

Lesson 2: Judges 1 - 2:1-5 Canaanites in Palestine, Israel's Disobedience

The Book of Judges consists of a collection of stories about leaders and events in the history of Israel that occurred **after** Joshua had led the people into the promised land and **after** the land was portioned out among the twelve tribes of Jacob. Stories of the events in this book were told and retold for generations. They were later collected and written into a holy text that is more theology than history, as we know history by today's standards. The *written* stories are attributed to a group of editors referred to as the "Deuteronomistic Historians" or "D". There is some evidence that the text was written in stages over time. Some verses include references to the time of the monarchy, (11th century B.C.) with a final edition emerging in the exilic period. (Ignatius Catholic Study Bible, Hahn, Scott) *The Book of Judges* tells the stories of early leaders before Israel had a king. It is a study and interpretation of history as it is viewed through the lens of Deuteronomy. History is explained as evidence that the "Hand of God" is active and present in the events of history.

- 1. Read the introduction to Judges in your bible. Share any interesting or helpful information that you find there with your group. What is a "judge" in this book?**
- 2. Read Judges 1:1-4 from your Bible and any footnotes there. Notice that instead of a leader, the Lord appoints a tribe to lead. Share with your group any footnotes you have in your Bible on these verses.**
After the death of Joshua, what question do the Israelites have for the Lord?
Looking at the map of the tribes of Israel, why do you suppose Judah asked the tribe of *Simeon* to join them?

3. Read Judges 1:5-8 in your Bible and Leviticus 24:19-20 below.

Who did the tribe of Judah capture during this battle?

How did they treat this conquered ruler and why?

What was the captive's response to his treatment?

What was this captive's ultimate fate?

Leviticus 24:19-20 ¹⁹Anyone who inflicts a permanent injury on his or her neighbor shall receive the same in return: ²⁰fracture for fracture, eye for eye, tooth for tooth. The same injury that one gives another shall be inflicted in return.

4. Read Judges 1:9-15 In your Bible and Joshua 15:16-17 below.

How do the books of Joshua and Judges agree with the events recorded here?

How does Aksah react to her arranged marriage in Judges 1:13-15?

Joshua 15:16-17 ¹⁵ From there he marched against the people living in Debir (formerly called Kiriath Sepher). ¹⁶ And Caleb said, "I will give my daughter Aksah in marriage to the man who attacks and captures Kiriath Sepher." ¹⁷ Othniel son of Kenaz, Caleb's brother, took it; so Caleb gave his daughter Aksah to him in marriage.

5. Read Judges 1:16-21.

Where was Judah successful in battles and conquests?

What prevented the tribe of Judah from total victory in the plain?

6. Read Judges 1:22-36 in your Bible.

In verses 27-29 Manasseh and Ephraim, the descendants of Joseph, did not force the inhabitants of the lands they conquered out of the land. *What did they do instead?*

Reflection: In verses 30-36, the inhabitants of the land remained living among the Israelites.

What are some of the cultural implications for the Israelites, *positive and negative*, of living so closely with other cultures and religions?

7. Read Judges 2:1-5 in your bible. Some translations refer to “the angel of the Lord” others to “a messenger of the Lord”.

How does your bible translate verse 1? Compare with other members of your group.

8. Read Numbers 33:55-56 and Joshua 23:13 below.

These were the instructions the Lord gave His chosen people as they were about to enter the Promised Land.

What was the warning given to the people in Numbers and Joshua and why?

Numbers 33:55-56 But if you do not dispossess the inhabitants of the land before you, those whom you allow to remain will become barbs in your eyes and thorns in your sides, and they will harass you in the land where you live, ⁵⁶ and I will treat you as I had intended to treat them.

Joshua 23:12-13 For if you ever turn away from him and join with the remnant of these nations that survive among you, by intermarrying and intermingling with them, ¹³ know for certain that the LORD, your God, will no longer dispossess these nations at your approach. Instead, they will be a snare and a trap for you, a scourge for your sides and thorns for your eyes, until you perish from this good land which the LORD, your God, has given you.

9. Read again Judges 2:1-5. What was the message of the angel? How did the people respond to the message? Was there any suggestion of *repentance* in these verses?