

JUDGES 1

Please turn in your Bibles this evening to Judges chapter 1 as we continue our study through the Word of God, and we begin the book of Judges.

As we move from Joshua to Judges we move from the children of Israel walking in the Spirit and seeing the salvation that the Lord brought to them, to apostasy. It truly was a very dark, a very black period for the nation of Israel!

And yes, there were those who loved the Lord, but it was usually born out of a period of judgment that was upon them.

You see, no longer did they have a leader in Israel, like Joshua.

The priests were to do that as they were spread throughout the land of Israel, occupying 48 Levitical cities, but they failed.

Thus, instead of drawing close to God they moved away from God because there was no one there to encourage them, no one to help keep them moving in the right direction, teaching them the things of God!

There was an old Pogo comic strip that captures the message of Judges.

In this comic strip we see Pogo go into the swamp to fight a battle. When he returns, he says, *"We have met the enemy . . . and he is us."*

That is the book of Judges in a nutshell! And, as we will see, the book of Judges proves we're often our own worst enemy. When we put ourselves, and our own interests ahead of God's will and it causes us to miss out on opportunities to receive His wonderful blessings.

What we will see in our study of this book is that the nation will go through a cyclical pattern in their walk with the Lord.

The cycle begins with a time of prosperity and rest as God blesses the nation. During this time of peace and prosperity they become complacent in their walk with God, they turn from God and fall into idolatry.

As they turn away from God, as idolatry fills their lives, God brings His judgment upon them. And this judgment is manifested as the enemies of Israel rise up and oppress them.

As this judgment continues on for years the children of Israel finally come to their senses and fall on their knees, repenting of their sins before God, the one they told Joshua that they would serve wholeheartedly! It is then that they do return to the Lord.

Then God raises up a Judge who comes on the scene to deliver the children of Israel from the oppression they were facing with their enemies.

And it is out of this we see born a time of peace and prosperity that continues on for a time, until the Judge dies, and then they return to their complacency, and they turned away from the Lord. When that happens, we see that this cycle repeats itself over and over again!

Here is that sin cycle, ***SIN, SERVITUDE, SUPPLICATION, SALVATION*** and ***SIN*** once again!

Now keep in mind that this is not a picture of the entire nation of Israel going through this at the same time. But these things occurred within the various tribes of Israel and God then raised up a Judge or deliverer to bring them out of the bondage they were in.

But as you will see, this apostasy or falling away from God will eventually cover the whole nation; they all will have a time of falling away!

Here is how it is played out.

We will see the southern region of Israel affected in Judges 3:5-31.

Then the northern region of Israel will be affected in Judges 4:1-5:31.

Next, we will see the central region of Israel affected in Judges 6:1-10:5.

Then there is the eastern region of Israel affected in Judges 10:6-12:15.

And finally, we see the western region of Israel affected in Judges 13:1-16:31.

Not a pretty picture as all of Israel, in a time span of about 300 years or so went into apostasy!

Now, if you added up all the years of servitude and rest it would total 410 years but keep in mind that some of these judges and apostasies overlapped with each other and in the end, it was about 300 years and it brings us up to the time of Samuel.

Who wrote the book of Judges?

Many feel that it was Samuel who not only wrote the book of Judges, but also Ruth and, of course I & II Samuel.

We see also that the Talmud, which is a collection of ancient rabbinical writings, they too ascribe the book of Judges to Samuel as well as Ruth and Samuel!

Now, how could a nation that was directed so powerfully by God, saw the hand of God upon their lives in so many ways, fall into such sin?

The answer is given to us in the book of Judges several times.

In Judges 21:25 we are told, “**In those days there was no king in Israel; everyone did what was right in his own eyes.**”

And that is never a good thing! You see, there was no one leading them. The priests were not doing what God called them to do, and the people turned away from the Lord, doing what they felt was right in their own hearts.

And there is the problem because the Bible tells us that our hearts are wicked and capable of the most atrocious things. And a heart that is doing its own thing is a heart that is in opposition to what God desires of them.

And take a good look at America today and we too saw the blessings of God as we became a nation, but look at where we are at today, so far from God.

The church is falling into apostasy and pastors are not teaching God's Word and there are no leaders to help the people do what is right.

