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Judges 1

(2020)

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Although I believe my aim is pure and God's will perfect this document is still the product of a human man, as to such I neither claim perfect knowledge or perfect understanding.

Judges 1

TOPICS

This chapter firstly lists: the places that the following tribes capture:

- Judah and Othniel Caleb's brother, the tribes of Judah and Simeon together and the house of Joseph.

Secondly: it lists the places that the following tribes could not drive the inhabitants out of:

- Manasseh, Ephraim, Zebulun, Asher and Naphtali.

Lastly it states:

- The house of Joseph forced the Amorites to labour for them and pay taxes.

INTRODUCTION TO THE BOOK OF JUDGES

The Israelites forgot the LORD, and worshipped false gods, so the LORD removed His protection and blessings from them, which resulted in them being oppressed by their enemies and crying to the LORD for deliverance. In answer to their prayer the LORD raised up twelve judges to deliver them, but not judges as we think of judges today or preachers of righteousness, but rather military leaders and fighters, that led Israel to triumph over their enemies and delivered them from their sinful behaviour.

Most suppose that Samuel (considered by some to be the last judge) wrote some parts of the book, while other parts were written at a later time by someone of his generation or a later generation. The primary purpose of the judges is best articulated in the following words, "The LORD raised up judges, who saved them out of the hand of those who plundered them. (Judges 2:16). For an overview of the entire book see the title:

- Overview of the Book of Judges (at the beginning of the index).

JUDGES 1: 1-3

- **Judges 1:1-3:** After the death of Joshua, the people of Israel inquired of the LORD, "Who shall go up first for us against the Canaanites, to fight against them?"² The LORD said, "Judah shall go up; behold, I have given the land into his hand."³ And Judah said to Simeon his brother, "Come up with me into the territory allotted to me, that we may fight against the Canaanites. And I likewise will go with you into the territory allotted to you." So Simeon went with him.

Due to the fact that the events from this first verse to (Judges 2:5) took place before the death of Joshua, and other events in the book took place during his lifetime, the statement "after the death of Joshua," has naturally created some difficulty for various commentators, because the words, "after the death of Joshua," cannot be taken to mean all events in this book took place after his death. (Josh. 2:8-9).

There have been various ways of accounting for this difficulty, of which the most following seems to be the most reasonable, which is, at the same time the appendix was added to the book (Judges 17-21) additional material was also added, but the original introduction, "Now after the death of Joshua," was left unaltered as a general description of the overall story of the book.

Who shall go up first for us against the Canaanites: (v1) three practical reasons Israel would desire to go against the Canaanites:

1. So, the tribes that had not yet taken possession of their allotted inheritance could take possession of it.
2. The Canaanites that had not yet been subdued were troublesome neighbours to them.
3. Over the years the population of the Israelites had been daily increasing, so there was a need for more land to cultivate and more cities to occupy.

Added to these three practical reasons was the fact, it was the will of the LORD that they drive out all the Canaanites. Some say that it is not Judah the man that is called here, but the tribe of Judah, this is an error for the LORD says, "I have given the land into his hand." (v2) and then we read that, "Judah said to Simeon his brother," (v3), which clearly shows that Judah the man is in focus, however, they are right in saying the entire tribe is called to go up, since it would be foolish to think Judah would go without his tribe or that the tribe would go without Judah, which means both Judah and the tribe were called to go up first against the Canaanites who remained unsubdued, for though the land had been divided by lot they were not yet in possession of all of it yet.

The people of Israel inquired of the LORD: (v1), meaning they were desirous of knowing the mind of God, this may mean they inquired of the high priest by the Urim and the Thummim asking, who shall go up for us against the Canaanites to fight first against them?

Urim and Thummin: carry the idea of perfections. It is important to note that the Urim and Thummim was not the jewelled breastplate of judgment, but something that was put into it as the following verse shows:

- And in the breastpiece of judgment you shall put the Urim and the Thummim, and they shall be on Aaron's heart, when he goes in before the LORD. Thus Aaron shall bear the judgment of the people of Israel on his heart before the LORD regularly. (Exodus 28:30).

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Following are the two most common ways various commentators suspect the Urim and Thummin may have been used:

1. They were placed in the breastplate, so that whenever the high priests entered the presence of the LORD they would be over his heart. In this way the high priest would always bear the means of making decisions for the Israelites over his heart before the LORD."
2. The high priest carried in his breastplate the Urim and Thummin perhaps two sticks or two stones, one white and the other black. When Israel was preparing for battle, and desired to know God's will, they would shake or toss the sticks or stones, if they turned up black, they would not go to battle, and if they turned up white, they would proceed into battle with the knowledge that they were in the will of God.

Judah shall go up: (v2) the priority is given to Judah to lead God's people into battle to take possession of their promised inheritance, is a clear indication of divine direction, for it points forward to the birth of the Lord Jesus Christ (of the tribe of Judah) being the first to lead us into God's Kingdom. Judah and Simeon were both sons of Leah, Judah suggests Simeon goes with him to fight against the Canaanites, because the land allotted to Judah and the land allotted to Simeon were intermingled.

- The second lot came out for Simeon, for the tribe of the people of Simeon, according to their clans, and their inheritance was in the midst of the inheritance of the people of Judah. (Josh. 19:1).

I have given the land into his hand: (v2) not the whole land of Canaan, but the district assigned as Judah's allotted inheritance of which they are assured victory.

- **Judges 1:4-7:** Then Judah went up and the LORD gave the Canaanites and the Perizzites into their hand, and they defeated 10,000 of them at Bezek.⁵ They found Adoni-bezek at Bezek and fought against him and defeated the Canaanites and the Perizzites.⁶ Adoni-bezek fled, but they pursued him and caught him and cut off his thumbs and his big toes.⁷ And Adoni-bezek said, “Seventy kings with their thumbs and their big toes cut off used to pick up scraps under my table. As I have done, so God has repaid me.” And they brought him to Jerusalem, and he died there.

The LORD gave the Canaanites and the Perizzites into their hand: (v4) of Judah and Simeon. The Canaanites spoken of here is not the collective name used at certain time to embrace the seven nations, but the name of one of those individual nations distinguished from the Perizzites and the other nations. These were subdued by the united forces of Judah and Simeon, fulfilling the LORD’S promise that He would give them into their hands (v2).

They defeated 10,000 of them at Bezek: (v4) the name Bezek is Hebrew in origin and means lightning.” There seems to be some confusion concerning its exact location, since it has not yet been identified, the most common thought is that it was a city in a district within the territory of Judah, about twelve miles south of Jerusalem. The words, “they defeated them at Bezek,” carries the idea that they not only defeated them in the city, but also in the surrounding country side.

They found Adoni-bezek at Bezek: (v5) Adoni-bezek was the king of Bezek, it appears he went to battle with the armies of the Canaanites and the Perizzites in the surrounding countryside, but upon seeing their forces being defeated fled to the city for safety where he was found and taken prisoner.

Cut off his thumbs and his big toes: (v6) barbarities of this kind were commonly practised on prisoners of war in ancient times. Following are some of the reasons they cut off the thumbs and big toes:

- To forever disabled them from fighting and from military service.
- To prevent them from ever drawing a bow or wielding a sword again.
- To prevent them from running swiftly on their feet which was essential for an ancient warrior.
- To humble them forever before their people and their armies.

