

Message Eleven

**Partners of Christ
Fighting for God's Interest**

Scripture Reading: Num. 13:17—14:38;
Deut. 1:34-38; Josh. 14:6-14; Heb. 3:14

I. First Corinthians takes the history of the children of Israel in the Old Testament as a type of the New Testament believers—10:5-11; 5:7-8; 10:1-2:

- A. Paul warned the believers not to repeat the history of the children of Israel in doing evil things against God—vv. 6-11.
- B. The goal of God's calling of the children of Israel was that they would enter into the promised land to enjoy its riches so that they might establish God's kingdom and be God's expression on earth—Exo. 3:7-8:
 - 1. However, although all Israel was redeemed through the passover, delivered out of the Egyptian tyranny, and brought to the mountain of God to receive the revelation of God's dwelling place, the tabernacle, nearly all fell and died in the wilderness, failing to reach this goal because of their evil-doings and unbelief—Heb. 3:7-19; 1 Cor. 10:5, 7-10.
 - 2. Only Caleb and Joshua reached the goal and entered into the good land—Num. 14:27-30.
 - 3. This signifies that although we have been redeemed through Christ, delivered out of Satan's bondage, and brought into the revelation of God's economy, we may yet fail to reach the goal of God's calling, that is, to enter into the possession of our good land, Christ (Phil. 3:12-14), and enjoy His riches for the kingdom of God so that we may be His expression in the present age and participate in the fullest enjoyment of Christ in the kingdom age (Matt. 25:21, 23).
 - 4. This should be a solemn warning to all New Testament believers about repeating the failure of the children of Israel in the wilderness—1 Cor. 10:6, 11:
 - a. Without God's mercy and grace, we would be the same as the children of Israel—Rom. 9:15-16.
 - b. We need to read the history of Israel as our history, paying careful attention to Numbers 13 and 14.

II. Of all the children of Israel who came out of Egypt, only two, Joshua and Caleb, entered the good land—Deut. 1:34-38; Num. 13:17—14:38:

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- A. Although all were redeemed, only two overcomers, Joshua and Caleb, received the prize of the good land—Josh. 14:6-14; 19:49-51.
- B. According to the record in Numbers 13 and 14, the people had an evil heart of unbelief—13:31-33; 14:1-3, 9, 11:
 - 1. Nothing is more offensive to God than unbelief—Heb. 3:8-12.
 - 2. Unbelief is evil because it insults the living, faithful, and almighty God; if we do not believe in God, in His work and in His ways (Psa. 103:7), we insult Him.
 - 3. Nothing insults God more than our unbelief, and nothing honors Him more than our belief in Him—John 14:1; Rom. 10:9-10.
- C. Because the people believed neither in God nor in His word and even murmured against Him (Num. 14:1-4), God swore in His wrath that not one of the unbelieving generation would enter into the good land; only Joshua and Caleb were allowed to enter (Deut. 1:34-38).
- D. As indicated by the evil report of the ten spies (Num. 13:31-33) and the murmuring of the people (14:1-4), the children of Israel did not care for God but cared only for themselves:
 - 1. In everything and in every way they were for themselves, not for God's interests.
 - 2. Because of this, they did not believe in God, and they offended God to such an extent that they became abhorrent to Him.
 - 3. Their situation brought in God's judgment and punishment.
- E. Joshua and Caleb took the word of God as their faith—13:30; 14:7-9:
 - 1. Joshua and Caleb believed in the word of God, obeyed the Lord, and pressed toward the goal.
 - 2. Joshua and Caleb honored God, and God, in turn, honored them—v. 38.
 - 3. God alone is the source of faith; if we would have faith, we must learn to care for God's interests and not for our benefit.
 - 4. The example of Joshua and Caleb in the Bible shows us what it is to believe—13:30; 14:7-9:

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- a. Joshua and Caleb were not the ones who overcame in Numbers 13 and 14; it was the One in whom they trusted.
 - b. God did everything; they simply enjoyed what God did—v. 8.
5. We should follow the example of Joshua and Caleb; they had hearts full of faith—13:30.

