

**JUDGES 1:3-20**  
**PREPARING FOR FAILURE!**  
**PART 1**

Please turn in your Bibles this morning to Judges chapter 1 as we continue our study through this very sad and tragic book of the Bible.

I think it is hard to imagine a book of the Bible in that kind of light, but it is true.

Let me show you what I mean, how this book of the Bible is played out in the lives of the children of Israel.

The nation of Israel fell into this cyclical pattern of *SIN*, as they turned from God.

Then they fell into *SERVITUDE*, where God brought them into bondage because of their sin, their enemies took them captive.

From servitude they moved into *SUPPLICATION* where they repented before God for their sins.

And as God heard their hearts cry out to Him, He brought them *SALVATION* by the hands of a Judge that He raised up.

And tragically, after the Judge died, the cyclical pattern started all over!

We see this spoken of in Judges chapter 2 beginning in verse 11 as we are told, **“Then the children of Israel did evil in the sight of the LORD, and served the Baals; and they forsook the LORD God of their fathers, who had brought them out of the land of Egypt; and they followed other gods from among the gods of the people who were all around them, and they bowed down to them; and they provoked the LORD to anger. They forsook the LORD and served Baal and the Ashtoreths. And the anger of the LORD was hot against Israel. So He delivered them into the hands of plunderers who despoiled them; and He sold them into the hands of their enemies all around, so that they could no longer stand before their enemies. Wherever they went out, the hand of the LORD was against them for calamity, as the LORD had said, and as the LORD had sworn to them. And they were greatly distressed. Nevertheless, the LORD raised up judges who delivered them out of the hand of those who plundered them. Yet they would not listen to their judges, but they played the harlot with other gods, and bowed down to them. They turned quickly from the way in which their fathers walked, in obeying the commandments of the LORD; they did not do so. And when the LORD raised up judges for them, the LORD was with the judge and delivered them out of the hand of their enemies all the days of the judge; for the LORD was moved to pity by their groaning because of those who oppressed them and harassed them. And it came to pass, when the judge was dead, that they reverted and behaved more corruptly than their fathers, by following other gods, to serve them and bow down to them. They did not cease from their own doings nor from their stubborn way.”** Judges 2:11-19.

Again, this is a very sad story of *sin, servitude, supplication, salvation* and then back to sin as they turn from God as I have said!

What was the problem?

I think the main issue was that they were prosperous in this land flowing with milk and honey and that prosperity lead them away from God! They didn't see their need for God, and they did as they pleased, they served whatever god they wanted because, they were prosperous. They might have thought that they were being blessed! But in the end, it brought them into bondage!

I have called this study, ***PREPARING FOR FAILURE!***

I know, it sounds strange, but I truly believe that these little compromises of their faith would lead to bigger compromises of their faith until God brought judgment upon them. Again, the cyclical pattern of *sin, servitude, supplication, salvation!* They were ***PREPARING FOR FAILURE!***

I have broken these verses we will be looking at this morning into seven main points and, next week, in part two of this study, we will finish up looking at the rest of this chapter and the how they were ***PREPARING FOR FAILURE!***

This is how these verses we will be looking at this morning in Judges chapter 1 are broken down.

***THE FAILURE OF JUDAH – JUDGES 1:3***

***THE BATTLE – JUDGES 1:4-7***

***DEFEAT OF JERUSALEM – JUDGES 1:8-9***

***DEFEAT OF HEBRON – JUDGES 1:10***

***DEFEAT OF DEBIR – JUDGES 1:11-15***

***DEFEAT OF CANAANITES – JUDGES 1:16-18***

***THE FAILURE OF JUDAH AGAIN – JUDGES 1:19-20***

Now, before we get to our text this morning, let me share this with you. It will set the stage for what we will be talking about, this ***PREPARING FOR FAILURE!***

And, what I would like you to see is the warning so we don't go down that path, that the lessons that are found here will help us in our walk so we don't fail but we go forward in our walk with the Lord!

Let me share this with you now.

We are told,

We live in a world where things go wrong, and many of the things that do so are beyond our control. Accidents happen. People that are well and strong and in the prime of life are suddenly struck down by cancer. Earthquakes and tsunamis happen without warning and kill thousands.