Some say that during these ancient generations these kinds of mutilations prevented a man from ever becoming a king, because the people would never exalt a man with such mutilations and personal defects who could never go to battle or ascend to the throne. It is also said that Romans who desired to escape conscription purposely cut off their thumbs.

Seventy kings with their thumbs and their big toes cut off: (v7) this shows the power that Adoni-bezek and his forces had, for during his reign he had defeated seventy kings. This may seem like an unbelievable number, but when it is considered that during ancient times each ruler of a city or great town were freely given the title king, because they had kingly power in that place. Add to this, it is very likely that some of these seventy kings had reigned in the same place and had successively opposed Adoni-bezek and others may have only reigned for a short time.

Pick up scraps under my table: (v7) meaning he would fling scraps of food from his royal banquet table for his servants to eat off the floor like dogs. For a man (especially one who lives with extreme luxury) to treat another human in such a manner is an act of cruel inhumanity. The fact Adoni-bezek had cut of the thumbs and toes of seventy men and treated

his servants with such disdain clearly manifests his cruel and tyrannical nature. The Israelites treat him as he had treated others, which could be said to fulfilled, "an eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth," and "the law of equivalent punishment." which Moses had tolerated as the best way to limit the intensity of various crimes:

- But if there is harm, then you shall pay life for life. (Exodus 21:23).
- If anyone injures his neighbour, as he has done it shall be done to him, ²⁰ fracture for fracture, eye for eye, tooth for tooth; whatever injury he has given a person shall be given to him. (Lev. 24:19-20).
- Your eye shall not pity. It shall be life for life, eye for eye, tooth for tooth, hand for hand, foot for foot. (Deut. 19:21)
- And the men of Judah said, "Why have you come up against us?" They said, "We have come up to bind Samson, to do to him as he did to us." ¹¹ Then 3,000 men of Judah went down to the cleft of the rock of Etam, and said to Samson, "Do you not know that the Philistines are rulers over us? What then is this that you have done to us?" And he said to them, "As they did to me, so have I done to them." (Judges 15:10-11)

As I have done, so God has repaid me: (v7) Adoni-bezek himself confesses, that he has received the punishment that he inflicted upon others. The following verse shows us that there are many gods in the world:

- Now I know that the LORD is greater than all gods, because in this affair they dealt arrogantly with the people." (Exodus 18:11).

This does not mean that many gods exist, but that there are many different gods people believe in. With this in mind it is hardly likely Adoni-bezek words, "so God has repaid me," refers to the God of Israel (especially since he was an Ammonite), but more unlikely refer to the god that the Ammonites worshipped. His own conscience accused him of the brutality he had inflicted upon others, which causes him to acknowledge that the punishment inflicted upon him was a just punishment by the order of a divine hand.

They brought him to Jerusalem, and he died there: (v7) prior to laying siege of Jerusalem the capitol of the nation, the Israelites could have released Adoni-bezek with his big toes and thumbs cut off to join his own people as a living testimony of God's vengeance upon those who plot to destroy His people, but instead, they kept him as their prisoner, perhaps to expose him as a trophy of victory, and as an example of divine justice to their enemies. Later they took him to Jerusalem (v7) possibly so that his horrific mutilations and his humbled and defeated position would inspire the people of Israel dwelling at Jerusalem when they saw a fierce enemy defeated, and instil terror into the Jebusites still dwelling in the city and fear into Israel's enemies far and wide.

JUDAH CAPTURES JERUSALEM

JUDGES 1: 8

- **Judges 1:8:** And the men of Judah fought against Jerusalem and captured it and struck it with the edge of the sword and set the city on fire.

Judah fought against Jerusalem and took it etc: (v8) this verse has caused some confusion amongst various commentators in regards to the capture of Jerusalem, because it is states here that Judah captured and took Jerusalem (v8), yet in the book of Joshua we read that Joshua captured the King of Jerusalem:

- These are the kings of the land who Joshua and the people of Israel defeated in the land of the Hittites, the Amorites, the Canaanites, the Perizzites, the Hivites, and the Jebusites and the king of Jerusalem, the king of Hebron. (Joshua 12:7-10).

This clearly shows that the Jebusites and the king of Jerusalem are numbered among Joshua's conquests, however, it should be noted that there is no specific detail concerning the capture of the city, which leaves the possibility open that the Jebusites were not totally expelled from Jerusalem, but dwelt with the children of Judah as the following verse shows:

- But the Jebusites, the inhabitants of Jerusalem, the people of Judah could not drive out, so the Jebusites dwell with the people of Judah at Jerusalem to this day. (Joshua 15:63).

And later in the book of Judges:

- But the people of Benjamin did not drive out the Jebusites who lived in Jerusalem, so the Jebusites have lived with the people of Benjamin in Jerusalem to this day. (Judges 1:21).

Then sometime later we read that a Levite man would not spend the night in the city of Jebus (that is, Jerusalem) because foreigners, who did not belong to the people of Israel dwelt there.

- When they were near Jebus, the day was nearly over, and the servant said to his master, "Come now, let us turn aside to this city of the Jebusites and spend the night in it."¹² And his master said to him, "We will not turn aside into the city of foreigners, who do not belong to the people of Israel, but we will pass on to Gibeah." (Judges 19:11-12).

Based on these verses it is suggested Jerusalem was taken twice, first by Joshua and the children of Israel, but while he was occupied conquering many other cities in the land the surviving Jebusites and the Jebusites in the surrounding countryside later recovered the city, but not completely, perhaps only the lower section of the city, for the higher section on top of Mount Zion was far harder to conquer because of the strong walls, and its high location. All of what is recorded above shows that the city of Jerusalem was not fully occupied by Israel, and that it continued to be occupied by Jebusites until the reign of David:

- And the king (David) and his men went to Jerusalem against the Jebusites, the inhabitants of the land, who said to David, "You will not come in here, but the blind and the lame will ward you off"—thinking, "David cannot come in here."⁷ Nevertheless, David took the stronghold of Zion, that is, the city of David. (2 Samuel 5:6-7).

THE CONCLUSION: is that Jerusalem was never fully taken by Israel until the reign of David:

- And the king (David) and his men went to Jerusalem against the Jebusites, the inhabitants of the land, who said to David, "You will not come in here, but the blind and the lame will ward you off"—thinking, "David cannot come in here."⁷ Nevertheless, David took the stronghold of Zion, that is, the city of David.⁸ And David said on that day, "Whoever would strike the Jebusites, let him get up the water shaft to attack 'the lame and the blind,' who are hated by David's soul." Therefore it is said, "The blind and the lame shall not come into the house."⁹ And David lived in the stronghold and called it the city of David. And David built the city all around from the Millo inward. (2 Samuel 5:6-9).

During the lifetime of Joshua Israel did take Jerusalem, but never fully occupied the city in sufficient force to prevent the Jebusites from gradually recovering the complete possession of the city.

Smitten with the edge of the sword: (v8) the sword here embraces all the weapons of war they had available to them during these ancient days.

