

Judges 01 - Incomplete Conquest; War for Jerusalem; The Failure of Many Tribes

I. Israel deteriorates due to her failure to drive out the Canaanites (Judges 1:1—3:6)

(1) Political failure (1:1-36)

(A) Judah (1:1-20)

(B) Benjamin (1:21)

(C) Joseph (1:22-29)

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Judges 1

I. Israel deteriorates due to her failure to drive out the Canaanites (Judges 1:1—3:6)

(1) Political failure (1:1-36)

(A) Judah (1:1-20)

1 Now it came about after the death of Joshua that the sons of Israel **inquired of the LORD**, saying, "Who shall go up first for us against the Canaanites, to fight against them?"

1 Now it came about after the death of Joshua that the sons of Israel inquired of the LORD, saying, "Who shall go up first for us against the Canaanites, to fight against them?"

1 Sometime after Joshua had died, the Israelis asked the LORD, "Who is to lead us against the Canaanites in our opening attack against them?"

1 Now after the death of Joshua it came to pass, that the children of Israel asked the LORD, saying, Who shall go up for us against the Canaanites first, to fight against them?

- The death of Joshua is mentioned again in 2:6-9, so the events of 1:1-2:5 may have taken place during Joshua's lifetime

— This verifies that what Joshua says, that the conquest and occupation of the Land was incomplete

— This provides a background for the rest of the Book of Judges, after Joshua's death

- Joshua began the conquest of the Land and assigned tribal territories; now it was the job of each tribe to finish the conquest of the land assigned to them, and settle (possess) it

- "...inquired of the LORD" - probably with Urim and Thummim

— Now that the tabernacle was permanently erected in Shiloh, there was a place to have inquiry

2 The LORD said, "Judah shall go up; behold, I have handed the land over to him."

2 The LORD said, "Judah shall go up; behold, I have given the land into his hand."

2 The LORD replied, "The tribe of Judah is to lead you. Look! I've given the land into their control."

2 And the LORD said, Judah shall go up: behold, I have delivered the land into his hand.

- Initially the people of Israel wisely sought God's guidance and asked which tribe was to engage the enemy first

— Judah was not only to conquer the territory assigned to them, but they were to conquer the whole Land on behalf of the other tribes

— This was why Judah took Jerusalem, a city that belonged to the Tribe of Benjamin, but Benjamin was unable to hang on to it

— Perhaps Judah was to go first as it was appointed to be the champion of his brothers (Gen 49:8-12)

3 Then Judah said to his brother Simeon, "Go up with me into the territory allotted me, and let's fight the Canaanites; and I in turn will go with you into the territory allotted you." So Simeon went with him.

3 Then Judah said to Simeon his brother, "Come up with me into the territory allotted me, that we may fight against the Canaanites; and I in turn will go with you into the territory allotted you." So Simeon went with him.

3 But the tribe of Judah told the tribe of Simeon, the descendants of Judah's brother, "Come with us into our territory, and we'll both fight the Canaanites. In return, we'll go with you when you fight in your territory." So the army of the tribe of Simeon accompanied the army of the tribe of Judah.

3 And Judah said unto Simeon his brother, Come up with me into my lot, that we may fight against the Canaanites; and I likewise will go with thee into thy lot. So Simeon went with him.

- A promise of mutual assistance...

- Judah and Simeon were blood brothers since Leah had given birth to both of them (Gen 35:23)

— The tribe of Simeon actually had its inheritance within the tribe of Judah (Joshua 19:1)

4 **Judah went up**, and **the LORD handed over** to them the Canaanites and the Perizzites, and they defeated ten thousand men at Bezek.

4 Judah went up, and the LORD gave the Canaanites and the Perizzites into their hands, and they defeated ten thousand men at Bezek.

4 When the army of the tribe of Judah went into battle, the LORD gave the Canaanites and the Perizzites into their control, and they defeated 10,000 men at Bezek.

4 And Judah went up; and the LORD delivered the Canaanites and the Perizzites into their hand: and they slew of them in Bezek ten thousand men.

