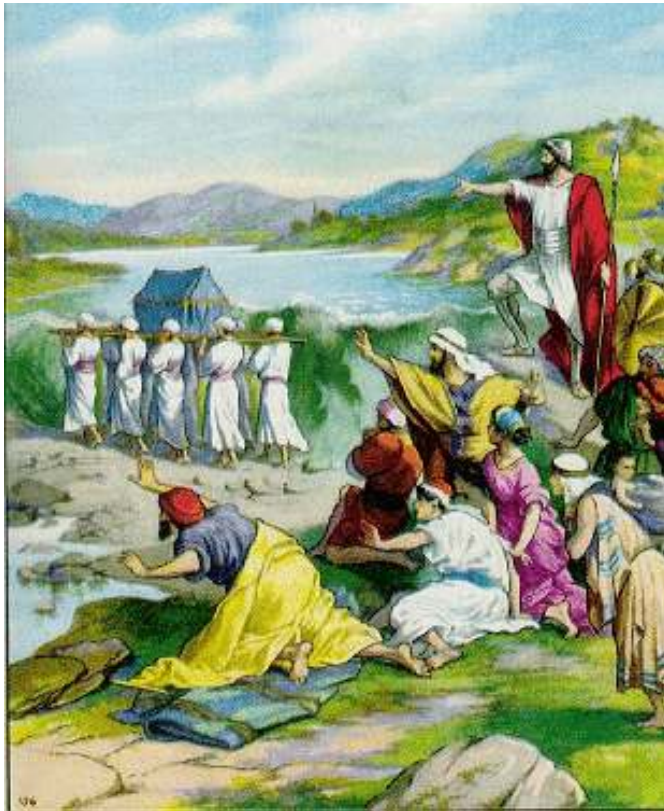


Presentation - Possessing the Land



One of the great themes of the Old Testament is found in the story of Joshua leading the people of God to go in and take possession of the land of promise. A major portion of the Old Testament is devoted to this account. As Christians we must understand that all of these things were recorded for OUR benefit. Yahweh has always had in mind this present age when He would raise up spiritual children after His image. To help this present generation to understand both His desire for them, and the manner in which they would attain to this desire, He has given us the history of Israel for our instruction.

Even as the Israelites went in to take possession of the land Yahweh promised to them, we also have a land promised to us. Even as they had to face the enemies in the land and drive them out, we too have enemies that must be conquered. What is this land that the born again child of God is to take possession of in order to establish the kingdom of God on Earth?

To discover where this land is that the Christian is to take possession of, we need only look to the words of Christ and see where He said the kingdom of God exists. Even as the Israelites of old sought to establish a kingdom for God in the land of Canaan, so too must we work to establish the kingdom of God.

(Slide - Key Scripture)

Luke 17:20-21

Now when He was asked by the Pharisees when the kingdom of God would come, He answered them and said, "The kingdom of God does not come with observation; nor will they say, 'See here!' or 'See there!' For indeed, the kingdom of God is within you."

This passage identifies where it is that God seeks to reign. It identifies where Yahweh desires to set His throne, and what land He seeks to bring under complete subjection to His rule. This kingdom is within you and I!

(Slide - Man Formed of Earth)



Genesis 2:7

Then Yahweh God formed man of dust from the ground...

Consider for a moment how Yahweh has created a perfect parable in the long warfare of Israel as she sought to conquer the land of Canaan. The Israelites were seeking to establish a kingdom in the earth. The kingdom we must establish is in the earth of man's flesh for Christ said "the Kingdom of God is within you."

In Genesis chapter two we are told that man's body was formed from the dust of the earth. Each one of us is walking around in a little piece of real estate. Each one of us is clothed with a body formed from the earth. It is Yahweh's desire that we bring this piece of land that we inhabit under complete subjection to His rule.

When man sinned this earth we inhabit fell under the curse of sin. Darkness descended upon the land, and many evil creatures entered in under the curse of death and darkness. Even as the Israelites had to face giants, strongholds, fortified cities, wild beasts, and a myriad of enemies, so too do we find that the same things exist within us.

The apostle Paul wrote, "In my flesh dwells no good thing." "Sin dwells in my flesh." There is much that is evil that resides within us, and it must all be brought under subjection to the rule of God.

(Slide - Key Scripture)

Proverbs 16:32

He who is slow to anger is better than the mighty,
And he who rules his soul, than he who captures a city.

In this proverb King Solomon uses the illustration of a man capturing a fortified city to serve as a parable of a man ruling over his own soul. Warfare in the Old Testament serves as a parable for the spiritual warfare of the saint today. Whereas the patriarchs of old battled with natural enemies, the Christian must contend with spiritual enemies.

Consider Solomon's point here. He is acknowledging that it takes a better man to rule over his own soul, than it takes to capture a city. If you have read of the warfare of Israel as they sought to conquer the land of Canaan, and you thought it was a difficult warfare, understand that this warfare simply stands as a type and a shadow of the warfare the Christian is called to enter into.

Have you ever thought of what it would be like to live in days of old when men were faced with such physical enemies, as were the kings of Israel and their leaders? Have you ever thought that you would like to experience warfare and victory after the manner of David when he slew Goliath, or when he conquered the cities of the Philistines? Have you ever wondered what it would be like to have followed Joshua as he led the people of God in to take possession of the land of promise, while driving out all the evil inhabitants of the land?

This is precisely what God has called you and I to do today! We are to enter into battle and rule over the land of this flesh. In our flesh are enemies. In our flesh there are giants and strongholds and walled cities. We must completely conquer the land, bringing it under the rule of God. Then the kingdom of God will be established in us.