Set the city on fire: (v8) not all of the city, but some part of it, for the children of Judah dwelt in some section of it and in another section the Jebusites.

- **Judges 1:9:** And afterward the men of Judah went down to fight against the Canaanites who lived in the hill country (in the mountain in the KJV), in the Negeb, and in the lowland (in the valley in KJV).¹⁰ And Judah went against the Canaanites who lived in Hebron (now the name of Hebron was formerly Kiriath-arba), and they defeated Sheshai and Ahiman and Talmai.¹¹ From there they went against the inhabitants of Debir. The name of Debir was formerly Kiriath-sepher.¹² And Caleb said, "He who attacks Kiriath-sepher and captures it, I will give him Achsah my daughter for a wife."¹³ And Othniel the son of Kenaz, Caleb's younger brother, captured it. And he gave him Achsah his daughter for a wife.¹⁴ When she came to him, she urged him to ask her father for a field. And she dismounted from her donkey, and Caleb said to her, "What do you want?"¹⁵ She said to him, "Give me a blessing. Since you have set me in the land of the Negeb, give me also springs of water." And Caleb gave her the upper springs and the lower springs.

1. **The hill-country or high land:** (v19) (in the mountain in the KJV), is the district of Palestine, which runs through the whole length of the country, broken only by the plain of Jezreel.
2. **The Negeb (the south in KJV):** (v19) derived from a root which means "dry," was the region mainly occupied by the tribe of Simeon.
3. **Lowland (the valley in KJV):** referring to the low lands (Shephelah): (v19) also called low maritime plains, which is Palestine proper, (i.e., the region of Philistia), the sea-coast south of the Plain of Sharon. Sometime it is translated, "the valley," as it is here or as "the plain" or "the low plains."

Hebron (Kirjath-arba): is midway between Jerusalem and Beersheba, and twenty miles from both. Originally called Kirjath-arba (i.e., the city of Arba), it is interesting to note, that all cities named (Kir-jath-huzoth, Kirjath-jearim etc.,) existed before the conquest of Palestine. Joshua gave Kiriath-arba, that is Hebron (Arba was the father of Anak) to Caleb. (Josh. 15:13).

Sheshai, Animan and Talmai: (v10) all three were children of Anak and men of giant stature and possibly the names of three clans of the Anakim.

- So they (Joshua, Caleb and the other 10 spies) went up and spied out the land from the wilderness of Zin to Rehob, near Lebo-hamath.²² They went up into the Negeb and came to Hebron. Ahiman, Sheshai, and Talmai, the descendants of Anak, were there. (Hebron was built seven years before Zoan in Egypt.) (Num. 13:21-23).

Debir (Kirjathsepher): (v11) Debir was originally known as Kirjathsepher (also called Kirjath-sannah) (Josh. 15:49), it means "the city of the book," and is translated by some "city of letters and city of learning." The name Debir means "the oracle." From these names we could suppose that it was a famous centre of Canaanite culture and learning, but this is only speculative. It is believed to be near the spring Ain south-west of Hebron. It later became a Levitical town.

Othniel: (v13) in (Josh. 15:15-17) we are told Caleb gave Achsah his daughter to Othniel, and in (Judges 3:9) we read that Othniel was the son of Kenaz, the brother of Caleb, which would make Othniel Caleb's nephew, however, the expression is inconclusive, because in Hebrew it has been taken to mean one of the following two things:

- Othniel was the brother of Caleb.
- Othniel's father Kenaz was the brother of Caleb.

The words, "and afterward," (v9) refers to after Judah had captured Jerusalem, they then continued on to fight against the Canaanites. The events recorded in verse eight and nine are highlighting Israel's past history, perhaps to show that Judah had previously taken Jerusalem, and to draw attention to the daring exploits of the tribe of Judah. The following verses recorded in the book of Joshua are exactly the same as we read here in (Judges 1:12-15), clearly showing that this is a retelling of Israel's past history:

- And Caleb said, “Whoever strikes Kiriath-sepher and captures it, to him will I give Achsah my daughter as wife.”¹⁷ And Othniel the son of Kenaz, the brother of Caleb, captured it. And he gave him Achsah his daughter as wife.¹⁸ When she came to him, she urged him to ask her father for a field. And she got off her donkey, and Caleb said to her, “What do you want?”¹⁹ She said to him, “Give me a blessing. Since you have given me the land of the Negeb, give me also springs of water.” And he gave her the upper springs and the lower springs. (Joshua 15:16-19).

This clearly shows that the story being told here in Judges is a retelling of Israel’s past history.

When Achsah came to Othniel: (v14), Caleb had already given his daughter the Achsah, the land of the Negeb (a south land in KJV) and now she is married she asks him to bless her by giving her the lush green fertile land nourished by springs of water, he, doubles her blessing by giving her the upper and lower lands, perhaps because he committed her to marrying a man, she may not have chosen, and she obeyed. It would certainly make her a wife of wealth.

JUDAH AND SIMEON DEFEAT ZEPHATH AND HORMAH

JUDGES 1: 16-17

- **Judges 1:16-17:** And the descendants of the Kenite, Moses’ father-in-law, went up with the people of Judah from the city of palms into the wilderness of Judah, which lies in the Negeb near Arad (in the south of Arad in KJV), and they went and settled with the people.¹⁷ And Judah went with Simeon his brother, and they defeated the Canaanites who inhabited Zephath and devoted it to destruction. So the name of the city was called Hormah.

The children of the Kenite: (v16) the father-in-law of Moses, was Jethro, who was a Kenite, however, it is generally accepted that he also had the following names: Reuel, Jether, Hobab, Heber, Keni and Putiel. The Kenites were a people of the same origin and family that Jethro descended from. It seems they were of Midianite origin and descended from Abraham through Keturah. The children of Jethro are called, “Children of the Kenite” because they were the people Jethro descended from.

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The following verses show that the offspring of Jethro came into Canaan with the Israelites and remained with them (or at least a great part of them did). Jethro visited Moses in the wilderness and then returned to his own country, but his son Hobab remained with Moses and travelled with him and Israel through the wilderness to Canaan were some of his descendants settled in various parts of the land. The name Kenites continued to the days of Jeremiah, after which they went by the name of Rechabites, from Rechab, a descendant of Jethro. The Kenites like all Bedouins (nomadic Arabs of the desert) loathed city life and avoided living in them except under absolute necessity as the following verses show:

- Then I (Jeremiah) set before the Rechabites pitchers full of wine, and cups, and I said to them, “Drink wine.”⁶ But they answered, “We will drink no wine, for Jonadab the son of Rechab, our father, commanded us, ‘You shall not drink wine, neither you nor your sons forever.’⁷ You shall not build a house; you shall not sow seed; you shall not plant or have a vineyard; but you shall live in tents all your days, that you may live many days in the land where you sojourn.’ (Jer. 35:1-7).

THE CITY OF PALM TREES

The city of palm-trees: (v16) refers to the territory of Jericho as the following verse shows:

- The Negeb, and the Plain, that is, the Valley of Jericho the city of palm trees, as far as Zoar. (Deut. 34:3).