- "Judah went up" - Judah's role: obey God and initiate the military campaign

- "...the LORD handed over" - God's role; Judah's doing their role in turn caused God to fulfill His role

5 They found Adoni-bezek in Bezek and fought against him, and they defeated the Canaanites and the Perizzites.

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5 They located Adoni-bezek in Bezek, fought him, and defeated the Canaanites and the Perizzites.

5 And they found Adonibezek in Bezek: and they fought against him, and they slew the Canaanites and the Perizzites.

6 But Adoni-bezek fled; and they pursued him and caught him, and cut off his thumbs and big toes.

6 But Adoni-bezek fled; and they pursued him and caught him and cut off his thumbs and big toes.

6 Adoni-bezek ran off, but they pursued him, caught him, and amputated his thumbs and big toes.

6 But Adonibezek fled; and they pursued after him, and caught him, and cut off his thumbs and his great toes.

- The idea was that without thumbs he couldn't wield a weapon; without toes, his stance was unsure. Being unfit for battle, he was also deemed unfit to lead or rule.

7 And Adoni-bezek said, "Seventy kings with their thumbs and their big toes cut off used to gather up *scraps* under my table; **as I have done, so God has repaid me.**" So **they brought him to Jerusalem**, and he died there.

7 Adoni-bezek said, "Seventy kings with their thumbs and their big toes cut off used to gather up *scraps* under my table; as I have done, so God has repaid me." So they brought him to Jerusalem and he died there.

7 Adoni-bezek used to brag, "Seventy kings without thumbs and big toes used to eat what was left under my table. God has repaid me for what I've done." They brought him to Jerusalem, and he later died there.

7 And Adonibezek said, Threescore and ten kings, having their thumbs and their great toes cut off, gathered their meat under my table: as I have done, so God hath requited me. And they brought him to Jerusalem, and there he died.

- Adoni-Bezek recognized God's justice; he was "de-feeted"

- "...as I have done, so God has repaid me" - this was retribution for his previous wrongs

- For other examples of disablement, see:

— Samson's blindness (Judges 16:21)

— Nahash's condition for a covenant with the men of Jabesh (at Bezek) (1 Sam 11:2)

— Zedekiah's blindness (2 Kings 25:7)

- These 70 kings illustrate the sad plight of anybody who has given in to the enemy:

— They couldn't walk or run correctly

— They couldn't use the sword effectively

— They were in the place of humiliation instead of on the throne

— They were living on scraps and leftovers instead of feasting at the table

- "...they brought him to Jerusalem" - this violated God's command (Deut 7:1-2; 20:16-17)

8 Then the sons of Judah fought against Jerusalem and captured it, and struck it with the edge of the sword, and set the city on fire.

8 Then the sons of Judah fought against Jerusalem and captured it and struck it with the edge of the sword and set the city on fire.

8 Then the army of Judah attacked Jerusalem, captured it, executed its inhabitants, and set fire to the city.

8 Now the children of Judah had fought against Jerusalem, and had taken it, and smitten it with the edge of the sword, and set the city on fire.

- Jerusalem was their next trophy but although they conquered it, they didn't occupy it (Cf. v21; 19:11-12, where it was considered a foreign city)

— In Joshua 10, Joshua killed the king of Jerusalem, but he did not capture the city

— Judah who took the city, but since Jerusalem was in Benjamin territory, they did not settle there. However, Benjamin failed to settle there; and the Jebusites came back and rebuilt Jerusalem (Cf. v21). It remained Jebusite until the days of David.

— That wasn't captured until the time of David (2 Sam 5:7) when it became "the city of David" and the national capital (something that Zech 12:2-3 predicts will be a primary challenge in the last days)

9 Afterward, the sons of Judah went down to fight against the Canaanites living in the hill country, and in the Negev, and in the lowland.

9 Afterward the sons of Judah went down to fight against the Canaanites living in the hill country and in the Negev and in the lowland.

9 Later, the army of Judah left Jerusalem to attack the Canaanites who lived in the hill country, the Negev, and the Shephelah.

9 And afterward the children of Judah went down to fight against the Canaanites, that dwelt in the mountain, and in the south, and in the valley.

