

**“The Cycle Begins”**

**Judges 1-2**

**Scripture Ref:** Josh 15:13-19; Heb 4:16; Matt 7:7-11; Num 33:55; Josh 24:29-31;  
Rom 1:21-23

- 1. The “Dark Ages” of Israel - What we find out about *man* in Judges is depressing; but what we find out about *God* in Judges is spectacular**
  - a. The progression of sin.... Mercy of God!**

**Judah Takes Jerusalem**

(Josh 15:13-19)

1:1 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?"

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. 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.

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. 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 Talmai.

- 2. Jerusalem falls to Judah; it was occupied for a time (Adoni-Bezek was taken there and died there), but it later fell back to the Jebusites (see Judges 1:21). David re-conquered the city some 400 years later (2 Samuel 5:6-10)**

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. 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.

**3. A picture of our ability to come to our heavenly Father...**

- a. She knew it was her *father* she asked.
- b. She went humbly, yet eagerly.
- c. Her father asked her what she wanted - God will ask us the same thing, and we should know what we want.
- d. You should actually ask for it; it is a pleasure for God to hear you ask.
- e. Her prayer: "Give me a blessing."
- f. She mingled gratitude with her petition (you have given me land in the South).
- g. She realized that what she had been given before was of no use without continual springs of water.
  - i. "What is the use of the hearers if there be not the power of the Holy Spirit going with the Word to bless them? Give me springs of water." (Spurgeon)
- h. Her father gave her what she asked.
- i. Her father gave to her in large measure.
- j. Her father was not critical of the request in the slightest way.

**Heb 4:16** *Let us therefore come boldly to the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy and find grace to help in time of need.*

**Matt 7:7-11**

*"Ask, and it will be given to you; seek, and you will find; knock, and it will be opened to you. 8 For everyone who asks receives, and he who seeks finds, and to him who knocks it will be opened. 9 Or what man is there among you who, if his son asks for bread, will give him a stone? 10 Or if he asks for a fish, will he give him a serpent? 11 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!"*

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 (***see right here – Gaza belongs to Israel!***), Ashkelon with its territory, and Ekron with its territory. 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. 20 And they

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

4. **“The Lord was with them.... they could not drive out the inhabitants of the lowlands...”**
  - a. **Of course, this spoke more to Judah's lack of full trust in God than it did to Canaanite military superiority.**
  - b. **Sometimes we obtain “partial victory” vs “complete victory”, we only “half-believe” God**
  - c. **Chariots are not problem for God's people when they are fully trusting God.**

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.

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.

### **Living with the Canaanites**

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

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.

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.

**5. We have already covered this situation in a previous study (Joshua 12-19), and there were three important lessons that we learned:**

***#1 – Who you associate with can either draw you closer to the Lord, or farther away.***

- **Who do you hang with? Who are your close associates?**

***#2 – What you allow into your life can either draw you closer to the Lord, or farther away.***

- **Allowing the Canaanites into close proximity caused the Israelites to stumble**
- **Same with sin – keep it in close proximity and you will stumble.**

***#3 - Partial obedience is not obedience at all.***

- **When God tells us to remove something, we need to remove it – immediately, and completely!**

**6. Interesting comment “for the Canaanites were determined to dwell in that land”**

- a. They were not going to just roll over and leave – not going to go easy – they were determined to stay!**
- b. POINT: Some areas of sin we easily conquer – But some do not go easily. Some sin is like the Canaanites – like it has a mind and will of it’s own.**
- c. You want it to go – you pray for it to go – but it digs in and becomes entrenched**
- d. So what do you do? Give up? Live with it? NEVER!**
- e. This entire historical/biblical record is a living example that “Living with the Canaanites” is simply not an option.**
- f. Just like the Israelites had to do spiritual warfare – trust in the Lord – rest in His promises – depend on His strength**
- g. There are some areas of sin that we need to strap on our sword, trust God, and eradicate the sin – burn it – as painful and messy as it might get!**

### **Israel's Calling Out**

2:1 Then the Angel of the LORD came up from Gilgal to Bochim, and said: "I led you up from Egypt and brought you to the land of which I swore to your fathers; and I said, 'I will never break My covenant with you. 2 And you shall make no

covenant with the inhabitants of this land; you shall tear down their altars.' But you have not obeyed My voice. Why have you done this? 3 Therefore I also said, 'I will not drive them out before you; but they shall be thorns in your side, and their gods shall be a snare to you.'" 4 So it was, when the Angel of the LORD spoke these words to all the children of Israel, that the people lifted up their voices and wept.