Now, obviously not every pastor or leader is evil, but look at where we are at today and it is not good!

Here in Judges, in these times of apostasy, God does raise up Judges to deliver them once they repent of their sin.

Now when we think of a judge, we think of a person who sits in a courtroom, they are wearing black robes, and they deal with the law.

That is not at all what these Judges were all about.

The Hebrew word is *SHAPHAT* and that is the title of this book, *Judges* and it basically means a deliverer or a heroic leader.

That is what these 12 men and 1 woman were all about, 13 of them! And Samuel, who comes on the scene in I Samuel, they say is the 14th Judge.

We also need to keep in mind that these Judges were not some kind of superhero. They did not come flying in to save the day, but they did save the day, not in the power of their might, but the Lords!

I like that because I see over and over again God using average people, not superhero's according to the world's standards. He uses the weak, those that may not have all those degrees, those who are not powerful, those who are not rich and He uses them in a very powerful way.

And what God did back then He is still doing today, and I like that!

Paul makes this point in I Corinthians 1:20-31 as he tells us, **“Where is the wise? Where is the scribe? Where is the disputer of this age? Has not God made foolish the wisdom of this world? For since, in the wisdom of God, the world through wisdom did not know God, it pleased God through the foolishness of the message preached to save those who believe. For Jews request a sign, and Greeks seek after wisdom; but we preach Christ crucified, to the Jews a stumbling block and to the Greeks foolishness, but to those who are called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God and the wisdom of God. Because the foolishness of God is wiser than men, and the weakness of God is stronger than men. For you see your calling, brethren, that not many wise according to the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble, are called. But God has chosen the foolish things of the world to put to shame the wise, and God has chosen the weak things of the world to put to shame the things which are mighty; and the base things of the world and the things which are despised God has chosen, and the things which are not, to bring to nothing the things that are, that no flesh should glory in His presence. But of Him you are in Christ Jesus, who became for us wisdom from God - and righteousness and sanctification and redemption - that, as it is written, ‘He who glories, let him glory in the Lord.’”**

Do you see what God is doing here? He is bringing us all down or up to the same playing field. It is not that education is wrong but that the world's wisdom, the world's education can't save you, it can't bring you to Jesus!

God does not need our strength, our resources for victory. Yes, He will use them, but if you think that it is about you and how great you are, well, don't stand next to me!

God is looking for people who love Him and people that are available. He will use the weak, the poor, those that may not have all those degrees to put to shame those that do because they are gloating in them!

You see, God will use us with the gifts, the abilities we have until we think that without us, God is in trouble and then you will be put on the shelf until you humble yourself before the Lord. You may still be involved in ministry, but it is not fruitful.

You can never be too small for God to use you, but you can be too big!

The key, of course, is that we can't boast about what we have done but we surely can boast in all that Lord has done, He gets the glory! And that is what we see with these Judges that God raises up.

What a comfort to know that what God was doing back then He is still doing today in the lives of His people!

And I think, as we read through this book of Judges, you will see – ***MISSED OPPORTUNITIES!***

They could have walked with the Lord and received the blessings of the Lord, but they did their own thing and it brought them into bondage!

What a lesson to learn for each of us. Don't miss those opportunities by doing your own thing. Follow the Lord and see the salvation He will bring to the things you encounter in your life. Don't go into bondage, let the Son set you free because then you shall be free indeed! (John 8:36)

Before we begin our study in Judges, let me just share this last point with you and that is what Arthur E. Cundall wrote. We are told:

There is much in Judges to sadden the heart of the reader; perhaps no book in the Bible witnesses so clearly to our human frailty. But there are also unmistakable signs of the divine compassion and longsuffering. . . . As the lives of these lesser-saviours are considered, there may be a realization of the need in modern times of a greater Saviour, of unblemished life, who is able to effect a perfect deliverance, not only in time but for eternity.

- Arthur E. Cundall

May we not lose sight of that fact, that we have a righteous Judge, Jesus who is our deliver and He is not only delivering us from the many things we face here and now, but for eternity!

What a joy, what a comfort, what a Savior we have in Jesus.

With that said, let's begin reading in Judges chapter 1, starting in verse 1 and see what the Lord has for us as we study His Word.

