

Sermon Recap Sheet

The Book of Judges Mini-Prequel

Date: 9/7/25

Title: The Book of Judges Part 1

Text: Judges 2:16-23

Since Genesis, something that has driven the biblical story forward is the Promise to Abraham that his descendants would become a great nation, they would own their own land and therefore become an actual society. Furthermore, as a people who have experienced the miraculous power of the one true God and witnessed His glory, they would be a light to the nations by the way in which they live in that land.

Up until Judges everything looks good. Joshua has led them in and it looks as if the promises have been fulfilled and the world is going to see who God is. But Judges shows that no, the children of Israel are not going to live the way they should in the land. Judges is a downward spiraling series of cycles that repeats as follows:

1. *The Israelites do what is evil in the sight of God;*
2. *God allows the nation to be conquered and oppressed by a neighboring nation;*
3. *The people cry to God; and*
4. *God sends a judge to deliver them, but every time the deliverer gets more and more flawed.*

The book of Judges highlights Israel's inability to fulfill God's promises without divine intervention. Judges chapter 2 captures the central tension: God declares, "I will never break my covenant with you," yet Israel continually breaks their covenant with Him. God warns that the Canaanite nations left in the land will become snares to the people of Israel.

God's command to drive out the Canaanites was not arbitrary or ethnically motivated, but theological and covenantal. The Canaanites represented entrenched idolatry, immorality, and practices that directly opposed God's holiness (e.g., child sacrifice, pagan worship). If left in the land, they would tempt Israel to compromise their covenant relationship with God, leading to syncretism and unfaithfulness—which the book of Judges repeatedly shows happening.

Removing the Canaanites was essential for Israel to live as God's holy people, distinct and set apart for His purposes. This also foreshadows the New Testament call for God's people to put sin to death and pursue holiness. Just as Israel's failure to fully drive out the Canaanites led to ongoing cycles of rebellion, oppression, and deliverance, Christians are warned that tolerating sin leads to spiritual decline. Ultimately, this narrative is pointing to Christ, who conquers sin and secures the covenant promises perfectly where Israel fell short.

Discussion Questions

1. Judges records Israel's activity in their conquest of the Promised Land of Canaan. Why did God promise a land to the descendants of Abraham in the first place?

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2. What does God's plan to provide His people a Promised Land teach us about God and the way He wants to relate to us? How does this relate theologically to other parts of Scripture such as the account in Genesis of Eden?
3. How should we understand the purpose behind God's command to drive out the Canaanites?
4. If someone was struggling with the violent nature of God's command to drive out the Canaanites, how might you be able to explain that when seen correctly it actually demonstrates the love, grace and justice of God?