- Three basic regions that Judah conquered: hill country of Judah (in the north), the Negev, and the Shephelah (in the west)

10 So Judah went against the Canaanites who lived in Hebron (the name of Hebron was previously Kiriath-arba); and they struck Sheshai, Ahiman, and Talmai.

10 So Judah went against the Canaanites who lived in Hebron (now the name of Hebron formerly was Kiriath-arba); and they struck Sheshai and Ahiman and Talmai.

10 They attacked the Canaanites who inhabited Hebron (formerly known as Kiriath-arba) and fought Sheshai, Ahiman, and Talmai.

10 And Judah went against the Canaanites that dwelt in Hebron: (now the name of Hebron before was Kirjath-arba) and they slew Sheshai, and Ahiman, and Talmai.

- Arba was the father of the giant Anak, the father of the Sheshai, Ahiman, and Talmai

— The descendants of Anak (the Anakim) were the *Nephilim* who had frightened 10 of the 12 spies who first explored the land (Num 13:22,28,33)

- Joshua had promised Hebron to Caleb because of his faithfulness to the Lord at Kadesh-Barnea (Num 13-14; Joshua 14:6-15; Deut 1:34-36), but his descendants didn't follow through (Joshua 15:13-14)

— Hebron is still a fortress of Israel's enemies today (in the West Bank)

— However, faith must have run in Caleb's family, because the city of Debir was taken by Othniel, Caleb's nephew (Judges 3:9; Joshua 15:17)

11 Then from there he went against the inhabitants of **Debir** (the name of Debir was previously Kiriath-sepher).

11 Then from there he went against the inhabitants of Debir (now the name of Debir formerly was Kiriath-sepher).

11 The army of Judah then proceeded to attack the inhabitants of Debir, which used to be known as Kiriath-sepher.

11 And from thence he went against the inhabitants of Debir: and the name of Debir before was Kirjathsepher:

- "...Debir" - means "City of Books"

12 And Caleb said, "Whoever attacks Kiriath-sepher and captures it, I will give him my daughter Achsah as a wife."

12 And Caleb said, "The one who attacks Kiriath-sepher and captures it, I will even give him my daughter Achsah for a wife."

12 Caleb announced, "I'll give my daughter Achsah in marriage to whomever leads the attack against Kiriath-sepher and captures it."

12 And Caleb said, He that smiteth Kirjathsepher, and taketh it, to him will I give Achsah my daughter to wife.

- Caleb took the city of Hebron directly, but chose a different strategy with Debir

13 Now Othniel the son of Kenaz, Caleb's younger brother, captured it; so he gave him his daughter Achsah as a wife.

13 Othniel the son of Kenaz, Caleb's younger brother, captured it; so he gave him his daughter Achsah for a wife.

13 Othniel, Caleb's nephew through his younger brother Kenaz, captured the city, so Caleb awarded him his daughter Achsah in marriage.

13 And Othniel the son of Kenaz, Caleb's younger brother, took it: and he gave him Achsah his daughter to wife.

14 Then it happened that when **she came to him**, she incited him to ask her father for a field. Then *later*, she dismounted from her donkey, and Caleb said to her, "What do you want?"

14 Then it came about when she came *to him*, that she persuaded him to ask her father for a field. Then she alighted from her donkey, and Caleb said to her, "What do you want?"

14 Later on, after she had arrived, she urged Othniel to ask her father for a field. As she got off her donkey, Caleb asked her, "What do you want for yourself?"

14 And it came to pass, when she came to him, that she moved him to ask of her father a field: and she lighted from off her ass; and Caleb said unto her, What wilt thou?

- "...she came *to him*" - at the time of their marriage

15 She said to him, "Give me a blessing: since you have given me the land of the Negev, give me springs of water also." So Caleb gave her the upper springs and the lower springs.

15 She said to him, "Give me a blessing, since you have given me the land of the Negev, give me also springs of water." So Caleb gave her the upper springs and the lower springs.

15 "I want this blessing from you," she replied. "Since you've given me land in the Negev, give me water springs, too." So Caleb gave her both the upper and lower springs.

15 And she said unto him, Give me a blessing: for thou hast given me a south land; give me also springs of water. And Caleb gave her the upper springs and the nether springs.