Called the city of palm trees because of the great number of palm trees that grew near the vacant site of the city:

- And the men who have been mentioned by name rose and took the captives, and with the spoil they clothed all who were naked among them. They clothed them, gave them sandals, provided them with food and drink, and anointed them, and carrying all the feeble among them on donkeys, they brought them to their kinsfolk at Jericho, the city of palm trees. Then they returned to Samaria. (2 Chron. 28:15).

Though there is no longer a city located on this land, for it is destroyed, it is perhaps referred to as a city, because the famous and miraculous fall of Jericho was well known throughout all the land. One of the reasons the writer of Scripture often refers to the territory as the city of palms maybe because the city was so well known, but because the name Jericho originates from a Canaanite deity and the city was a worship centre for this deity, it was quite in accordance with Hebrew writers to avoid mentioning the cities name. The influence of the following curse Joshua put over the city of Jericho maybe another reason the title, "city of palm trees" is used:

- Joshua laid an oath on them at that time, saying, "Cursed before the LORD be the man who rises up and rebuilds this city, Jericho. "At the cost of his firstborn shall he lay its foundation, and at the cost of his youngest son shall he set up its gates." (Joshua 6:26).

The title, "city of palm trees" is used to refer to the territory of Jericho, rather than the name itself. The land seems, to have been a most fertile, pleasant and fruitful place. Three possible reasons the Kenites may have moved to this land in the wilderness in the south of Arad with the children of Judah and remained there amongst the people may have been:

1. To avoid the neighbouring Canaanites
2. The passion and love they had for the people and tribe of Judah.
3. It was a fruitful land.

Kenites: when the Kenites first crossed the River Jordan with Joshua they settled in this land of palm trees most likely for the following two reasons:

1. It was a pleasant and fruitful land suitable for people who dwelt in tents, as they did.
2. It fully met the following promise the LORD through Moses had given to Hobab:
 - Moses said to Hobab the son of Reuel the Midianite, Moses' father-in-law, "We are setting out for the place of which the LORD said, 'I will give it to you.' Come with us, and we will do good to you, for the LORD has promised good to Israel." (Num. 10:29).

It seems they remained in this land until this time, but now they are leaving it with the children of Judah to travel into the wilderness of Judah; which was also a suitable place for tent dwellers and those who love a solitary life. Following are three possible reasons they may have left the territory of palm trees:

1. The Canaanites surrounding the region may have decided to reclaim the land.
2. They had built strong bonds and friendships amongst the tribe of Judah.
3. They felt safe and protected with the tribe of Judah, because they were a warlike and valiant tribe.

The wilderness of Judah: (v16) was a name applied to the lower Jordan valley and the southern hills of Judea, it does not refer to a dry barren waste desert, but a fertile plain with pasture land.

Judah went with Simeon his brother: (v17) having possessed all of what belonged to the tribe of Judah, as far as they were able, Judah now went to assist the tribe of Simeon to acquire possession of their inheritance according to their promise:

- Judah said to Simeon his brother, “Come up with me into the territory allotted to me, that we may fight against the Canaanites. And I likewise will go with you into the territory allotted to you.” So Simeon went with him. (Judges 1:3).

The tribe of Simeon and Judah utterly destroyed the Canaanites that inhabited Zephath (where this city was is uncertain).

Hormah: Moses told Israel not to go up against the Amalekites and the Canaanites, because the LORD was not with them, but they went against His word (Num. 14:39-41), and as a result of this disobedience the Amalekites and the Canaanites pursued them all the way to Hormah.

- The Amalekites and the Canaanites who lived in that hill country came down and defeated them (Israel) and pursued them, even to Hormah. (Num. 14:45).

Sometime later the LORD gave Israel victory over the Canaanite cities, so the name of the place was called Hormah, meaning, broken rock, banned, or devoted to destruction.

- When the Canaanite, the king of Arad, who lived in the Negeb, heard that Israel was coming by the way of Atharim, he fought against Israel, and took some of them captive.² And Israel vowed a vow to the LORD and said, “If you will indeed give this people into my hand, then I will devote their cities to destruction.”³ And the LORD heeded the voice of Israel and gave over the Canaanites, and they devoted them and their cities to destruction. So the name of the place was called Hormah. (Num. 21:1-3).

Hormah is also known by its Canaanite name Zephath, it is an unidentified city, mentioned in relation to conflicts between Israel and the Amalekites and Canaanites who dwelt in southern Canaan when Israel was taking possession of the Promised Land. The city and territory of Hormah became the possession of the tribe of Simeon:

- Simeon's inheritance was in the midst of the inheritance of the people of Judah.² And they (Simeon) had for their inheritance Beersheba, Sheba, Moladah,³ Hazar-shual, Balah, Ezem,⁴ Eltolad, Bethul, Hormah. (Joshua 19:1-2).

Arad and its king: Arad was a town in southern Israel in the northeast Negev, about 32km from Hebron. The ruins are visible at Tel 'Arad, about 9 km east-northeast. In (Num. 21:1–3 we read how the Canaanite king of 'Arad fought the Israelites during the exodus from Egypt, during these wars the armies of Israel utterly destroyed his cities.

- When the Canaanite, the king of Arad, who lived in the Negeb, heard that Israel was coming by the way of Atharim, he fought against Israel, and took some of them captive.² And Israel vowed a vow to the LORD and said, “If you will indeed give this people into my hand, then I will devote their cities to destruction.”³ And the LORD heeded the voice of Israel and gave over the Canaanites, and they devoted them and their cities to destruction. So the name of the place was called Hormah. (Num. 21:1-3).

Ekron: an ancient Canaanite city and one of the five cities of the Philistine pentapolis. Israel did take this city, but the Philistines regained possession of it.

JUDAH DID NOT DRIVE OUT THE INHABITANTS OF THE PLAIN

JUDGES 1: 18-19

- **Judges 1:18-19:** Judah also captured Gaza with its territory, and Ashkelon with its territory, and Ekron with its territory.¹⁹ And the LORD was with Judah, and he took possession of the hill country, but he could not drive out the inhabitants of the plain because they had chariots of iron.

Judah also took Gaza, Askelon and Ekron: (v18) these three cities were on the sea-coast in the country of the Philistines. Though Judah did capture these three cities they did not hold them long before the Philistines regained them again, for the Israelites were content with having victory over these cities and receiving their taxes rather than destroying them, so it was only a matter of time before they rose up against them and regained their freedom and their cities. This no-doubt was why God told Israel to completely destroy the seven ungodly nations in the land of Canaan when they went in to take possession of it.

Gaza: by lot fell to the Judah. (V47).

Ekron was the lot that fell to Judah, but was later given to the tribe of Dan. Now Judah and Simeon go to war to take it for the following two reasons:

1. Out of love to their brother Dan.
2. To secure their new conquests and other adjoining territories from their fierce neighbours.

He drove out the inhabitants of the mountains: the mountainous part of Judea surrounding Jerusalem and other cities and where Hebron stood.

The LORD was with Judah: (v19) this expression is frequently used to imply insured victory, triumph and prosperity. The war was of the LORDS, whose omnipotent presence and aid would have ensured their success whether on the mountains, in the valleys or on the plains, whether with foot soldiers or cavalry, the LORD would ensure their victory.