(Slide - Canaan Cursed)

Genesis 9:22-25

Ham, the father of Canaan, saw the nakedness of his father, and told his two brothers outside... When Noah awoke from his wine, he knew what his youngest son had done to him. So he said, "Cursed be Canaan; A servant of servants he shall be to his brothers."

The Israelites went in to take possession of the land of Canaan. It is therefore instructive for us to understand who Canaan was, and the character of the inhabitants there. Canaan was the grandson of Noah. Canaan's father Ham did an evil thing in acting rebelliously toward his father Noah. Ham found his father drunk and naked in his tent, and rather than covering his father and not speaking of his condition, he went and broadcast it. The Scriptures tell us that love covers over a multitude of sins. Ham, however, was not walking in love, but in selfishness.

It is interesting to note that when Noah realized what Ham had done, that he cursed Ham's offspring Canaan. This is a symbol that the fruit of rebellion and selfishness is cursed. We see that this same rebellion and selfishness that was in Ham was also in his offspring, and they waxed worse and worse until God determined to remove them from the earth.

This land of Canaan is a symbol for the land we must conquer, even the land of our flesh. As Paul stated, "In my flesh dwells no good thing." In Genesis 15:16 we find Yahweh speaking to Abraham and promising that He will give the land of Canaan to his descendants. Yet He said that the time for them to possess it had not arrived, for the sins of the people of the land had not yet come to its fulness. Only when there was no good thing left in the land was God ready to destroy its inhabitants.

We must acknowledge that this is the condition of our flesh. There is no good thing in it. So at the fulness of time God sent His Son to begin to destroy the works of the Devil, and to deliver a spiritual people from bondage to sin. It is our calling to follow Yahshua as He leads us to engage in warfare to bring all that is within us into subjection to the rule of His Father.

The leader of the Israelites who led them in to conquer the land of Canaan is the same name as our Lord who leads us in to take possession of the land of our flesh. Joshua is the English form of the Hebrew name Yahshua. This is the same name as the Son of God. The first Yahshua stands as a type and symbol for the other. First the natural, then the spiritual.

Even as Yahshua told His disciples to choose between serving God or living to satisfy the desires of their soul, Joshua urged the people to make a similar choice.

(Slide - Key Scripture)

Joshua 24:14-16

Now therefore, fear Yahweh, serve Him in sincerity and in truth, and put away the gods which your fathers served on the other side of the River and in Egypt. Serve Yahweh! And if it seems evil to you to serve Yahweh, choose for yourselves this day whom you will serve, whether the gods which your fathers served that were on the other side of the River, or the gods of the Amorites, in whose land you dwell. But as for me and my house, we will serve Yahweh."

Yahweh promised the Israelites that if they would serve Him with a whole heart and separate themselves from the idols of the nations around them, then they would always rule over their enemies and dwell securely in the land. However, we know the history of Israel and how they compromised their devotion to Yahweh by serving other gods. They did not pursue Yahweh with a whole heart, and therefore they knew constant defeat at the hands of their enemies.

This is a parable for the Christian today. If the Christian does not pursue God with a whole heart, but instead seeks after the same idols as the nations in which they dwell, whether that be an idol of materialism, or comfort, of pleasure, of entertainment, of ease, of sexual immorality, or any other such god of this world, the promises of God become null and void to them. Such a saint cannot expect to walk victoriously over sin, Satan and the world.

We must put away all idols from our lives at the very beginning of our warfare. If we have idols in our heart and go forth to establish the kingdom of God within, we will fail. We will not be able to subdue the enemies that dwell in our flesh. Even as Joshua challenged the Israelites at the very beginning of their campaign to examine their devotion to God, we as Christians are instructed to do the same.

If we are not wholly devoted, if we have not counted the cost of following Christ wherever He would lead us, then you are already crippled in your fight to possess the land and walk as an overcomer. We must be 100% devoted to Christ, holding nothing in reserve.

(Slide - Key Scripture)

Luke 9:62

But Yahshua said to him, "No one, after putting his hand to the plow and looking back, is fit for the kingdom of God."

Tragically, there are few saints today who have heeded the call of Christ to give Him all of their life. Few have the mindset that they are no longer their own person and therefore they can no longer choose for themselves the life they will live, the choices they will make. They belong totally to God.

(Slide - Key Scripture)

I Corinthians 6:19-20

Or do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit who is in you, whom you have from God, and that you are not your own? For you have been bought with a price...

It is precisely this lack of understanding the total ownership of God over the saint that is responsible for so much defeat among the body of Christ today. How can a man wage war effectively against the flesh, the world and Satan if he is not totally committed to Christ, if he is divided in his loyalty and affections?

Consider the words of Paul to Timothy:

(Slide - Key Scripture)

II Timothy 2:3-5

Suffer hardship with me, as a good soldier of Christ Jesus. No soldier in active service entangles himself in the affairs of everyday life, so that he may please the one who enlisted him as a soldier. Also if anyone competes as an athlete, he does not win the prize unless he competes according to the rules.

This level of commitment is not merely for ministers of the gospel. Christ said “No man can be My disciple who does not hate even his own life.” How then can a man fight the good fight of faith if he is also pursuing the things of this world? How can a Christian expect to walk as an overcomer when his pursuit of the things of the world is identical to that of his lost neighbor?

