

## Bibles???

### The Word of God is the Absolute Truth and the Final Authority

Turn your bibles with me to the Book of Judges

The theme of the book –

I would point to a verse we are going to find 3 times in our study through Judges.

**[Jdg 17:6 NKJV] 6 In those days [there was] no king in Israel; everyone did [what was] right in his own eyes.**

(18:1,19:1)

The period of the Judges began with the death of Joshua & ended with the coronation of Saul – so a span of about 300 years; 1350-1050 B.C.

Who are the judges????

First of all,

When we use the word “judge” we tend to think of some man or woman sitting behind a high desk with a gavel in his hand, adjudicating the law.

That’s not the idea here.

The Hebrew word is shaphat /shaw-fat – & refers to anyone who rules by not only passing sentence, but carrying it out, personally.

So the Judges were people who brought deliverance to Israel by leading them against their enemies, then, once deliverance was accomplished, they settled in to rule.

So over the past few weeks, I have told you to go ahead and read the book of Judges and when we study it we are going to find these individuals who God used to deliver His people – and I mentioned that many of them had flaws.

We might tend to think that God only uses “perfect” people, but the truth is, everyone God has ever used is flawed at some point.

However, there are a few other things that I want you to take note of.

We are going to see a lot of things that are going to make our skin crawl.

We are going to see God’s people doing the most horrible things.

However, we are also going to see God’s grace.

Let’s pray...

**[Jdg 1:1-36 NKJV] 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?"**

The Book of Joshua ends with the death of Joshua.

Joshua was the person that God used to lead the Children of Israel into the Promised Land after they had wandered the wilderness for 40 years.

Not only did Joshua lead them into the Promised Land, he also led them (guided by the Lord) in the conquest of the land.

And he laid out the boundaries for each of the tribes.

All the heavy fighting was already finished – the only thing that was left over was mop up duty.

The tribes simply had to go into the land that God had given to them and take possession of it.

So here at the beginning of the chapter, the Children of Israel are doing something good – they are seeking the LORD for guidance.

The idea was that they would help each other out until all the tribes had possessed their land.

By the way, this is a good example of the church –

We all have different roles and responsibilities – Paul writes in 1 Cor 12 that some of us within the body are eyes and some of us are hands – there are many members, yet one body.

**2 And the LORD said, "Judah shall go up. Indeed I have delivered the land into his hand." 3 So Judah said to Simeon his brother, "Come up with me to my**

**allotted territory, that we may fight against the Canaanites; and I will likewise go with you to your allotted territory." And Simeon went with him.**

So the Lord says – Judah, you are up first.

And Judah selects Simeon to come and help.

The tribe of Judah and Simeon were close.

You might remember that Judah and Simeon were sons of the same mother – Leah.

And also, Simeon's inheritance was left inside Judah's inheritance

**4 Then Judah went up, and the LORD delivered the Canaanites and the Perizzites into their hand; and they killed ten thousand men at Bezek. 5 And they found Adoni-Bezek in Bezek, and fought against him; and they defeated the Canaanites and the Perizzites. 6 Then Adoni-Bezek fled, and they pursued him and caught him and cut off his thumbs and big toes. 7 And Adoni-Bezek said, "Seventy kings with their thumbs and big toes cut off used to gather [scraps] under my table; as I have done, so God has repaid me." Then they brought him to Jerusalem, and there he died.**

So, Judah goes up and the Lord delivered all the ites – just like He said He would.

And when Judah and Simeon get to Bezek, they come across Adoni-Bezek.

The word Adoni – is the word for Lord, so not only was he the lord of Bezek – by the way, the word Bezek means, “lightning” so he was the lord of lightning. Thor?

However, we see that the lord of lightening was no match for the One True Lord who by the way, created lightening.

So when they capture him, they cut off his thumbs and big toes.

Meaning the lord of lightening was not able to defend himself (couldn't hold a sword) and he couldn't run away.