- For an unknown reason, Othniel did not follow through with Caleb on the request, so Achsah made the request directly to her father

— She does not mean that the City of Debir was in the Negev (it's in the Hill-Country of Judah, directly south of Hebron). What she meant was that the land had Negev-type qualities in that the soil was good, but it lacked water.

— She was not asking for more fertile land—the land itself could be fertile—but she needed the water necessary to make it fertile

16 Now the descendants of the Kenite, Moses' father-in-law, went up from the **city of palms** with the sons of Judah, to the wilderness of Judah which is in the south of Arad; and they went and lived with the people.

16 The descendants of the Kenite, Moses' father-in-law, went up from the city of palms with the sons of Judah, to the wilderness of Judah which is in the south of Arad; and they went and lived with the people.

16 The descendants of the Kenites, the tribe from which Moses' father-in-law came, accompanied the descendants of Judah from the city of the palms to the Judean wilderness, which is in the desert area south of Arad, and lived with the people there.

16 And the children of the Kenite, Moses' father in law, went up out of the city of palm trees with the children of Judah into the wilderness of Judah, which lieth in the south of Arad; and they went and dwelt among the people.

- These Kenites were descended from Moses' father-in-law and brother-in-law and were thus allies of Israel

— In Hebrew, the words "brother-in-law" and "father-in-law" use the same letters; this helps explain the problems connected with the names Reuel, Jethro, and Hobab (Ex 2:18; 3:1; Num 10:29; Judges 4:11)

— Some think that Moses' father-in-law had two names, Hobab and Jethro; and that Reuel was Jethro's father, or possibly some other distant relative

- "...city of palms" - Jericho, a deserted and condemned city (Joshua 6:26), so the Kenites moved to another part of the land under the protection of the tribe of Judah

— Currently Jericho (today called Bet-Yerah, "House of the Moon God") is adjacent to ancient Jericho, and is also a fortress of Israel's enemies today

17 Then Judah went with his brother Simeon, and they struck the Canaanites living in Zephath, and utterly destroyed it. So the name of the city was called **Hormah**.

17 Then Judah went with Simeon his brother, and they struck the Canaanites living in Zephath, and utterly destroyed it. So the name of the city was called Hormah.

17 The army of Judah accompanied the army of Simeon, Judah's brother, as they attacked the Canaanites who were living in Zephath, and they completely destroyed it. Then they renamed the city Hormah.

17 And Judah went with Simeon his brother, and they slew the Canaanites that inhabited Zephath, and utterly destroyed it. And the name of the city was called Hormah.

- Zephath (Hormah) was in the tribal territory of Judah that was settled by the tribe of Simeon

— This fulfills the promise of mutual assistance between the tribes (Cf. v3)

- "...Hormah" - "a city destined for destruction"

18 And Judah took Gaza with its territory, Ashkelon with its territory, and Ekron with its territory.

18 And Judah took Gaza with its territory and Ashkelon with its territory and Ekron with its territory.

18 The army of Judah captured Gaza and its territory, Ashkelon and its territory, and Ekron and its territory.

18 Also Judah took Gaza with the coast thereof, and Ashkelon with the coast thereof, and Ekron with the coast thereof.

- At the time, this area was inhabited by Canaanites; after the Philistine invasion, Israel would lose these territories

19 Now the LORD was with Judah, and they took possession of the hill country; but *they could* not drive out the inhabitants of the valley, because they had iron chariots.

19 Now the LORD was with Judah, and they took possession of the hill country; but they could not drive out the inhabitants of the valley because they had iron chariots.

19 The LORD was with the army of Judah, and they captured the hill country, but did not expel the inhabitants of the valley because they were equipped with iron chariots.

19 And the LORD was with Judah; and he drove out the inhabitants of the mountain; but could not drive out the inhabitants of the valley, because they had chariots of iron.

