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Driving Them Out Slowly

Ryan M Marks

Hillsboro, MO

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Driving Them Out Slowly: Breaking Strongholds and the Scriptural Process of Sanctification

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Second Edition

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Driving them out Slowly, Part 1

Text:

Behold, I send an Angel before thee, to keep thee in the way, and to bring thee into the place which I have prepared. Beware of him, and obey his voice, provoke him not; for he will not pardon your transgressions: for my name is in him. But if thou shalt indeed obey his voice, and do all that I speak; then I will be an enemy unto thine enemies, and an adversary unto thine adversaries. For mine Angel shall go before thee, and bring thee in unto the Amorites, and the Hittites, and the Perizzites, and the Canaanites, the Hivites, and the Jebusites: and I will cut them off. Thou shalt not bow down to their gods, nor serve them, nor do after their works: but thou shalt utterly overthrow them, and quite break down their images. And ye shall serve the LORD your God, and he shall bless thy bread, and thy water; and I will take sickness away from the midst of thee. There shall nothing cast their young, nor be barren, in thy land: the number of thy days I will fulfil. I will send my fear before thee, and will destroy all the people to whom thou shalt come, and I will make all thine enemies turn their backs unto thee. And I will send hornets before thee, which shall drive out the Hivite, the Canaanite, and the Hittite, from before thee. I will not drive them out from before thee in one year; lest the land become desolate, and the beast of the field multiply against thee. By little and little I will drive them out from before thee, until thou be increased, and inherit the land. And I will set thy bounds from the Red sea even unto the sea of the Philistines, and from the desert unto the river: for I will deliver the inhabitants of the land into your hand; and thou shalt drive them out before thee. Thou shalt make no covenant with them, nor with their gods. They shall not dwell in thy land, lest they make thee sin against me: for if thou serve their gods, it will surely be a snare unto thee.

Exodus 23:20-33

There is an important principle that I want to share with you from this passage. There will be several subpoints, but the overall message is that God drives out our enemies slowly. I want you think about this in regard to your own life. The

transformation of the Lord is usually a gradual, over-time process. Theologians call this sanctification. With that in mind, let's dive into the passage!

*Behold, I send an Angel before thee, to keep thee in the way, and to bring thee into the place which I have prepared. **21** Beware of him, and obey his voice, provoke him not; for he will not pardon your transgressions: for my name is in him. **22** But if thou shalt indeed obey his voice, and do all that I speak; then I will be an enemy unto thine enemies, and an adversary unto thine adversaries. **23** For mine Angel shall go before thee, and bring thee in unto the Amorites, and the Hittites, and the Perizzites, and the Canaanites, the Hivites, and the Jebusites: and I will cut them off.*

The Lord sent an Angel before Israel and He has sent the Holy Spirit to be with us. While Angels still protect us and serve as God's messengers, it is the Holy Spirit that we primarily have fellowship with, not Angels, as Christians. So when you think about the Angel here, think about the Holy Spirit. He knows the way you need to go. He will keep you on track if you will only listen to Him and obey His voice. He will bring you and present you ready in the place that the Lord wills for you to be if you will only surrender your will and humbly follow Him.

And if you obey the Lord, and walk in close communion with His Spirit, guess what? God will be an enemy to your enemies, and an adversary to your adversaries! He will defend you! Vengeance is the Lord's, let Him repay! The Lord will fight our battles. We are in a war, but our job is to trust in His Word as our Sword and wear His gifts as our armor (Eph. 6).

Driving them out Slowly, Part 2

*Thou shalt not bow down to their gods, nor serve them, nor do after their works: but thou shalt utterly overthrow them, and quite break down their images. **25** And ye shall serve the LORD your God, and he shall bless thy bread, and thy water; and I will take sickness away from the midst of thee. **26** There shall nothing cast their young, nor be barren, in thy land: the number of thy days I will fulfil.*

Do not serve the gods of this world: TV, music, pop culture, violence, video games, selfishness, etc... But serve the Lord! It is He who blesses your Bread! It is He who gives you the mind and ability to earn wealth! It is He who provides your water! It is He who protects you, not all your insurance policies (I'm not saying don't have insurance, just that we need to reevaluate where our Source of trust lies). And this passage also gives some incredible blessings for the Jewish people. While God still heals, don't just look at this as a promise for prosperity. This passage is speaking to Israel. In heaven, we will all one day be freed from sickness. Think of your nation though. Is it sick and evil? If once again we seek God as a nation, I believe these blessings will be given to us again: The Lord will take away our sickness, there will be no more barrenness in our crops or our cattle or our people! National weakness and plagues in Scripture are almost always due to sin. Do a study of the Old Testament on this.

