

Don't Judge Me, Lead Me: The Book Of Judges

Judges 1:9-15

"Too Much Compromise"

Are you living with the consequences of too much compromise in your walk with God? Our hearts are sensitive to what we subject them to, be it questionable content on our screens, or sin patterns left unchecked for years. To be half-hearted toward God leads to half-obedience to His Word. Of course, God is merciful, and He has left us His holy, cleansing Word that we can hide in our hearts so we don't sin against Him (Psalm 119:11). This same Word can reverse the damage done by past bad choices:

Joel 2:25

And I will restore to you the years that the locust hath eaten, the cankerworm, and the caterpillar, and the palmerworm, my great army which I sent among you.

Judges 1:9

(KJV) And afterward the children of Judah went down to fight against the Canaanites, that dwelt in the mountain, and in the south, and in the valley.

(NIV) After that, Judah went down to fight against the Canaanites living in the hill country, the Negev and the western foothills.

We see in this verse a geographical inference pointing towards a southward progression, encompassing the southern expanse of Judah's hill country towards Hebron, and the northern border of the Negev desert extending westward into the Shephelah and the Philistine coastal area. Their battle plan here is to seize a significant portion of the territories designated for both Judah (Jos 15:1-12, Jos 15:21-63) and Caleb (Jos 15:13-19). While this may sound like progress, we will soon see the holes in the armour of the Israelites from earlier partial obedience.

***QUESTION FOR MEDITATION:** In your walk with God, have you ever been aware that a present difficult circumstance was the result of past disobedience to God? What did you learn from this realization?

***STUDY POINT:** Study out Galatians 6:7-10. How might this unwavering principle from Scripture explain the consequences that the Israelites experience in the Book of Judges? What can we learn—to our own blessing—through this same passage, and then by observing the plight of the Israelites in Judges?

Judges 1:10

(KJV) And Judah went against the Canaanites that dwelt in Hebron: (now the name of Hebron before was Kirjatharba:) and they slew Sheshai, and Ahiman, and Talmi.

(NIV) They advanced against the Canaanites living in Hebron (formerly called Kiriath Arba) and defeated Sheshai, Ahiman and Talmi.

Some fun facts about Hebron:

- Hebron is one of the oldest cities in the Levant.
- According to the Bible, Abraham settled in Hebron and bought the Cave of the Patriarchs as a burial place for his wife Sarah.
- The Cave of the Patriarchs is believed to be the burial site of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, along with their wives Sarah, Rebecca, and Leah.
- Hebron is where David was anointed king of Israel.
- After the Babylonian captivity, the Edomites settled in Hebron.

Hebron emerges as a pivotal location. Situated at Jebel er-Rumeidah, approximately twenty-three miles northeast of Beersheba and nineteen miles southeast of Jerusalem, Hebron served as a crossroads connecting routes from the Shephelah, the western Negev, and Jerusalem. The text references its former name, Kiriath Arba (refer to Gen 23:2; Neh 11:25), hinting at its potential significance as a hub for the Anakites clan (Jos 14:15, Jos 15:13).

Judges 1:11

(KJV) And from thence he went against the inhabitants of Debir: and the name of Debir before was Kirjathsepher:

(NIV) From there they advanced against the people living in Debir (formerly called Kiriath Sepher).

Here, Debir stands out. Positioned southwest of Hebron within the southern reaches of the Judean hill country, Debir in the early Iron Age could have served as an outpost for the invading Sea Peoples, assuming the Anakim of Jos 11:21 were not Canaanites. It is believed to be located at Khiriath Rabud.

In the next four verses, Caleb reiterates the narrative of himself and his lineage, as found in Joshua 15:13-19.

Judges 1:12

(KJV) And Caleb said, He that smiteth Kirjathsepher, and taketh it, to him will I give Achsah my daughter to wife.

(NIV) And Caleb said, "I will give my daughter Aksah in marriage to the man who attacks and captures Kiriath Sepher."

What's this? The promise of a daughter as a reward? Unusual to us and even uncommon then, the notion of advancing one's status through a marriage arrangement not otherwise attainable would certainly appeal to ambitious individuals! A similar instance is seen in David's ascent to Saul's royal household through the offer of a daughter and his subsequent triumph over Goliath (1 Samuel 17:25). Both endeavours—conquering Kirjathsepher and facing Goliath—are daunting tasks, hence the exceptional offer of a prestigious marriage contract to entice a hero to rise. Despite Othniel's existing high status in his ties to Caleb, even greater prestige awaits for him.

Judges 1:13

(KJV) And Othniel the son of Kenaz, Caleb's younger brother, took it: and he gave him Achsah his daughter to wife.

(NIV) Othniel son of Kenaz, Caleb's younger brother, took it; so Caleb gave his daughter Aksah to him in marriage.

Othniel takes the land and gets the girl! Are you sensing this man is on a fast track to success?

Judges 1:14

(KJV) And it came to pass, when she came *to him*, that she moved him to ask of her father a field: and she lighted from off *her* ass; and Caleb said unto her, What wilt thou?

(NIV) One day when she came to Othniel, she urged him to ask her father for a field. When she got off her donkey, Caleb asked her, "What can I do for you?"

In Judges 1:14, Othniel, having won his wife through the conquest of Kiriath Sepher, is encouraged by Acsah to request land to support their household, a dowry not previously mentioned. In the ancient context, daughters typically didn't inherit land, necessitating a request from a male relative. Othniel, a valued vassal with a history of military service, could expect a land grant. Acsah's action of getting off the donkey is interpreted diversely: some see it as drawing attention and expressing disdain, while others view it as a supplication for favor from her father to secure their survival on unwatered land.

*STUDY POINT: Do you have any Othniels in your life? Or perhaps you are an Othniel! Write down ten characteristics of Othniel that made him successful and a top pick for God to choose to be the first judge over Israel.

Judges 1:15

(KJV) And she said unto him, Give me a blessing: for thou hast given me a south land; give me also springs of water. And Caleb gave her the upper springs and the nether springs.

(NIV) She replied, "Do me a special favor. Since you have given me land in the Negev, give me also springs of water." So Caleb gave her the upper and lower springs.

In Judges 1:15, the mention of upper and lower springs likely denotes water sources accessible through shallow digs in wadi beds or deeper well shafts where the water table is lower. It could also allude to specific geographic sites in the Negev, though their exact locations remain unidentified.

Beloved, this is where we end for today. We've covered a lot of Biblical ground, so I want to give you time to go through parts of the video again and digest the continuing Israelite conquest for their promised land—and really the takeaway for us: Too much compromise eventually results in trouble, trouble, trouble!

~ Reverend Darren McClelland