Paul declares that an athlete cannot win the prize unless he competes according to the rules. The first rule of discipleship in Christ is to count the cost of giving all to Him, turning our backs on our former vain way of life, and agreeing to accept whatever the Father has chosen for us. If we seek to skip this step it is no different than an athlete who seeks a shortcut by cutting across the center of the field, rather than running the designated course around the track. Any Christian who does not count the cost and commit all to Christ will be disqualified from receiving the crown of the overcomer.

(Slide - Counting the Cost)

Luke 14:33-35

“So likewise, whoever of you does not forsake all that he has cannot be My disciple. Salt is good; but if the salt has lost its flavor, how shall it be seasoned? It is neither fit for the land nor for the dunghill, but men throw it out. He who has ears to hear, let him hear!”

There can be no victorious life without a complete surrender of all things to Christ. This is the first requirement of a overcoming life. If you do not commit all to Christ, you will not be able to walk victoriously over all things. If there is even one thing you will not surrender to Christ, then you have an idol in your heart, and the idol will become a snare to your feet and keep you from complete victory in Christ.

Some of you understand that there are serious things wrong in the churches today. You understand that there is little victory among the saints, for they are as enslaved to their lusts and evil habits and worldly pleasures as the world. One chief reason is that there is no cost of discipleship proclaimed to the church. A gospel of ease has replaced the preaching of the disciple's cross.

A church that avoids counting the cost of discipleship is doomed to failure. Such a church can never attain to the desire of Yahweh, or reach conformity to the image of Christ. That is why in this Bible Study God has not let me deliver to you more truth before you have demonstrated a willingness to walk in the truth already delivered to you.

The church of this hour would never place such a requirement upon its members. But the Spirit of Christ demands that we obey those things He has delivered to us already. Christ is determined to daily bring every true disciple to confront the cost of following Him, and to accept the cost willingly. Only then can we have any hope of walking in victory over the sins that are resident in our flesh.

This then must be settled first. Will you commit all to Christ? Will you count the cost of losing mother, father, wife, sons, daughters, possessions, and even give up your own right to self direction? If you do not accept the cost then you are wasting your time seeking to be found pleasing to God; you are wasting your time trying to walk as an overcomer and attain victory over the flesh, the world and Satan.

There are many lessons we can learn from the example of Israel concerning spiritual warfare and victory over sin as we look at their history in the land of promise.

(Slide - Key Scripture)

I Corinthians 10:1-6

And I do not wish you to be ignorant, brethren, that all our fathers were under the cloud, and all passed through the sea, and all to Moses were baptized in the cloud, and in the sea; and all did eat the same spiritual food and all did drink the same spiritual drink, for they were drinking of a spiritual rock following them, and the rock was the Christ; but in the majority of them God was not well pleased, for they were strewn in the wilderness, and those things became types of us, that we should not passionately desire evil things, as also these did desire.

All that we read concerning the history of Israel was written for our benefit. This passage continues:

(Slide - Key Scripture)

I Corinthians 10:7-12

And do not become idolaters as were some of them. As it is written, "The people sat down to eat and drink, and rose up to play." Nor let us commit sexual immorality, as some of them did, and in one day twenty-three thousand fell; nor let us tempt Christ, as some of them also tempted, and were destroyed by serpents; nor complain, as some of them also complained, and were destroyed by the destroyer. Now all these things happened to them as types of us, and they were written for our admonition, on whom the ends of the ages have come.

I have found that the Spirit of Christ has answered many of my questions regarding spiritual warfare as I have looked to the examples of the Old Testament. The history of Israel going in to take possession of the land of promise serves as a type and shadow of the Christian taking possession of the land of his flesh. Even as man's body was formed of the dust of the earth, so too does the history of Israel conquering the land of promise serve as an example of Christians conquering their flesh.

(Slide - Moses as Law Giver)



As we begin to examine the types and shadows of the history of Israel's warfare to conquer the land, we might ask why God did not choose Moses to lead the people into their inheritance. The reason is that Moses was the Law-giver. The Law can never lead mankind forth into victory over sin. The Law was given to show us how weak we are, and to make known our total inability in our own strength to conquer the enemies that dwell in our land.

The Law simply revealed the righteousness of God, but it was powerless to make men righteous. The Law could reveal that true righteousness was manifested in a pure devotion to God and love for one's neighbor, but it could not produce this love and devotion in the hearts of men and women.

Something further would need to happen in order for men to begin to walk in righteousness, and to establish the kingdom of God in the earth. Mankind would need to receive a new heart, a heart that yearned to do the will of Yahweh. This new heart would not be given until the Holy Spirit was given to mankind at the day of Pentecost. This Spirit of Christ would then produce in man the desire to do the will of the Father, and the power to accomplish His desire. The Law was designed to lead us to Christ, showing us our need to be born again of the Spirit.

(Slide - Key Scripture)

Romans 8:3-4

For what the Law could not do, weak as it was through the flesh, God did: sending His own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh and as an offering for sin, He condemned sin in the flesh, so that the requirement of the Law might be fulfilled in us, who do not walk according to the flesh but according to the Spirit.

When God gave man a law that was external to himself, written on tablets of stone, that which man received was weak, unable to give him victory of sin and the flesh. The Law could only tell us what we should do, but it could not produce in us the desire to do it, nor could it impart the spiritual life necessary for man to rule over his flesh.

(Slide - Key Scripture)

Galatians 3:21

Is the Law then contrary to the promises of God? May it never be! For if a law had been given which was able to impart life, then righteousness would indeed have been based on law.

This was the weakness of the Law; it was not able to impart spiritual life to men. We need the life of Christ in us if we are to conquer sin. For this reason, Moses could not be the man to lead the Israelites into victory over the enemies of the land. The entire time Moses led the people of Israel, they remained outside the land of promise.

