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One of the things we always run into danger with in the Scripture when we exegete, when we concentrate on a book study and go into all the details is the risk of not developing the discipline of going back to the big idea, the big picture, the big framework, and that's part of what this series is all about. We're not getting involved in all the details, but going back to the basic picture, over and over again. We have come through all of these events and we are now going into the **Conquest and Settlement**. Each one of these events teaches us some doctrine, teaches us some basic truth. The truths of Gen 1-9 are foundational to everything else. When we dealt with those first four events, we gave the doctrine of God, the doctrine of man, the doctrine of nature, a little about judgment/salvation and a very important something about good and evil. So we want to go back and look at the doctrine of good and evil that we went through, because to understand holy war and sanctification, necessarily we have to understand it in the larger context of the Creation and the Fall. These events that we're talking about have to be seen in the larger picture. That discipline of setting an event into a larger framework is what we should be doing in our Christian lives, because every day of our life is a little event and we have to keep setting that little event into the big frame of reference, the battle to do this is there all the time. When we get spiritually distracted it's usually because we got bogged down looking at this little event independently of the larger picture. So I hope if we keep going through this and repeating it that it will help you.

We showed this last year, because this is the big picture. Going back to this whole basic picture, we want to think, first always think what does the Scriptures say and then what does the opposition say, what does sin do to the Scriptural picture. We said over and over again, that the nature of God is defined by His act of creation. He's the Creator of the universe and the most

fundamental thing that we can ever think about God is that He is distinct from that which He creates. We call that the Creator-creature distinction. By that we are saying that the universe did not sort of ooze out of God, it's not an extension of His being, you can't put God and angels and man and rocks on a scale. God makes those things, God is not those things. We say He is the *ex nihilo* Creator, that's the Latin term that was used to describe God's creation, and it just means He created out of nothing, there was no prior material out of which He created. He simply spoke and the components of the universe came into being. Now, that's a radical idea in our day, the modern world just as the ancient world always trends toward another idea, another basic presupposition and that is the Continuity of Being, the idea that all is one, all differs only by shades, but at bottom everything is related, we're all surrounded by the same mysterious universe and God, if he's there, is subject to the same mystery we are. So don't be surprised when you meet someone and they believe this. What else is new? The world is a dark place.

These two views lead to several things, and the most important thing that we can say on the Creator-creature side is that God is Personal and Sovereign. On the Continuity of Being side of things we have Impersonal Chance. That's what the world believes. Is this the tendency of me and all people that have lived since Adam and Eve fell? What is our intellectual tendency, born of our flesh and our fallen natures? We prefer to think sinfully. So the point is that sin has this slant to it. It always wants to smear the Creator-creature distinction. This isn't new, evolutionary theory is an ancient idea, it's just a sinful tendency, a sinful distortion of this fundamental truth. That's where the battle is, two completely different ways of looking at the world.

At the heart of the pagan idea is, not necessarily that we don't believe in gods, of some sort or another, it's rather that we don't believe in a Creator-creature, that distinction of the transcendent Creator who is personal and sovereign. We will accept gods as long as they are sort of super men, higher versions of ourselves, and if you've studied the myths that's all they are, the gods sin like men, they lie like men, they fornicate like men, they murder like men and do everything else like men. Those kinds of gods are perfectly acceptable to the pagan heart. As long as they're of the same order, Dr. God and Mr. man The problem and the dilemma of paganism is that nobody is finally in charge. There's always a committee of the gods and goddesses and they meet together and have fights, and out of the fight one or two of them

emerge as winners for a while until another god comes along and beats them up. In that kind of a committee type theology nobody is finally in charge, and that's the weakness of the whole system. Therefore, to get around that, what the pagan has to do is resort to some kind of mystery or fate, the Greeks called it Fate, in the modern day, expressed wonderfully in the movie series *Star Wars*, i.e. go to a Force, somehow the Force is back of all things, you have your Darth Vader's and you have your Luke Skywalker's, but behind this father and son is the Force, they weren't the Force, they were incarnations of the Force. The Force was an impersonal thing that was somehow back of it all. But the Force isn't a person, there's no one there. It's just blind fate, impersonal fate. That's where you have to end up as a non-Christian. That ultimately our environment is a very dark, impersonal, uncaring universe. Now, that's very different from the biblical side. On the biblical side there is no committee bickering and fighting for control of the universe. Our universe is controlled by a Personal Sovereign God. There's no challenge to His authority. He's perfectly relaxed sitting at the helm of the universe.