5 Then they called the name of that place Bochim; and they sacrificed there to the LORD..

7. **Here the nation is being called to task – basically God (pre-incarnate Christ) is saying to them “I have given you the task, and promised that I would be with you through it... but you have disobeyed”**
  - a. **God had told them earlier...**

***Numbers 33:55** But if you do not drive out the inhabitants of the land from before you, then it shall be that those whom you let remain shall be irritants in your eyes and thorns in your sides, and they shall harass you in the land where you dwell.*

8. **What's the deal – is God being hard on them?**
  - a. **Here's the thing – there are some things that God calls us to that are NOT EASY. They are even HARD.**
  - b. **Even though God is with us, and He is empowering us, and going before us – it can still be a difficult, grinding task.**
  - c. **Get this – SO WHAT? Who ever said life was easy? That serving the Lord was floating around on a cloud of blessings and never stubbing your toe?**
  - d. **Being obedient to the Lord means being obedient even when things are hard – tough – difficult.**
  - e. **When the going gets tough – some get going - others get lost!**
9. **Israel heard this and wept. Why did they weep? Were they weeping for their sin... or about their sin?**
  - a. **Maybe they were sorry for their sin... or maybe they were upset because they realized that they were going to become targets of the nations around them.**
  - b. **Whatever the reason – if this were real repentance, then it would change behavior.**
  - c. **Many will shed tears in the face of their sin – but if nothing changes... then they are just tears.**

### **Death of Joshua (replay)**

(Josh 24:29-31)

6 And when Joshua had dismissed the people, the children of Israel went each to his own inheritance to possess the land 7 So the people served the LORD all the

days of Joshua, and all the days of the elders who outlived Joshua, who had seen all the great works of the LORD which He had done for Israel. 8 Now Joshua the son of Nun, the servant of the LORD, died when he was one hundred and ten years old. 9 And they buried him within the border of his inheritance at Timnath Heres, in the mountains of Ephraim, on the north side of Mount Gaash..

**“Another Generation” – A Cycle Begins**

10 When all that generation had been gathered to their fathers, **another generation** arose after them **who did not know the LORD** nor the work which He had done for Israel

**10. “did not know” - The literal meaning here is not that Israel was ignorant, but that they deliberately refused to acknowledge God’s authority...**

- a. And when one deliberately refuses to acknowledge God – a cycle will begin....**
- b. Paul described in Romans...**

***Rom 1:21-23***

*although they knew God, they did not glorify Him as God, nor were thankful, but became futile in their thoughts, and their foolish hearts were darkened. 22 Professing to be wise, they became fools, 23 and changed the glory of the incorruptible God into an image made like corruptible man - and birds and four-footed animals and creeping things.*

11 Then the children of Israel did evil in the sight of the LORD, and served the Baals; 12 and they forsook the LORD God of their fathers, who had brought them out of the land of Egypt; and they followed other gods from among the gods of the people who were all around them, and they bowed down to them; and they provoked the LORD to anger. 13 They forsook the LORD and served Baal and the Ashtoreths. 14 And the anger of the LORD was hot against Israel. So He delivered them into the hands of plunderers who despoiled them; and He sold them into the hands of their enemies all around, so that they could no longer stand before their enemies. 15 Wherever they went out, the hand of the LORD was against them for calamity, as the LORD had said, and as the LORD had sworn to them. And they were greatly distressed.

16 Nevertheless, the LORD raised up judges who delivered them out of the hand of those who plundered them. 17 Yet they would not listen to their judges, but they played the harlot with other gods, and bowed down to them. They turned quickly from the way in which their fathers walked, in obeying the commandments of the LORD; they did not do so. 18 And when the LORD raised up judges for them, the LORD was with the judge and delivered them out of the hand of their enemies all the days of the judge; for the LORD was moved to pity by their groaning because of those who oppressed them and harassed them. 19 And it came to pass, when the judge was dead, that they reverted and behaved more corruptly than their fathers, by following other gods, to serve them and bow

down to them. They did not cease from their own doings nor from their stubborn way.

**11. Clear cycle of sin – however not just a “re-run”, there was a downward cycle.**

- a. Each new outbreak of sin and disobedience took the nation further and further away from the Lord.**
- b. Each time they fell away, they fell farther**
- c. Each time they fell farther, their misery increased.**
- d. By the end of the account, Israel had sinned in almost every imaginable way.**

**12. How many times has this pattern played out in the lives a Christians?**

- a. A little compromise, a little sin – repentance each time of course**
- b. But if a pattern is allowed to develop – each time there is a fall – the fall is farther**
- c. As each fall happens, the misery increases**
- d. How many Christians have found themselves sitting in a place where they have sinned in ways they never thought they ever would?**

**13. SIN – takes you farther than you ever wanted to go**

- a. Causes you to stay longer than you wanted to stay**
- b. Demands a price more than you wanted to pay.**

**14. And we see here the REASON God allowed these nations to stay -**

20 Then the anger of the LORD was hot against Israel; and He said, "Because this nation has transgressed My covenant which I commanded their fathers, and has not heeded My voice, 21 I also will no longer drive out before them any of the nations which Joshua left when he died, 22 so that through them I may test Israel, whether they will keep the ways of the LORD, to walk in them as their fathers kept them, or not." 23 Therefore the LORD left those nations, without driving them out immediately; nor did He deliver them into the hand of Joshua.

**15. Israel apparently wanted these Canaan nations around, as they joined in with them in their practices...**

- a. So God gave them their wish...**
- b. We should be careful not to set our heart on sinful things – God may allow us to get our wish!**
- c. And God will use these very things to bind us – to enslave us.**

**16. Thing is – we CAN be free – if we set our heart on the Lord.**

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## ***Judges 1-2***

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