Look back up at verse 24 and note the second half of the verse. *We are to overthrow—we are to stand against—the sinful, pagan culture around us. We are to proclaim the truth in love, yet stand for the perfect law of God; uncompromisingly denouncing homosexuality, entitlement, debt, feminism, effeminate manhood, evolution, secular humanism, etc.... We are to tear down the idols of our age (sex, greed, pride, selfishness, tyranny) with the message of God's Word—the true and living Gospel of Jesus Christ which will transform people's lives.*

Driving them out Slowly, Part 3

*I will send my fear before thee, and will destroy all the people to whom thou shalt come, and I will make all thine enemies turn their backs unto thee. **28** And I will send hornets before thee, which shall drive out the Hivite, the Canaanite, and the Hittite, from before thee. **29** I will not drive them out from before thee in one year; lest the land become desolate, and the beast of the field multiply against thee. **30** By little and little I will drive them out from before thee, until thou be increased, and inherit the land. **31** And I will set thy bounds from the Red sea even unto the sea of the Philistines, and from the desert unto the river: for I will deliver the inhabitants of the land into your hand; and thou shalt drive them out before thee. **32** Thou shalt make no covenant with them, nor with their gods. **33** They shall not dwell in thy land, lest they make thee sin against me: for if thou serve their gods, it will surely be a snare unto thee.*

The Lord will send His Fear before us as we serve Him. There are missionaries who literally have tribes afraid of them because they know that the Christian God is real and powerful. Read stories about faithful missionaries; you will find that pagan, cannibalistic tribes have turned their backs to some of them and literally ran away afraid of our Almighty God.

***28** And I will send hornets before thee, which shall drive out the Hivite, the Canaanite, and the Hittite, from before thee.*

God will send the hornets—some small, annoying thing—before us to drive out the demonic forces of evil that are holding people in bondage. Examples are witchdoctors, psychics, new age spiritualists, and oculists (this is largely seen on the mission field) as well as false worldviews and mindsets, strongholds, and satanic intimidation in our own lives.

***29** I will not drive them out from before thee in one year; lest the land become desolate, and the beast of the field multiply against thee. **30** By little and little I will drive them out from before thee, until thou be increased, and inherit the land.*

The Lord will drive them out little, by little. Not in 1 year—not fast, because we can't handle that much conquered territory yet. But as we are able to take care of more and more, the Lord will add it to us. Think of this in regard to your sanctification (lifelong transformation) as you follow the Lord. Little by little, the Lord breaks down each stronghold and teaches us how to maintain personal freedom on that conquered spiritual land; otherwise, we would give the devil a foothold and he would just begin to build his fortress right back up again.

Driving them out Slowly, Part 4

*And I will set thy bounds from the Red sea even unto the sea of the Philistines, and from the desert unto the river: for I will deliver the inhabitants of the land into your hand; and thou shalt drive them out before thee. **32** Thou shalt make no covenant with them, nor with their gods. **33** They shall not dwell in thy land, lest they make thee sin against me: for if thou serve their gods, it will surely be a snare unto thee.*

The Lord will drive them out. It is not our strength or willpower that breaks down our strongholds or saves a nation, it is the LORD! Make no covenant, don't enter into peace treaties and contracts with those who serve the kingdom of darkness. For Israel, this was any Gentile nation; for us it is the unbeliever, the culture, the world, the flesh, and the other evil and sinful forces of our day. Don't make a covenant with their gods! Stay free from entanglements with the World. *Live as a stranger here, a citizen of a heavenly kingdom. Live and walk in a manner worthy of the calling that you have received in the Lord Jesus Christ.* They (the evils and wickedness of the day) shall not dwell in thy land. What land do you have? Is it physical land? Don't rent it out to a billboard company promoting gambling or "adult entertainment." I believe that the Holy Spirit has shown me that your land can be your home, your household (your family), your possessions (books, movies, music), your car (do you have any inappropriate bumper stickers?), and your mind and heart. Keep it all free from the pollution of your enemies! **We are called to love our enemies, pray for them, and share the Gospel, but we are to have no part in their sin!** There isn't supposed to be even one hint of sexual immorality (Ephesians 5:3) among us! Don't let them dwell in your land, for they will work their way into your heart just like they did in the ancient people of Israel and cause you to stop serving your Lord, make your children pagans, and hinder your communication with the Lord. Don't compromise! Don't push the envelope! Their gods are your snare!

About the Author

Ryan M Marks (B.A. in Communications and pursuing an MTS in Theology from Liberty Baptist Theological Seminary) has taught in two local churches and served as an evangelist throughout Missouri. Having begun preaching and writing at 15 following the Lord's call, Ryan has authored a number of books. He serves as Director of and contributor to the blog and online ministry of FocusingOnTheMarkMinistries.com which provides resources for evangelism and discipleship globally.

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