Out of that rapidly comes the thing that we showed over and over again but figures prominently in what we're going to do now. That is, once you accept these two positions, they lead immediately to two radically different ideas about suffering, death, murder, war, cancer, sickness, disease, etc.

Everything you can think of that's evil you're going to look at in one of two ways, not 101 ways, there are only two basic presuppositions, there are not hundreds of worldviews, there are only two. C. S. Lewis said really there are only two religions in the world, Biblical Christianity and Hinduism. If you don't have time to study 101 religions you don't have to, you only have to study two. If you want to study unbelief in its highest form, study Hinduism, because that is unbelief well thought through.

In the pagan way of looking at this, on the bottom, notice what happens. If there is no Creator and all that is has always been then evil has no boundaries; it always has been and always will be. Is that a very good answer to evil? If you've read a little about Oriental religion, New Age, Buddhism, Zen, how do they all ultimately deal with evil? Everybody faces evil, everybody dies, so they have to have an answer to it. What are their answers? They laugh at us, why don't we turn around and start laughing at them—we ought to cry for them, their answer is so pathetic. What is their usual answer,

what is their way usually of coping with it? In the Orient, in this religion what you have to conclude is that the only way you can escape evil is to do what? Not die, because if you die that evil keeps with you. So logically if you believe that way, how do you escape from evil? The only answer that has ever been given is to be absorbed into the nirvana, or lose your existence, like a drop in the ocean, it just loses all its identity. That's existentialism and that's the modern authors, this is the modern art, modern music, it's just picking up a centuries old theme of unbelief. It's the only exit I've got out of this mess. If evil always is part of this, whether it's material or immaterial, the only way to stop it is to destroy it. That's why there's this famous saying in the Orient about a drop drips back into the ocean and becomes part of the ocean, that way you get rid of consciousness and if you get rid of consciousness you get rid of the pain, a shrewd solution. But on this basis you never get rid of it, do whatever you want, take drugs, whatever, but you're not going to get rid of evil, it's always there.

In the Biblical way of looking at evil and suffering up top, what is the crucial event that we always ought to discipline our souls to think of? The Fall, Gen 3, the most critical event of history since Creation, so we have to go back to the Fall. Why do we go back to the Fall? The reason is because that little time interval that exists between the moment the creation left the hand of God and the moment Adam ate the fruit is so important. Why? Why is that interval between Gen 2 and Gen 3 so absolutely critical to a Biblical view of suffering, death, the whole question of evil? It tells us that evil was not there from the point of Creation, and therefore evil has a boundary to it. You can interview hundreds of people about this, this is so easy to see but most people miss it by a mile. And I'll tell you what happens practically in your life if you do miss it by a mile. You become bitter and angry at God. I have seen people with chronic diseases, terminal illnesses come in my office, "Why did God do this to me." And it's a fundamental misunderstanding back here at Creation and the Fall. They're all screwed up about evil and suffering and they're bitter, it's hard to get these people to stop and think. I'm sure if we had testimonies today you could go through your family, just your family, never mind your friends, but in your own family you would find people that lived all their lives, year after year, bitter at God for something that happened, it's God's fault, God let this happen, I lost my wife, it's God's fault, I lost my child, it's God's fault. I'm not going to church; I'm not going to have anything to do with that kind of a God, that attitude. Sorry fellow, if you think that