JUDGES 1

VERSE 1

Here is the link from the book of Joshua to the book of Judges; Joshua has died.

We have seen two very strong national leaders, Moses and Joshua, pass off the scene and now would the people continue on in the faith?

Remember at the close of Joshua how he told the people that they needed to choose whom they would serve, either the Lord or those foreign gods, but you can't serve both. You can't serve the Lord half-heartedly because He will judge you for your lukewarmness to Him.

And the people responded back to Joshua by saying in Joshua 24:21, "**And the people said to Joshua, 'No, but we will serve the Lord!'**"

And in Joshua 24:24 we are told, "**And the people said to Joshua, 'The Lord our God we will serve, and His voice we will obey!'**"

Now would they be faithful in what they promised not only to Joshua but also to the Lord?

Keep in mind that under the leadership of Joshua the children of Israel broke the back of the Canaanites military strength. But there were still those pockets of resistance that needed to be dealt with and the children of Israel ask the Lord who should go and fight against these Canaanite pockets of resistance?

You see, without a national leader they now had to go and seek the Lord and trust Him and what He tells them on a more individual level.

That is not a bad thing. In fact, it shows spiritual growth!

Things are starting out well after the death of Joshua. They are seeking the Lord, and the Lord will speak to them in what they should do.

VERSE 2

What a great lesson this is for us. Israel sought the Lord, they were not sure what they should do, and the Lord answered them, the Lord directed them.

It is as Jesus said in Luke 11:9, **“So I say to you, ask, and it will be given to you; seek, and you will find; knock, and it will be opened to you.”**

In the Greek all three of these verbs: *ask*, *seek* and *knock* are to be a continuous action and not a onetime prayer even though God does answer our prayers like that sometimes.

I think The Amplified Bible gives us a better reading of this verse as it tells us, **“So I say to you, Ask and keep on asking and it shall be given you; seek and keep on seeking and you shall find; knock and keep on knocking and the door shall be opened to you.”**

You see, I believe God answers every single one of our prayers but not like the health, wealth and prosperity teachers teach us.

Sometimes God says, **“Yes.”** And other times God says, **“No.”** And then there are times that God says, **“Not yet.”**

You see, He does answer them; we just might not like what He is telling us! But the idea here is that we need to keep praying for the situation we are in because God will direct us as He did here with Israel!

And, if you are praying and you are not at peace with something, wait upon the Lord and let Him give you peace about what you are to do!

We see here that God calls the tribe of Judah to go forth and destroy these Canaanite pockets of resistance. And here is the great thing; God already assures them of the victory, all they needed to do is walk by faith.

Paul also tells us this in I Thessalonians 5:24, “**He who calls you is faithful, who also will do it.**”

The Amplified Bible puts it like this, “**Faithful is He Who is calling you [to Himself] and utterly trustworthy, and He will also do it [fulfill His call by hallowing and keeping you].**”

You see, God is working in you and through you and since He called you, He will complete the work, He will give to you those victories against the enemies of your life, primarily the flesh!

The problem comes when we refuse to walk by faith. We either don't want to let go, or we are afraid to walk.

Keep your eyes focused on Him and see the salvation He will bring to you!

One last point here. God called the tribe of Judah to defeat this enemy and Judah means praise.

I truly believe as we go into these battles, if we do so in praise, God will give us the victory.

If we go in murmuring and complaining, how is that honoring to God?

Case in point. In Acts chapter 16 Paul and Silas are thrown in a Philippian jail for delivering a girl who was demon possessed, a fortune-teller. You see, her owners lost their income with her deliverance and had them thrown in jail.

And in Acts 16:25-34 we are told what transpired, **“But at midnight Paul and Silas were praying and singing hymns to God, and the prisoners were listening to them. Suddenly there was a great earthquake, so that the foundations of the prison were shaken; and immediately all the doors were opened and everyone’s chains were loosed. And the keeper of the prison, awaking from sleep and seeing the prison doors open, supposing the prisoners had fled, drew his sword and was about to kill himself. But Paul called with a loud voice, saying, ‘Do yourself no harm, for we are all here.’ Then he called for a light, ran in, and fell down trembling before Paul and Silas. And he brought them out and said, ‘Sirs, what must I do to be saved?’ So they said, ‘Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and you will be saved, you and your household.’ Then they spoke the word of the Lord to him and to all who were in his house. And he took them the same hour of the night and washed their stripes. And immediately he and all his family were baptized. Now when he had brought them into his house, he set food before them; and he rejoiced, having believed in God with all his household.”**

Now you would not think of having victory in a dungeon, a jail but God gave Paul and Silas this victory and I believe it was born out of them praying and praising God.

