

Unity Among The People Of God

Ponder: Canaanites and Perizzites: Who Cares?

Scripture: “The Canaanites and the Perizzites then dwelt in the land” (Genesis 13:7b, NKJV).

When Abram was dwelling in the land of Canaan, at least ten different nations were occupying it as well (see Genesis 15:19-21). So, when Moses observes in 13:7 that “the Canaanites and Perizzites then dwelt in the land,” we might think to ourselves, “Well, duh! Of course they did! It’s the land of Canaan – what else would you expect?”

But Moses had good reason to bring up this fact. Both Abram and his nephew, Lot, were remarkably wealthy. They had so much livestock that finding pasture and water for them was becoming more and more difficult. Abram’s herdsmen and Lot’s herdsmen began quarreling. At this point, Moses brings up the fact that the Canaanites and Perizzites then dwelt in the land.

Comparatively speaking, Abram and Lot were newcomers to Canaan. The other people in the land would be struggling to find pasture for their livestock, too. They may not have appreciated the extra competition. If they detected a rift between Abram and Lot, they could be tempted to use the tactic “divide and conquer” to drive out both of them. Besides that, it simply wasn’t becoming for two men who knew the true God to be arguing over grass and water! How could they influence the pagans in Canaan toward the true God while acting like that?

God’s people today ought to be united. When disputes arise, we must resolve them quickly and amicably. In a manner of speaking the Canaanites and Perizzites are still in the land! We must present a united front in dealing with people who do not believe and obey the truth. Our influence becomes diluted when we are divided. Paul prayed for the Christians at Philippi to “stand fast in one spirit, with one mind (literally “one soul”), striving together for the faith of the gospel” (Philippians 1:27).

Nothing promotes Christianity more than obedient believers being united. For this Jesus prayed in John 17. Let us make every effort to be what Jesus prayed we would be!