before them would seemingly be wage with swords, bows, arrows, spears and rocks, the real battle was either won or lost in another area altogether.

7. What did Joshua want Israel to do? (Joshua 24:14-15)

We too must live in constant surrender. Our fleshly nature is 100% sided with the enemy. We are not to make treaties with it, but to put it to death (Col. 3:5). If we drop our guard, the enemy will slip in and have the upper hand before we know it. This requires self-supervised-discipline. While we are with our brothers and sisters in Christ, the battle is obviously less intense. The challenge comes when are put into totally voluntary situations (eg.'s include- holidays, sick days, etc). Therefore our hearts must be 100% dedicated to doing God's will. Even after Jesus defeated the Devil's temptation in the wilderness, he was still tempted by the devil. We too will find that have victories in certain areas but are tempted back into these same areas of bondage. The best form of defence is attack.

Not that I have already obtained all this, or have already been made perfect, but I press on to take hold of that for which Christ Jesus took hold of me. Brothers, I do not consider myself yet to have taken hold of it. But one thing I do: Forgetting what is behind and straining toward what is ahead, I press on toward the goal to win the prize for which God has called me heavenward in Christ Jesus. All of us who are mature should take such a view of things. And if on some point you think differently, that too God will make clear to you. Only let us live up to what we have already attained.

Philippians 3:12-16

Amen.