They were not praising God for being in jail but for who He is. And out of all this we see the Philippian jailer get saved, his family and I believe the other prisoners who were in that jail with Paul and Silas.

What a witness, what a victory all born out of Paul and Silas praying and singing songs unto the Lord, just praising Him.

What a great lesson for us as we find ourselves in dark, stinky situations!

VERSE 3

Now some don't see a problem with what Judah did here, partnering with the tribe of Simeon, but I do see it as a problem.

God 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.

You may not see this as a big problem but to me it shows a lack of faith on Judah's part. God said He delivered this enemy into their hands, but a 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 let me also say this. We are to work together to defeat the enemies but here, specifically, God told Judah to go up and fight.

And I do understand that many see this as a good thing, but like I have said, it seems to me that they did not fully obey the Lord.

We saw this also when the Lord called Moses to deliver Israel from their bondage in Egypt. God told 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.

And 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!

Moses 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 the 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.

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!

VERSES 4-7

Interestingly enough Bezek was far north of the territory that Judah occupied and yet God called them to go forth and they did.

We too may be called by God to go places or do things that may seem out of our territory you might say, but if God is calling, we need to walk by faith and see the victory God can give us as He did with Judah.

For me, going to Russia was a step of faith. I don't know the Russian language at all. I never met anyone from Russia, I only spoke with Dema. And yet, as I took those steps of faith, I saw all that God was doing. He did His part and I needed to do mine and I did, and I was so blessed!

Now the leader of Bezek was called Adoni-Bezek, and his name means, "***Lord of lightning.***"

Kind of a cool name but 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, his walk would not be as stable, and he would not be able to run as well. So, as a military leader he was useless!

This was a smart thing to do!

In fact, this was a common practice to make the person worthless as a warrior. In fact, 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.***"

Listen again to what is said in Judges 1:7, “**And Adoni-Bezek said, ‘Seventy kings with their thumbs and big toes cut off used to gather their food under my table; as I have done, so God has repaid me.’ . . .**”

What we see here is the principle of sowing and reaping.

Adoni-Bezek cut off the thumbs and toes of 70 Kings during his reign, making them into nothing more than beggars.

And now this was done to him, and he realizes he is only reaping what he sowed.

That same principle, of sowing and reaping can be applied to our own Christian lives.

Paul said in II Corinthians 9:6-7, “**He who sows sparingly will also reap sparingly, and he who sows bountifully will also reap bountifully. So let each one give as he purposes in his heart, not grudgingly or out of compulsion; for God loves a cheerful giver.**”

Now some apply this to money, and I think that is true, but it goes far beyond that. It speaks of our time, our resources, and our life!

How much do you give unto the Lord for His use?

And this is where we need to be careful, if you can’t give your money, time, resources out of a cheerful heart, a hilarious heart, then don’t give at all.

And again, the idea is sowing and reaping. What are you sowing because whatever you sow, that is what you will get back as Adoni-Bezek found out!

VERSES 8-9

Now this is interesting. Judah defeats the inhabitants of Jerusalem, they occupied it for a time, in fact the King of Bezek, Adoni-Bezek dies in captivity there. But they didn’t completely destroy the enemy and according to Judges 1:21 the city fell back into the hands of the Jebusites.

It was not until the time of King David, some 400 years down the road, that Jerusalem was taken back.

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.”**

They could have had the city earlier if they were fully obedient to the Lord. In other words, they did not have a good follow-through, like a pitcher who throws the ball, but he does not allow his arm to come all the way forward, no follow-through, and he is not going to win that way. And neither did the children of Israel.

VERSE 10

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.

VERSES 11-15

Debir was located farther to the south, about 8 miles southwest of Hebron.