The apostle Paul describes his own struggle against sin, before he came to know Christ, as a futile exercise that always ended in failure.

(Slide - Key Scripture)

Romans 7:14-23

For we know that the Law is spiritual, but I am of flesh, sold into bondage to sin. For what I am doing, I do not understand; for I am not practicing what I would like to do, but I am doing the very thing I hate. But if I do the very thing I do not want to do, I agree with the Law, confessing that the Law is good. So now, no longer am I the one doing it, but sin which dwells in me. For I know that nothing good dwells in me, that is, in my flesh; for the willing is present in me, but the doing of the good is not. For the good that I want, I do not do, but I practice the very evil that I do not want. But if I am doing the very thing I do not want, I am no longer the one doing it, but sin which dwells in me. I find then the principle that evil is present in me, the one who wants to do good. For I joyfully concur with the law of God in the inner man, but I see a different law in the members of my body, waging war against the law of my mind and making me a prisoner of the law of sin which is in my members.

Before we come to Yahshua and receive His Spirit, we can have very good intentions of doing the will of God, but we will always fall short. We will find that the desires of our flesh are too strong, making us slaves to sin. Only after receiving the Spirit of Christ will we have the spiritual life, and the spiritual power, necessary to conquer sin and begin to live in righteousness.

What a desperate and vexing condition a man finds himself in when he begins to be awakened to the evil that resides in his flesh. As much as he may want to rule over it, he finds himself unable to break free of its domination of his life. But take hope, for Yahweh has provided an answer. He has given us a Savior to deliver us from the bondage to sin.

(Slide - Key Scripture)

Romans 7:24-25

**O unhappy and pitiable and wretched man that I am! Who will release and deliver me from [the shackles of] this body of death? O thank God! [He will!] through Jesus Christ (the Anointed one) our Lord!
[Amplified Bible]**

As we dwell in this body of flesh we are in bondage to the sinful desires that reside in it. We cry out, “Who will release and deliver me from the shackles of this body of death?” God answers, “I will set you free through my son, Yahshua the Messiah.”

We see then that Moses could not lead the people into conquer the land, for the Law does not have the power to set men free. Joshua, who is a type of Yahshua, our Savior, was God’s appointed vessel to lead the people in to conquer the land and drive out its inhabitants.

How then is this victory accomplished, and what is the manner of our warfare?

(Slide - Joshua Crossing Jordan)



The parallels between the life of Joshua and the life of Yahshua, the Son of God, are not coincidental. They were ordained by God to teach us many profound lessons. Not only do they share the same Hebrew name, but many similarities exist between their lives.

(Slide - Joshua and Yahshua: Leaders)

Joshua and Yahshua: Both Leaders of God's People

- Joshua: [Moses said] Yahweh was angry with me also on your account, saying, "Not even you shall enter there. Joshua the son of Nun, who stands before you, he shall enter there; encourage him, for he will cause Israel to inherit it." (Deuteronomy 1:37-38)

- Yahshua: "And you, Bethlehem, land of Judah, are by no means least among the leaders of Judah; for out of you shall come forth a Ruler, Who will shepherd My people Israel." (Matthew 2:6)

(Slide - Joshua and Yahshua: Both Called out of Egypt)

Joshua and Yahshua: Both Called out of Egypt

Joshua: "None of the men who came up from Egypt, from twenty years old and upward, shall see the land... except Caleb the son of Jephunneh the Kenizzite and Joshua the son of Nun, for they have followed Yahweh fully."
(Numbers 32:11-12)

Yahshua: Joseph arose and took the Child and His mother by night, and departed for Egypt; 15 and was there until the death of Herod, that what was spoken by the Lord through the prophet might be fulfilled, saying, "Out of Egypt did I call My Son." (Matthew 2:14-15)

(Slide - Joshua and Yahshua: Filled with the Spirit)

Joshua and Jesus: Both Filled with the Spirit

Joshua: So Yahweh said to Moses, "Take Joshua the son of Nun, a man in whom is the Spirit, and lay your hand on him." (Numbers 27:18)

Yahshua: "You know of Yahshua of Nazareth, how God anointed Him with the Holy Spirit..." (Acts 10:38)

(Joshua and Yahshua: Appoint Twelve Men)

Joshua and Yahshua: Appoint Twelve Men

Joshua: "So Joshua called the twelve men whom he had appointed from the sons of Israel, one man from each tribe." (Joshua 4:4).

Yahshua: "And He went up on the mountain and summoned those whom He Himself wanted, and they came to Him. And He appointed twelve, so that they would be with Him and that He could send them out to preach..." (Mark 3:13-14)

(Joshua and Yahshua: Baptized in the Jordan River)

Joshua and Yahshua: Baptized in the Jordan River

Joshua: Joshua said, "By this you shall know that the living God is among you... It shall come about when the soles of the feet of the priests who carry the ark of Yahweh, the Lord of all the earth, rest in the waters of the Jordan, the waters of the Jordan will be cut off, and the waters which are flowing down from above will stand in one heap." (Joshua 3:10-13)

Yahshua: "In those days Jesus came from Nazareth in Galilee and was baptized by John in the Jordan." (Mark 1:9)

Many more parallels between the lives of these two men could be cited, but this should be sufficient to give you understanding that God chose for one to serve as a type and shadow of the other. God intends for His people to learn from the patterns of the Old Testament that they might walk victoriously in this age.