- There was initial success because of divine aid, but then came a point of failure: because of the iron chariots, Israel couldn't defeat them on level ground, but they did claim the hill country

— This shows that Judah had faith to fight the Canaanites in the locations where they had a military advantage (the hill country), but not when the advantage was on the side of the enemy (flat land)

— The Philistines' sea-based trade gave them a local monopoly in the use of iron weapons, which they used to their advantage against Israel (1 Sam 13:19-21)

— Israel eventually gained access to carburized iron (steel) under Samuel, Saul, and David, who was ultimately successful in subduing the Philistines

20 Then they gave Hebron to Caleb, as Moses had promised; and he drove out from there the three sons of Anak.

20 Then they gave Hebron to Caleb, as Moses had promised; and he drove out from there the three sons of Anak.

20 They gave Hebron to Caleb, just as Moses had promised, and he drove out the three sons of Anak from there.

20 And they gave Hebron unto Caleb, as Moses said: and he expelled thence the three sons of Anak.

- The three sons previously named in 1:10

(B) Benjamin (1:21)

21 But the sons of Benjamin did not drive out the Jebusites who lived in Jerusalem; so the Jebusites have lived with the sons of Benjamin in Jerusalem to this day.

21 But the sons of Benjamin did not drive out the Jebusites who lived in Jerusalem; so the Jebusites have lived with the sons of Benjamin in Jerusalem to this day.

21 However, the descendants of Benjamin did not expel the Jebusites who lived in Jerusalem, so the Jebusites have lived with the descendants of Benjamin in Jerusalem to this day.

21 And the children of Benjamin did not drive out the Jebusites that inhabited Jerusalem; but the Jebusites dwell with the children of Benjamin in Jerusalem unto this day.

- An example of "Sparing the Enemy"—Stage 2 of Israel's decline and fall (see introductory notes)

- In v8, Judah captured Jerusalem for Benjamin, but Benjamin failed to settle it or keep the Jebusites from returning

— This cohabitation between Benjaminites and Canaanites influenced Benjamin both morally and religiously, thus setting the stage for the role of the tribe of Benjamin in Judges 19-21

(C) Joseph (1:22-29)

22 Likewise the house of Joseph went up against Bethel, and the LORD was with them.

22 Likewise the house of Joseph went up against Bethel, and the LORD was with them.

22 Then the army of the tribe of Joseph attacked Bethel, and the LORD was with them.

22 And the house of Joseph, they also went up against Bethel: and the LORD was with them.

- Ephraim and the western half-tribe of Manasseh joined together and took Bethel, which was important to them because of its connection with the patriarchs (Gen 12:8; 13:3; 28:10-12; 35:1-7)

— Bethel was given to Benjamin (Joshua 18:22); it was situated on the southern border of Ephraim

— Ephraim could not tolerate the Canaanites just across the border, especially considering that they had to defend their own territory against the Canaanites

— So, just as Judah took Jerusalem for Benjamin, Ephraim took Bethel for Benjamin

— This again shows Benjamin's failure to do what other tribes succeeded in doing

23 The house of Joseph had *men* spy out Bethel (the name of the city previously was Luz).

23 The house of Joseph spied out Bethel (now the name of the city was formerly Luz).

23 The army of the tribe of Joseph scouted out Bethel, which had been formerly named Luz.

23 And the house of Joseph sent to descry Bethel. (Now the name of the city before was Luz.)

24 And the spies saw a man coming out of the city, and they said to him, "Please show us the entrance to the city, and we will treat you kindly."

24 The spies saw a man coming out of the city and they said to him, "Please show us the entrance to the city and we will treat you kindly."

24 The scouts observed a man coming out of the city and they promised him, "Please show us the entrance to the city and we'll deal kindly with you."

24 And the spies saw a man come forth out of the city, and they said unto him, Shew us, we pray thee, the entrance into the city, and we will shew thee mercy.

- He apparently came out of a secret entrance, which the scouts could not see

25 So he showed them the entrance to the city, and they struck the city with the edge of the sword, but they let the man and all his family go free.

25 So he showed them the entrance to the city, and they struck the city with the edge of the sword, but they let the man and all his family go free.

25 So he showed them the entrance to the city, and they attacked the city with swords, but they let the man and his entire family escape.

25 And when he shewed them the entrance into the city, they smote the city with the edge of the sword; but they let go the man and all his family.