They could not drive out inhabitants of the plain because they had chariots of iron: (v19) but Israel had God on their side, whose chariots are thousands of angels:

- The chariots of God are twice ten thousand, thousands upon thousands; the Lord is among them. (Psalm 68:17)

The words, "the LORD was with Judah," (v19) should have greatly encouraged Israel and given them strengthening faith and confidence that they could defeat any enemy, regardless of the weapons they had. But they allowed unbelief and their fear to supersede their faith rather than trust the LORDS word that He was with them and could have easily driven out the inhabitants of the valley.

All three places: Gaza, Ashkelon, Ekron with their territory, were retaken and became three of the five principal cities possessed by the Philistines, that from then on they held.

- These are the golden tumors that the Philistines returned as a guilt offering to the LORD: one for Ashdod, one for Gaza, one for Ashkelon, one for Gath, one for Ekron. (1 Samuel 6:17).

CALEB POSSESS HEBRON

JUDGES 1: 20

- **Judges 1:20:** And Hebron was given to Caleb, as Moses had said. And he drove out from it the three sons of Anak.

According to the commandment of the LORD, Joshua gave Hebron to Caleb for an inheritance.

- So now give me this hill country of which the LORD spoke on that day, for you heard on that day how the Anakim were there, with great fortified cities. It may be that the LORD will be with me, and I shall drive them out just as the LORD said." ¹³ Then Joshua blessed him, and he gave Hebron to Caleb the son of Jephunneh for an inheritance. ¹⁴ Therefore

Hebron became the inheritance of Caleb the son of Jephunneh the Kenizzite to this day, because he wholly followed the LORD, the God of Israel. ¹⁵ Now the name of Hebron formerly was Kiriath-arba. (Arba was the greatest man among the Anakim.) And the land had rest from war. (Joshua 14:12-15).

- According to the commandment of the LORD to Joshua, he gave to Caleb the son of Jephunneh a portion among the people of Judah, Kiriath-arba, that is, Hebron (Arba was the father of Anak). ¹⁴ And Caleb drove out from there the three sons of Anak, Sheshai and Ahiman and Talmai, the descendants of Anak. (Joshua 15:13-14).

Caleb drove out the three sons of Anak whose names are given in the following verse:

- And Judah went against the Canaanites who lived in Hebron (now the name of Hebron was formerly Kiriath-arba), and they defeated Sheshai and Ahiman and Talmai. (Judges 1:10).

BENJAMIN DID NOT DRIVE OUT THE INHABITANTS

JUDGES 1: 21

- **Judges 1:21:** But the people of Benjamin did not drive out the Jebusites who lived in Jerusalem, so the Jebusites have lived with the people of Benjamin in Jerusalem to this day.

It was only when King David conquered Jerusalem that it was fully taken:

- David took the stronghold of Zion, that is, the city of David. (2 Sam. 5:7).

After taking possession of the city, David rebuilt it. The city was properly given to the Benjamin, but David's conquest of Zion naturally caused it to be identified closer to Judah. Prior to David's conquest Israel tolerated the Jebusites to dwell with them in the city.

To this day: (v21) the fact that the Benjaminites dwelt with the Jebusites in the city of Jerusalem shows that this account is older than David's conquest of Jerusalem. The city of Jerusalem belonged to Benjamin and Judah, the border of the two tribes ran through the city, and at this time Judah had driven the people out from their section of Jerusalem:

- The men of Judah fought against Jerusalem and captured it and struck it with the edge of the sword and set the city on fire. (Judges 1:8).

Set the city on fire, not the entire city, but part of it. Though Judah regained their section of the city, Benjamin could not fully drive out the Jebusites from Jerusalem, and it seems that neither tribe could fully drive out the Jebusites, perhaps residing in the strong hold on the top of Mount Zion, for it was far harder to conquer, because of the strong walls, and its high location, until the time of David and his mighty and powerful forces took the city. Some are of the opinion, that at this time Jerusalem was not a city enclosed with walls, but rather a large province named Jebus, inhabited in the following three ways:

1. One part belonged to the tribe of Judah, and another to the tribe of Benjamin, with a third section being possessed by the Jebusites.
2. The part that belonged to the tribe of Judah was fully possessed by Judah, while the section that belonged to the tribe of Benjamin was inhabited by Benjamites and Jebusites.
3. The tribe of Judah, the tribe of Benjamin and the Jebusites all mingled together.

THE HOUSE OF JOSEPH DEFEATS BETHEL

JUDGES 1: 22-26

- **Judges 1:22-26:** The house of Joseph also went up against Bethel, and the LORD was with them. ²³ And the house of Joseph scouted out Bethel. (Now the name of the city was formerly Luz.) ²⁴ And the spies saw a man coming out of the city, and they said to him, “Please show us the way into the city, and we will deal kindly with you (show thee mercy in KJV).” ²⁵ And he showed them the way into the city. And they struck the city with the edge of the sword, but they let the man and all his family go. ²⁶ And the man went to the land of the Hittites and built a city and called its name Luz. That is its name to this day.

The LORD was with them: (v22) meaning His favour was with them, directing, assisting, and giving them success in their battle against Bethel.

The house of Joseph: (v22) The focus now shifts from the conquest of southern Palestine toward central Palestine. Though the house of Joseph embraces both the tribes of Ephraim and the tribe of Manasseh, the focus here is the tribe of Ephraim, we know this because verse twenty-seven tells us that Manasseh did not drive out the inhabitants of Beth-shean, Taanach, Dor, Ibleam, Megiddo and that the Canaanites continued to remain in land.

They went up against Bethel (v22): Bethel was located on the borders of the tribes of Ephraim and Manasseh (sons of Joseph). Wanting to enlarge their borders the tribes of Ephraim and Manasseh went up against Bethel to take it.

Following are some of the things that made Bethel a city of great importance:

1. It was the highway between Hebron and Shechem and a main thoroughfare of Palestine. (Judges 20:31) (Judges 21:19).

2. It had a sacred connection with Abrahams as the following verses show:

- On the hill country on the east of Bethel Abram pitched his tent, with Bethel on the west and Ai on the east and built an altar to the LORD and called upon the name of the LORD. (Genesis 12:8-9).
- Abram journeyed on from the Negeb as far as Bethel to the place where his tent had been at the beginning, between Bethel and Ai, where he had made an altar at the first and called upon the name of the LORD. (Genesis 13:3-4).

3. It had a sacred connection with Jacob as the following shows:

- In a dream Jacob saw a ladder set up on the earth, with the top reaching to heaven and the angels of God ascending and descending on it. He heard the LORD saying, “The land on which he was lying on He would give to him and to his offspring, and that his offspring would be like the dust of the earth spreading from the west, the east, the north and to the south, and in his offspring all the families of the earth would be blessed. When Jacob woke from his sleep he said, “this is the gate of heaven,” so he took the stone that he had put under his head and set it up for a pillar and poured oil on the top of it, and called the name of the place Bethel (meaning the House of God), but the name of the city was Luz at the first. (Gen. 28:10-19).