We do our best in work or ministry, but somehow our dreams are never realized. A church plant fails. Things seem to conspire against us, and our plans end in disappointment. People long for marriage, but it never happens for them. A baby is conceived but miscarries. Crops are sown, but the rain never comes. Things go wrong, and we ask why but receive no answers. Things are just not right, and we are powerless to change them.

It is not always so, however. Sometimes there are reasons – reasons that deep down we know but find hard to acknowledge. We bring trouble on ourselves by what we do or fail to do; but instead of accepting responsibility for our misfortune we attribute it to others or to bad luck or the general state of the world or (worst of all) to God.

But in the end this is self-destructive. It traps us in a delusion of our own making, damages us morally and spiritually, and cuts us off from the only real source of healing. There is no hope for us until we face up to what really went wrong and our own part in it.

I have always been fascinated with aircraft and for some time now have been an avid watcher of the documentary series *Air Crash Investigations* on the National Geographic channel UK.

It's unsettling to say the least, especially when you're about to embark on another overseas trip!

Most episodes follow the same basic pattern. A plane is preparing to take off. We are shown the pilots discussing the flight and doing all the appropriate pre-flight checks. They are highly professional and completely in command.

There may be some concerns about the weather or other matters. But everything is under control. It's a normal beginning to a normal flight.

Then we're shown the passengers boarding the aircraft, making their way down the aisles, finding their seats and storing their luggage. The occasional one is new to flying and looks a little apprehensive, but most look totally relaxed. Sometimes we're told a little about them. This family is going on vacation. Someone else is visiting a relative she hasn't seen for some time. Another is a businessman on an interstate trip he's done a hundred times. Everyone is settling in. The regular announcements are being made. Everything is routine. No one has any reason to think this flight will be different from any other.

Then a ways into the flight, unusual things begin to happen. They are scarcely noticeable at first – an unexpected warmth in the cabin. A puzzling noise somewhere, lights on the instrument panel that make no sense and begin to confuse the pilots, then difficulty in controlling the aircraft, and finally (too late) a sickening lurch to one side or a plunge, followed by screams, chaos, and darkness.

The rest of the program describes the search for survivors and answers.

Meticulously, piece by piece, the events that led up to the disaster are retraced, and every scrap of recoverable wreckage is examined in a search for the probable cause.

Sometimes no explanation is found, but more often than not there comes a moment of truth when the reason at last comes to light, and measures are taken to ensure, as far as possible, that what happened in this case never happens again. The arrival at the point of explanation is empowering because it enables effective action to be taken.

- Barry G. Webb, Judges and Ruth – God in Chaos, pp. 29-30

That, in a sense, is what we will be doing as we go through the book of Judges.

Examining why there was this catastrophic failure in the nation of Israel. What went wrong? And as we look at what happened, we can learn from it and take appropriate action in our own lives so that we don't go down that same path.

That is what Paul tells us in Romans 15:4, **“For whatever things were written before were written for our learning, that we through the patience and comfort of the Scriptures might have hope.”**

You see, as we read these stories in the Bible of the things that happened to the people of God, they are not here so we can point our fingers at them, not at all.

No, these stories of the people of God are here so we can learn from them, their success and their failures.

I guess you can say that these stories of the people of God are here in the Bible for them to point their finger at us and say to us, ***“Learn these lessons from us. Don't pass them by. They are here so that you can grow in the Lord, so that you can continue to draw close to Him. Don't ignore them but apply them to your life!”***

I guess we can put it like this. When all else fails, and it will, read the instructions. Think about it,

We are so good at doing things our own way. Then, when they do not work out, we turn to God and say, “Help! Now what do I do?”

We are so foolish, for if we had read His instructions in the first place, we wouldn’t have had the problem in the second place.

“Thy Word have I hid in my heart that I might not sin against thee.”

That’s a powerful thought!

- A Treasury of Bible Illustrations

So that is what we are going to be doing in our study through the book of Judges, learn these lessons, read the instructions that God has given to us in His Word so what we might grow in our relationship with Him.

Now, in our last study, as we began the book of Judges, we saw that Joshua has died and there was no one leader in the land.

I truly believe that Joshua trained up many to be leaders in the land of Israel, as they were spread out far and wide.

