

**Episode:** Promised Land Series No. 14

**Narrator:** Paul

**Primary Scriptures:** Judges 1

**Story Summary:** Israelites fail to completely conquer Canaan

**Location:** Canaan

**Time:** c. 1406 BC The Israelites enter Canaan

c. 1209-1169 BC The rule of Deborah

c. 1075-1055 BC The rule of Samson

**Suggested Memory Scriptures:** Judges 1:19-21, 27-33

The book of *Joshua* ends with the Israelites having mostly conquered the land of Canaan. There are pockets of resistance that just don't seem worth overcoming, though. It just doesn't seem worth the price to completely take over the land. The book of *Judges* picks up the story after the death of Joshua.

Chapter One begins with great promise. The tribes of Judah and Simeon work together to defeat the Canaanites living in the lands they have been allotted. Judges 1:8 says that they even took the city of Jerusalem and set it on fire. Judges 1:18 says they conquered the cities and associated territories of Gaza, Ashkelon and Ekron.

Starting with Judges 1:19, it becomes obvious that things are not perfect. We learn the Israelites they were unable to drive out the people of the plains because they had chariots. Hmm. Gaza, Ashkelon and Ekron were probably cities of the plains and are the cities that will later be inhabited by the Philistines.

Judges 1:21 says the Benjamites did not drive out the Jebusites who lived in Jerusalem, and the Jebusites continued living there. Hmm. Maybe Judah had not destroyed Jerusalem completely.

The tribe of Joseph spares an informant, who goes on to establish a city. Manasseh does not drive out the people completely. Nor does Ephraim. Nor Zebulun, Asher, Naphtali, or Dan. As a weak justification, the writer of *Judges* says things like, "When Israel became strong, they pressed the Canaanites into forced labor."

The most important part of taking over the Promised Land was to destroy or drive out *all* of the inhabitants. None were supposed to live with the Israelites. God knew the Israelites would succumb to the worship of the Canaanites' idols if they were ever available.

The failure of the Israelites to completely obey God will haunt them forever. The seeds of the destruction of future generations are sown by the incomplete obedience of the first generation to enter the Promised Land.

### Discussion Questions:

1. We sometimes forget that the events of the Bible took place within the context of wider world events. The period of the Judges coincides with the end of the Bronze Age, when the ruling cities of that time period collapsed. When the shepherds of Israel could no longer count on the food coming from other countries, how did they have to react?
2. Describe the events of Judges 1:1-17. How do those events differ from the ones in Judges 1:18-36?
3. Judges 1:8 says the men of Judah captured Jerusalem and set it on fire. How does that fit with Judges 1:21?
4. Find a detailed map of Israel during the time of the Judges, and try to plot the cities of Judges 1:18-36 that the Israelites did not destroy. Describe what you find.

1. They had to be less nomadic, and become more settled as they became farmers. This would have put them in conflict with the inhabitants of Canaan who had been farming. 2. The first verses describe victories of the Israelites after the death of Joshua. The second verses tend to describe the inability of the tribes of Israel to completely drive out the Canaanites as commanded by God. 3. It is hard to make those two verses fit. Possibly Judah did that many years before, and the Jebusites had time to recover and fortify the city so the Benjamites could not prevail. 4. The cities are scattered throughout Israel, and will likely be a thorn in the side of the Israelites for centuries to come.

### Application Questions:

1. Judges 1:1-17 describes the victories of Judah when they worked together with the men of Simeon. Would the stories of Judges 1:18-36 been different if some of those tribes had worked together? Do you prefer to try to overcome your difficulties by yourself or by working with others?
2. The Israelites disobeyed God by not completely driving out the Canaanites. Pretend that you are the leader of one of those tribes, and explain to God why you didn't complete the task. Would you try to use those same types of excuses to God about why you are disobedient in some area of your life today?

### Application Questions for Teens:

1. The stories of Judges 1:18-36 read like someone is trying to make excuses for why the Israelites did not completely obey God. Do you ever make excuses because the things you need to do are difficult and require a big sacrifice of time and energy? Are you in the habit of behaving that way or is it an occasional failing?
2. Judges 1:18-36 has stories of the Israelites making people groups do forced labor as an excuse for not killing those people groups. What do you think about God wanting the Israelites to wipe out the indigenous people of Canaan? Why did God insist that they do so? Was making them into slaves a good solution? How does this intersect with your thinking on the treatment of indigenous people and slaves in American history?