Even as Joshua began the conquest of the promised land by crossing through the midst of the Jordan on dry land, Yahshua began His ministry of destroying the works of the Devil by being baptized in the Jordan River.

(Slide - Yahshua's Baptism)



We observed in previous presentations that the number three is a number indicating completion, and fulness. Therefore we have three baptisms figured at the Jordan. The first is Joshua crossing with the people of Israel. The second is Yahshua being baptized by John. The third is the Christian's baptism, symbolizing his unity with Christ in this baptism.

(Slide - Key Scripture)

Romans 6:3-8

Or do you not know that all of us who have been baptized into Christ Jesus have been baptized into His death? Therefore we have been buried with Him through baptism into death, so that as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, so we too might walk in newness of life. For if we have become united with Him in the likeness of His death, certainly we shall also be in the likeness of His resurrection, knowing this, that our old self was crucified with Him, in order that our body of sin might be done away with, so that we would no longer be slaves to sin; for he who has died is freed from sin. Now if we have died with Christ, we believe that we shall also live with Him...

Baptism is a symbol of our being united with Christ in His death. When we are placed under the water it is a symbol of dying. When we come up out of the water it is a symbol of resurrection into a new life in Christ. If we were to be held under the water for any length of time, the first thing we would want to do is take a deep breath of air as we came up out of the water. This too is a symbol, for after we are united with Christ we are to receive the Holy Spirit, who is often depicted as the wind, or the breath of God.

(Slide - Key Scripture)

John 20:21-22

So Yahshua said to them again, "Peace be with you; as the Father has sent Me, I also send you." And when He had said this, He breathed on them and said to them, "Receive the Holy Spirit."

This receiving of the Holy Spirit is also pictured in Yahshua's baptism, for after coming out of the water we read:

Luke 3:21-22

Now when all the people were baptized, Jesus was also baptized, and while He was praying, heaven was opened, and the Holy Spirit descended upon Him in bodily form like a dove...

From that point forward, Yahshua went about doing the work of God in bringing the Kingdom of God to the earth and destroying the works of the devil. This to is to be our work after we have been united with Christ through baptism and have received the Holy Spirit.

We must not go forth to do the will of God until after we have received the Spirit. For this reason Yahshua, having commissioned His disciples, told them to tarry in Jerusalem until they were endued with power from on high. We cannot destroy the work of the devil in our own strength. We must be clothed with the power of God.

Immediately after being baptized and receiving the Spirit, the Lord was led out into the wilderness to be tempted by the devil. We see then that He immediately entered into battle with Satan. We can be encouraged that He never once lost a battle, and God also promised Joshua that no enemy would ever be able to stand against him.

These things written about the children of Israel under Joshua's leadership, serve therefore as instruction for ourselves. As we follow Christ into battle, we need never be defeated. He will always lead us to victory if we follow Him faithfully with a whole heart.

(Slide - Key Scripture)

I Corinthians 10:13-14

No temptation has overtaken you but such as is common to man; and God is faithful, who will not allow you to be tempted beyond what you are able, but with the temptation will provide the way of escape also, so that you will be able to endure it. Therefore, my beloved, flee from idolatry.

Even as Joshua and the people with him went directly to Jericho to do battle, and even as Yahshua was led into the wilderness to be tempted by the devil, so too will we be faced with temptation and confronted by our adversary the devil. Yet a glorious promise has been given to us here. God will never allow us to be tempted beyond our ability to overcome and to walk victoriously. Yahweh will always provide a way to come forth victoriously.

Yet we must be mindful of the sentence that follows this promise. If we have idols in our lives, we will not be able to stand before the enemy.

(Slide - Achan's Idolatry)



When Joshua led the people to their first battle in the land, which was against the fortified city of Jericho, God commanded them to not take any plunder for themselves. One man disobeyed, and as a result at the next battle the people faced, they were overcome by their enemies, even though the enemy was very small. Upon inquiring as to the cause of their defeat, Yahweh revealed that His command concerning the taking of plunder had been disobeyed, and this disobedience had led to their defeat. It was disclosed that a man named Achan had taken a gold bar and a Babylonian garment and had hidden them in the ground under his tent.

This is itself a parable of the saints having hidden sin in their lives, and harboring idols. Our Lord forcefully commands all who would follow Him as a disciple to first count the cost of surrendering all things to Him. We are told:

Luke 14:33

So then, none of you can be My disciple who does not give up all his own possessions.

Christ tells us that we cannot love anything or anyone more than we love Him. We must count the cost of discipleship, and accept the cost. Only those who do so, giving up all rights to their life and possessions, will be able to conquer the land and walk in victory over the enemy. If we hold back anything in reserve, or refuse to surrender anyone or anything to God, we will walk in defeat before our enemies. Although some might think to spare themselves or their family by refusing to count the cost, the story of Achan reveals that when we fail to surrender all to God that it will result in evil to those we thought to spare. Achan and his entire family were stoned to death as a result of his idolatry.

Let us back up a little bit, for there is much more we can learn concerning our own spiritual warfare as we look at Israel's experience in the land.

(Slide - Key Scripture)

Joshua 5:2-3, 9

At that time Yahweh said to Joshua, "Make for yourself flint knives and circumcise again the sons of Israel the second time." So Joshua made himself flint knives and circumcised the sons of Israel at Gibeath-haaraloth... Then Yahweh said to Joshua, "Today I have rolled away the reproach of Egypt from you."

After being baptized in the Jordan, signifying our union with Christ in His death and resurrection, and after having received the Holy Spirit, we find that the next event in the life of God's people is the removal of the flesh of the foreskin in the act of circumcision. What does this symbolize?