And listen to what we are told starting in verse 1 of Judges chapter 1, **“Now after the death of Joshua it came to pass that the children of Israel asked the Lord , saying, ‘Who shall be first to go up for us against the Canaanites to fight against them?’ And the Lord said, ‘Judah shall go up. Indeed I have delivered the land into his hand.’”**

It sounds so good, and it was! They sought the Lord in what they should do, and the Lord told them that Judah should go to battle. That sounds good, but is it?

With that as our background, let's begin reading in Judges chapter 1, beginning in verse 3 as we look at the topic, ***PREPARING FOR FAILURE!***

## **JUDGES 1**

### **VERSE 3**

Remember our first point, ***THE FAILURE OF JUDAH!***

Now some will read this, and they see no problem in what Judah did here. They don't see this as a failure on Judah's part.

All they did was they asked their brother, blood brother in fact, Simeon to help them in this battle. And, keep in mind that the tribe of Simeon lived in the borders of Judah! So it does seem to make sense.

One writer put it like this,

The leaders of the tribe of Judah acted wisely here. By partnering with another tribe, the work was much easier. Here, the tribes functioned in the same way that God wants the church to function – as a body, with each part of the body helping out other parts of the body.

- David Guzik

Again, logically, that makes perfect sense and when you add the picture of the church, it even makes more sense. But is that what God instructed Judah to do?

Here is another writer who wrote, "The tribes of Judah and Simeon were blood-brothers (Genesis 29:33-35) and are uniformly depicted as acting in the closest relationship." (Cundall)



And one more, so you can see there are some opposing views on this. He wrote,

The tribal military alliance of Judah and Simeon was a logical one since the allotted inheritance of the Simeonites was within the southern boundaries of the tribe of Judah (Josh 19:1-9).

Also Judah and Simeon had a natural bond as offspring of Jacob and Leah (Gen 29:33-35).

Their common enemy was the Canaanites, probably used here as a generic term for all the inhabitants of Canaan in the area west of the Jordan River.

In a more restricted sense, the term. “Canaanites” sometimes refers to the inhabitants of the coastal plain and the valleys, whereas the inhabitants of the hill country are sometimes designated as Amorites (Num 13:29; cf. Judges 1:34-36; 3:5).

- Bible Knowledge Commentary/Old Testament Copyright

Again, because we don’t see God correct Judah or rebuke them for what they did, we assume that it is okay. I don’t think so.

And think about that for a minute. In the Old Testament, God instructed us on what marriage is to be, one man to one woman!

But in the Old Testament we see men marrying multiple wives and God does not come against it, He does not rebuke them for it. Why is that?

Because God has already told us what the standard is, and He does not have to repeat Himself. When He speaks of polygamy in the Old Testament, He just states what was going on. And if you study those situations carefully, they never ended up for good.

Why is that?

Because that is not the standard that God had set.

Now why in the world do I think what Judah did here is so wrong?

The answer is simple, and it is because what God told Judah.

Remember what the Lord said in Judges 1:2, “**... ‘Judah shall go up. Indeed I have delivered the land into his hand.’**”

I think that is pretty clear. Notice that the Lord did not say, “*Judah and Simeon go and take care of these Canaanites, make mincemeat out of them.*”

No, He said, “**... ‘Judah shall go up. Indeed I have delivered the land into his hand.’**” Joshua 1:2.

Why am I making such a big deal with this?

The answer is very simple. What Judah did was they did not trust what the Lord instructed them to do and they sought help from their brothers, the Simeonites.

God said to Judah that He would deliver this enemy into their hands. End of story, but not so.

They added to what God told them and it showed a lack of faith on their part. And that lack of faith caused them to ask for help instead of seeing what God could do in and through the tribe of Judah in this battle.

Now that may be shocking to us. “***How could Judah do that?***”

But when you look at what is happening in the church today, we are doing the same thing. We are adding to God’s Word or taking away from God’s Word to make us fit into this world! And we do not have the right to do that, only God can because He is the Author of this book and not just the Author, but the Finisher!