But notice that the reason that tribes did this to him was because he had a reputation of doing the same things to others.

And in verse 7, Adoni Bezek realizes that this was justice. He said, “God has repaid me.”

He was getting what he deserved

He was reaping what he sowed.

Jesus said we need to be careful how we treat other people.

He said that the way we treat others will determine how others treat us:

**(Matthew 7:1–2 NKJV) —1 “Judge not, that you be not judged. 2 For with what judgment you judge, you will be judged; and with the measure you use, it will be measured back to you.**

If we treat others harshly and unfairly, we shouldn't be surprised if someone comes around one day and treats us harshly and unfairly.

If we treat others with mercy and patience, we will find that for the most part, people will treat us the same way.

**8 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.**

Judah goes into Jerusalem and they drive everyone out –

**9 And afterward the children of Judah went down to fight against the Canaanites who dwelt in the mountains, in the South, and in the lowland. 10 Then Judah went against the Canaanites who dwelt in Hebron. (Now the name of Hebron [was] formerly Kirjath Arba.) And they killed Sheshai, Ahiman, and Talmi.**

So from Jerusalem, the tribe of Judah is not messing around and they go to Hebron.

Now, in Joshua 15, it tells us that Caleb is the one who defeated these individuals.

These three individuals were the sons of Anak – they were giants.

These were the giants that spies saw when they went into Canaan and 10 of the 12 gave a bad report that discouraged the Children of Israel from entering the Promised Land.

The only ones who gave a good report were Joshua and Caleb.

And because of Caleb's faithfulness (Joshua 14) he got to pick what piece of land he wanted and he picks the land with the giants.

Caleb had chosen the most challenging piece of real estate in all the land – Hebron.

It was the headquarters of the giants.

By the way, Caleb was in his 80's by this time.

Even as an old man, Caleb believed God would give him victory.

So he took his walking stick, led the attack on the city & prevailed.

**11 From there they went against the inhabitants of Debir. (The name of Debir [was] formerly Kirjath Sepher.) 12 Then Caleb said, "Whoever attacks Kirjath Sepher and takes it, to him I will give my daughter Achsah as wife." 13 And **Othniel** the son of Kenaz, Caleb's younger brother, took it; so he gave him his daughter Achsah as wife.**

So Caleb issues a challenge –

He knew that there was land to conquer – so he gives an incentive

Whoever attacks the next town and conquers it, they can marry my daughter.

Othniel, who by the way – is Caleb's nephew – he takes up the challenge and wins the girl.

We will see that God isn't finished with Othniel – we will see him in two weeks.

**14 Now it happened, when she came [to him], that she urged him to ask her father for a field. And she dismounted from [her] donkey, and Caleb said to her, "What do you wish?" 15 So she said to him, "Give me a blessing; since you have given me land in the South, give me also springs of water." And Caleb gave her the upper springs and the lower springs.**

There are two things that are going here.

The first thing is that Achsah convinces Othniel to ask Caleb for a blessing (vs 14)

However, also notice that Achsah wasn't satisfied with the blessing.

She wanted more.

So she asked for more and get this – she got more.

But I want you to focus on how she asked.

First of all, notice that Caleb asked first, "What do you wish?"

And church, our Heavenly Father is asking you and me this very question – waiting for us to reply.

He is ready to give us a blessing according to His will – if we simply ask.



What do you want my son, What do you want my daughter – what can I give to you?  
and if our hearts are filled with the will and wishes of God, it will flow right out of us.

Give me a blessing -

There is nothing wrong with praying for a blessing – as long as we are not doing it in a selfish way.

There is a big difference between “Bless me with a sportscar”

and

“Bless me so that I may be a blessing to others”

**Achsah also asked with gratitude** - since you have given me land in the South, give me also springs of water.

When we ask God for a new blessing, do we thank Him for the blessings that He has already bestowed upon us?

Because that is what Achsah is doing here.