- As a result of the information provided by the local informant, the tribe of Joseph

- Reminiscent of the episode with Rahab at Jericho (Joshua 2; 6)

26 Then the man went to the land of the Hittites and built a city, and named it Luz, which is its name to this day.

26 The man went into the land of the Hittites and built a city and named it Luz which is its name to this day.

26 So the man traveled to the land of the Hittites and built a city that he named "Luz," and it is called by that name to this day.

26 And the man went into the land of the Hittites, and built a city, and called the name thereof Luz: which is the name thereof unto this day.

- A Canaanite escapes death by helping the Israelites, similar to Rahab

— However, Rahab had already become a believer in the God of Israel, but there is no indication that this man became a believer

27 But Manasseh did not take possession of Beth-shean and its villages, or Taanach and its villages, or the inhabitants of Dor and its villages, or the inhabitants of Ibleam and its villages, or the inhabitants of Megiddo and its villages; so the Canaanites persisted in living in this land.

27 But Manasseh did not take possession of Beth-shean and its villages, or Taanach and its villages, or the inhabitants of Dor and its villages, or the inhabitants of Ibleam and its villages, or the inhabitants of Megiddo and its villages; so the Canaanites persisted in living in that land.

27 The army of the tribe of Manasseh did not conquer Beth-shean and its villages, Taanach and its villages, the inhabitants of Dor and its villages, the inhabitants of Ibleam and its villages, and the inhabitants of Megiddo and its villages. Instead, the Canaanites continued to live in that land.

27 Neither did Manasseh drive out the inhabitants of Bethshean and her towns, nor Taanach and her towns, nor the inhabitants of Dor and her towns, nor the inhabitants of Ibleam and her towns, nor the inhabitants of Megiddo and her towns: but the Canaanites would dwell in that land.

- The half tribe of Manasseh (west of the Jordan) failed to drive out or destroy the Canaanites

— This meant that the fertile Jezreel Valley stayed in Canaanite hands

28 And it came about, when Israel became strong, that they put the Canaanites to forced labor; but they **did not drive them out completely**.

28 It came about when Israel became strong, that they put the Canaanites to forced labor, but they did not drive them out completely.

28 When Israel had grown strong, they subjected the Canaanites to conscripted labor and never did expel them completely.

28 And it came to pass, when Israel was strong, that they put the Canaanites to tribute, and did not utterly drive them out.

- "...did not drive them out completely" - the Hebrew is more intensive: "...and drive them out, they surely did not drive them out"

— Instead of driving them out or destroying them, according to God's command, they conscripted them to do taskwork

— This is the key problem that sets the stage for the whole book

29 And Ephraim did not drive out the Canaanites who were living in Gezer; so the Canaanites lived in Gezer among them.

29 Ephraim did not drive out the Canaanites who were living in Gezer; so the Canaanites lived in Gezer among them.

29 The army of the tribe of Ephraim did not expel the Canaanites who were living in Gezer, so the Canaanites lived in Gezer among them.

29 Neither did Ephraim drive out the Canaanites that dwelt in Gezer; but the Canaanites dwelt in Gezer among them.

- This same failure to drive out and destroy the Canaanites was noted back in Joshua 16:10

- This verse shows that the Book of Judges was written before Solomon, when this statement was no longer true

(D) Zebulun (1:30)

30 Zebulun did not drive out the inhabitants of Kitron, or the inhabitants of Nahalol; so the Canaanites lived among them and became subject to forced labor.

30 Zebulun did not drive out the inhabitants of Kitron, or the inhabitants of Nahalol; so the Canaanites lived among them and became subject to forced labor.

30 The army of the tribe of Zebulun did not expel the inhabitants of Kitron or the inhabitants of Nahalol, so the Canaanites lived among them, but were subjected to conscripted labor.

30 Neither did Zebulun drive out the inhabitants of Kitron, nor the inhabitants of Nahalol; but the Canaanites dwelt among them, and became tributaries.

- Like Manasseh and others, Zebulun failed to drive out and destroy the Canaanites from their land

— They kept them around as conscripted laborers

(E) Asher (1:31-32)

31 Asher did not drive out the inhabitants of Acco, or the inhabitants of Sidon, or of Ahlab, or of Achzib, Helbah, Aphik, or of Rehob.