Listen to this report from April of 2019, this year. We are told,

The article begins with a provocative statement: “Churches will continue hemorrhaging members until we face the truth: Being a faithful Christian does not mean accepting everything the Bible teaches.” [Really? Jesus said, **“Sanctify them by Your truth. Your word is truth.”** John 17:17. So what he is saying is that God’s Word is not truth! Listen to what he goes on to say.]

What teachings of the Bible does Thomas have in mind that Christians must reject? He targets passages that expressly condemn homosexuality and the entire array of LGBTQ sexual ethics. Moreover, the source of the Church’s error, he argues clearly, is not a misinterpretation of the Scriptures. Rather, the *Bible* got it wrong - the biblical authors were bound by time, culture, and an antiquated worldview that wrongly encumbered and vilified homosexual behavior.

Thomas laments the current positions held by many evangelical Christians. He writes, “A sad thing is happening in America. The church is killing itself. A great *revelation* has occurred that is bringing joy and happiness to millions, but it is being met with resistance and retrenchment from many of my colleagues inside the church.” Oliver Thomas makes a bold claim by using the word “revelation” - his argument is a revelatory argument, which suggests that God has revealed new truth to the world, but not through the Bible. The genesis of this new revelation is sociological experience. [As Pastor Chuck Smith use to say, “If it is true it is not new and if it is new it is not true!”]

He explains the “what” behind the revelation, writing, “The revelation is that LGBTQ people are just like the rest of us - only LGBTQ . . . People don’t choose their sexual orientation any more than they choose their race or gender. This is what lay behind a recent comment by Mayor Pete Buttigieg of South Bend, Indiana, that Vice President Mike Pence’s quarrel - if he has one - is not with the mayor. ‘Your quarrel, sir,’ said the openly gay Democratic presidential candidate, ‘is with my creator.’”

He also chronicles what he believes to be the tragic developments in the United Methodist Church, which has, by his estimation, moved towards the wrong side of history by affirming the traditional Christian teaching on sexuality and gender.

Oliver Thomas believes that the source of the church’s modern troubles stems from an erroneous approach to the Bible. “Here is the corner we have painted ourselves into. *The Bible says it. I believe it. That settles it.* Yet, the Hebrew and Christian Scriptures did not float down from heaven perfect and without error. They were written by men, and those men made mistakes.”

In just a few words, Thomas has denied the position of the believing Church since its inception - that the Scriptures are holy and stand as the inspired, authoritative Word of the living God. This is an explicit denial of *sola Scriptura*. We can at least credit Thomas for his candor - he does not hedge nor equivocate. In his view, the Bible has simply erred.

Moreover, Thomas dismisses a fantastical view of inspiration that in no way accords with the Bible’s internal witness. He depicted Christian belief in the inspiration of the Scriptures as the sacred writings floating down from heaven.

Of course, Christians do not believe the Bible simply descended from the heavens. . . .

- <http://bit.ly/2mllaOf>

And let me say this. The compromise in altering God's Word may start out very small, it may not seem like a big thing to you. But a little compromise here and a little compromise there and look out, you are so far away from what God has spoken in His Word to you!

And yes, we also see God challenge our faith, He wants to stretch our faith and to do that He calls us to do things that are outside our comfort zone. Things which we do not feel comfortable in doing.

We see this when the Lord called Moses to deliver Israel from their bondage in Egypt.

God tells Moses **"Come, now, therefore, and I will send you to Pharaoh that you may bring My people, the children of Israel, out of Egypt."** Exodus 3:10.

That is pretty straight forward and Moses has seen the hand of God upon his life, so this should be easy. Not exactly!

Moses, this great deliverer of his people begins to argue with the Lord, and finally Moses tells the Lord that he can't do it, he is not qualified, he can't speak, Jupiter is not aligned with Mars or whatever excuse that he could come up with so he did not have to walk by faith.

Yes, he knew that he could not do it but that was not the issue.

Moses was overwhelmed and he just tells the Lord his lack of ability to do the job. He says, **"O my LORD, I am not eloquent, neither before nor since you have spoken to your servant; but I am slow of speech and slow of tongue."** Exodus 4:10.

Again, that was true but that was not the issue!

I think it is important that we recognize our weaknesses, so we depend more upon the Lord. And for Moses, he rightly saw his weakness, but the Lord said to him, **“Who has made man’s mouth? Or who makes the mute, the deaf, the seeing, or the blind? Have not I, the LORD? Now therefore, go, and I will be with your mouth and teach you what you shall say.”** Exodus 4:11-12.