way you're screwed up, you're really screwed up, because the universe wasn't created with evil. When it left God's fingertips it didn't have any of that, it had the capacity and the potential, yes, but the responsibility for evil cannot be placed upon God. The responsibility for creating a history in which creatures would choose evil, yes, that is His responsibility, but the evil itself, that's our responsibility, we did that. And when we did that, and this is our crucial set up question for the Conquest, when we fell in Adam did that did God have to keep us around? Was God obligated at the Fall to sustain the human race? Couldn't He just as well have said "poof" and that would have been it? But that was not it, that's where we get the idea of grace, God showed grace and so we have this time when judgment is suspended, but it's not indefinitely suspended. Evil will be put aside, evil will be split off from the good and become a separate realm. Grace will end. The end of grace is when Jesus Christ at the end of history splits good and evil, and evil is relegated to an eternal garbage heap called the Lake of Fire. That truth is inherent to the Christian message. We have people that want to apologize for that, "Ooh, I know, it's a blemish, we don't talk about those things, we just talk about love." "Excuse me, but if you don't have this, how do you ever solve the problem of evil?" So you may not like the Christian answer but do you have a better answer? I throw out the challenge, come up with a better answer, but until you do, you'd probably better just shut up about criticizing the Christian position.

That's the idea that we're going with today; we're going to focus in on this splitting that occurs between good and evil, because God says He bounds evil, it starts and it will be dealt with, and in this interval between the beginning of evil and the end of evil, He gives us a preview of how it is dealt with. That's what we're saying here in the Conquest and Settlement about the declarations of holy war. We've looked at the first event which is the Covenant Breaking at Sinai, we've looked at the Declaration of Holy War, and we want to spend a little more time in those two. The nation has come out of Egypt, they have a personal Father-Son relationship, God initiated that, they went to Mt Sinai and God spoke to His Son, gave Him the Law, how to live in right relationship with Him. Now we come to the Conquest.

And today we want to look at a missed opportunity to enjoy God's blessing. Deut 9 is a passage where God is briefing Israel on the strategy to conquer the land. If you look at the map, you'll see the place in the south marked A,

Kadesh-Barnea, and A was the original strategy route to conquer the land 38 years earlier. Strategy B is now on the horizon, it was from the east across the Jordan. Verse 1, "Hear, O Israel! You are crossing over the Jordan today to go in to dispossess nations greater and mightier than you, great cities fortified to heaven," so they're all ready to go. Verse 3, God speaking, "Know therefore today that it is the LORD your God who is crossing over before you as a consuming fire. He will destroy them and He will subdue them before you, so that you may drive them out and destroy them quickly, just as the LORD has spoken to you." Who's the "them?" "Them" are the peoples inside the land; "them" are the people mentioned in Gen 15 when God promised Abraham the land. God said there are people in that land but I'm giving you the land, they don't have a contract to the land. It's My land and I give it to whomever I please. That's a covenant promise. And what's the whole idea of a covenant? A covenant or a contract is established to monitor behavior, and when you monitor behavior you measure integrity of character. The testament is a testament of whether God is faithful to that contract, or not. And now it's time to give Israel the land and God said in the Gen 15 passage, "the iniquity of the Amorites" would become full, they have rebelled and rebelled and rebelled, and they represent a subset of the human race that has reached the maximum level of rebellion, they were theologically a damned people and therefore scheduled for extermination. Not a pleasant idea.

Just as the Jews become a picture of God's grace in history, the Amorites, the Canaanites, the Jebusites, these people become a picture of God's judging people and sending them to hell. That's what they're a picture of. They represent, in their personal histories, what happens when men rebel and rebel and rebel and finally receive judgment. They've never learned to submit to God's authority. They didn't learn it in their home, they didn't learn it in their schools, they didn't learn it in their society, so they will learn, they will learn it in hell and they will have a long, long time to learn what it means. There's no escaping from authority in this universe. God is the authority, whether I like it or not, whether you like it or not, God is the authority and everybody will finally have to adjust to that. You can do the easy way in willing submission or the hard way, He'll break the knees.

Verses 4-5 are a warning to believers. It's easy to get fat-headed and self-righteous, and conclude when God does this separation that it's because we're such great people and we have perfect integrity, and we wouldn't do those

ugly horrible things. Verses 4-5 are a warning against that arrogance. “Do not say in your heart when the LORD your God has driven them out before you, ‘Because of my righteousness the LORD has brought me in to possess this land,’ but it is because of the wickedness of these nations that the LORD is dispossessing them before you. ⁵It is not for your righteousness or for the uprightness of your heart that you are going to possess their land, but it is because of the wickedness of these nations that the LORD your God is driving them out before you, in order to confirm the oath which the LORD swore to your fathers, to Abraham, Isaac and Jacob.”

