

Judges Chapter 01 Commentary

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

Israel begins by doing the right thing after Joshua has died. They seek council of the Lord, as Moses and Joshua had done aforetime. This is a reminder to us; we should always seek God's council before we move, not waiting to ask his council after we have gotten ourselves in a mess.

We remember that Judah was given the blessing of headship over his brethren, by being given the right of firstborn son by his father, because of the sin of Judah, the firstborn, and the sins of Simeon and Levi. However, Joseph's two sons were given the double portion of the property. Wherefore, it is fitting that Judah be the first sent to battle, as he has headship over his brethren.

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. 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.

Some will say that Judah is not trusting the Lord by asking Simeon to assist them. However, I will remind the reader, Simeon's possession of property is within the borders of the possession of Judah, and they are under the authority of Judah, because of the curse from their sin at Shechem seen in Genesis chapter 24. The loss of authority can be seen in Jacob's prophesy of their future: **Ge 49:5-7; 5 ¶ "Simeon and Levi are brethren; instruments of cruelty are in their habitations. 6 O my soul, come not thou into their secret; unto their assembly, mine honour, be not thou united: for in their anger they slew a man, and in their selfwill they digged down a wall. 7 Cursed be their anger, for it was fierce; and their wrath, for it was cruel: I will divide them in Jacob, and scatter them in Israel."** They remain tribes of Israel, but they do not have a separated portion of land that is disconnected from the other tribes.

5 And they found Adonibezek in Bezek: and they fought against him, and they slew the Canaanites and the Perizzites. 6 But Adonibezek fled; and they pursued after him, and caught him, and cut off his thumbs and his great toes. 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.

God gives Judah victory over the Canaanites and Perizzites. They capture the king of Bezek, Adonibezek (*lord of Bezek*). *Matthew Henry's Commentary: Here is an example of a king that named himself after his territory, rather than naming his territory after himself, as many kings did.*

God executes judgment upon Adonibezek, after the same way he had dealt with seventy kings which he had conquered. They cut off the thumbs so, that they could no longer hold a sword, or draw a bow, in war against them. They cut off their big toes so, they could not run well and pursue them as an enemy, nor could they flee from captivity without being easily recaptured. They kept him captive, as he had done to the seventy kings he conquered, until he died. Thus, God requited him the same

punishment he had doled out to others. This reminds us that we are to be careful how we treat others, least we reap what we sow.

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.

The king of Jerusalem, Adonizedek, and his armies were destroyed in battle against Joshua in Joshua chapter 10. However, the city of Jerusalem was not taken at that time. Here, we see that Jerusalem is delivered to Judah by God. We also point out: all of the suburbs and inhabitants of Jerusalem were not destroyed as seen in: ***Jg 1:21 "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."*** The Jebusites will remain among the Israelites until King David obliterates them in: ***2Sa 5:6-7; 6 ¶ "And the king and his men went to Jerusalem unto the Jebusites, the inhabitants of the land: which spake unto David, saying, Except thou take away the blind and the lame, thou shalt not come in hither: thinking, David cannot come in hither. 7 Nevertheless David took the strong hold of Zion: the same is the city of David."***

By burning the city of Jerusalem, Judah ridded the city of the idolatry that was present there, which is what God had commanded Israel to do. Jerusalem will eventually become the capital city of Israel under the reign of King David. King David will also bring the ark of the covenant to Jerusalem, and it will become the principal place, of worship of God, in Israel. Later, King Solomon will build the temple of the Lord there. It will eventually be where they carry on their mock trial and crucify Jesus.

The lesson for us is you should burn up all the idolatry of your former and future life. Rid yourself of idolatry and keep yourself unspotted from the world of sin. Dedicate yourself to the Lord, so that all people recognize you as a disciple of Christ Jesus, who is fully living the life of a Christian.

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. 10 ¶ And Judah went against the Canaanites that dwelt in Hebron: (now the name of Hebron before was Kirjatharba:) and they slew Sheshai, and Ahiman, and Talmai. 11 ¶ And from thence he went against the inhabitants of Debir: and the name of Debir before was Kirjathsepher: 12 And Caleb said, He that smiteth Kirjathsepher, and taketh it, to him will I give Achsah my daughter to wife. 13 And Othniel the son of Kenaz, Caleb's younger brother, took it: and he gave him Achsah his daughter to wife. 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? 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.

We have already read and studied about the taking of Kirjathsepher in Judges chapter 15. We remind ourselves; this territory was already the possession of Caleb, and he has the authority to give it to whom he will.

We note that Caleb's daughter was granted a blessing of her father, but she had to ask for it. How many blessings do we miss because we ask not? Remember the scripture in: ***Jas 4:2-3; 2 "Ye lust, and***

have not: ye kill, and desire to have, and cannot obtain: ye fight and war, yet ye have not, because ye ask not. 3 Ye ask, and receive not, because ye ask amiss, that ye may consume it upon your lusts."