This event does not stand for a removal of sin from our lives, for this would be the work of the conquest of Canaan to come. What is pictured here is the means in which we carry out our warfare. It is a symbol that our warfare is to be conducted through faith, not through human effort. The apostle Paul spoke of this in the following Scripture.

(Slide - Key Scripture)

Galatians 5:6

For in Christ Yahshua neither circumcision nor uncircumcision means anything, but faith working through love.

What Paul is declaring here is that circumcision is merely a symbol, and the symbol holds no spiritual benefit for a man. That which helps a man is what the symbol stands for. Circumcision is a symbol of a man ceasing to rely upon the power of the flesh to accomplish the purposes of God. It symbolizes a man choosing instead to have faith in God's ability to accomplish His will through the man. As the Scriptures declare, "The battle belongs to the Lord." Our role is simply to follow wherever He leads, and to trust Him to accomplish the victory for us.

Whenever Yahweh calls a man to some work, He promises that He will supply everything to accomplish that work. He does not expect the man to try to accomplish God's will through his own strength. We find a parallel to this story in God's call on Moses. After appearing to Moses at the burning bush, and telling Moses that he had been chosen to deliver God's people from bondage in Egypt, we read of the following event.

(Slide - Key Scripture)

Exodus 4:24-26

Now it came about at the lodging place on the way that Yahweh met Moses and sought to put him to death. Then Zipporah took a flint and cut off her son's foreskin and threw it at Moses' feet, and she said, "You are indeed a bridegroom of blood to me." So God let Moses alone.

We saw earlier how the son of Ham represented the fruit of Ham's life. In the same way, the son of Moses represented the fruit of his life. The fruit we bring forth unto God must be that which is a product of faith, not of the works of the flesh. Moses was going forth to perform a great task that Yahweh had called him to. Yahweh would not tolerate any human striving in this work. He wanted all to be done by faith.

It is important therefore to identify what faith is. Faith always consists of two parts. The first part is the word, or command, of God. The second part is a response of trusting obedience to God's word.

(Slide - Key Scripture)

Romans 10:17

So then faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the word of God.

This sentence is translated more literally by declaring, “faith is out of hearing, and hearing by the word of God.” This means that faith must have something to arise out of. Faith always starts with the command of God. For example, Yahweh appeared to Abram and told him to leave his home and his people behind and to travel to a land that He would give to Abraham and his descendants. Abraham did not just grow tired of living in his hometown and decide for himself to launch out to find a new home, while trusting God to protect him. This is not faith. It is presumption.

No, God spoke a command to Abraham, and Abraham trusted God and obeyed the command. This is faith.

After we come to Christ and receive of His Spirit, the Spirit begins to direct our path. He will lead us as a shepherd leads his sheep. We must be attentive to the voice of the Spirit and trust the voice of God, and follow in willing obedience. This is faith.

We are never to decide for ourselves how we are going to serve God, or how we are to accomplish His desire. This is the message of the circumcision. We must begin to walk in faith. Listening for God’s voice, and obeying whatever He commands. Only then can we go forth to conquer the land of our flesh and establish the kingdom of God.

(Slide - Jericho)



Only after these events, were the Israelites ready to begin the conquest of the land. Yahweh did not start the Israelites out in battle with some minor enemy. He led them directly to one of the greatest fortified cities in the entire land of Canaan. I believe He did this that they might know that even as He gave them victory over this enemy that He would give them victory over every enemy.

Consider the strange manner in which God directed them to achieve victory. They did not wage war in any conventional manner. God asked them to do a thing that made no sense. Yet He promised them that if they did what He asked that Jericho would be conquered.

For six days Yahweh told the people to march around the city one time, remaining silent. On the seventh day they were to march around seven times, and after the seventh time the priests were to blow the trumpets and all the people shout, and the walls of Jericho would fall down. Without erecting any siege works, without attacking the walls, God completely removed the protection from Jericho and delivered the people into the hands of Israel. The entire city was destroyed and not one Israelite perished.

(Slide - Key Scripture)

Deuteronomy 1:30-33

"Yahweh your God who goes before you will Himself fight on your behalf, just as He did for you in Egypt before your eyes, and in the wilderness where you saw how Yahweh your God carried you, just as a man carries his son, in all the way which you have walked until you came to this place.' But for all this, you did not trust Yahweh your God, who goes before you on your way, to seek out a place for you to encamp, in fire by night and cloud by day, to show you the way in which you should go.

An important matter is seen in this. God has spent forty years leading His people through the wilderness. They were commanded to observe the pillar of fire by night and the pillar of cloud by day. Whenever the pillar moved, they were to immediately strike camp and follow. When the pillar remained, they were to remain in their place.

This obedience to follow God was a pattern to be continued as they entered the land. Even though the pillar of fire and cloud did not go with them into the land, they now had Joshua to declare to them the will of God. In the same way the Christian has Yahshua to guide them even as a shepherd guides his sheep.

In all we do we are to be led by the Spirit of Christ that has been given to every Christian. We are not to choose our battles, nor are we to determine how we are to attain the victory. We must be careful to listen to all that God would speak to us, and we must obey precisely what He has told us if we are to walk in victory.

The life of the overcomer in Christ is by necessity a Spirit led life.

When you are convicted that there is some enemy in the land in which you dwell that God desires for you to overcome, you cannot choose for yourself how you will wage war. For example, suppose that your enemy is a spirit of addiction to alcohol, or drugs, or even cigarettes. There are many solutions offered by both the world and the church to confront and overcome such things. Yet it is not for you to choose how you will do battle. You must receive the counsel of God to know what He requires you to do. He may ask you to do something that makes as little sense as marching around a walled city in silence. Yet, as you are careful to do all He has spoken, He will give you the victory.