31 Asher did not drive out the inhabitants of Acco, or the inhabitants of Sidon, or of Ahlab, or of Achzib, or of Helbah, or of Aphik, or of Rehob.

31 The army of the tribe of Asher did not expel the inhabitants of Acco nor the inhabitants of Sidon, Ahlab, Achzib, Helbah, Aphik, or Rehob.

31 Neither did Asher drive out the inhabitants of Accho, nor the inhabitants of Zidon, nor of Ahlab, nor of Achzib, nor of Helbah, nor of Aphik, nor of Rehob:

32 So the Asherites lived among the Canaanites, the inhabitants of the land; for they did not drive them out.

32 So the Asherites lived among the Canaanites, the inhabitants of the land; for they did not drive them out.

32 So the descendants of Asher lived among the Canaanites who continued to inhabit the land, because they did not expel them.

32 But the Asherites dwelt among the Canaanites, the inhabitants of the land: for they did not drive them out.

- The wording here differs from v29-30, which stated that the Canaanites lived among the Israelites

— Here, it is the Asherites who lived among the Canaanites, which indicates the Canaanites had the upper hand. This is why “subjected to conscripted labor” is omitted from this verse.

(F) Naphtali (1:33)

33 Naphtali did not drive out the inhabitants of Beth-shemesh, or the inhabitants of Beth-anath, but lived among the Canaanites, the inhabitants of the land; and the inhabitants of Beth-shemesh and Beth-anath became forced labor for them.

33 Naphtali did not drive out the inhabitants of Beth-shemesh, or the inhabitants of Beth-anath, but lived among the Canaanites, the inhabitants of the land; and the inhabitants of Beth-shemesh and Beth-anath became forced labor for them.

33 The army of the tribe of Naphtali did not expel the inhabitants of Beth-shemesh and the inhabitants of Beth-anath. Instead, they lived among the Canaanites who inhabited the land. However, the inhabitants of Beth-shemesh and Beth-anath were subjected to conscripted labor.

33 Neither did Naphtali drive out the inhabitants of Bethshemesh, nor the inhabitants of Bethanath; but he dwelt among the Canaanites, the inhabitants of the land: nevertheless the inhabitants of Bethshemesh and of Bethanath became tributaries unto them.

- This verse shows that what was true about Asher was also true of Naphtali: the Canaanites had the upper hand, although (“nevertheless”) things eventually did go the opposite way

(G) Dan (1:34-36)

34 Then the Amorites forced the sons of Dan into the hill country, for they did not allow them to come down to the valley;

34 Then the Amorites forced the sons of Dan into the hill country, for they did not allow them to come down to the valley;

34 Later on, the Amorites forced the descendants of Dan into the hill country and did not permit them to come into the valleys of the hills.

34 And the Amorites forced the children of Dan into the mountain: for they would not suffer them to come down to the valley:

- Dan failed to conquer the fertile valleys. This sets the stage for the move of Dan to the far north later in Judges.

35 yet the Amorites persisted in living on Mount Heres, in Aijalon and Shaalbim; but when the power of the house of Joseph grew strong, they became forced labor.

35 yet the Amorites persisted in living in Mount Heres, in Aijalon and in Shaalbim; but when the power of the house of Joseph grew strong, they became forced labor.

35 Furthermore, the Amorites continued to inhabit Mount Heres in Aijalon and Shaalbim. Eventually, however, after the tribe of Joseph had become strong, the Amorites were subjected to conscripted labor.

35 But the Amorites would dwell in mount Heres in Aijalon, and in Shaalbim: yet the hand of the house of Joseph prevailed, so that they became tributaries.