The point the Lord is making is that He has created us, and He knows us better than we know ourselves. And these battles will not be won in the strength of our flesh, but by the power of His Spirit upon our lives.

He will teach us; He will guide us and equip us for the work He has called us to and we must walk by faith.

And understand that if He has called us to take a step of faith, He will equip us for that work.

If we look to ourselves, we will fail, but if we look to Him for our strength, the enemy will be defeated.

He is the Master Artist, and He sometimes uses the smallest brush to achieve the best results.

As an instrument in the hands of the Master Artist, we need only be submissive to His will, and a beautiful picture will flow from His hands!

For Judah, they sought help, not from the Lord, but from the tribe of Simeon! ***THE FAILURE OF JUDAH!***

VERSES 4-7

In this section and for the next several verses we see the battles that Judah and Simeon were involved in.

This section I have called ***THE BATTLE*** and then we will focus on the specific battles that they were involved in.

And what I want you to see here is that even though Judah was not completely obedient to the Lord, they did step out and do battle against the enemy.

And what we see here is that Bezek was far north of the territory that Judah occupied and yet God called them to go forth and they did.

Here is something that we can apply to our own lives.

God may call us to go places or do things that seem out of our territory. Now they may be literally out of our territory as He calls us to go somewhere, to move from where we are now living.

But many times it is a call to move us out of the territory that we are comfortable in and to take those steps of faith and see the victory that God will give to us as we do.

We see it here with Judah and God is the same yesterday, today and forever!

Here we see that the leader of Bezek was called Adoni-Bezek and his name means, ***“Lord of lightning.”***

As tough as that sounds, God brought him down and the children of Israel cut off his big toes and his thumbs.

I know, kind of strange but not when you really think about it. By doing this he would not be able to hold a sword, nor could he run and thus, as a military leader he was useless! So it was a smart thing to do!

In fact, this was a common practice to make the person worthless as a warrior. Clarke tells us that this practice continued on as he wrote, “It was a custom among those Romans who did not like a military life, to cut off their own thumbs, that they might not be called into the army. Sometimes the parents cut off the thumbs of their children, that they might not be called into the army.”

So, with this first battle, may we answer the call of God upon our lives and move out of the territory that we are comfortable in and walk by faith!

### VERSES 8-9

This next section deals with the ***DEFEAT OF JERUSALEM***.

Look at how early on we see the children of Israel capture the city of Jerusalem. But, tragically, they only occupied it for a short time.

Remember what we read about the King of Bezek, Adoni-Bezek, that he died in captivity there in Jerusalem. They had taken this city!

And here is the problem. If you don’t drive out the enemy, they will find a way to get back in, and that is what we see here.

As you look at Judges 1:21, we see that the city of Jerusalem fell back into the hands of the Jebusites. We are told, “**But the children of Benjamin did not drive out the Jebusites who inhabited Jerusalem; so the Jebusites dwell with the children of Benjamin in Jerusalem to this day.**”

In fact, it wasn’t until the time of David that the city of Jerusalem was captured by the Jews and it stayed in their hands until they went into captivity!



In II Samuel 5:6-10 we are told, “And the king and his men went to Jerusalem against the Jebusites, the inhabitants of the land, who spoke to David, saying, ‘You shall not come in here; but the blind and the lame will repel you,’ thinking, ‘David cannot come in here.’ Nevertheless David took the stronghold of Zion (that is, the City of David). Now David said on that day, ‘Whoever climbs up by way of the water shaft and defeats the Jebusites (the lame and the blind, who are hated by David's soul), he shall be chief and captain.’ Therefore they say, ‘The blind and the lame shall not come into the house.’ Then David dwelt in the stronghold, and called it the City of David. And David built all around from the Millo and inward. So David went on and became great, and the Lord God of hosts was with him.”

The problem that I see here in Judges is that they could have had the city earlier if they were fully obedient to the Lord.

And what I want you to see here is that many times we can be obedient, to a point. And that is the problem. God wants total obedience and we think we know better; we don't think it will be a problem, and we don't listen to Him and in the end, we are in bondage, we are defeated, and we wonder why.