And it seems that Debir was a cultural capital of the Canaanites, for its name means “**books**” possibly implying they had an extensive library there.

And Caleb makes an offer that Othniel can’t refuse. He said that he would give his daughter to the person who defeats the inhabitants of Debir.

And, like I have said, we see 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.

What I want you to see is the faith of Caleb’s daughter here and there are some principles we can carry away with us and apply to our own walk with the Lord.

- She knew it was her ***father*** she asked and of course, we need to bring our heavenly requests before our Heavenly Father!
- She went humbly, yet eagerly. We too, as we approach the Lord, we need to humble ourselves before Him. We need to seek His will and not ours!
- Her father asked her what she wanted - God will ask us the same thing, and we should know what we want. And here is the great thing, as we are walking with the Lord, the desires that He places in our hearts are His desires!
- You should actually ask for it; it is a pleasure for God to hear you ask. People are afraid or they feel they are not to ask for things from God, just pray for others. That is wrong, we are to bring our requests before the Lord and He does delight to give us the desire of our hearts!

- Her father gave her what she asked. And I believe that our Heavenly Father will give us what we ask for, He will answer our prayers. It may not be always the way we want, but He will answer in such a way that it will be the best for our lives!

Remember what Jesus said in Matthew 7:7-11, **“Ask, and it will be given to you; seek, and you will find; knock, and it will be opened to you. For everyone who asks receives, and he who seeks finds, and to him who knocks it will be opened. Or what man is there among you who, if his son asks for bread, will give him a stone? Or if he asks for a fish, will he give him a serpent? If you then, being evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your Father who is in heaven give good things to those who ask Him!”**

God wants us to ask, to seek and as we do, we will find the answer that God has for us!

VERSES 16-18

Here we see the descendants of Jethro, the Kenites, Moses' father-in-law, and they were nomadic people.

And Judah is 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 the 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.

Please understand that it is not enough to just gain ground spiritually if we turn around and lose what we've gained.

G. K. Chesterton once said, ***“The only way to love anything is to realize it can be lost.”***

If something is important to us, we will fight for it.

And isn't what God has said in His Word, what He is showing us, important to us?

It should be!

May we not be Teflon Christians!

I know, you are thinking, "***What in the world is he talking about, Teflon Christians?***"

What I mean by Teflon Christians is that nothing sticks, like with Teflon!

God is teaching them, showing them and He blesses them, but they forget what God has done as soon as it occurs.

When God has opened your eyes to His Word, when you see the truth, when He is working on your heart, when He is speaking to you, don't forget it!

Remember it!

Nurture it!

Embrace it by faith!

Apply it to your life!

And never let it go!

Never let the Devil deceive you and steal it away!

The children of Israel did not listen and fully obey the Lord and we will see that as we finish up this chapter here in Judges!

VERSES 19-20

Judah had a successful military campaign and yet, it was incomplete.

They did not drive out the enemy, and it wasn't because of the chariots!

I know, you are thinking, *“Pastor Joe, it says that they could not drive out the inhabitants of the lowland because they had chariots of iron and now you are saying that was not the reason. Why is that?”*

I am not saying that the enemy didn't have these chariots, they did, and they were powerful war machines. But that was not the reason. The reason was they lacked the faith to walk, to take what God had already given to them!

You see, it didn't matter that the enemy had this powerful military equipment, these chariots because, like I have said, God had already told them that the enemy was defeated, but they did not walk by faith, they walked by sight, and they did not.

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!

Listen to what Spurgeon wrote of this, *“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.”*

May we trust in the promises of God and walk by faith!

We also see Caleb get Hebron, the area that was promised to him by Moses, and he does drive out the enemy.

How?

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

And this was not an easy area to capture.