- As a result of Joseph prevailing over the Canaanites, much of the land originally allotted to Dan was taken over by Ephraim after Dan left the territory

36 The border of the Amorites ran from the ascent of Akrabbim, from Sela and upward.

36 The border of the Amorites ran from the ascent of Akrabbim, from Sela and upward.

36 The Amorite border extended upward from the Akrabbim Ascent, that is, from Sela.

36 And the coast of the Amorites was from the going up to Akrabbim, from the rock, and upward.

- This series of tribal defeats was the first indication that Israel was no longer walking by faith and trusting God to give them victory

— The tribes of Benjamin, Ephraim, Manasseh, Zebulun, Asher, Naphtali, and Dan all failed to overcome the enemy and allowed these godless nations to continue living in their tribal territories

— The enemy even forced the tribe of Dan out of the plains into the mountains

— The Jebusites remained in Jerusalem (v21) and the Canaanites who remained were finally pressed into forced labor when the Jews became stronger (v28, NIV)

- Eventually Solomon conscripted these Canaanite peoples to build the Temple (1 Kings 9:20-22; 2 Chr 8:7-8) but this was no compensation for the problems the Canaanites caused the Jews

Summary: Judges 1

Judges 1 can be summarized in four points concerning the practical outcomes of Israel's failure to secure the Land:

- (1) The Canaanites firmly remained in the Land because Israel could not drive them out; and as a result, Israel moved from attempting conquest and destruction of the Canaanites to co-existing with them.

(2) Because of Canaanite strongholds throughout the Land of Israel, Israel could not move freely.

(3) Canaanite idolatry remained intact, which would serve to tempt Israel into apostasy.

(4) Instead of rejecting and removing the Canaanites from the Land, Israel began to develop relationships with them.

Divine Reasons for Israel's Failure

Originally God allowed some of the Canaanite tribes, as city-states, to escape the conquest, in order that the Land in those parts would not suddenly be left unattended and become desolate, as Israel was to drive the enemy out only little by little (Deut 7:20-24). The presence of the enemy was a daily test for Israel as to whether they would obey the commands of the Lord to drive them out and have nothing to do with them and their gods, or whether they would choose the way of least resistance and yield to the temptation of intermarriage and syncretism (Judges 2:21-23; 3:4). Every time Israel disobeyed concerning these nations, God used those same nations to punish and plunder Israel.

Neglecting the Word of God

The priests were commanded to read the Book of Deuteronomy publicly to the nation every Sabbatical Year during the Feast of Tabernacles (Deut 31:9-13). Had they been faithful to their job, the spiritual leaders would have read Deut 7 and warned the Israelites not to spare their pagan neighbors. They would have reminded the people that God promised that He would help them defeat their enemies (Deut 31:1-8). It was by receiving and obeying the Book of the Law that Joshua had grown in faith and courage (Joshua 1:1-9; Rom 10:17). That same Word would have enabled the succeeding generation to overcome their enemies and claim their inheritance. The same steps toward defeat and slavery are being taken by the church today.

2 Tim 4:3-4:

3 For *the* time will come when they will not tolerate sound doctrine; but *wanting* to have their ears tickled, they will accumulate for themselves teachers in accordance with their own desires,

4 and they will turn their ears away from the truth and will turn aside to myths.

- Too many believers today are relying on religious "fast food" being dispensed for easy consumption by entertaining teachers who give people what they want rather than what they need. Is it any wonder that few are experiencing God's power in their lives?

Canaanite Genocide: Sparing the Enemy

Wasn't it cruel and unjust of God to command Israel to exterminate the nations of Canaan? Not so! God had been patient for centuries, withholding His judgment (Gen 15:16; 2 Peter 3:9). Their society—especially their religion—was unspeakably wicked (Rom 1:18ff). It should have been wiped out years before Israel appeared on the scene.

[On America:]

I tremble for my country when I reflect that God is just and that His justice will not sleep forever. — Thomas Jefferson

The Canaanite nations had also been warned by the judgments God had inflicted on others, especially on Egypt and the nations east of the Jordan (Amorite kings Sihon and Og, Joshua 2:8-13). Rahab and her family had sufficient information to be able to repent and believe and God saved them (Joshua 2; 6:22-25). We have every right to conclude that God would have saved anybody who had turned to Him. The King of Nineveh repented "on the speculation" that God might spare them from the 40-day deadline Jonah was called to declare (Jonah 3:4-10). God did not want the filth of Canaanite society and religion to contaminate His people Israel. They were His special people, chosen to fulfill His purposes in this world. They had to be separated from all other nations to bring the world the Scriptures and the Savior.

God is perpetually at war with sin. That is the whole explanation of the extermination of the Canaanites. — G. Campbell Morgan