Looking at verses 4-5 and thinking through in your hearts, let’s put ourselves in that situation for a moment, and that kind of thinking that’s going on that’s being challenged by God in verses 4-5. What is the main objective of God here in this 450 year period? Is it to provide a wonderful place for man? Is this something He is doing for man’s sake? It’s very easy to think that what God does for us is simply for our benefit. Ultimately it’s not, we get fringe benefits, but the main objective here is God’s plan for history, His word, His character, that’s the objective. It’s not to give us relief. We get relief but that’s not the purpose of it. There are far higher, greater purposes to history than us, and that’s what this passage is about. It’s because God has a plan and part of that plan goes back to this diagram. God has evil contained and he’s going to get rid of it. He’s previewing that.

Notice verses 4-5, I do this because I, the God of the creation, against whom this evil began, I am going to eliminate it, you just happen to be along for the ride, but the ride is mine not yours. I’m doing this because of what I said I would do for Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, not because I looked down and I see you’re such wonderful people. This takes the pride out of it. These are excellent verses to remember that no matter what blessings we get it’s not because we have righteousness in and of ourselves, it’s because of God’s grace. But the purpose of it is His objective, His plan. He’s trying to accomplish something. And in the case of verses 4-5, it’s His plan to remove evil from this land, that’s His big objective and we have to keep that in our sights. Now, the way that is going to happen is by your trusting Me, it’s not trying to get ahead because you’ve got some slick scheme, it’s a daily walk with the Lord, it’s trusting His strategy and not our own. The only strategy that will work to take the land via Kadesh-Barnea is God’s strategy and they didn’t accept that. So the analogy we’ll begin to develop to our own spiritual

life in a little bit, we just want to enmesh and bury ourselves and get lost, as it were, in the text of these OT historical events.

At this point I'm thinking we need to go into Deut 9, filter out the two prior truths, the necessity for a new heart due to the failure at Mt Sinai (9:6-14, 17) and the intercession of Moses (18-20). Failure at Kadesh (9:23-24) and more intercession (9:25-29). Then go into the full Kadesh text in Num 13-14. The truth we're trying to get at here is the necessity of holy war in order to enjoy God's blessing to the full. All truths of sanctification. See pp 80-81 in the notes.

In Deut 9 God says that it's My objective. Verse 6, "Know, then, it is not because of your righteousness that the LORD your God is giving you this good land to possess, for you are a stubborn people." Verse 8, "Even at Horeb," that's Mt Sinai, "you provoked the Lord to wrath. Remember last week, Moses is up on the mountain getting the Law from God, the people are down at the bottom of the mountain making themselves out to be the Law. It's a profound situation. At the very moment God's making the covenant the people are breaking the covenant. So right from the start we learn a critical truth and that's the necessity for a new heart. If we're ever going to obey God the first thing that has to happen is we get a new heart, because the heart of flesh is at enmity with God and makes itself out to be God. So the Covenant Breaking at Mt Sinai is critical. The second truth we learned, which is if you drop down to verse 14, and this is a bonafide threat, God means business here, 'Let Me alone, that I may destroy them and blot out their name from under heaven; and I will make of you a nation mightier and greater than they.' And we said this is God calling Moses out. Here's a guy who God's called to be the leader, yet he's struggling to step up and lead, so God, so to speak, slaps Moses around, and I think He's trying to get Moses to slap back. C'mon Moses, what are you going to do about YOUR people. And Moses does slap back with a prayer you just would not see in the 21st century liturgical church. I mean, this guy goes right at God. But it's showing something. Drop down to verse 18, he gets down the mountain, he smashes the tablets, signifying the need for a new heart and then, v 18, "I fell down before the Lord," Why? "Because of all your sin which you had committed." What's he doing here? He's interceding for the people's sin. He's not interceding for his own sin. V 20, "I prayed for Aaron at the same time," so he's a picture, he's a foreview of the Lord Jesus Christ's intercessory ministry. He's not interceding

for His own sin, He didn't have any sin and Moses becomes a preview of that. And that's our second truth, the need for an intercessor. It simply must be. If we are to be in fellowship with God there's got to be a mediator who sits there and intercedes on our behalf. Without that there can't be any spiritual growth.