We see this played out in Joshua 14:7-12, where Caleb is telling Joshua, **“I was forty years old when Moses the servant of the Lord sent me from Kadesh Barnea to spy out the land, and I brought back word to him as it was in my heart. Nevertheless my brethren who went up with me made the heart of the people melt, but I wholly followed the Lord my God. So Moses swore on that day, saying, ‘Surely the land where your foot has trodden shall be your inheritance and your children’s forever, because you have wholly followed the Lord my God.’ And now, behold, the Lord has kept me alive, as He said, these forty-five years, ever since the Lord spoke this word to Moses while Israel wandered in the wilderness; and now, here I am this day, eighty-five years old. As yet I am as strong this day as on the day that Moses sent me; just as my strength was then, so now is my strength for war, both for going out and for coming in. Now therefore, give me this mountain of which the Lord spoke in that day; for you heard in that day how the Anakim were there, and that the cities were great and fortified. It may be that the Lord will be with me, and I shall be able to drive them out as the Lord said.”**

Here is a guy that is eighty-five years old, and he wants a piece of land that was promised to him by Moses and there are giants in the land. Not only giants but the cities were great, they were fortified!

How could Caleb do something like that? Why not something easier?

Because he trusted in what God had promised and he then walked by faith!

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!

Spurgeon says this about Caleb. He wrote, *“Yet, as if to rebuke them, they had a singular incident set before them for the vindication of God’s power, and of that we read in the twentieth verse. Caleb, that grand old man, who still lived on, the sole survivor of all who came out of Egypt, had obtained Hebron as his portion, and he went up in his old age, when his bones were sore and set, and slew the three sons of Anak, even three mighty giants, and took possession of their city. In this way the Lord’s power was trusted and vindicated from the slur which Judah had brought upon it.”*

As we read on, we are going to see that the children of Israel did battle with the enemy, ***BUT . . . !***

And this is a big problem for them or will be a big problem for them as we will see.

VERSE 21

What did we read in Judges 1:2, **“And the Lord said, ‘Judah shall go up. Indeed I have delivered the land into his hand.’”**

And then in Judges 1:8 we see the results of what the Lord said to Judah, **“Now the children of Judah fought against Jerusalem and took it; they struck it with the edge of the sword and set the city on fire.”**

The Lord gave it to them, in fact the battle was already won, all they had to do was just enter in and it would be theirs.

But they did not do that. Well, they partially obeyed the Lord. You might call this an incomplete victory!

And they heard what the Lord had given them, and we see all that God had given them and then that nasty three letter word, ***“BUT!”***

And because of that, Jerusalem was not theirs yet!

And folks, think about this. ***“But”*** is just an excuse for compromise, for sin, for failure on our part of not walking.

Think about it.

“Everybody is doing it, so what is wrong with it!”

“Hey, I know that I am married, but God has brought this other woman into my life!”

“They gave me too much money back, it is not my problem, it is theirs!”

And we can go on with compromise but in the end, it will bring us into captivity!

Let’s get rid of it or say, ***“BUT GOD!”***

VERSES 22-26

In this tribe of Joseph were his two sons, Ephraim and Manasseh. So this story is about the combination of these two tribes and the battle that they encountered.

Now to understand this story, you have to know what these men were looking for, and it was not the main entrance to the city, which was easy to find.

The problem was, with the main gates of a city, is that these gates could be locked down.

But many of these cities would have a tunnel that would take you out of the city so you could get to a fresh water supply if they were under attack from an enemy.

Hezekiah had something similar, he built a tunnel that was dug through 1,700 feet of solid rock, to bring in a fresh water supply into the city, which is still in existence today.

So these spies were shown how to get into the city of Bethel, and they destroyed the city.

Now please understand that it was not their military strategy that brought them this victory, it was the Lord, and it is always the Lord folk's!

He gets the glory, and we are just the instruments that He uses to work through!

And that is what we see here as the tribes of Ephraim and Manasseh take the city of Bethel!

VERSES 27-29

At first these pockets of resistance may have been no problem, but as the enemy was left in the land they grew and eventually became a problem.

To deal with this they put these Canaanites under tribute to work for them, but again, that eventually brought the children of Israel down because the worship of those false gods entered into the nation of Israel!

And the same things happen in our own lives. Instead of driving out the enemy completely we try to co-exist with them or make a profit off of them.

Morgan gives us this insight as he wrote, ***“The story as here given reveals that whereas the work began in earnest, it gradually weakened. The Lord was with Judah and victories resulted. The Lord was with Joseph and Beth-el was taken. Manasseh and Ephraim and all the rest weakened in the work and Canaanites were left in possession.”***

How often do we start a work and then fade away and the work is not done!

In the church today we see all kinds of compromises, allowing the enemy to become part of the church.

