

**Read Judges Chapter 1.**

*In the Pentateuch (first five books of the Bible) God prepared His chosen people to live under His rule in the Promise Land. In the book of Joshua God established His people initially in the land, but from the very beginning in the book of Judges we see that God's people failed to take advantage of their great privileges and wonderful heritage. The book of Judges, therefore, is a sequel to the book of Joshua.*

- 1.A. The events in the book of Judges, according to verse 1, take place "after the death of Joshua". Who was Joshua? See Exodus 24:13 with Numbers 11:28 and Deuteronomy 3:28.
  
- 1.B. What qualities characterized Joshua according to Numbers 13:1-4 with verses 8 and 16, Numbers 13:26-31 and Numbers 14:5-9? What other attributes did he have according to Deuteronomy 34:9, Joshua 1:5-9 and Joshua 24:14 and 15?
  
- 1.C. Joshua had a sterling reputation. Which characteristic do you admire the most and why? Is your life characterized by this quality? What steps can you take to enhance this attribute in your life?
  
- 2.A. According to verses 1 and 2, from whom did the Israelites seek direction and wisdom? Was this a "wise plan of action"?
  
- 2.B. **OPTIONAL SHARE QUESTION:** Where do you most often seek direction and wisdom? What is God's promise to you today if you seek His wise counsel? See Proverbs 2:3-6 with James 1:5.

*Note: When the Israelites first entered their promised land (Joshua), they united as one army to crush the inhabitants of the land. The Canaanites occupied the promised land and they lived in "city-states" where each city had its own government, army, and laws. Canaan's greatest threat to the Israelites, however, was not their military strength, but its religious system. The idolatry of the Canaanite religion idealized evil, sexual immorality, cruelty, selfish greed, and materialism. It was a "me-first, anything-goes" society. Under Joshua's leadership the Israelites swept through Canaan conquering the land and its inhabitants just as God had promised. After their initial victory, the land was divided among twelve tribes (see Joshua chapters 13-24). Each tribe was then responsible for driving out the remaining enemy from within their own territories. In Judges chapter 1, nine of the twelve tribes are mentioned.*

3.A. According to Deuteronomy 7:1-2, what did God order the Israelites to do? Why did God desire that the Canaanites be a "people no more"? See Exodus 34:10-16 with Leviticus 18:25-28.

3.B. Who was the first tribe to go up to fight the Canaanites in our chapter? See verses 1-2. Which tribe combined forces with them to insure success? See verse 3. Were the two tribes successful in verses 4-8 with verse 19?

*Note: According to verse 4, 10,000 men were killed at Bezek. Bezek was obviously one of the strongholds of Canaan. Adoni-bezek was the title of the king of that region. It was not his proper name.*

3.C. What did the Israelites do to Adoni-bezek in verses 5-6? **CHALLENGE QUESTION:** Why did they treat him in such a manner?

*Note: The Judeans were successful in their desire to conquer and overthrow their allotted lands. They conquered ten "city-state" areas in verses 3-18 under the leadership of Caleb.*

4.A. Who was Caleb? See Numbers 13:1-2 with verse 30 and Numbers 14:6-11. How was Caleb awarded for his faithfulness to God in Numbers 14:24 and Judges 1:20?

4.B. Caleb also attacked the people of Debir. What promise does Caleb make back in Judges 1:12? Who accepts Caleb's challenge in verse 13? According to verses 14-15, how does Caleb's story end? What happens in these verses?

- 4.C. Unfortunately, Judah's story does not end as well. In verse 19, was Judah completely successful in driving out the Canaanites? Why, or why not?
- 4.D. In verse 19 we read, "But they (Judah) could not drive out the inhabitants." However, in verse 21 we see that Benjamin (another tribe of Israel) "did not drive out the people." How is the phrase, "did not" different from "could not"? In what way are they the same?

*Note: Verses 21-36 record the failure of all the tribes of Israel to conquer their lands. The tribes were all strong under Joshua's leadership, but they were side-tracked by fear, weariness, lack of discipline, lack of faith, and the evil around them. As a result, their faith faded away. So much so that we read at the end of the book of Judges that "everyone did what was right in his own eyes." See Judges 21:25.*

- 5.A. What is faith? Can our faith fade away? Has this ever happened to you? What can we do to encourage our faith to remain firm?
- 5.B. Can we today get side-tracked by the same things that lured Israel away from their relationship to their God? Refer back to the last note. According to Matthew 6:19-21 with verses 24 and 33, how can we "keep on track?"
- 6.A. Read verses 21-36 again in our first chapter of Judges. List the eight tribes that failed to obey God fully. How did the tribe of Joseph fail in verse 25?
- 6.B. Verse 28 is a key verse in our chapter. What did the Israelites do to the Canaanites? Was this an appropriate course of action?
- 6.C. We, too, often fail to drive sin from our lives. Often we know what to do, but we don't follow through. See James 4:17. What is sin? What happens in our lives when we deal incorrectly with sin? How should we handle sin when it crops up?