

## Incomplete Conquest.

Judges 1.

Sunday evening, December 12, 2010.

### I. The meaning of this chapter in the context of the book.

The opening two chapters of the book of Judges set the stage for the remainder of the Book. These two chapters chronicle Israel's failure to conquer the land and to exterminate the Canaanites together with their perverted religious practices. (Ch.1) This in turn led to a second evil; the evil of first tolerating, and then embracing for themselves the religious practices of the Canaanites. (Ch. 2).

### II. Failure to conquer the land chronicled.

#### A. The tribe of Judah (with Simeon.) Vs. 1-20.

The bulk of this chapter is devoted to the exploits of the tribe of Judah.

There is reason for that; Judah was the largest tribe in Israel. The entire Southern part of the land was given to her.

Some things should be noted about Judah's exploits:

1. Before anyone went to war following the death of Joshua, Israel sought the counsel of the Lord. This would have been done by way of the Urim and the Thummim, which task would have been performed by the High Priest.
2. Further encouragement was given to Judah as the Lord repeated His promise that He had given the land into the hand of Judah.  
The other tribes in turn would take courage from the Lord's blessing the obedient efforts of Judah. They too in turn would undertake to rid their territories of any remaining Canaanites.
3. Judah takes Simeon (Israel's smallest tribe) along and promises Simeon that it will in turn help Simeon to rid its land of any remaining Canaanites.  
This was not a matter of disobedience or fear on the part of Judah. It simply made sense to do it this way as the territory of Simeon comprised as it were an island in the middle of the territory of Judah; hence the joint effort.
4. The list of Judah's exploits is not limited to things done following the death of Joshua, but it looks back to many things done before the departure of Joshua; things mentioned in the book of Joshua as well.
5. Special attention is deserved by the case of Adoni-Bezek, or the king of Bezek. Why was not this man simply killed along with all the other Canaanites? It was because of the unusual cruelty with which he had conducted himself. Seventy kings of surrounding cities had been captured by Adoni-Bezek, and rather than having killed them he cut off their thumbs and big toes, reducing them to mere beggars for they could neither walk well nor do anything useful with their hands. So Adoni-Bezek was forced to live out his days as a mere beggar.
6. The Kenites, of which Moses' father in law was a part, were allowed to settle in the territory of Judah. They were a peaceful people who at least in part had joined Israel in their journey to the promised land.
7. Judah's failure ultimately comes when they face the inhabitants in the lowlands along the Mediterranean shores. They had iron chariots, and in the

sight of these chariots Judah's faith fails. They do not consult with the Lord; they do not engage them; they simply allow these Canaanites to continue to dwell in their midst.

8. With that a precedent was set for the other tribes to follow.
- B. The tribe of Benjamin is mentioned next. They shared the city of Jerusalem with the tribe of Judah. Judah had expelled the Canaanites out of their part of Jerusalem Vs. 8, but Benjamin failed to do so and allowed the Jebusites to live among them in Jerusalem.
- C. Next is the house of Joseph (Manasseh and Ephraim). They defeated the city of Bethel, but allowed others to remain and live among them. Vs. 22-29.
- D. The chapter closes by mentioning the tribes of Asher, Naphtali and Dan. They may be taken as representative of the rest. The pattern is the same; these tribes allowed the Canaanites to dwell in their midst.

### III. Why did Israel allow the Canaanites to remain?

- A. A certain laziness of spirit; if you will the path of least resistance. It was easier to leave the Canaanites alone as long as they did not bother them.
- B. A certain fearfulness or ungodly timidity caused them to shy away from the task as long as it didn't absolutely have to be done.
- C. A certain covetousness may have crept in as well. They could put the Canaanites under tribute and make them their servants. Why waste such perfectly good resources?
- D. A certain absence of fear with regards to the religious practices of the Canaanites, and the repulsiveness thereof.
- E. On the other hand the presence of a certain tolerance of the Canaanite practices; a tolerance that would grow into admiration and acceptance.
- F. A certain mistrust with regards to the directions and promises of God. Were they still valid now, or was it safer just to put up with the remaining Canaanites?
- G. A certain humanitarian spirit may have been extended toward the Canaanites. They were human beings too. A spirit of kindness; of goodwill, or even friendship. How do you just cut down with the sword little girls in pigtails, or little boys playing in the streets; moms with nursing infants, and grey haired old men and ladies making their way with difficulty through the streets?

### IV. The Canaanites in your life.

Who are they, and what are they like?

- A. It is a desire that will not yield, but demands to be serviced. "I must have..."
- B. It is an expectation that must be met, or "I will be angry."
- C. It is an opinion that must prevail, for "I must be right."
- D. It is a possession that I can not part with, for "it is too dear to me."
- E. It is a right that I will not give up, for "I want to insist on it."
- F. It is a heart that will not humble itself, for "I want to think highly of myself."
- G. A pleasure that will not yield to the need of a brother; "I deserve that pleasure."
  - Canaanites demand to live in the promised land; in the heart of a Christian.
  - Canaanites must be executed (crucified with Christ) or they will steal your heart away from the Lord. Yes, it is that serious! Define and guard your first love!