Now, if you work your way down to verse 23, we have a new event we want to introduce today and that's the Kadesh-Barnea Fiasco. Kadesh-Barnea is this city in the south where they were going to make their first attempt to enter the land. Verses 23-24 reveal a little problem. "When the LORD sent you from Kadesh-Barnea, saying, 'Go up and possess the land which I have given you,' then you rebelled against the command of the LORD your God; you neither believed Him nor listened to His voice. "You have been rebellious against the LORD from the day I knew you." So, rebellion deep in the heart, it manifests itself by our unbelief. We want God's blessing but there's only one way to get there, we have to trust His word. So what does Moses resort to again in v 25? More intercession.

All right, let's turn over to the full Kadesh text in Num 13-14. The truth we're trying to get at here is that if you want to get to God's blessing the only way to get there is through Holy War. People try all other kinds of paths to get God's blessing because they don't like the blood and guts of it. But there is no other way, that land is not going to be a place of security and blessing until the enemies are removed. And we'll see the same things holds in the spiritual realm for us. These are all truths of sanctification.

In Numbers 13 they're making the southern approach and God gives a little intelligence gathering mission. Verse 2, "Send out for yourself men so that they may spy out the land of Canaan, which I am going to give to the sons of Israel; you shall send a man from each of their fathers' tribes, every one a leader among them. So Moses sent them from the wilderness of Paran at the command of the LORD, all of them men who were heads of the sons of Israel. Moses goes and lists the tribes, verse 5-16, these are his personnel; he makes every tribe participate in the intelligence. Verse 17, "When Moses sent them to spy out the land of Canaan, he said to them, 'Go up there into the Negev;

then go up into the hill country. [18] And see what the land is like, and whether the people who live in are strong or weak, whether they are few or many.” In verse 19 see “how are the cities in which they live, are they like open camps or with fortifications?” Verse 20, “And how is the land, is it fat or lean? Are there trees in it or not? Make an effort then to get some of the fruit of the land.” Verse 21, “So they went up and spied out the land” all the way up to the north end. In verse 25 they gathered intelligence for forty days and came back and we come to the report in verse 26. “They proceeded to come to Moses and Aaron and to all the congregation of the sons of Israel in the wilderness...and they brought back word to them and to all the congregation and showed them the fruit of the land.”

What had God promised? That this land was flowing with milk and honey, it was going to be a blessing. What does verse 27 report? Is it a blessing, does this land have assets, does it have resources? You bet it does. Has God been faithful to His promise so far? War hasn't started yet, but is the land like God said it was? Yes. Now this is what I love about the OT, I love it because God portrays man warts and all, and I have my warts and I like to see somebody else is infected, it's encouraging. Verse 28, “Nevertheless, the people who live in the land are strong, and the cities are fortified and very large; and moreover we saw the descendants of Anak there. [29] Amalek is living in the land of the Negev.... [30] Then Caleb quieted the people before Moses, and said,” we're going to go take it. “We should by all means go up and take possession of it, for we shall surely overcome it.” Verse 31, “But the men who had gone up with him said, ‘We are not able to go up against the people, for they are too strong for us. [v. 32] So they gave out to the sons of Israel a bad report of the land which they had spied out, saying, ‘The land through which we have gone in, spying it out, is a land that devours its inhabitants; and all the people whom we saw in it are men of great size.’”

Just from the history that you know, what do you think, who had the bigger army, Egypt or the Canaanites? Think this one through. Egypt was the super power in their day. What did God do to their military machine? He drowned it. Did He need any help from the Israelites? Did they pull out their swords and their spears and take on Pharaoh and his chariots? No. God took care of that. The Exodus happened without any help. Now God's asked them to go in and gather the intel, they find in verse 27 that what God said about the land is true, but then they add the fact that this is not going to be a pushover,

we've got some opponents, verses 31-32, we've got a big problem here. Verse 33 is a classic statement, "There also we saw the Nephilim..." by the way, these people were large, "and we became like grasshoppers" but look what the text says. Remember who wrote the text, God the Holy Spirit, He doesn't say "we became like grasshoppers in their sight," but "we became like grasshoppers in our own sight." It's just a little faint recognition of the fact of what is going on, they're getting psyched out here. How many times have we all gone through this process? A few obstacles and suddenly we can't trust the Lord. Forgetting all about the past obstacles He's overcome in our lives.

