

Title: 'As We See Fit': A study of the book of Judges- Part 2- You can go your own way!

Key text: Judges 1:1-36

Suppl. texts: Luke 22:42b, John 14:21, 23a

Introduction: Last time, we understood the background & context of the book of Judges. To understand Judges, we needed to start at the end of Joshua & come forward. We saw how quickly God's people decayed & didn't continue to worship Yahweh. We noted clear cycles of decay beginning with disobedience, idolatry, & intermarriage with pagan cultures, which led to God's judgment & discipline. Though God's people would temporarily turn & experience remorse over their sins, time & again they would repeat their folly & suffer the consequences. This failure was in part because the generation before them had not fully conquered the Promised Land & drove out or killed off the pagan inhabitants. Therefore, sin was at their gate. They owned the land but didn't fully possess it. These other people groups were constant snares to God's people. Tonight, we move into the book of Judges & begin to see the devolution of the people of God.

Outline: *read Judges 1:1-3.*

1. A prayer & a promise from God (1:1-2)

- **Vs. 1;** *"After the death of Joshua, the Israelites asked the LORD, 'Who will be the first to go up and fight for us against the Canaanites?'"*
- What a **great start!** The Israelites are continuing their dependence on Yahweh.
- God was with them through the Exodus, through the wilderness wanderings, & into the conquest of the Promised Land.
- The **right expectation** is that God would still be with them in everyday life as they settled down. Why? Because God had promised them that He would be.
- **What's the problem?** There are Canaanites still in the Promised Land. There's still work to be done. So, rightly, they seek the Lord in prayer.
- God's people should always be those who seek the will of God in prayer. Jesus modeled this out for us, **Luke 22:42b;** *"not My will, but Yours be done."*
- The Lord gave **clear instructions:** Judah will fight for Israel. Upholding Judah's position as the head of Israel's tribes. Foreshadowing the Messiah who will come.
- **Vs. 2;** *"The LORD answered, "Judah is to go; I have given the land into their hands."*

2. Man's compromise (1:3)

- Compromise always leads to **less** than God's best. Compromises lead to **unintended consequences** every time.
- Remember, the Exodus generation didn't fully trust God's plan/Word & wandered for forty years.

- Joshua's generation didn't fully thrust out the inhabitants of the Promised Land & those people groups ensnared the future generations of Israel.
- The unintended consequences can last beyond your lifetime (**generational curses?**).
- **What are some common compromises of today, among God's people?** Sex outside of marriage, marriage/living with one another, divorce/remarriage, alcohol usage/drunkenness, etc. We say, " Oh no, we're under grace."
- **John 14:21, 23a:** *"Whoever has My commands and obeys them, he is the one who loves Me." "If anyone loves Me, he will obey My teaching."*
- **C.S. Lewis quote:** *"That first act of moral compromise can lead to further acts so that it becomes a habit that shapes your character and destiny."*
- **Unknown quote:** *"Every sin starts with a seemingly small, harmless compromise."*
- Judah's compromise was to make a **pact** with another **friend** against their **foe**.
- Judah **adds** to the **command** of God by enlisting the tribe of Simeon.
- God's **plan** & **Word** were not enough.
- **Vs. 3:** *"Then the men of Judah said to the Simeonites, their brothers, 'Come up with us into the territory allotted to us, to fight against the Canaanites. We, in turn, will go with you into yours.' So the Simeonites went with them."*

3. Initial **success** (1:4-20)

- The writer of Judges doesn't comment on the enlistment of Simeon & shockingly, the Lord still gives the Canaanites & Perizzites over to defeat.
- The Israelites experience several solid victories & probably think all is well.
- God accomplishes His promises by using **Caleb**, the former spy w/ Joshua, now an old man (80+), & his son-in-law/nephew **Othniel**, who becomes the **first** judge.
- **Allowing outsiders in. Vs. 16:** *"The descendants of Moses' father-in-law, the Kenite, went up from the City of Palms (Jericho) with the men of Judah to live among the people of the Desert of Judah in the Negev near Arad."*
- Doesn't seem like that big of a deal. Moses & Jethro were friendly. However, again, they are falling short of what God commanded. Do not integrate with the surrounding nations.
- Right after this, though the Lord was with Judah, full victory wasn't achieved.
- **Vs. 19:** *"The LORD was with the men of Judah. They took possession of the hill country, but they were unable to drive the people from the plains, because they had iron chariots."* They had better **military** tech, but Israel had **Yahweh** on their side.
- Their **successes** seemed to **shield** them from the fact that they had compromised.
- **The same is true today.** If life is going well, we make even more compromises to keep the peace, to ensure our happiness, or feed our fleshly desires.
- Remember, the Lord won't **force** your obedience, but discipline is meant to **turn** us **away** from our sinful compromises.

- An ***intentional*** contrast. ***Vs. 20***; *“As Moses had promised, Hebron was given to Caleb, who drove from it the three sons of Anak.”*
- Anakites/Anakim (long-necked/tall) were large, tall, warring people. Remember how some of the spies sent into the land said we looked like grasshoppers compared to them. Yet, with God on their side, the smaller Israelites led by Caleb defeated them.