God wants full obedience from us because it is what is best for our lives.

#### VERSE 10

Here we see the *DEFEAT OF HEBRON*. And, as we are going to see, one city after another is falling.

Hebron is located about 19 miles southwest of Jerusalem in a valley lying about 2,800 feet above sea level. And this was the area of land given to Caleb, the area where the descendants of Anak were located.

Now as you read this you may come to the conclusion that God is with them, He has given them the victory.

That is not necessarily true. Yes, they were obtaining victories, but not complete victory as God had instructed them.

Remember the story of King Asa, who was a godly King. And he had some ten years of peace and then the enemy came against him and his kingdom.

But as strong as they might have been, Judah only had some 580,000 men of war and the enemy was twice as big. They were outnumbered around 2 to 1!

And what does this godly King do? Listen to what we are told in II Chronicles 14:11, **“And Asa cried out to the Lord his God, and said, ‘Lord , it is nothing for You to help, whether with many or with those who have no power; help us, O Lord our God, for we rest on You, and in Your name we go against this multitude. O Lord, You are our God; do not let man prevail against You!’”**

Asa did the only thing he could do, he cried out to the Lord to deliver them because he knew that this victory was not going to be because of their might!

And listen to what happened after that, **“So the Lord struck the Ethiopians before Asa and Judah, and the Ethiopians fled. And Asa and the people who were with him pursued them to Gerar. So the Ethiopians were overthrown, and they could not recover, for they were broken before the Lord and His army. And they carried away very much spoil. Then they defeated all the cities around Gerar, for the fear of the Lord came upon them; and they plundered all the cities, for there was exceedingly much spoil in them. They also attacked the livestock enclosures, and carried off sheep and camels in abundance, and returned to Jerusalem.”** II Chronicles 14:12-15.

God gave them this great victory and you would think that nothing would stop Asa and the Southern Kingdom of Judah. Well, there was only one thing that could stop them and that was Asa himself.

Interestingly enough, after this great victory, as they are coming home from battle, we are told, **“Now the Spirit of God came upon Azariah the son of Oded. And he went out to meet Asa, and said to him: ‘Hear me, Asa, and all Judah and Benjamin. The Lord is with you while you are with Him. If you seek Him, He will be found by you; but if you forsake Him, He will forsake you. For a long time Israel has been without the true God, without a teaching priest, and without law; but when in their trouble they turned to the Lord God of Israel, and sought Him, He was found by them. And in those times there was no peace to the one who went out, nor to the one who came in, but great turmoil was on all the inhabitants of the lands. So nation was destroyed by nation, and city by city, for God troubled them with every adversity. But you, be strong and do not let your hands be weak, for your work shall be rewarded!’”** II Chronicles 15:1-7.

And Asa did listen to this prophet, at least for a time. But if the Lord takes the time to warn you about something, you really need to pay attention.

You see, after some time there was trouble in the north. Baasha was the King of the Northern Kingdom of Israel, and he is trying to stop the flow of his people from going into the Southern Kingdom of Judah and to block the trade route to Judah.

You see, word got out how God was blessing Asa and the Southern Kingdom of Judah, and that caused many from the Northern Kingdom of Israel to come and be part of what God was doing. In II Chronicles 15:9 we read of this taking place. It says, “**... for they came over to him in great numbers from Israel when they saw that the LORD his God was with him.**”

So Baasha builds up Ramah, which was located about 5 miles north of Jerusalem, on the border between the two kingdoms, and on an important trade route linking Egypt and Mesopotamia, to stop this migration or defection of his people to the Southern Kingdom of Judah. And in the process of doing this, Baasha is bringing his men and supplies into this city to most likely prepare for war against Judah, which would put a halt to the defections that were taking place.

And Asa acts in the flesh instead of trusting in the Lord. You see, instead of crying out to the Lord, he cries out to Ben-Hadad the King from Syria for help.

What a contrast we see in what Asa did here versus what he did when the Ethiopians had him outnumbered. Then he trusted in the Lord, but now we see him trust in man.

He is in trouble and he has no place to turn, so he turns to man.

What happened?