The mental processes that we're going to observe in this Conquest and Settlement are directly analogous to the mental processes of living the Christian life and that's precisely why devotional writers come back to these pages and these events, to gain inspiration and guidance in living the Christian life. Do we have opponents? You bet we have; spiritual unseen powers that are very, very powerful, the principalities and powers of the air. Are they going to let us have our way? Not if they have anything to say about it they're not, this is their world. This is Satan's world, he owns it, we're the intruders, we're the aliens, we have come like the Jews onto his turf. Do you think he likes us here? Do you think he really enjoys seeing us gathered together getting armed to the teeth with Scripture? I don't think so. Does he enjoy you trying to establish a godly home? Do you think he's going to take that lying down? No-no. There's opposition, this is an evil world because evil hasn't been removed yet. Remember the war going on.

At the end of chapter 14 look what happens: verse 31, after they say this unbelieving expression, now look at how God inverts it, they're afraid they're going to die, they're so concerned about their homes. He says in verse 31, "Your children, however, whom you said would become a prey—I will bring them in, and they shall know the land which you have rejected. [32] But as for you, your corpses shall fall in this wilderness." So that generation, verse 33ff, that entire generation had to die before the unbelief was purged and the next generation could once again take the land, this time by campaign B on the map, from the east side. But between campaign A and campaign B is thirty-eight long years, enough time, literally, to allow unbelieving elements in the people of God to die out so the younger people who could believe could take the objective. If you do the math on this, which I did at one time, it ended up being 83 funerals a day on average for 38 years. Just imagine, to

get rid of that generation I gotta go through Ps 23 83 times a day, and all that because we failed to trust the Lord. What a lesson.

Then in verse 42-43 look what happens. This is the grand conclusion of the discussion. Moses says in verse 42, because he sees clearly now, they've blown it, "Do not go up, lest you be struck down before your enemies, for the LORD is not among you." Forget it, you're not going to get the land now, you've blown it. Verse 43, "For the Amalekites and the Canaanites will be there in front of you, and you will fall by the sword, inasmuch as you have turned back from following the LORD. And the LORD will not be with you. [44] But they went up heedlessly to the ridge of the hill country; neither the ark of the covenant of the LORD nor Moses left the camp. [45] Then the Amalekites and the Canaanites who lived in that hill country came down, and struck them and beat them down as far as Hormah." The first military defeat they had, because they didn't listen to the word of God again and they heedlessly said "Oh, we're going to go up now." Look at verse 40, watch the clauses, "In the morning, however, they rose up early and went up to the ridge of the hill country, saying, 'Here we are; we have indeed sinned, but we will go up to the place which the LORD has promised.'" Look at the juxtaposition of those two clauses. "We sinned," no problem, "we're going to take it anyway." Excuse me? It doesn't work that way. Here's a part of the truth we're getting at with this event. The Lord who speaks to the heart and He wants heart obedience, that's what He's after, if the heart isn't right you can do whatever you want on the outside, you can put on your big show and fake everybody else out, but whatever your trying to accomplish is going to fail. And that's what this whole thing is about. Love the Lord with all your heart and the other things follow; take that away and everything else collapses. You can't fake it. You can't go through the motions, it doesn't happen, it won't happen. We get defeated when we do that. The blessings are over there, God's made all the promises, but to get to the blessings there has to be heart obedience. There's no other way, you can put on the Christian life, you can paste on your smile and say Jesus loves you, but in the end if it's not in here and you're just putting on, you're going to fail. You can't fake out God. So, that's one of the things we want to get into again and again in the Christian life. Read through Numbers 13-14, a fantastic area of devotion to read, and I suggest for next week reading Joshua 2-6, because that's the famous battle around Jericho and we'll look at that. Please read the background Scripture, that will make it a lot easier to follow the arguments.

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