4. Predicted ***future failure*** (1:21-36)

- What comes next are those ***half-measures*** we discussed last time.
- Israel ***settled*** for less than God’s ***best***. They only partially obeyed. Full ***disobedience***.
- ***Vs. 21***; *“The Benjamites, however, failed to dislodge the Jebusites, who were living in Jerusalem; to this day the Jebusites live there with the Benjamites.”*
- ***Vs. 27***; *“But Manasseh did not drive out the people of Beth Shan or Taanach or Dor or Ibleam or Megiddo and their surrounding settlements, for the Canaanites were determined to live in that land.”*
- ***Vs. 28***; *“When Israel became strong, they pressed the Canaanites into forced labor but never drove them out completely.”*
- ***Vs. 29***; *“Nor did Ephraim drive out the Canaanites living in Gezer, but the Canaanites continued to live there among them.”*
- ***Vs. 30***; *“Neither did Zebulun drive out the Canaanites living in Kitron or Nahalol, who remained among them; but they did subject them to forced labor.”*
- ***Vs. 31-32***; *“Nor did Asher drive out those living in Acco or Sidon or Ahlab or Aczib or Helbah or Aphek or Rehob, and because of this the people of Asher lived among the Canaanite inhabitants of the land.”*
- ***Vs. 33***; *“Neither did Naphtali drive out those living in Beth Shemesh or Beth Anath; but the Naphtalites too lived among the Canaanite inhabitants of the land, and those living in Beth Shemesh and Beth Anath became forced laborers for them.”*
- ***Vs. 34-35***; *“The Amorites confined the Danites to the hill country, not allowing them to come down into the plain. And the Amorites were determined also to hold out in Mount Heres, Aijalon, and Shaalbim, but when the power of the house of Joseph increased, they too were pressed into forced labor.”*
- Not only did they not drive out the inhabitants, but sometimes they were the ones confined to a small portion of God’s promised inheritance.
- Again, early success, going their own way, hid their future failure.
- God didn’t ***leave*** His people; He didn’t destroy them, but through discipline, He set ***limits*** around them. The same is true for us today.
- ***What’s the cause of such compromise?***
- **Two-fold**: 1. ***Scriptural Ignorance***: Not reading & studying God’s Word, or 2. ***Scriptural indifference***: Not recognizing loving/applying the Word in our lives.

As We See Fit

A Study of the Book of Judges- Part 2

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1. A _____ & a _____ from God (1:1-2)

- What a _____! The Israelites are continuing their dependence on Yahweh.
- The _____ is that God would still be with them in everyday life as they settled down.
- **What's the problem?**
- The Lord gave _____: Judah will fight for Israel. Upholding Judah's position as the head of Israel's tribes.

2. Man's _____ (1:3)

- Compromise always leads to _____ than God's best.
- Compromises lead to _____ every time.
- **What are some common compromises of today, among God's people?**
- Judah's compromise was to make a _____ with another _____ against their _____.
- Judah _____ to the _____ of God by enlisting the tribe of Simeon.
- God's _____ & _____ were not enough.

3. Initial _____ (1:4-20)

- God accomplishes His promises by using _____, the former spy w/ Joshua, now an old man (80+), & his son-in-law/nephew _____, who becomes the _____ judge.
- **Allowing _____ in.**
- They had better _____ tech, but Israel had _____ on their side.

- Their _____ seemed to _____ them from the fact that they had compromised.
- Remember, the Lord won't _____ your obedience, but discipline is meant to _____ us _____ from our sinful compromises.
- **An _____ contrast.**

4. Predicted _____ (1:21-36)

- What comes next are those _____ - _____ we discussed last time.
- Israel _____ for less than God's _____. They only partially obeyed. Full _____.
- God didn't _____ His people; He didn't destroy them, but through discipline, He set _____ around them.
- ***What's the cause of such compromise?***
- **Two-fold:** 1. ***Scriptural*** _____: Not reading & studying God's Word, or 2. ***Scriptural*** _____: Not recognizing loving/applying the Word in our lives.

Small group discussion questions & prayer:

- 1. Rank your own level of dependence on God's plan & ability from 1-10. Do you dig into the Word & prayer when you don't know what to do? Why or why not?**
- 2. Can you think of a time in your life where your sin had unintended consequences, either for you or for others? If so bold, share your experience with the group.**
- 3. We briefly discussed some common compromises among God's people today. Compile & discuss your own list.**
- 4. Success or the good times of life tend to shield us from the sinful severity of our compromises. Have you been guilty of half-measures or partial obedience? Do you realize that the pragmatic approach often leads to spiritual capitulation? How do we guard against such spiritual blindness & settling for less than God's best?**
- 5. Discuss the two causes of spiritual compromise. Can you determine any differences between the two? Is one worse than the other?**

Write down any additional prayer requests & needs:
