

Total Victory

Part 1

The Introduction

Satan was completely defeated and stripped of all ultimate power at the cross. Today he can only make guerilla warfare that needs us to come against him in Jesus' name and power. In natural warfare one of the biggest problems is half-won victories in the spirit. Likewise, one of the biggest problems in spiritual warfare is that we frequently stop fighting long before the battle is truly over. We claim victory as soon as we win a brief skirmish, or force the enemy to give a little ground. This incomplete victory is very different from the warfare God commanded the Children of Israel to wage as they took over the Promised Land.

Our Study

Unconditional Surrender

The Scripture: Exodus 23-20-23

"I am sending an angel ahead of you to guard you along the way and to bring you to the place I have prepared. Pay attention to him and listen to what he says....If you listen carefully to what he says and do all that I say, I will be an enemy to your enemies and will oppose those who oppose you. My angel will go ahead of you and bring you into the land of [your enemies]."

1. What was God's promise to the Israelites? _____

2. If they were obedient, what did God promise to be to them? _____

3. What did He promise to do for them? _____

Notice that God's requirement for His destruction of the enemy was their complete obedience.

In Deuteronomy God gave them further instructions: When they captured a distant city, they were to kill all the men; everything else they could take for plunder. As for the nearby cities, they were to destroy everything that breathed. This was to prevent them from following the cities' practices and gods.

4. God made a distinction between two kinds of cities. What was it? _____

Discussion Question: Why do you think God did this? _____

God undoubtedly had many reasons for doing this, but I think it was largely to build up their confidence. As they achieved victory after victory in the nearby cities, they would grow more confident.

In Exodus God gave them further instructions:

- They were to worship the Lord God.
- They were forbidden to worship their enemy's gods.
- They were to demolish their enemy's sacred stones.

If they were obedient to the Lord, He would bless their food and water and He would take away sickness from them, including miscarriage and barrenness. He would give them a full military, and He promised to terrorize their enemies so they would turn their backs on them and run away. God said He was not going to do this in a single year, but little by little.

As Joshua led the Israelites through the Promised Land...

At Jericho...

The Scripture: Joshua 6:21

“At the sound of the trumpet, when the people gave a loud shout, the protective wall surrounding the city collapsed, so that every man charged straight in, and the Israelites took the city.”

5. What happened at Jericho? _____

To the Canaanites living in Zephath...

The Scripture: Judges 1:17

“Then the men of Judah went with the Simeonites, their brother, and attacked the Canaanites living in Zephath, and they totally destroyed the city.”

6. What happened at Zephath? _____

Following the Lord's command, the Israelites took city after city.

Almost as an afterthought, the Bible adds:

The Scripture: Judges 1:18:

“The men of Judah also took Gaza, Ashkelon... “

7. What other cities and territories did the men of Judah take? _____

Interestingly enough, these are cities very much in the news as this is being written.

I think you're beginning to get the point. In each case the Israelites were to fight until the enemy was completely destroyed.

If we are repelled by all this bloodshed and find it hard to accept the fact that God would command His people to be so bloodthirsty, we need to remember two important facts. First, these were heathen people whom God knew would turn His people away from Him if they were allowed to live side by side with the Israelites.

We need to remember, too, that the accounts of the wars of the Old Testament, which were fought in the natural, are there to provide us with a picture of what we Christians are supposed to do in the Spirit.

God made fantastic promises

In Leviticus 6, He promised the Israelites that if they were obedient, He would send them fruitfulness. They would have all the food they needed and they would live in safety in their own land. He also promised He would remove the beasts from the land and if enemies attacked them they would defeat them mightily.

Sadly, the history of Israel is not one of complete obedience. Everything that God warned the Children of Israel about that *would happen* if they were less than totally obedient to Him, *did happen*.

The Scripture: Judges 1:28

"When Israel became strong, they pressed the Canaanites into forced labor but never drove them out completely."

8. What did the Israelites do to the Canaanites? _____

Repeatedly, the Israelites were disobedient. God continued to warn them.

The Scripture: Judges 2:3

(God speaking): *"They will be thorns in your side and their gods will be a snare for you."*

9. What did God warn them? _____

Eventually, the Canaanites even refused to allow the Israelites passage through their country.

How does this apply to the spiritual warfare Christians are supposed to wage? It applies in this way - when we engage our enemy in battle, we must be resolved to fight through to complete victory.

But how do we know when the battle is completely over? Obviously, in any kind of spiritual warfare, we have to strongly rely on spiritual discernment, but there are two lessons we can learn from the Old Testament warfare that are missing factors in so much of the warfare we conduce today.

We will look at these in the second part of this study

The Answers

1. He would send an angel ahead of them to guard them and bring them to the place He had prepared for them.
2. He would be an enemy to their enemies, and to oppose those who opposed them
3. To bring them into the land of their enemies
4. Whether the cities were distant or nearby
5. At the sound of the trumpet, the people gave a loud shout, the wall collapsed, and the men charged in and took the city.
6. The men of Judah completely destroyed the city.
7. Gaza and Ashkelon
8. They pressed the Canaanites into forced labor instead of driving them out of the land.
9. That the Canaanites would be a thorn in their sides and their gods, a snare to them.

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