And notice, Caleb is not critical of her. He doesn't yell at her and call her greedy or ungrateful – he says, you came to me asking for springs of water, I am going to give you the upper springs as well as the lower springs.

Caleb rejoiced at the fact that she asked for big things from him.

And our Heavenly Father rejoices when we ask big things from Him.

When we come before Him in boldness and gratitude – just like Achsah did before Caleb.

**16 Now the children of the Kenite, Moses' father-in-law, went up from the City of Palms with the children of Judah into the Wilderness of Judah, which [lies] in the South [near] Arad; and they went and dwelt among the people. 17 And Judah went with his brother Simeon, and they attacked the Canaanites who inhabited Zephath, and utterly destroyed it. So the name of the city was called Hormah. 18 Also Judah took Gaza with its territory, Ashkelon with its territory, and Ekron with its territory.**

So we see continuing its conquest of its land.

The Children of the Kenite were the descendants of Jethro – Moses' father-in-law.

The settled in the area around where Jericho once stood – that is the City of Palms that is mentioned here.

**19 So the LORD was with Judah. And they drove out the mountaineers, but they could not drive out the inhabitants of the lowland, because they had chariots of iron.**

I first want you to notice that the Lord was with Judah.

They have great success in the hills that run north and south in the middle of the land, however, when they get to the lowlands – the area along coast.

They could not drive out the inhabitants there – because they had chariots of iron...

Apparently chariots of iron are God's kryptonite –

He has no problem using an 80 year old dude to beat up giants – but chariots of iron???

Did God have a problem with chariots of iron?

Was this too difficult for God?

Of course not –

You see, the Egyptians had chariots – Exodus 14 tells us that Pharaoh sends 600 choice chariots and all the other available chariots to go after the Children of Israel. (Exodus 14)

So why couldn't Judah drive out the inhabitants of the lowlands?

You see church -

**The problem doesn't lie in God's abilities.**

**The problem lies in man's ability to trust and obey.**

And I think one of the questions we need to ask ourselves this evening is – what are the chariots of iron in our lives.

Is it a sin we struggle with?

One that you haven't been able to overcome - gossip, anger, bitterness

Are we constantly worrying about everything???

Do we live in fear?

Those are all chariots of iron –

“I will never leave you nor forsake you.” (Heb 13:5)

The Lord was with Judah – and He is with us all today.

The question is – do we trust Him and are we willing to obey.

**20 And they gave Hebron to Caleb, as Moses had said. Then he expelled from there the three sons of Anak. 21 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.**

Judah conquered Jerusalem – however, the Jebusites moved in, and the tribe of Benjamin failed to drive them out.

And the Jebusites will inhabit Jerusalem until David drives them out 400 years later.

**22 And the house of Joseph also went up against Bethel, and the LORD [was] with them. 23 So the house of Joseph sent men to spy out Bethel. (The name of the city [was] formerly Luz.) 24 And when the spies saw a man coming out of the city, they said to him, "Please show us the entrance to the city, and we will show you mercy." 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. 26 And the man went to the land of the Hittites, built a city, and called its name Luz, which [is] its name to this day.**

The House of Joseph (Ephraim and Manasseh)

They go against Bethel –

They have an agreement with this man –

Very similar to when Joshua sends spies to Jericho and they show grace to Rahab the harlot.

He shows them the entrance to the city and they conquer the city and then they let the man and his family go and he builds a city somewhere else.

**27 However, Manasseh did not drive out [the inhabitants 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; for the **Canaanites were determined to dwell in that land.****

Here, we see that the tribe of Manasseh, they couldn't drive out the Canaanites in their cities.

And it says here that they were determined to dwell in the land.

Do you think that these Canaanites were more determined than the Canaanites that fought against Judah or those that fought against Caleb in Hebron???

Because when you are fighting for your life, you are pretty determined.

It's not like the other Canaanites didn't put up a fight.

