

JUDGMENT DAY

--Judges 1:22-2:5--

INTRODUCTION:

In the opening verses of Judges, it looked like even after the death of Joshua, the nation of Israel was off to a great start. The influence he had left on the nation was seen as they inquired of the Lord, and then worked together to carry out God's command. But then near the end of our passage, at some verses we did not look at specifically, there is some indication that not everything was going according to plan. Judah could not drive out the Canaanites in the valley because they had iron chariots and the Benjaminites did not drive the Jebusites out of Jerusalem, and so they lived with the Israelites in Jerusalem.

These defeats were not complete disasters, but they should have served as warning signs that something was amiss. If the LORD was with Judah, why were iron chariots a problem? Why after conquering Jerusalem did the Benjaminites allow the Jebusites to stay? These are questions that need to be answered and others that will come this morning. We must probe a little deeper to discover the real reason of what went wrong and to understand and learn from it for our own benefit.

I. VICTORY AT BETHEL? (Judges 1:22-26)

- a. As we come to verse 22 of this first chapter the focus shifts from Judah and Simeon to the house of _____.
- b. The success at _____ was not only important because of its strategic position on the trade routes or because of its importance in the history of the nation but by taking this city it opened the whole northern hill country as far as the Jezreel valley to possible occupation by both tribes of the house of Joseph.

II. COMPROMISE AND DEFEAT (Judges 1:27-36)

- a. This next set of verses is very depressing as it summarizes the circumstances of the individual northern tribes, beginning with _____ down through Dan.

- b. What began with a kind of victory in Bethel ends with a humiliating defeat and a general situation that can at best be described as a _____.
- c. Notice what is said concerning each tribe in this section, it does not say that they _____ not drive out the Canaanites, but instead says that they _____ not drive out the Canaanites.
- d. Is it possible that this _____ with the enemy was a yielding to what Israel saw as a reality?

III. JUDGMENT DAY (Judges 2:1-5)

- a. This is the first appearance of the _____ of the LORD in the book of Judges, it will not be His last.
- b. Who exactly is this "angel of the LORD"? As I said this is His first appearance in Judges, but it will not be His _____.
- c. The One who appeared to Joshua at the beginning of Israel's campaign to occupy Canaan now appears again to _____ how things have gone and to give His verdict on whether or not His orders have been followed.
- d. As we look at the verdict of the Angel of the LORD, and the speech He gives we should note that the key word in all that He says is "_____."
- e. Israel's responsibilities as the beneficiaries of this covenant were to be _____ to the LORD and to keep His commands.
- f. It all began at _____, or Luz as the Canaanites called it.
- g. The Hebrew word translated "treat _____" is the word *chesed* and the Hebrew expression used here is "we will do *chesed* with you." This word *chesed* has to do with making a covenant.
- h. Just as Adam and Eve's sin had terrible _____, so would Israel's unfaithfulness to God.
- i. The book will tell the sad history of what a harvest of bitter consequences they Israelites reaped from their _____ to God.

CONCLUSION:

The situation that we see Israel in at the end of our passage did not come about suddenly. It was the result of a slow process that began with one act of compromise. Instead of trusting in God for the victory, they did that one thing that was inconsistent with being faithful to God even though it sounded reasonable, it was still wrong. This event in the history of Israel should be a warning to us, we each face innumerable temptations in our day, little inconsistencies with being faithful to God, they are very subtle. Under pressure to act “kindly,” to be tolerant we can begin to compromise our commitment to the uniqueness of Christ and the truth of the gospel, especially in the world in which we live today. The only way we can face this enemy is by trusting the Lord for the victory.

This passage is also a warning to the church, local churches. Paul said it this way to the Corinthians in 2 Corinthians 6:14, “*Do not be bound together with unbelievers; for what partnership have righteousness and lawlessness, or what fellowship has light with darkness?*” (2 Corinthians 6:14, NASB95) The world offers infinite opportunities to compromise. Israel’s world was Canaan, with its false gods and fascinating and captivating culture. Ours is the fast-paced, pleasure-seeking, pluralistic, consumer culture in which everything is possible, and nothing forbidden except intolerance. The opportunities to compromise are limitless, and the pressure to do so is immense. These opportunities and the issues they present will not go away, we must keep our focus on God and never close our ears to the Word of God; or harden our hearts to God’s voice when He speaks to us from His Word. Because in the end it is not to the world that we must answer, but Jesus Christ the Lord and the Word of God that He has given us that we must answer. For one day we, like Israel, will have to stand before the divine Judge and hear the verdict on how faithful we have been to Him. This is not about our salvation, but about our faithfulness. On that day it will be too late to change what we have done, and there will be no excuse if we have failed Him. Better to be faithful now than to weep then.