(Slide - The Battle of Ai)



The next battle God led the Israelites unto was at the city of Ai. He instructed Joshua to fight this battle in more conventional means. The men were to engage the citizens in battle, and then flee as if in defeat, only to lead the men of Ai to abandon their city and to run into an ambush. In this way the city was left undefended and the enemy was completely destroyed.

We must always receive instruction from God regarding the enemies in our land that must be subdued. We are never to assume that we know what needs to be done, even when the answer seems obvious. The next event in Israel's experience of conquest reveals this clearly.

(Slide - Gibeonites)



Deception of the Gibeonites

Dwelling right in the middle of the land of Canaan was a group of people called Gibeonites. The Gibeonites had heard how Israel had destroyed Jericho and Ai, as well as all that God did in bringing them out of Egypt. They trembled in fear at the approach of Joshua and his people. Knowing they could not defeat Israel in battle, they thought to defeat them through deception.

The Gibeonites appointed key men to go and ask Joshua to make a treaty of peace with them. They knew Joshua would not do so if he knew they dwelt in the midst of the land God had promised to Israel, so they made it appear as if they came from a far land. They put on worn out clothes. They put moldy cheese and dry bread in their bags. They chose worn and patched water flasks to carry. Through these means they sought to deceive Israel into thinking they came from a far land.

These men came to Joshua and the leaders of Israel and told them that they had come from a far land where the fame of Israel had been heard, and they asked for a treaty of peace with them. The leaders of Israel questioned them concerning where they had come from, and asked if they dwelt in the land of Canaan. The Gibeonites denied doing so, and they showed them their food and

clothes and water bags as proof that they had journeyed a long way.

These men appeared to be telling the truth, and Joshua made a treaty of peace with them. A few days later their deception was uncovered, but it was too late. A treaty had already been made and the oath had to be honored. Israel was not able to dispossess this people due to the treaty. This enemy dwelt in their land throughout their days when God desired for them to be conquered.

In the same way, Satan seeks to deceive the overcomer, and to cause him to fail to establish the kingdom of God completely within his being. He seeks to have some enemies remain in the land. Our only safeguard against this is to seek the counsel of God before making any decision.

I could cite numerous examples of Christians who have made decisions based upon evidence that they assumed was correct, and which indicated the will of God. Because things seemed so obvious, they did not seek God as they should, and it led to defeat in their lives.

(Slide - Key Scriptures)

Isaiah 11:3-4

And He will not judge by what His eyes see, nor make a decision by what His ears hear; but with righteousness He will judge...

This scripture is a prophecy of Christ. We are told that He would not judge as the Israelite leaders did. He would not make a decision based upon the physical facts before His eyes, or the witness that came to His ears. His judgment would be a righteous judgment, for He would only do those things His Father commanded Him to do.

As Christians, we are not to judge things by appearances. This is a most difficult thing to learn. We must place no confidence in the flesh. We must not think that we can discern anything correctly unless we have heard from God. We need to learn the practice of seeking the counsel of God in all things, even those things that seem readily apparent. There are times when Satan will tempt us with things that seem so extraordinary, that we will assume they have come from God, for they may be an answer to some inner desire, or appear to be the very answer we need to some critical need in our life. At such times we must be very patient, and wait upon God to know His counsel.

(Slide - David and Abishai)



There were two occasions in David's life when God allowed him to be tempted to strike King Saul. To do so was not the will of God, yet it seemed that God had delivered David's enemy right into his hands.

For many years David was hunted by King Saul out of jealousy. Saul made David's life a misery. David had to be constantly on the run, and he even had to flee from the land of Israel and live among the Philistines to escape from Saul. David had an army of 600 men with him, and they all knew that Samuel had anointed David to be king of Israel, and that God had chosen David for this task. Yet their lives were difficult as they lived in wilderness places and in caves and foreign lands.

On two occasions Yahweh placed Saul within striking distance of David. The first time was when Saul and his army was pursuing David and his men. Saul went into a cave to relieve himself, not knowing that David and all of his men

were hiding there. The second time was on another occasion when Saul was pursuing David. God caused a deep sleep to come upon Saul and all his army, and David and Abishai, one of David's military leaders, were able to walk right into the camp and take the spear and water jug from beside King Saul. In both cases David's men told David that God had delivered his enemy into his hand, and David should strike King Saul and his problems would be over.

It is in times of great desperation and need that we are most apt to fall for the temptations of Satan. When we want something badly, and that thing is set right before us, we may be tempted to believe that it is God's provision for us. In such times we cannot judge by what our eyes see, or our ears hear. We must listen intently to the voice of the Spirit to discern the will of God.

(Slide - Key Scripture)

I Samuel 26:8-9

Then Abishai said to David, "Today God has delivered your enemy into your hand; now therefore, please let me strike him with the spear to the ground with one stroke, and I will not strike him the second time." But David said to Abishai, "Do not destroy him, for who can stretch out his hand against Yahweh's anointed and be without guilt?"

Abishai did not have God's desires uppermost in his mind. Abishai wanted to have an end to their exile and difficulties. He therefore judged things according to the desire of his heart. Yet David was a man after God's heart, and he desired to obey God more than he desired to end his own suffering. He was therefore not deceived by the appearance of things. He was willing to wait patiently upon God to fulfill His promises.