During those years of peace Asa did not cultivate a deep relationship with the Lord but focused on his outward strength. Thus, his actions are born out of an empty spirit. Because of that Asa takes the treasures of God and gives them to Ben-Hadad, king of Syria, an unbeliever, to help him with his problems.

Spurgeon sums this up like this, “The power of Ethiopia was broken before him, and Judah’s armies returned laden with the spoil. You would not have thought that a man who could perform that grand action would become, a little after, full of unbelief; but the greatest faith of yesterday will not give us confidence for to-day, unless the fresh springs which are in God shall overflow again.”

And yes, Asa gained a great victory with the help of the Syrians, but this was not a victory from God. Just because he got the victory it ended up hurting him in the long run!

You don’t make an alliance with the enemy, you never ask them to assist you, no matter how bad the situation is.

And, as in the case here in Judges, you completely wipe out the enemy or they will wiggle their way back into your life and take back that victory you had!

### VERSES 11-15

In these verses we see the ***DEFEAT OF DEBIR***.

Keep in mind that Debir was located farther to the south, about 8 miles southwest of Hebron. And it seems that Debir was a cultural capitol of the Canaanites, for its name means “books” possibly implying they had an extensive library there.

Now we also see here that Othniel takes Caleb's challenge and defeats the inhabitants of Debir, and obtains Achsah, the daughter of Caleb, for a wife. (Othniel is either the brother or nephew of Caleb).

And because this area of the south was very dry, Achsah asks that her husband speak to her father to see if he would give them the upper and lower springs so they could be assured to have a fresh water supply.

As strong as Othniel was in defeating the enemy, he seems a little gun-shy of Caleb, thus, Achsah asks her dad for the springs, which he does give to them.

Another city down, but the story does not end there. Let's read on and see what happens next.

### VERSES 16-18

In these verses we see the ***DEFEAT OF THE CANAANITES***. There are several cities mentioned here and they were wiped out by the children of Israel, but, as we will see as we read on, not completely!

We also see here the descendants of Jethro, Moses father-in-law, and they were nomadic people and the Kenites, as I have said, were the descendants of Jethro.

And they are moving farther to the south, Arad was a city out in the Judean wilderness, west of Masada and the Dead Sea.

And then Judah went and attacked and took Zephath, which was close by. They also were moving towards the Mediterranean Sea, down to Philistine country.

And these Philistine cities along the Mediterranean Sea, the children of Israel took, but they did not drive out the Philistines, who were a thorn in the side of Israel, as well as completely driving out some of the other inhabitants of the land, as I have said.

### VERSES 19-20

And in these verses, we see ***THE FAILURE OF JUDAH, AGAIN!***

Remember as we opened up this morning and we saw how God instructed Judah to go into battle. That is what God told them and yet, that is not exactly what Judah did. They also asked Simeon to help them.

And we may not see this as a big compromise, but a little compromise here and a little there and you know what happens? It becomes a ***BIG*** compromise!

And here we see that they did not completely wipe out the enemy. Why did they not completely wipe out the enemy in the land?

It is simple, from a human perspective, “**... because they had chariots of iron.**” Judges 1:19.

Now we read that, and we think that their actions were foolish, so what, they had chariots of iron. It was a big deal. They were like our modern-day tanks back in those days. It gave you an advantage in battle.

Let me share this with you to show you what they were like and I think you will see why these iron chariots were a game changer. You see, these chariots had a platform for a driver; a javelin thrower, an archer, and the wheels on the chariot had blades on them so that when you got too close, your legs would be cut in two.

So as you understand the military strength of the enemy, you can understand why Judah did not completely drive out the enemy, from a human standpoint.

But what did God tell Judah? The Lord said to Judah, “**... ‘Judah shall go up. Indeed I have delivered the land into his hand.’**” Judges 1:2.

God did not say that they might get the victory but that the land was theirs, all they needed to do was walk by faith and take what God had already given them!

Now here’s the thing. Yes, Judah had a successful military campaign. But, and here is the problem, it was incomplete.

They did not drive out the enemy, and it wasn’t because of the chariots, it was because of their lack of faith.

I know, easy for me to say, I am not facing these iron chariots. And that is true. But were they going to do battle in the power of their might or in the power of God? Of course the Lord was fighting for them!

