

The Enemies - Israel's and Ours
Historical Background: Part 3

As we left last week's study, Israel was again standing on the border of the Promised Land after an additional forty years of training in the desert. It was now time to move in and possess the land. Did Israel obey God's instructions for taking over the Promised Land? This week we will look at Israel under Joshua's leadership; then next week we will see how things changed after his death.

Stop and Pray - Show me the victories we can have when we trust in You, Lord.

1. What is the first thought that comes to mind when you think of the word "enemy"?

2. Before we move on in Israel's history, we need to clarify some things about their enemies.
 - a. In Deuteronomy 20:16-18, the Hittites, Amorites, Canaanites, Perizzites, Hivites, and Jebusites were identified as Israel's enemies. Where did they come from originally and why were these people called the Canaanites (Genesis 9:18-25; 10:1, 6, 15-20)?

 - b. Why were they their enemies (Deuteronomy 7:4)?

 - c. What was Israel to do to their enemies upon entering the land (Deuteronomy 7:1-6)? Why?

3. When Moses died, God gave Joshua (one of the two faithful spies) leadership over Israel's twelve tribes. Just prior to entering the Promised Land, God again stated the steps Israel was to take to possess the land. Read Joshua 1:1-9 and Deuteronomy 9:1-3 and note the following:

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| <u>God's Part in the process</u> | <u>Joshua's/Israel's part in the process</u> |
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4. Restate in your own words what God's part was in the process of conquering their enemies.

5. Restate in your own words what Israel's role was (and your role is) in conquering their enemies.

In Today's World – The Israelites were guaranteed victory over their enemies. However, they had to engage in battle to win. We too are guaranteed a victorious spiritual life, but we have to contend daily in our fleshly bodies to gain the victory God has promised us. If we engage in battle, we too will win. What are the enemies in our land (our spiritual life) as a believer? In this study we will define our enemies as **those things God allows in our lives to drive us back to Himself**. If allowed to go unchecked, these enemies can draw our hearts away from God. However, God intends for us to battle the enemies He allows in our lives and to have victory. Through this victory our faith in our God will increase. (Idols, on the other hand, draw our hearts away from God with no redeeming purpose.) In Ephesians 2:1-5, God says that our enemies are the world, the flesh, and the Devil. Through Christ, God has done His part in freeing us from them. And like Israel, though He has promised complete victory, He leaves our enemies in the land and gives us a choice. We can choose to co-exist with our enemies and experience oppression, or we can engage them and watch God give us the full victory He desires for us.

Note: Let's define "world," "flesh," and "holy" so that we will all have the same understanding of their meanings. World: Things of this world that would lead one's heart away from God. Flesh: Mere human nature, the earthly nature of man apart from divine influence, and therefore, prone to sin and opposed to God. Holy: Set apart, a general term used to indicate sanctity or separation from all that is sinful, impure, or morally imperfect in reference to persons, places, and things. (New Unger's Bible Dictionary)

6. a. What are some forms the enemy takes in the lives of people today?
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| <u>World</u> | <u>Flesh</u> | <u>Devil</u> |
| b. <u>What God has done</u> | | |
| World – John 16:33; I John 5:4-5 | <u>What God desires of me through His power</u> Romans 12:2; I John 2:15-17 | |
| Flesh – Romans 6:6-7 | Galatians 5:16, 25; Romans 6:13 | |
| Devil – I John 3:8; Hebrews 2:14-15 | Ephesians 6:11-17; James 4:7 | |
| c. How does it make you feel to realize that the victory has already been won? Please elaborate. | | |

- d. After studying the above passages, why do you think it is good to do battle with your flesh daily?

Warning: As we study Judges and seek to apply its truths to our lives, we must remember that in the Old Testament, Israel was given clear commands for dealing with their enemies who occupied the Promised Land. Their battle was physical as well as spiritual. For Christians the battle is no less real. We too are involved in warfare, but ours is a spiritual battle (Ephesians 6:12). We are not called to annihilate our unbelieving neighbors, but to love them.

Now that we have clarified what scripture refers to as our enemies, we can move on to observe Israel's success in the Promised Land under Joshua.

7. As they prepared to move into the Promised Land a second time, what new attitudes were produced in this new generation of Israel, through the lessons learned from their fathers' unbelief and their forty years of refining in the desert (Joshua 2:1, 23-24; 6:21)?
8. How much success did the Israelites have in the first seven years of battle?
Joshua 10:40-42

Joshua 11:15-16

Joshua 12:7-24

Joshua 21:43-45

After seven years of battle, Israel had gained control of the land. The land was then divided between the twelve tribes (Joshua 13-21), and the army dismissed. It was now the responsibility of each tribe to clear out any remaining enemy from their own areas (Joshua 13:1-7). According to Joshua 13:1, there were still very large areas to be conquered. The 12 tribes of Israel had stood together as a nation and been incredibly successful under Joshua's leadership. Left on their own, would each tribe remain faithful and obedient?

9. Based on what you have studied so far, what should each tribe have done upon settling into their allotment? Why? What should have given them courage to do so?

Joshua 21:43-44 implies that their conquest of the land was complete. But that was not the case. Before Joshua dies, he calls all Israel together and reminds them of the task ahead (Joshua 23-24). Read Joshua, chapters 23 and 24.

10. Of what does Joshua:
Remind them (Joshua 23:5-11)?

Warn them (Joshua 23:12-16)?

Challenge them (Joshua 24:14-20)?

11. a. How does Israel respond to Joshua's challenge?
 - b. Read Joshua 24:23 carefully. Even at this point, what had already become a part of their lives? Why is this significant?

12. a. Name those things that are of the world, the flesh, or the devil (your enemies) that have subtly crept into your life.

Heart Check: Are you willing to do battle against things listed above? Why or why not? Spend some time talking to God about this.

- b. With God's help, what specific steps do you need to take to get rid of those things, listed in question 12, which negatively influence your life? (Perhaps refer back to verses in 6b and ask the Holy Spirit to direct your thinking.)

Final Thoughts: God desires to give us complete victory. He has promised to fight for us, but we have a role in gaining the victory that will often require sacrifice. He gives us specific instructions and He expects us to obey fully. Will we add to God's Word and do it in our own way? Will we become fearful and quit, satisfied with partial victory? Or will we trust and obey God, having our faith increased as we watch Him fight on our behalf?

Looking Ahead: God was supposed to be Israel's King and leader (I Samuel 8:7). He desired Israel to be a victorious holy nation. In the weeks to come, we will see all the incredibly creative and unexpected ways God conquered their enemies through His judges. God's ways are not our ways, but boy do they keep life interesting!

Pray - God, give me the courage to fight the fight and the faith to allow you to be King and Conqueror in my life.

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