

The Extent of Israel's Obedience

Congratulations! You made it through the historical background material. Way to be diligent! Your understanding of Judges will be enhanced by your hard work. Now let's turn to the book of Judges itself. It begins with a double introduction (which will be paralleled by a double conclusion at the end of the book). The first one, Judges 1:1-2:5, introduces us to the pattern of Israel's increasing failure to drive out the Canaanites, which will be mirrored in the moral degeneration of the judges' lives. The second one, Judges 2:6-3:6, introduces us to the all-important cyclic pattern which occurs throughout the book. The first introduction tells of disobedience and apathy, the second of apostasy. In this lesson, we will focus on Judges 1:1-36.

Stop and Pray - God show me the subtle steps of spiritual erosion. Make me aware of undetected cracks in my spiritual foundation so that I can repair them now, before my life and witness for You collapses.

1. How many siblings do you have? What was the order of your birth (oldest, youngest, etc.)?
2. Keeping in mind that partial obedience is really disobedience, answer this question: In what ways do people try to get out of obeying? In other words, how do people work the angles to do what they want, when they are asked to do something else? Example: Do it in their own time frame.

Read Judges 1:1-2:5. (A copy of the passage is included with this lesson. Marking it as instructed will aid your observation of these verses.)

How exciting! Finally the tribes of Israel decide to get busy and clear the remaining enemies out of the land. They are on their way to becoming a holy nation, free from pagan taint, who will witness to all the peoples of the world who travel through their land—or are they?

Something happened between the mighty victories of Joshua and the dark days of Judges. What turned this nation from victory to oppression and apostasy? It was Israel's increasing spiritual erosion.

The first stages of erosion usually go undetected. They are only noticed after huge potholes are created that affect many lives. Let's see if we can trace Israel's subtle, slippery slope into the dark days of Judges.

- e. How would you describe this second step in Israel's spiritual erosion?
 - f. How do we do the same thing today?
5. Reread Judges 1:9-11, 17-19. — The Third Step in Israel's Spiritual Erosion
- a. From these verses, we see Judah experiencing multiple victories. What happened in verse 19 to keep their victory from being complete?
 - b. God had repeatedly told them to remember what He had done in Egypt (Exodus 14:26-28). Why? How would it apply here?
 - c. What was the real problem that kept Judah from gaining victory in this situation?
 - d. How would you describe the third step in Israel's spiritual erosion?
 - e. How do we do this today?

Up to this point, we see the tribe of Judah experiencing relative success. However, under the surface, they are spiritually eroding because of their choices to not fully trust and obey God. Erosion ultimately causes landslides.

Reread Judges 1:21-36. — Steps 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, ...

- 6. List repeated phrases that are used in this section which show Israel disobeying, compromising, rationalizing, etc.
- 7. Each tribe of Israel will pay the consequences for their choices, as we shall see in our study of Judges. How has the noncompliance we have observed in Judah paved the way for the disobedience of all the other tribes?

8. Notice how the various tribes chose to deal with their enemies. List each tribe, how they dealt with the enemy, and the outcome. Do you see a progression? (Look at a map of ancient Israel to note their northward conquest of the land.)

Tribe

Disobedience

Outcome

Note: The house of Joseph represents two tribes - Manasseh and Ephraim (Joshua 16:4).

9. We have just seen Israel relying on many tactics for victory instead of completely trusting and fully obeying God. How about you?
- a. In what area(s) of your life is God asking for your obedience now?

 - b. How are you trying to get out of obeying?

 - c. What steps do you need to take to respond to God's direction, fully and obediently this week? Be as specific as possible.

Ask someone to hold you accountable to these steps this week. Write their name below.

Heart Check: Are you depending on any resource other than God to rid yourself of those things that draw your heart away from God?

Final Thoughts: This week you get to write this section. Review your completed lesson. Write a summary of the main points and any thoughts you would like to remember.

Pray - “In those days there was no king in Israel, everyone did what was right in his own eyes.” (Judges 21:25) Lord, by your grace may this never be true of me. “Search me, O God, and know my heart; test me and know my anxious thoughts. See if there is any offensive way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting.” (Psalm 139:23-24)

Partial obedience is disobedience.

Kyna Ritchie (original 2002; revised 2013)

Lesson 5 — The Setting of Judges — Judges 1:1-2:5

Examine your text. Here is the entire text of the first introduction in Judges. Read it so that you can keep the whole picture in context. However, this week we will only study chapter one. Please mark the entire passage now, as you will need it for next week.

Mark your text. Underline any repeated phrases or words in orange. Put a box around all time words (e.g. then, now, after). Put a circle around all conditional words (e.g. but, so that, thus). Put a red box around any references to the covenant. Underline all references to the following, including pronouns (e.g. he, me, they, I):

- Israel in blue (Designate each tribe by putting the first letter of the tribe above the underlined word.)
- an enemy in black
- God in red

Judges 1:1-2:5 — Israel's Perspective of their Situation

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?" 2 The LORD said, "Judah shall go up; behold, I have given the land into his hand." 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. 4 Judah went up, and the LORD gave the Canaanites and the Perizzites into their hands, and they defeated ten thousand men at Bezek. 5 They found Adoni-bezek in Bezek and fought against him, and they defeated 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. 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. 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. 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. 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. 11 Then from there he went against the inhabitants of Debir (now the name of Debir formerly was Kiriath-sepher). 12 And Caleb said, "The one who attacks Kiriath-sepher and captures it, I will even give him my daughter Achsah for a wife." 13 Othniel the son of Kenaz, Caleb's younger brother, captured it; so he gave him his daughter Achsah for a wife. 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?" 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. 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. 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. 18 And Judah took Gaza with its territory and Ashkelon with its territory and Ekron with its territory. 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. 20 Then they gave Hebron to Caleb, as Moses had promised; and he drove out from there the three sons of Anak. 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. 22 Likewise the house of Joseph went up against Bethel, and the LORD was with them. 23 The house of Joseph spied out Bethel (now the name of the city was formerly Luz). 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." 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. 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. 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. 28 It came about when Israel became strong, that they put the Canaanites to forced labor, but they did not drive them out completely. 29 Ephraim did not drive out the Canaanites who were living in Gezer; so the Canaanites lived in Gezer among them. 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. 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. 32 So the Asherites lived among the Canaanites, the inhabitants of the land; for they did not drive them out. 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.

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; 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.

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

Chapter 2

1 Now the angel of the LORD came up from Gilgal to Bochim. And he said, "I brought you up out of Egypt and led you into the land which I have sworn to your fathers; and I said, 'I will never break My covenant with you, 2 and as for you, you shall make no covenant with the inhabitants of this land; you shall tear down their altars.' But you have not obeyed Me; what is this you have done? 3 "Therefore I also said, 'I will not drive them out before you; but they will become as thorns in your sides and their gods will be a snare to you.'" 4 When the angel of the LORD spoke these words to all the sons of Israel, the people lifted up their voices and wept.

5 So they named that place Bochim; and there they sacrificed to the LORD.

(Judges 1:1-2:5, NASB95)