- First: We see from this scripture, if we ask of our lust of the flesh, we can expect no for an answer. Or, we may get what we ask for, as a retribution for asking amiss. However, remember, when you are asking in lust of the flesh, you are not in the will of God.
- Second: We understand that we may expect to receive of our Father in heaven when we ask in the will of God. When we are seeking his glory and honor and not our own.

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.

The Kenites had joined with Israel on the wilderness march and remained with them since that time, seen in: ***Nu 10:29-33; 29 ¶ "And Moses said unto Hobab, the son of Raguel the Midianite, Moses' father in law, We are journeying unto the place of which the LORD said, I will give it you: come thou with us, and we will do thee good: for the LORD hath spoken good concerning Israel. 30 And he said unto him, I will not go; but I will depart to mine own land, and to my kindred. 31 And he said, Leave us not, I pray thee; forasmuch as thou knowest how we are to encamp in the wilderness, and thou mayest be to us instead of eyes. 32 And it shall be, if thou go with us, yea, it shall be, that what goodness the LORD shall do unto us, the same will we do unto thee. 33 And they departed from the mount of the LORD three days' journey: and the ark of the covenant of the LORD went before them in the three days' journey, to search out a resting place for them.***" Some will say, Hobab refused the offer and did not go. However, I point out that in verse 33 it says "**they departed**" which indicates to us that Hobab changed his mind and they joined Israel and went with them. Also, we find them with Israel here in the book of Judges.

There are other Kenites that were not of this family, and they will be dealt with as outsiders.

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.

Judah had promised to help Simeon and he does. Another example of being faithful to our words, whether spoken orally, or expressed inwardly in our hearts and minds.

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

Why could Judah not destroy all the inhabitants of their possession? We are reminded that scripture is not given in chronological order, and this is one instance that we can see the influence of circumstances that are recorded earlier and later in scripture. Remember how Balaam had the secret council with Balak? Where he told Balak that the way he could destroy and overcome Israel was to marry and mingle with Israel and lead them to idolatry. Certainly, Israel did not go into idolatry all at once, but slowly over time.

Here we see; Judah could not overcome the inhabitants of the valley for they had iron chariots. Do you believe that iron chariots could keep God from overcoming them? The answer is no, God can overcome any enemy no matter what defenses they can put up. Wherefore, we understand that there is sin in the tribe of Judah and God has withdrawn his help from them. This is why they cannot overcome. We do not know for sure that Judah has already fallen into idolatry, but we can be sure, their failure is because of sin and disobedience to God.

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

We are again reminded of the non-chronological order of scripture. In Joshua 15, we are told that these sons of Anak had been driven from their former habitations and apparently, they settled together here in Hebron. We find here that Caleb expelled these three men from Hebron. Expelled means to drive out from, which is apparently what happened. Expelled can mean to destroy, but we understand that they were driven out of Hebron, because we shall meet their descendants when we read of David slaying Goliath.

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. 22 ¶ And the house of Joseph, they also went up against Bethel: and the LORD was with them. 23 And the house of Joseph sent to descry (descry means to spy out) Bethel. (Now the name of the city before was Luz.) 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. 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. 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. 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. 28 And it came to pass, when Israel was strong, that they put the Canaanites to tribute, and did not utterly drive them out. 29 Neither did Ephraim drive out the Canaanites that dwelt in Gezer; but the Canaanites dwelt in Gezer among them. 30 Neither did Zebulun drive out the inhabitants of Kitron, nor the inhabitants of Nahalol; but the Canaanites dwelt among them, and became tributaries. 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 But the Asherites dwelt among the Canaanites, the inhabitants of the land: for they did not drive them out. 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. 34 And the Amorites forced the children of Dan into the mountain: for they would not suffer them to come down to the valley: 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. 36 ¶ And the coast of the Amorites was from the going up to Akrabbim, from the rock, and upward.

Again, we cite you to the comments for verses 18-19. The failures of Israel to drive out the inhabitants of the land of promise is always rooted in sin and disobedience in Israel, which causes God to withdraw his help from them. We shall see in scripture that Israel did turn to idolatry, and God did

withdraw his help from them. Apparently, this has already begun to happen, and it is the reason, of the inability of Israel to overcome all these enemies in the land of promise.

I point out again, the two and one-half tribes should not have disobeyed the will of God and remained on the east side of Jordan. Why? If all of Israel had entered the land of promise, they would not have been to let all these former inhabitants remain. They would need the space these people occupy and would have destroyed them as God commanded. Isn't it amazing to see how disobedience to God has lasting and far-reaching consequences?

Our life lesson is: if we do all that God commands, there will be security in our possession of our place in the land of promise, the church. We will enjoy the fulness of the blessing of having a land of promise here on earth. If we do not remove ourselves from all idolatry, our idols will become thorns in our sides, and we may receive severe judgments of God in our lives here. As Israel did not fully possess the possessions given to them, so it is, in our own lives as Christians, if we fail to possess, and inhabit, all the promises, and privileges, that Jesus has afforded to us in the church.

Thanks, and praise, to our Saviour and Lord, Jesus Christ, who has wrought the complete will of God, and has secured our place in the eternal land of promise. Praise the Lord that we cannot mess up what Christ has perfected. Hallelujah! Amen!