

Judges 1:1 – 2:9

April 24, 2019

The account in the book of Judges follows a pattern to be found throughout Scripture. As William Kelly puts it, “God no sooner gives a blessing than man misuses it.” Noah turns his first crops after the flood into wine and gets drunk. After God grants him land of Canaan, Abraham involves his wife in a dubious deception in Egypt. The strong and prosperous kingdom which David bequeaths to Solomon splits in two after his death. And here, within a generation of taking possession of the promised land, Israel turns aside from God to idolatrous worship of the local gods.

In the early history of the church we see both individual and group failures. Ananias and Sapphira introduce the poison of pretended charity into an outpouring of unselfish love after the day of Pentecost. And in 2 Timothy Paul grieves over those who have turned from his sound teaching.

Many commentators have noted how the book of Judges foreshadows the present fragmented state of Christianity. It seems that everyone does what is right in his own eyes.

But as Andrew Miller points out, there is a “silver thread of God’s grace” running through the history of God’s people. For the church, that thread is those in all times who have remained faithful to Scripture. Here in Judges, the silver thread is the flawed but faithful men and women God appoints to protect and preserve His people.

Notes:

1:1 The Israelites clearly have not rid the land of its inhabitants as commanded in Joshua 16:7 and elsewhere.

1:3 Canaanites can refer to any of the people living in the land, including Perizzites and Amorites.

1:8 The conquest of Jerusalem was short lived; see v. 21. David conquers it for good in 2 Samuel 5.

1:9-15 These verses appear to be a retelling of earlier victories in Joshua 15.

1:16 The Kenites were another Canaanite people, less hostile to Israel.

1:22 Joseph’s inheritance had been split between his sons Ephraim and Manasseh, known as the half tribes of Israel.

1:26 The Hittite kingdom was north of Israel, around modern day Turkey, and was not an enemy.

1:27-34 Israel does not achieve the full conquest that God has commanded. The remaining Canaanites will be a military and spiritual thorn in their sides for generations.

2:1 Gilgal was Joshua’s military base during the conquest and the place where “the reproach of Egypt” was rolled away. Bokim, in contrast, means “weepers.”

For some other references to the Angel of the Lord, see Gen. 16:7-11, 22:11, 48:16; Ex. 3:2, 14:19; Num. 22:22; Jud. 6:11, 13:3; 2 Ki. 19:35; Isa. 63:9; Zech. 1:12, 12:8

2:6-9 These verses reiterate the ending part of Joshua.



Questions:

1. In verses 1-3, do the men of Judah obey the Lord?

2. The maiming of Adoni-Bezek (King of Bezek) follows what Old Testament principle? What command do we as Christians follow?
3. Can you find a symbolic meaning in verse 15?
4. What are some reasons why the Israelites are unable or unwilling to drive out the Canaanites?
5. Did God command the Israelites to subject their captives to forced labor (verses 28-35)?
6. Who is the angel of the Lord in 2:1, 4?