4. For its following history:

- All Israel, went before the LORD at Bethel and the LORD told them to go again against the tribe of Benjamin. Israel went against the Benjamites in the highways, one of which went up to Bethel and the other to Gibeah, and destroyed the entire tribe of Benjamin, except for 600 men who had hidden themselves. (Judges 20:26-48).
- In Bethel the sons of the prophets who were there went to Elisha and said to him, that very day the LORD will take his master Elijah away from him. (2 Kings 2:2-3).

Luz: the King James Bible states, “Jacob renamed the place where he set up a pillar, Bethel, but its name was Luz at first (Gen. 28:19), and that Jacob came to Luz (that is, Bethel), which is in the land of Canaan. (Gen. 35:6). But because it also states, “The house of Joseph also went up against Bethel, and the LORD was with them and the house of Joseph

scouted out Bethel (now the name of the city was formerly Luz), (Judges 1:22-23), it is debated among scholars whether Luz and Bethel represent the same town, with Luz being the Canaanite name, and Bethel being the Hebrew name or whether they were distinct places in close proximity to each other.

The spies: (v24) it was enormously difficult for most nations to take a city by open attack, most relied on cleverly built blockades or on having someone or a group of men inside the city secretly working with them. This is why they ask the man to show them the way into the city, obviously they do not mean the gate of the city, since they see him coming out of the city, but rather a secret way, or the easiest way without being seen, or weakest part of the walls or by a cave or some hidden passage or the part that was least guarded.

We will show you mercy: (v24) meaning they will spare him and his family when they have possession of the city, which they did.

The man went to the land of the Hittites: (v26) The name Hittites is used for all the inhabitants of Canaan; it probably means coast dwellers.

- From the wilderness and this Lebanon as far as the great river, the river Euphrates, all the land of the Hittites to the Great Sea toward the going down of the sun shall be your territory. (Joshua 1:4).

The Hittites, dwelt in the land of Canaan prior to Joshua's conquest of the land:

- On that day the LORD made a covenant with Abram, saying, "To your offspring I give this land, from the river of Egypt to the great river, the river Euphrates,¹⁹ the land of the Kenites, the Kenizzites, the Kadmonites,²⁰ the Hittites, the Perizzites, the Rephaim,²¹ the Amorites, the Canaanites, the Girgashites and the Jebusites." (Gen. 15:18-21).

The Hittites were in the land during the time of Solomon:

- Now King Solomon loved many foreign women, along with the daughter of Pharaoh: Moabite, Ammonite, Edomite, Sidonian, and Hittite women. (1 Kings 11:1).
- They imported a chariot from Egypt for 600 shekels of silver, and a horse for 150. Likewise, through them these were exported to all the kings of the Hittites and the kings of Syria. (2 Chron. 1:17).

The land the man settled in after he and his family left the city of Bethel was most likely a region outside of Canaan that the Hittites settle in after they were driven out of the land Canaan.

The man built a city and called its name Luz: since the man built a city, it would be safe for us to suppose, that he was most likely a man of wealth and probably had a numerous family who were all permitted to take all their belongings and substance with them. The words, "Unto this day," implies that a lapse of sometime has passed between the taking of Bethel and building of Luz and this record of it.

It is said by some that during these ancient times it was not an uncommon practise for a city to be built in a different area of the country and given the same name of another city elsewhere.

MANASSEH DID NOT DRIVE OUT THE INHABITANTS

JUDGES 1: 27

- **Judges 1:27:** Manasseh did not drive out the inhabitants of Beth-shean and its villages, or Taanach and its villages, or the inhabitants of Dor and its villages, or the inhabitants of Ibleam and its villages, or the inhabitants of Megiddo and its villages, for the Canaanites persisted in dwelling in that land.

Beth-shean: after the Philistines battle against Gilboa, the victorious Philistines nailed the bodies of Saul and Jonathan to the walls of Beth-shean.

- David went and took the bones of Saul and the bones of his son Jonathan from the men of Jabesh-gilead, who had stolen them from the public square of Beth-shan, where the Philistines had hanged them, on the day the Philistines killed Saul on Gilboa. (2 Samuel 21:12).

Though it was conquered by Manasseh, it was in the lot of Issachar.

- Also in Issachar and in Asher Manasseh had Beth-shean and its villages etc. (Josh. 17:11).

It is now called Beisan. It was in a district so rich and fruitful that the Rabbis describe it as the gate of Paradise.

Taanach: means "the sandy," it was an ancient royal city of the Canannites on the south-western border of the plain of Esdraelon, about 7km south of Megiddo. It was a town of Issachar assigned to the Levites, and famous for Barak's victory over Sisera.

Dor: a great town with large territories, properly in Asher, it was attacked by Manasseh (Josh. 17:11), and ultimately won by Ephraim (1 Chron. 7:29).

Ibleam: also called Bileam (1 Chron. 6:70) and a Levitical town. The only event connected with it in Scripture is the death of Ahaziah (2 Kings 9:27).

Megiddo: was a royal city (Josh. 12:21) near Taanach (Josh. 17:11), following are some of the events that took place in Megiddo.

The death of Ahazia

- When Ahaziah the king of Judah saw this, he fled in the direction of Beth-haggan. And Jehu pursued him and said, "Shoot him also." And they shot him in the chariot at the ascent of Gur, which is by Ibleam. And he fled to Megiddo and died there. (2 Kings 9:27)

Pharaoh Necho killed Josiah.

- In his days Pharaoh Neco king of Egypt went up to the king of Assyria to the river Euphrates. King Josiah went to meet him, and Pharaoh Neco killed him at Megiddo, as soon as he saw him. (2 Kings 23:29).

It was fortified by Solomon.

- And this is the account of the forced labor that King Solomon drafted to build the house of the LORD and his own house and the Millo and the wall of Jerusalem and Hazor and Megiddo and Gezer. (1 Kings 9:15).

Megiddo: was inhabited roughly between 7000 B.C. and 300 B.C. It was an important town of ancient Palestine, overlooking the Plain of Esdraelon (Valley of Jezreel). King Solomon built Megiddo together with Hazor and Gezer.

- And this is the account of the forced labor that King Solomon drafted to build the house of the LORD and his own house and the Millo and the wall of Jerusalem and Hazor and Megiddo and Gezer. (1 Kings 9:15).

It guarded the western branch of a narrow pass through the Carmel Mountains which was one of the most important trade routes of the ancient fertile crescent, linking Egypt with Mesopotamia and Asia Minor. Its location gave the city an importance far beyond its size. Megiddo was the site of epic battles that decided the fate of western Asia. Joshua in his conquest of the land of Canaan defeated the king of Megiddo.

- These are the kings of the land whom Joshua and the people of Israel defeated on the west side of the Jordan --- NOW JUMP TO --- ²¹ the king of Taanach, one; the king of Megiddo, one. (Joshua 12:7, 21).

It is thought that the word Armageddon as a scene of battle and wailing is derived from Megiddo, since the prefix "har" in Hebrew means "hill" therefore it is supposed, Armageddon means "Hill of Megiddo." It is because major numerous battles were fought near Megiddo that the Book of Revelation, refers to the site as Armageddon, and why it prophesies that a final battle at the end of time would take place there. Today, modern Tel Megiddo, is known in Latin as "Via Maris," meaning "way of the sea," because of its strategic location.