So what made the difference here.

The difference here was in the determination of Manasseh.

The just didn't want to fight anymore.

And they didn't want to fight because they were content with what they had rather than what God wanted them to have.

Let me say that again - they were content with what they had rather than what God wanted them to have.

**28 And it came to pass, when Israel was strong, that they put the Canaanites under tribute, but did not completely drive them out.**

God's commands were crystal clear –

They were not allowed to make deals with the Canaanites.

They were to wipe out the Canaanites, erasing every last remnant of their occupation

And instead of wiping them out – Israel came up with the idea to simply tax them.

They could profit by having the Canaanites around.

It is ok – we can simply control them.

This is the same thing that many believers decide to do with sin

“I can live with it”, “I can harness it”, “I don’t have to get rid of it”

And as we will see, eventually the sin controls the individual.

**29 Nor did Ephraim drive out the Canaanites who dwelt in Gezer; so the Canaanites dwelt in Gezer among them. 30 Nor did Zebulun drive out the inhabitants of Kitron or the inhabitants of Nahalol; so the Canaanites dwelt among them, and were put under tribute. 31 Nor did Asher drive out the inhabitants of Acco or the inhabitants of Sidon, or of Ahlab, Achzib, Helbah, Aphik, or Rehob. 32 So the Asherites dwelt among the Canaanites, the inhabitants of the land; for they did not drive them out.**

The tribe of Asher – seven cities they failed to drive out the Canaanites.

Not only do they fail to drive them out – they are not even having them pay tribute.

And the reason is that if you look at verse 29 and 30 – the Canaanites were living among the tribes.

But here in verse 32, the Asherites are living among the Canaanites.

So it is getting worse.

**33 Nor did Naphtali drive out the inhabitants of Beth Shemesh or the inhabitants of Beth Anath; but they dwelt among the Canaanites, the inhabitants of the land. Nevertheless the inhabitants of Beth Shemesh and Beth Anath were put under tribute to them. 34 And the Amorites forced the children of Dan into the mountains, for they would not allow them to come down to the valley; 35 and the Amorites were determined to dwell in Mount Heres, in Aijalon, and in Shaalbim; yet when the strength of the house of Joseph became greater, they were put under tribute. 36 Now the boundary of the Amorites [was] from the Ascent of Akrabbim, from Sela, and upward.**

While the other tribes managed to settle in their allotted territories,

Dan was ousted from theirs altogether.

They were forced to take refuge in the inhospitable mountains.

The chronicle of the tribes goes from the victories of Judah to the defeat & humiliation of Dan.



What marked the decline was their weakening dependence on & devotion to God.

God had so much more for Israel – but possessing it would mean more battle.

They were content with what they had rather than what God wanted them to have.

And because they stopped moving forward in faith, they ended up losing it all.

Here's the lesson – Don't settle down to an average, normal Christian life.

Don't look around at what believers around you are doing or what they are allowing in their life.

If you aren't moving forward in faith, renewing yourself to a daily dependence on God, then for sure you are moving backward.

And just like Israel, you will discover, too late, that the things you thought you had control over, have chased you off into a lonely place.

Those who start like Manasseh always end up like Dan.

Let's pray...

To Receive Christ do the following:

Admit, "I am a sinner."

Confess and be willing to turn from your sin.

Believe, by faith that Jesus Christ died for you on the cross.

Receive, through prayer, Jesus Christ into your heart and receive eternal life.

Dear Lord Jesus,

I know that I am a sinner and need Your forgiveness. I believe that You died on the cross for my sins. Please forgive me for my sins and cleanse me by Your blood. I accept You by faith as my personal Lord and Savior. Give me a thirst for Your Word and Help me to follow You all of my days. In Jesus' name I pray, Amen.

[Num 6:24-26 NLT] 24 '

May the LORD bless you and protect you.

May the LORD smile on you and be gracious to you.

May the LORD show you his favor and give you his peace.'