We must also be careful to check our own desires in a matter. If we have any strong desire of our own in a matter we are in danger of failing the tests that come our way. We will be deceived by our own heart if we do not seek God's will above all else.

(Slide - Five Kings of the Amorites)



After the failure of Joshua with the Gibeonites, we read that five separate kings of the Amorites banded together to fight against Joshua and the people of God. They knew they would all perish separately, but they believed they could achieve victory over God's people if they fought together.

We will also find that there are times in our lives that we do not need to go and attack the enemies in the land, for they will come against us. There are also times when more than one enemy will fight against us. This is a strategy Satan holds to until this day.

There are some enemies of the saints that are strong enough that they will face us all alone. Lust and pride are two such enemies. They are powerful, and they rarely need to come against us in league with another adversary. However, some enemies are not as strong, and they often come at us in groups.

We can understand some of the nations and the sins they stand for as we observe the history of the Bible. Egypt is a symbol of the allure of the world as it tempts the flesh of man. We read of the Israelites lusting after the fleshpots of Egypt. We also read how Joseph was tempted daily while in Egypt to lie with the wife of his master Potiphar. I believe that Egypt stands as a symbol for lust, and Egypt was always a mighty nation and a great adversary of God's people. Israel remained in bondage to Egypt for 430 years, and many Christians today are in bondage to a spirit of lust.

There are times when Satan will use several enemies in league together to attack us. For example, we may be confronted by confusion, fear, impatience and doubt all at the same time. Whereas one of these enemies may not be able to defeat us alone, in combination that become much more formidable. Yet we must remember that God has said He will never allow us to be tested above our ability, and that He will always provide a way of escape.

Joshua was thoroughly chastened by his failure with the Gibeonites, so he sought the counsel of God before facing the five Amorite kings. As a result, God granted them a great victory. When we are overwhelmed by enemies, God will fight for us.

(Slide - Key Sripture)

Joshua 10:8-11

Yahweh said to Joshua, "Do not fear them, for I have given them into your hands; not one of them shall stand before you." Joshua came upon them suddenly by marching all night from Gilgal. And Yahweh confounded them before Israel, and He slew them with a great slaughter at Gibeon, and pursued them by the way of the ascent of Beth-horon and struck them as far as Azekah and Makkedah. As they fled from before Israel, while they were at the descent of Beth-horon, Yahweh threw large stones from heaven on them as far as Azekah, and they died; there were more who died from the hailstones than those whom the sons of Israel killed with the sword.

What an amazing testimony this is, and great encouragement for the Christian today who would follow Yahshua into battle. God will fight for us. If we will stand and fight as He directs, He will fight for us. He will bring about a greater victory than any we could achieve alone. To think that God cast hailstones from heaven upon the enemies of His people! What will He not do for us today if we will follow Him with a whole heart?

Perhaps you have heard stories of some men or women who were miraculously delivered from some besetting sin when they came to Christ. I have heard testimonies of some who were miraculously delivered from alcohol, or cigarettes, or a habit of swearing, when they were saved. The desire simply left them, and they never faced this enemy again. God simply delivered them.

Some people have heard such testimonies, and they have wondered why God does not perform such a deliverance in their life. They see that He has done so for some, and they expect that He will do so for them as well.

(Slide - Key Scriptures)

Exodus 23:27-28

“I will send My terror ahead of you, and throw into confusion all the people among whom you come, and I will make all your enemies turn their backs to you. I will send hornets ahead of you so that they will drive out the Hivites, the Canaanites, and the Hittites before you.”

It is true that God does deliver some men and women from the enemies that have been resident in them without their even having to do battle. Even as Yahweh drove some of the inhabitants of Canaan out with hornets so that Israel did not have to fight against them, so too will He deliver us from some of our enemies.

One thing God will never do, however, is to drive out all the enemies from the land in this way. He desires that we should learn spiritual warfare, and grow in godly attributes such as faith, patience, perseverance, longsuffering, and self-control. For these reasons He will bring all men and women to know much spiritual warfare in their lives in order to establish the kingdom of God within their body.

(Slide - Key Scripture)

Judges 3:1-4

Now these are the nations which Yahweh left, to test Israel by them (that is, all who had not experienced any of the wars of Canaan; only in order that the generations of the sons of Israel might be taught war, those who had not experienced it formerly)... They were for testing Israel, to find out if they would obey the commandments of Yahweh, which He had commanded their fathers through Moses.

God desires that every generation should learn spiritual warfare. There have been times when a people have known considerable victory over the enemy, and an entire nation has turned to righteousness. Many evil influences were removed from the land which might have tempted them and their children. Yet God never removes all enemies from a land, nor does He drive every enemy out of the land of our flesh. He will leave some there that we might learn warfare. He wants to know if our heart is set to obey Him. Our love for God is revealed through our warfare.

Are we allowing enemies to dwell in the land of our flesh uncontested? Have we not sought to fight against the enemies, but have resigned ourselves to their presence? Have we made excuses about the evil within us, that serve as justification for our failure to pursue a life of righteousness and holiness?

Our attitude in taking possession of the land of our flesh reveals our love for God, or the lack thereof.

Love for God is not a feeling. It is not measured by emotion. Our love is measured by our obedience.

(Slide - Key Scripture)

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.

A day is coming when this warfare within our members will be over. A day will come when we put aside these corrupt bodies under the curse of sin, and we will put on that which was created in righteousness and truth. Then we shall know warfare no more.

During this age, however, we must do battle. It is what we are called unto. Our God is for us, and He will lead us from victory unto victory if we will follow Him with an undivided heart.