III. We need to be today's Calebs, partners of Christ, who is the real Joshua—14:24; Josh. 14:6-14; Heb. 2:10; 3:14:

- A. Christ, the Captain of salvation, is the real Joshua, leading us to take possession of the land, and we, today's Calebs, are His partners, fighting with Him against the enemies and sharing with Him in taking and possessing the land—2:10; 3:14:
 1. Christ has been anointed by God to carry out God's commission, and we as His partners share with Him in carrying out God's commission.
 2. Hebrews 3:7-14 deals with entering the good land; the type of this entering the good land was the entering of the land under the leadership of Joshua (Josh. 1:1-6), and Caleb was his partner in possessing the good land (Num. 32:12; Josh. 14:6-8).
 3. Today Christ is the real Joshua, and we are His Calebs, His partners—Heb. 2:10; 3:14.
 4. As Christ's partners, we are working together with Him and cooperating with Him to fulfill God's desire to have a corporate expression of Himself.
- B. Caleb had a different spirit and fully followed the Lord by a different spirit, which was different from all the other spirits—Num. 14:24.
- C. We must be resolute and determined in our will to stand with the Lord, just as Caleb fully followed God—vv. 6-9, 24; Deut. 1:36; Josh. 14:14:
 1. Caleb fully followed the Lord because he knew that God wanted the children of Israel to enter into the good land—Num. 14:24; Deut. 1:36; Josh. 14:8.
 2. Since God wanted them to enter the good land, He would fight for them and accomplish everything for them—Num. 14:7-8.

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3. Caleb knew that God would fight on their behalf and destroy the enemies.
 - D. Joshua and Caleb did not fear the Nephilim or the inhabitants of the land of Canaan but said, “They are our bread”—v. 9:
 1. Caleb believed that the Nephilim (Anakim) would be defeated and become their bread because he knew that God had promised to bring them into the land—13:30, 33.
 2. Caleb’s experience demonstrates that the more Nephilim we eat, the stronger we will become; he was full of vitality at eighty-five because by assimilating so many Anakim over the years, he had developed a constitution that showed no trace of age—Josh. 14:10-14.
 3. Our battle with the enemy will be a defeat to him, but it will be bread for us; the defeated enemy is the most tasteful bread—Num. 14:9.
 4. The enemy will be our food, and swallowing him will be our satisfaction.
- IV. As today’s Calebs fighting for God’s interest, it is crucial for us to see a vision of the all-inclusive Christ typified by the good land and to conquer the satanic chaos and triumph in the divine economy—Deut. 8:7-10; Eph. 1:10; Rom. 16:20:**
- A. The good land, the land of Canaan, is a type of the all-inclusive Christ, the Christ who is all and in all and who is everything to us—Deut. 8:7-10:
 1. The good land provided whatever the children of Israel needed: water, wheat, barley, vines, fig trees, pomegranates, olive trees, animals, milk, honey, stones, iron, copper.
 2. The good land surely is a type of the all-inclusive Christ, the embodiment of the Triune God given to us as our inheritance—Acts 26:18; Col. 1:12.
 - B. In order to possess the good land, we need to engage in spiritual warfare to conquer the satanic chaos and triumph in the divine economy—Eph. 1:10; 6:10-12; Rom. 16:20:
 1. The history of the universe is a history of God’s economy and Satan’s chaos—Gen. 1:1-2, 26; Rev. 20:10—21:4:
 - a. Satan is the source of chaos, and God Himself is the divine economy.

CRYSTALLIZATION-STUDY OUTLINES

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- b. Both in the Bible and in our experience, the satanic chaos always goes along with the divine economy—2 Cor. 4:6; 1 Tim. 1:4.
2. Instead of delivering us from chaos, God wants us to be one with Him to conquer the destructive satanic chaos and to carry out the constructive divine economy—Eph. 3:8-10; 2 Cor. 5:17.
3. As we are suffering the chaos, we need to stand for and live out the divine economy—1 Tim. 1:4, 18; 2 Tim. 4:7.
4. The overcomers conquer the satanic chaos and triumph in the divine economy—1 Tim. 1:3-4, 19-20; 4:1-2; Titus 3:10; 2 Tim. 4:7-8:
 - a. The overcomers suffer the chaos, but instead of being disappointed or discouraged, they are strengthened and enabled to stand for and live out the divine economy according to the truth—Eph. 3:16; 6:10-12.
 - b. We conquer the chaos by the processed and consummated Triune God as the all-sufficient grace—1 Cor. 15:10; 2 Cor. 12:9; 2 Tim. 4:22.