What do I mean by that?

In the church today we see bingo nights, casino nights, drinking, secular music for worship and-so-on.

We are to drive out the enemy, not make a profit off of them. And it doesn't matter how good it sounds or how much you will make and use these funds for a good cause.

In Chicago they were using the Lotto, gambling, to help our school systems. What is next, prostitution?

We are not to go into business with the enemy or make a profit off of the enemy. It is totally wrong!

What we are basically saying is that if we can't beat sin, at least let us make a profit off of it.

Wrong!

Do not try to rationalize away what God has told you to do!

As Proverbs 10:2 says, "**Treasures of wickedness profit nothing, but righteousness delivers from death.**"

Some bring false doctrine into the church and the church embraces this so they won't make enemies with people. Sorry, you can't make friends with the enemy. Forget about that!

Folk's, God is not broke, and He will meet our needs, we don't have to help Him out and compromise our faith!

NEVER MAKE A PEACE TREATY WITH SIN!

VERSES 30-36

As we are reading through this, keep in mind that each tribe had its own responsibility and its own battles to fight.

And they failed in completing the work that God had called them to do.

Not just once, but over and over we read of their incomplete failure to drive out the enemy!

Why do you think God tells us of these failures over and over again?

Do you think God is trying to make a point here?

Of course He is. He wants our complete obedience - not to go halfway and stop. Not to dwell with the enemy - for how can light and darkness dwell together. And what ends up happening is that your light grows dimmer and dimmer till you become like the darkness that is around you.

And notice what happens to the tribe of Dan.

The enemy pushes them all the way to the north. This was the result of not completely destroying the enemy – don't live in defeat instead of the victory that God has given us in Christ.

Now here's the thing as we begin to wrap up our study tonight. The Israelites did not say,

“We are going to forsake the Lord!”

No, they did not do that, at least not yet.

What they did do is they decided that they would be satisfied with far less than God had for them.

Look at what God is showing us, that not one of the 12 tribes drove out the enemy completely, and thus, we are told of what they didn't do,

Nor did Ephraim drive out the Canaanites.

Nor did Zebulun drive out the inhabitants of Kitron.

Nor did Asher drive out the inhabitants of Acco.

Nor did Naphtali drive out the inhabitants of Beth Shemesh.

Nor did Dan drive out the Amorites in Mount Heres, Aijalon, Shaalbim.

And because of that they found themselves in trouble and they did not attain what God desired of them!

The same is true for us as Christians.

We might not say, ***“I am going to forsake the Lord!”***

But are we satisfied with where we are?

Are we satisfied with less instead of taking all that God has for us?

And again, there is danger in that. God truly has so much for us and many times I think we become satisfied with less.

Don't do that but seek the Lord, walk as He leads and see the salvation that He will bring to your life and to the situations that you face.

Paul reminds us in Philippians 4:13, **“I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me.”**

Do you believe that?

You need to! It is a promise from God and **“all things”** means just that!

May we not compromise our faith but drive out the enemies of our lives and see what God can do in us and through us as we allow Him to work, and we walk by faith!

As I close our study this evening, listen to how one writer summed this up for us with this perspective. He wrote,

There is a dangerous and seductive form of pacifism in the Christian life, which ignores the reality of the spiritual battle so clearly described in *Ephesians 6:10-20* and referred to by analogy in the Book of Judges.

This pacifist attitude will happily make a peace with the devil that basically says, ***“I will not harm your interests if you leave me mostly alone.”***

This attitude of spiritual surrender is unacceptable for the Christian.

Leon Trotsky, the infamous Communist leader said at least one correct thing: ***“You may not be interested in war, but war is interested in you.”*** To take an attitude of spiritual surrender is to willingly ***lose*** that war.

At this period of time, the tribes of Israel at their best experienced incomplete victory; at their worst they simply surrendered to and accommodated the enemy.

This makes us value the complete and glorious victory of Jesus Christ on our behalf all the more.

There was ***nothing*** left incomplete in the victory He won for us on the cross and through the resurrection.

- David Guzik, Judges 1

And the question I will leave with you is this. ***“Are you appropriating all that God has for you into your life, walking by faith and not by sight, trusting in the promises of God?”***