

# Words of Life

(February 6, 2007)

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*Yet the children of Manasseh could not drive out the inhabitants of those cities, but the Canaanites were determined to dwell in that land. And it happened, when the children of Israel grew strong, that they put the Canaanites to forced labor, but did not utterly drive them out.*

*Joshua 17:12,13*

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*The children of Israel had been instructed by God to completely eliminate the pagan nations within the promised land (Deut 7:1,2). They got off to a good start under the leadership of Joshua by moving into the land and conquering many of the inhabitants. However, as each tribe began to settle in their allotted land area, they did not finish the job. They began to lose momentum and stopped short of complete obedience.*

*It is interesting that in verse 12 we are told that they "could not" drive out the inhabitants. Why was it that they "could not" drive them out? God had promised to fight for them. So something was happening that was interfering with the promise of God. If we stand back and look at the situation, we gain some perspective that helps us understand this inability. It is also a perspective that may help us as we desire to see God's promises fulfilled in our lives.*

*On one hand we see the sure word of God and His promise to drive the enemies out of the land. On the other hand we see the enemies being determined to stay. Right smack between the two we have the Israelites.....God's chosen people. They are the middle link. God was going to be faithful to His word, but He was not going to bypass His people in the process. He was going to use them to accomplish what He had promised. Their part was to depend upon Him and remain in the battle and fight with endurance and determination until God's objectives were reached and the battle was won. Therein lies the problem. Notice that in the passage we are told that initially they "could not" drive the enemies out. But when they became strong they "did not" drive them out but put them to forced labor. Instead of following God's instructions to the end, they compromised.*

*Sometimes it is easier to exit the battle prematurely than to stay in the fight to the end. We can begin to redefine the outcome in our terms instead of God's. In this case the Israelites thought they would be ok by allowing the last of the Canaanites to stay as long as they were kept as slaves. But by the time we reach the third chapter of Judges 3 we see the serious problem this presented for them. They were intermarrying with the Canaanites and worshipping their gods. Sin will never stay our slave but will eventually force us to be it's slave.*

*We must always stay in the battle until the job is completed or until God tells us to stop. We must never stop short of His battle objective. We must never redefine the battle objective in our own terms. And, we must NEVER compromise, thinking we are able to keep an enemy of the Lord under our control.*

*Finally, my brethren, be strong in the Lord and in the power of His might.*

*Ephesians 6:10*

*Pastor Ted.*

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*The words that I speak to you are spirit, and they are life.*

*John 6:63*