

ABC's of SALVATION

by

John J. Van Gorder

Copyright © 1946

CHAPTER FOURTEEN

THE SEVEN NATIONS

“And Joshua said, Hereby ye shall know that the living God is among you, and that he will without fail drive out from before you the Canaanites, and the Hittites, and the Hivites, and the Perizzites, and the Girgashites, and the Amorites, and the Jebusites” (Joshua 3:10).

THE land of Canaan never was a type of heaven regardless of what some of our unscriptural hymnology teaches. When Israel reached Canaan, there were hostile nations to be driven out. Later on there were a series of shameful backslidings on the part of Israel. When the saints reach heaven, there will be neither fightings nor backslidings.

The counterpart of the book of Joshua is found in the Epistle to the Ephesians. The latter tells of our possessions in Christ, but the Christian must put on the whole armor of God and fight to “possess his possessions.” Alas, there seem to be few Christians who really “possess their possessions” in Christ. A study of the meaning of the names of the seven nations which Israel was ordered to drive out may throw some light upon the apparent failure of so many Christians.

I. Canaanites

The Canaanites are the first mentioned nation. The word Canaanite means *merchant or trafficker*. This at once suggests a train of thoughts.

What is the dominant thing in the world today—is it not the control of traffic? In the last analysis both World Wars were fought because of the desire of men to control the traffic of the world. During the First World War, the iniquitous liquor traffic attempted to place its establishments at the very gates of the great army encampments—willing to debauch the fighting forces of the nation for the sake of gain. It was then that the American electorate arose in its wrath and banished this hateful thing. The First World War was soon followed by a worldwide depression. Then it was that this iniquitous traffic “sold” the politicians the idea that America could drink itself back to prosperity. This hellish institution would send American soldiers into the trenches in a debauched condition for the sake of gain.

The children of God are not immune to the Canaanite spirit. Think of the questionable trade associations, business connections, etc. of professing Christians. Little wonder that there is such a dearth of spiritual power today.

This spirit needs to be driven out in order that many Christians may “possess their possessions.”

II. Hittites

The Hittites are the second mentioned nation. The word means *terror or fear*. In the preceding chapter we mentioned how the devil uses fear to keep men from being saved. But fear enters the realm of professed Christians also. Many of them seem to be afraid to talk, work, or invest for Christ. Most church members will talk to their neighbors about politics, weather, and kindred subjects, but how few ever mention a word about the need of salvation. They will engage in all kinds of social work but seldom if ever do personal evangelism. They will invest in all kinds of “get-rich-quick” schemes, but how penurious when the needs of the great mission fields are presented.

God’s Word plainly says, “**He which soweth sparingly shall reap also sparingly; and he which soweth bountifully shall reap also bountifully . . . God loveth a cheerful giver**” (II Corinthians 9:6, 7). In spite of this and other promises, the Hittite spirit seems to be prevalent throughout Christendom. Many churches, instead of being great lighthouses for the rescue of lost souls, have degraded into cheap amusement places in order to raise money.

These notes are being written while I am conducting a Bible conference in a northern city. This church is but a few months old, yet I noticed that the offerings of one adult class in the Sunday school exceeded, many times, the weekly offerings of entire churches with memberships of hundreds more. The spirit of fear on the matter of giving had been driven out by this class.

There are numerous ways in which the Hittite spirit may keep Christians from “possessing their possessions.”

III. Hivites

The Hivites are the third mentioned nation. This word is more difficult to render. It probably means *dweller in rural districts*.

In that day people lived in walled cities. In the pioneer days of this country, settlers always lived near the blockhouse for safety. At the beginning of the second decade of this century most of the United States Army was on the Mexican border to protect those citizens who insisted on living on the border line between the United States and Mexico.

Borderline Christians have been one of the sources of hindrance to the work of God. It is no uncommon thing to see a member of a church coming out of a salacious picture show or wearing an emblem of an organization that denies the deity of the Lord Jesus Christ. The vile story in the shop will produce a hilarious laughter through the week, but the same lips never utter an “amen” at the Sunday sermon.

The Hivite spirit needs to be driven out in order that Christians may “possess their possessions.”