You see, it didn’t matter what the latest military equipment the enemy had, even chariots because God had already told them that the enemy was defeated, but they did not walk by faith, but by sight.

Thus, their mind told them it was impossible to defeat the enemy that had chariots, and that was reflected in their actions.

Remember what the Psalmist said in Psalm 20:7, “**Some trust in chariots, and some in horses; But we will remember the name of the Lord our God.**”

What a great lesson for us, what are we trusting in for our victories in life? May it be the Lord!



And it is easy to look at what is before us, the situations we are in and become overwhelmed, like Judah did. And then, in the end, they just gave up, they did not finish the work because they did not believe that God would give them this land.

I know that seems harsh, but that is the reality and it is true in our own lives. Can we trust in Him no matter how big the enemy is, how overwhelming the situation may be, how hopeless it may seem? We need to because God wants us to trust in Him and know what we can do through Him!

We see this played out in Psalm 33:16-17 as we are told, **“No king is saved by the multitude of an army; a mighty man is not delivered by great strength. A horse is a vain hope for safety; neither shall it deliver any by its great strength.”**

And the Psalmist goes on to say where our hope should rest, **“Behold, the eye of the LORD is on those who fear Him, on those who hope in his mercy, to deliver their soul from death, and to keep them alive in famine. Our soul waits for the LORD; He is our help and our shield. For our heart shall rejoice in Him, because we have trusted in His holy name. Let Your mercy, O LORD, be upon us, just as we hope in You.”** Psalm 33:18-22.

The Lord is our help, but we need to look to Him and not only look to Him but then walk by faith and see the salvation that He would bring to the situations that we are in.

Spurgeon gives to us this insight. He wrote, “If they had believed in God, and gone forth in his name, the horses would soon have fled, as indeed they did when God gave his people faith. When Barak led the way with Deborah, then they smote Jabin, who had nine hundred chariots of iron . . . the imperfection of their faith lay in this, as it may do in yours, my brethren, - that they believed one promise of God and did not believe another. There is a kind of faith which is strong in one direction, but utter weakness if tried in other ways.”

How true that is. The Lord wants complete obedience to Him and as we do, we can trust in Him in all the things we face. And, as we do, it takes that weight off of our backs and places them at His feet, and He can handle it.

Now I don't want to close on this failure by Judah and thankfully, we don't have to.

In Judges 1:20 we also see Caleb get Hebron, the area that was promised to him by Moses, and he does drive out the enemy.

How? How can Caleb drive out these giants, gain this victory when Judah did not?

Because he walked by faith and believed in the promises of God!

Yes, it is easy to look back and see the salvation that the Lord brought to that situation, but can you see the salvation that He will bring before the battle is over?

God wants us to, to trust in His promises, all of them and not just some of them!

Remember the story we opened up with about a person who enjoyed watching the television show, *Air Crash Investigations*. Stories about plane crashes and the investigation of why they crashed.

In a sense, that is what we have done this morning. We have looked at Judah and we saw how they, in a sense, crashed. Now it was not devastating at this point, but down the road, as compromise after compromise kept coming into the land, the enemy finally got them to go after their gods, to worship their gods, to offer their children to the god Molech, and-so-on. And in the end, it brought judgment upon them, they went into captivity!

And, if you don't think it can happen to you, then you need to look at the church today!

We see that a little compromise here and a little there has brought big compromise into the church regarding our faith.

We see the acceptance of abortion, we see the acceptance of homosexuality, we see the acceptance of divorce, we see the acceptance of negating the blood atonement, we see the acceptance of rejecting Jesus as Almighty God, and the list goes on because the compromise goes on! God is not warning us to ruin our fun, but to protect us!

May we learn the lessons that the Lord has for us in His Word and apply them to our lives so that we may grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ and follow Him step-by-step, all the days of our life!

Let us prepare for victory in the Lord and not for failure as we do it our way!

As Solomon said, “**Trust in the Lord with all your heart, And lean not on your own understanding; In all your ways acknowledge Him, And He shall direct your paths.**”

Proverbs 3:5-6.

May we walk by faith and not by sight and see the salvation that the Lord will bring to the situations we face in our lives. May we drive out the enemies of the flesh and walk in the Spirit!