ISRAEL DID NOT DRIVE OUT THE INHABITANTS

JUDGES 1: 28-30

- **Judges 1:28-30:** When Israel grew strong, they put the Canaanites to forced labor (to tribute in KJV), but did not drive them out completely.²⁹ And Ephraim did not drive out the Canaanites who lived in Gezer, so the Canaanites lived in Gezer among them.³⁰ Zebulun did not drive out the inhabitants of Kitron, or the inhabitants of Nahalol, so the Canaanites lived among them, but became subject to forced labor.

The words, "Did not completely drive them out," is mentioned because it is the reason and the cause of Israel's future sins and disasters, for they were commanded to make no covenant with the inhabitants of the land and to break down their altars, but they did not obey the voice of the LORD.(Judges 2:2). Concerning the morality of these exterminating wars, it should be kept in mind that people and nations should all be judged by the moral standard of their own generation, not by the advanced morality of later ages.

Supporting this statement is the fact that the nations of Canaan had sunk to the lowest and vilest depths of moral degeneracy, they were not only worshipping pagan gods, but also sacrificing their children to them. They had fallen so low, that the cup of their iniquity was full to overflowing and to mingle with them would inevitably lead to following their ways, even the worst of their abominations, because of the natural weakness and corruption of the human heart, which it eventually did, for even God's chosen people Israel, eventually sacrificed their own children to pagan gods. This was one of the reasons, during Israel's time of godly zeal and passion under Joshua's leadership that they totally destroyed such corrupt nations, so that their children and future generations would be protected from being led astray to follow their wicked and ungodly ways, which means they were acting from a good and right place and not a wicked and evil place.

NOTE: it must be mentioned that the teaching of the Lord Jesus Christ concerning secular nations and our attitude toward them has completely changed the moral concepts, perceptions and thinking that the ancient world had. Nowhere in Christ's teaching can any command or evidence be found that Christians today should exterminate a whole population or nation, rather such a thing should immediately instil horror in our minds should any Christian leader give such a command, like that of Moses:

- But in the cities of these peoples that the LORD your God is giving you for an inheritance, you shall save alive nothing that breathes. (Deut. 20:16).

Or by Samuel:

- Now go and strike Amalek and devote to destruction all that they have. Do not spare them, but kill both man and woman, child and infant, ox and sheep, camel and donkey." (1 Samuel 15:3).

We should instantly declare that it would be impossible for the most beloved Son of God, the Lord Jesus Christ to give us these kinds of commands which violate our sense of justice and compassion. To quote and use such Old Testament commands as an excuse and incentive to commit such horrible acts of violence as certain Christian denominations have done in the past, is to:

- Ignorantly and recklessly obliterate the whole results of God's progressive moral teaching that the Lord Jesus Christ has given us.
- Ignore the fact that we are living under a completely different covenant and dispensation.
- Disown and renounce every blessing which has accrued to humanity from God's light that the Lord Jesus Christ has brought to us.

The ages of the Old Testament, especially during the possession of the Promised Land were violent, both in the secular world and the Christian world. The sad reality of that era was, if Israel did not eradicate an enemy, that enemy would soon rise up against them with one intention, to eradicate them, which history shows is exactly what Israel's enemies did, if it was not for God's hand upon Israel they would not exist as a nation on planet earth today.

The deeds of Old Testament Israel must be estimated, by the mindset and worldview of that era, and not by ours. Israel firmly believed that in exterminating the nations of Canaan they were acting under Divine commands; and there was nothing in such commands which would in that day have shocked the moral sense of their world, because it was not unnatural or foreign to the standard of life at that time, and it presented a genuine sense of doing what was right before God and a certain sense of justice in eradicating wickedness and, idolatry from the land that if allowed to continue would fill the land and the mind with all kinds of ungodly abominations. (Taken from Mozley, Lectures on the Old Testament).

Israel put the Canaanites to forced labour (tribute in KJV): (v28) when Israel had the power over the Canaanites, they violated the law of God, for under it they were to destroy or drive the people out of the land, but instead, they used them for labour and forced them to pay taxes, and since they were strong enough to impose taxes on them and force them to work for them, they clearly had the strength and power to have driven them entirely out of the land. It is very likely they thought it would be to their advantage to use them as labourers and that their taxes would prosper them, when in reality history shows that it was what led to their ruin.

Ephraim did not drive out the Canaanites who lived in Gezer: (v29): this is also mentioned in Joshua chapter sixteen.

- However, they did not drive out the Canaanites who lived in Gezer, so the Canaanites have lived in the midst of Ephraim to this day but have been made to do forced labor. (Joshua 16:10).

The Canaanites dwelt in Gezer until it was captured by Pharaoh, who gave it as a present to his daughter, the wife of Solomon.

- Pharaoh king of Egypt had gone up and captured Gezer and burned it with fire, and had killed the Canaanites who lived in the city, and had given it as dowry to his daughter, Solomon's wife. (1 Kings 9:16).
- Zebulun did not drive out the inhabitants of Kitron, or the inhabitants of Nahalol, so the Canaanites lived among them, but became subject to forced labor. (Judges 1:30).

Zebulun did not drive out inhabitants of Kitron, or Nahalol: (v30)

Kitron seems to be the same with Kattah or Kartah, and the Nahalol with Nahalal, both cities were given to the Levites.

- Kattath, Nahalal, Shimron, Idalah, and Bethlehem—twelve cities with their villages. (Joshua 19:15).

Allowing the Canaanites to live among them is what led to their idolatry and ruin

ASHER DID NOT DRIVE OUT THE INHABITANTS

JUDGES 1: 31-32

- **Judges 1:31-32:** Asher did not drive out the inhabitants of Acco, or the inhabitants of Sidon or of Ahlab or of Achzib or of Helbah or of Aphik or of Rehob,³² so the Asherites lived among the Canaanites, the inhabitants of the land, for they did not drive them out.

Accho: was a seaport later called Ptolemais. (Acts 21:7).

Zidon: was the capital city of Phoenicia, belonging to the tribe of Asher. though it was eclipsed by its neighbour Tyre. Asher never succeeded in conquering Zidon. It is now called Saida.

Ahlab: is an unknown town.

Ahlab and Helbah: are not mentioned among the cities of the tribe of Asher, unless Helbah is the same with Helkath.

Achzib: about nine miles north of Akka, there was a less well-known town named Achzib in Judah.

Helbah: the site is unknown.

Aphik: the name means strength.

Rehob: was a Levitical city.

- Helkath with its pasturelands, and Rehob with its pasturelands—four cities. (Joshua 21:31).
- Hukok with its pasturelands, and Rehob with its pasturelands. (1 Chron. 6:75).

NAPHTALI DID NOT DRIVE OUT THE INHABITANTS

JUDGES 1: 33

- **Judges 1:33:** Naphtali did not drive out the inhabitants of Beth-shemesh, or the inhabitants of Beth-anath, so they lived among the Canaanites, the inhabitants of the land. Nevertheless, the inhabitants of Beth-shemesh and of Beth-anath became subject to forced labor for them.