IV. Perizzites

The Perizzites are the fourth mentioned nation. The meaning of the word is *dwellers in secure villages*—just the opposite from the preceding word. False security is one of the devil's favorite methods of deception. The rich man in hades had lived in a false security on earth because of his wealth. The Perizzite spirit permeates every stratum of society and government. The very day that Pearl Harbor was bombed we noticed a popular magazine, the front cover of which carried the picture of the Secretary of the Navy, whose article was captioned "We Can Win on Either Ocean."

Christians are not immune to this spirit. During my long years of pastorate I have pleaded with sinning saints, both personally and by mail, to repent of sins done to others, only to see the plain teaching of the Word rejected and the rejecter later come under the chastening hand of God. The phrase "we deem all mortal but ourselves" applies to many professing Christians who seem to think all Christians are liable to the judgment hand of God save themselves. It is written in I Corinthians 11:31, "**If we would judge ourselves, we should not be judged.**" Failure to do this has kept many a Christian from "possessing his possessions."

V. Girgashites

The Girgashites are the fifth mentioned nation. The word means *dwellers on clay*. The root from which the word is taken means *foul disease*. They typify those who follow the lusts of the flesh. Today the great centers of humanity are reeking with a sensuality that would put Sodom and Gomorrah to shame. Again professing Christians are not immune to this spirit. It is true that they may not engage in the shocking sins of the flesh themselves, but they will patronize and support those institutions that cater to the lusts of the flesh. The dance, the moving picture, and many other so-called forms of pleasure exist only because of the appeal to the lusts of the flesh. The failure to drive out this Girgashite spirit has caused many Christians to fail to "possess their possessions."

VI. Amorites

The Amorites are the sixth mentioned nation. The word means *to speak*. Some Hebrew scholars say it means bitter speaking or bitter persons. Surely there is admonitory truth here. Words are said to be "the windows of the heart." They are the windows by which the heart is seen.

- The man whose language has to do with money, is usually the man whose heart is set on riches.
- The man who continually rolls under his tongue the vile, sensual story may be depended upon to be living a vile, sensual life.
- The person who is continually speaking bitter words shows forth the evidence of a bitter heart.

O, the sorrow that has been caused by bitter speaking! We doubt if the fires of persecution have ever wrought the destruction to the cause of Christ as have the uncontrolled tongues of professed Christians. It is written in Galatians 6:1, "**Brethren, if a man be overtaken in a fault, ye which are spiritual, restore such an one in the spirit of meekness; considering thyself, lest thou also be tempted.**"

These are plain words, yet how seldom heeded. Let a saint of God be overtaken in a fault, and how seldom does it occur that some other saint will go to that one and point out his error in meekness and lead the erring one back into fellowship. The usual procedure is to rush to a telephone and start the conversation with a third party with the words “Have you heard what happened to ‘So-and-So?’” Many a young convert has been dwarfed in his spiritual life, and even caused to go back into a life of sin, by the unsanctified tongues of older saints. The failures to drive out the Amorite spirit has kept many a saint from “possessing his possessions” in Christ.

VII. Jebusites

The Jebusites are the seventh and last mentioned nation. The root from which this word comes is rendered twelve times to *tread under foot* as illustrated in Psalms 44:5. This means, in the bad sense of the word, pride or a domineering spirit. The spirit of the Jebusite is characterized by the personal pronoun “I.” It was present in the first sin of the universe when the favored cherub said, “**I will be like the most High**” (Isaiah 14:14).

Few sins have caused more destruction and havoc than this sin. It has drenched the battlefields of this world with the blood of innocent men, because some man or men wanted to have a place of preeminence. The church has not been free from this spirit. It was the spirit which animated Diotrephes (III John 9). Few have been the churches which have not suffered from the Jebusite spirit. This spirit must be driven out if Christians would “possess their possessions” in Christ.

To possess their possessions,
Which were given by God,
Israel only possessed that
Upon which their feet trod.
They fought and they conquered
Walled cities—strong posts,
These victories all won
Through the Captain of Hosts.

To possess our possessions,
We a battle must wage,
Against hosts of darkness—
The god of this age.
The same Captain stands ready
To us victory give,
If we put on His armour,
In Him trust and live.

~ end of chapter 14 ~

<http://www.baptistbiblebelievers.com/>