Naphtali did not drive out inhabitants of Beth-shemesh, or Beth-anath: (v33)

Beth-shemesh: means "house of the sun," it may have been a great centre of Baal-worship.

Beth-anath: nothing is known of this town. The name may mean "house of echo," some identify it with Baneas or Paneas, a place at which the echo was famous.

NOTE: it is interesting to notice the change of language, for it is not said here, "Israel lived among the Canaanites," (v33) which implies the Canaanites though subdued by Israel were the larger population, for it is generally stated, "the Canaanites dwelt amongst Israel."

Bethshemesh and of Bethanath: though Naphtali got the mastery over these two cities and forced them to labour for them, they should have driven them out of the land or utterly destroyed them, according to the command of God.

DAN DID NOT DRIVE OUT THE AMORITES

JUDGES 1: 34-36

- **Judges 1:34-36:** The Amorites pressed the people of Dan back into the hill country, for they did not allow them to come down to the plain (valley in KJV) (v34).³⁵ The Amorites persisted in dwelling in Mount Heres, in Aijalon, and in Shaalbim, but the hand of the house of Joseph rested heavily on them, and they became subject to forced labor (became tributaries in KJV)³⁶ And the border of the Amorites ran from the ascent of Akrabbim, from Sela (the rock in KJV), and upward.

Amorites pressed Dan back into the hill country: (v34), the Amorites were the Highlanders of Palestine.

- The men of Gibeon sent to Joshua at the camp in Gilgal, saying, “Do not relax your hand from your servants. Come up to us quickly and save us and help us, for all the kings of the Amorites who dwell in the hill country are gathered against us.” (Joshua 10:6).
- The Amalekites dwell in the land of the Negeb. The Hittites, the Jebusites, and the Amorites dwell in the hill country. And the Canaanites dwell by the sea, and along the Jordan.” (Numbers 13:29).
- Then the Amorites who lived in that hill country came out against you and chased you as bees do and beat you down in Seir as far as Hormah. (Deuteronomy 1:44).
- And the men of Gibeon sent to Joshua at the camp in Gilgal, saying, “Do not relax your hand from your servants. Come up to us quickly and save us and help us, for all the kings of the Amorites who dwell in the hill country are gathered against us.” (Joshua 10:6).

But here the Amorites are dwelling in the valley (i.e., the lower plain of the land), the plain of Sharon which lay between Joppa and Caesarea, which belonged to the tribe of Dan. Unlike the central tribes forcing the Canaanite to labour for them and pay taxes the Amorites forced the children of Dan into the mountainous region, which shows that the strength of the tribe of Dan was the weakest of all tribes mentioned so far, since they did not even succeed in establishing a tolerated peace amongst them, like the northern tribes. However, sometime later, with the help of the house of Joseph they did possess the region.

Mount Heres, in Aijalon, and Shaalbim, became subject to Joseph: (v35)

Mount Heres: the exact location of Mount Heres is not certain, it signifies the "sun" maybe from the worship of the sun on it, or because Aijalon, the place where the miracle of the sun standing still took place was near it, since it is the next place mentioned.

Aijalon: is of Hebrew origin, it is said it means, "Gift of God" and "Gods' Gift," It was a beautiful valley in the lowland of the Shephelah in the West Bank. It is first mentioned in the Book of Joshua where Joshua asked the LORD to lengthen the day by uttering the command: "Sun, stand thou still on Gibeon; and thou, Moon, in the valley of Aijalon" to allow the Israelites to defeat five Amorite kings before nightfall. It was identified in the 19th century as Yalo at the foot of the Bethoron pass, a Palestinian Arab village located 13 kilometres southeast of Ramla in the West Bank but destroyed in 1967.

Shaalbim: When the Amorites had forced the children of Dan into the mountain they came and dwelt in Mt. Heres, Aijalon and Shaalbim, which maybe identical with Shaalabbin.

The hand of the house of Joseph prevailed: (v35) meaning when Dan was unable to drive out the Amorites the tribes of Ephraim being near to them came to their aid and together drove them out from the land, which is why some translate it, "The hand of the house of Joseph was heavy on the Amorites."

They became subject to forced labour (tributaries in KJV): (v35) due to Dan's great triumph and victory with the aid of the Ephraimites the Amorites, were forced to labour for Dan and pay them taxes.

Sela (the rock in KJV): not to be confused with Selah. The Hebrew meaning of Sela is rock, (in Latin Petra), it is a geographical name encountered at various times in the Bible, and appears later in history under the name Petra.

It was the capital of Edom, situated in the great valley extending from the Dead Sea to the Red Sea:

- He (Amaziah king of Judah) struck down ten thousand Edomites in the Valley of Salt and took Sela by storm, and called it Joktheel, which is its name to this day. (2 Kings 14:7).

It was near Mount Hor, close by the desert of Zin. It is called "the rock" here in (Judges 1:36), and when Amaziah took it he called it Joktheel. It is mentioned by the prophets in Isaiah and Obadiah as doomed to destruction.

- Send the lamb to the ruler of the land, from Sela, by way of the desert, to the mount of the daughter of Zion. (Isaiah 16:1).

In Obadiah it is referred to as the rock.

- The pride of your heart has deceived you, you who live in the clefts of the rock, in your lofty dwelling, who say in your heart, "Who will bring me down to the ground?" (Obad. 1:3).

1200 BCE, the Petra area (but not necessarily the site itself) was populated by Edomites and the area was known as Edom, meaning red. But little was known about Petra until about 312 BC by which time the Nabataeans, one of many Arab tribes, occupied it and made it the capital of their kingdom.

Edom and Idumea, are two related, but distinct terms which are both related to a historically neighbouring population, but though adjacent they were two separate territories that were occupied by the Edomites/Idumeans at different periods of their history. Petra was the famous capital of Idumea, called Petra, because of the mass of precipitous rock which encloses the town, and in which many of its buildings are built into.

From Sela and upward: (v36) referring to the southern part of Canaan, from where it went up towards the north. This last verse maybe added to show the great power and large extent of the Amorite people and to sum up the chapter, by showing that neither the northern, eastern, nor western boundaries were completely secured, as the boundaries of the southern tribes were.

CONCLUSION

During the life of Joshua, the Israelites had shown great bravery and had driven out many nations of the Canaanites; but, after his death, they became cowardly, fearful and fainthearted and lacked the determination to drive them out, and allowed the Canaanites to dwell in the land, by agreement or forced labour. This was the first step of their decline and turning away from the LORD.

The people of Israel would have gained total conquest of the Promised Land, if it was not for their lack of trust in God, their cowardice, their covetousness for the ways of the surrounding nations, their willingness to let the Canaanites live among them and their lack of distain for idolatry.

The passion and godly zeal they began with waned, and distrust in the Lord their God deprived them of His power and brought them into troubles. Likewise, throughout all generations, including this present one, the faith of many who begin with zeal and godly passion for the Lord Jesus Christ, wanes and the world recovers its hold.

As the founder of Bible House of Grace, I would like to thank the many Christian scholars, commentators and theologians who have gone before me, and the many today, who have freely made available their works to enhance the knowledge of the Bible to all people worldwide. It is only with the help of these faithful writers that much of Bible House of Grace exists as it does today.

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