

APRIL 23

I'm including a few charts/maps that may help you to orient yourself to what is being written about Israel. Since the action is taking place in different parts of the country, this should give you an orientation. The following are located at the end of this document.

“Chart of the Judges,” The Bible Knowledge Commentary-OT, p. 375.

“Canaan in the Days of the Judges,” The Bible Knowledge Commentary-OT, p. 377.

“The Judges and the Oppressors,” The Bible Knowledge Commentary-OT, p. 385.

Judges 1:1-2:9

The introduction of Judges in the Bible Knowledge Commentary-OT, pp. 373-374, provides some good information. Apparently, Judges was probably written by Samuel sometime after Saul was made King of Israel, but before David became king. Samuel is the final judge of Israel. Though he isn't mentioned in Judges, he is thought to have been a judge during the same period of time as Samson. The period of time involved in Judges is a whopping 410-450 years. The US hasn't been a nation that long; in fact, 400 years ago the pilgrims still hadn't landed here (1620). We will cross that long span of time in this book.

Judges 1

Vs. 1-21 The leadership of Judah. This section describes what God did through Judah, both before and after Joshua's death. We have heard of some of these adventures in Joshua while Joshua was still living.

V. 1 According to the Bible Knowledge Commentary-OT, pp. 376-377, it is better to understand, *After the death of Joshua*, as a heading for the history that Samuel was about to summarize. Joshua's final words and death will be mentioned in 2:6-9.

Vs. 2-7 It doesn't say it here, but when the people inquired in v. 1, it was probably the priest using the Urim and Thummim. The center of Israel was the tabernacle at Shiloh. Notice how Judah became a model of one tribe bonding with another tribe to fight together. This was a great victory.

Vs. 6-7 This is similar to what Joshua did in having his captains put their feet on the necks of their enemies and then hanging them. Here, apparently they knew the reports of this king and God used them to punish him as he had punished others. FYI, a man without thumbs couldn't hold a weapon, and without big toes, you don't fight or stand as well.

Vs. 8-10 This is the first time we hear of Judah going after Jerusalem, but we've heard of them winning at Hebron. Notice that Judah did conquer Jerusalem, possibly after Joshua's death. It just wasn't a capital city for them, and they were told to give it to Benjamin. We'll see that Benjamin couldn't hold it.

The three names in Hebron may be the sons / clans related to the king of Hebron mentioned in v. 20.

Vs. 11-15 We have heard this story before and how Othniel wins the city and Caleb's daughter.

Vs. 16-21 As a testimony to how well Judah did its fighting and securing of the land, the Midianite (Kenite) part of Moses' family came to dwell in Judah's land.

V. 18 Judah conquered this area but as time went on they couldn't hold it. Caleb and Othniel broke the power of those people but it would take faith to occupy those lands.

V. 20 I think these three sons are mentioned in v. 10.

V. 21 Judah defeated the city, but the people of Benjamin couldn't hold it.

Vs. 22-26 The other honored tribe of Israel, Ephraim, had one major, notable victory. Notice that this man and his family were spared but chose to live in Syria. All of the Canaanites could have moved.

Vs. 27-36 Now begins the subtle beginning of the end. The people didn't obey. It started with tolerance and peace agreements now, and ended up with Israel losing its identity and becoming involved in full-blown idolatry later.

Vs. 27-29 This is a summary of the tribes of Joseph. The tribe of Manasseh rationalized their sin by putting the Canaanites to forced labor. Ephraim just allowed the Canaanites to live among them.

Notice that all of the tribes that had land in Canaan sinned in making peace agreements with the people. It should make us think about the importance of obedience and influence.

The tribe of Dan has a little more mentioned about their situation. At the end of Judges we get a dysfunctional little story involving Dan. Apparently they had the honor of being the first complete tribe to fall into idolatry.

Judges 2:1-9

Notice *the angel of the Lord* and the way He speaks. This points to His identity as God.

Notice that the Lord goes up from Gilgal. Important things have happened there. No one is sure where Bochim was. Since this section has a parallel with Joshua's final addresses to Israel, it could be that Bochim is near Shechem. Joshua made part of his final address at Gilgal and his final words were spoken at Shechem. In any event, this must have been a gathering place, but it wasn't Shiloh where the tabernacle was.

V. 4 Notice that the people weep, but they don't seek the Lord to find out how to correct their wrong. Years later the people in Ezra's day will do something similar, and when they seek counsel from Ezra, they actually do what he tells them. The people crying is not the same as the people repenting.

V. 5 How does this make sense? The only place they were supposed to sacrifice was at the tabernacle. By the end of Judges we will see some very wrong religious thinking. It looks like their worship was becoming a matter of the "heart," rather than obedience to the Word.

Vs. 6-9 With these verses, it is as if Samuel has finished one summary of the time after Joshua, and is beginning a new train of thought. This summary of Joshua dismissing the people is a review of the end of the book of Joshua and the faithfulness of that generation. As time went on and men like Joshua and Caleb were gone, the people drifted from God.

In a very real sense, God allowed this to happen to test the people in that He didn't appoint a national leader. At first the people sought a leader, but that didn't last long. God often leads a person to a particular place and then draws back and is silent, to reveal what is in that person's heart. This is God's way to see if we will honor Him and follow, or if He needs to show us that we will still very easily drift from Him. Tomorrow we'll be given a very clear rationale for why God allows adversity into our lives.

Luke 21:29-22:13

Luke 21:29-38

Vs. 29-33 Two groups of people are being addressed here. First are the people in Jesus' generation who would be present and watching things come together for the destruction of Jerusalem in 70 A.D. Then there are those who will be present in the future when the temple is desecrated at the midway point of the Tribulation. Both of these generations will witness completion of those events within their lifetimes.

Vs. 34-36 Very clearly this is referring to the Tribulation and those believers who will be tempted to lose focus and give in to the sadness of those times. Just as it will be possible to miss the beginning of the Tribulation, it will be easy in the Tribulation to miss the signs of the Lord's coming. Again, I think the "he who endures to the end will be saved" message is not referring to losing salvation, but salvation from the effects of bitterness and persecution. The way to be "saved" is to remain strong and focused on what is taking place, knowing that it is God's working. This is much the same with us today.

This is a good word for us as disciples. We are surrounded by the wreckage of Christians who have forgotten why we are here. They are simply living among the "natives" to be liked by them and they have been ruined by becoming like them. We'll see this happen to Israel, but we are no different. We are here in the harvest as our Savior was, to seek the lost and introduce them to Him. If we are just here to live life and go to church until we die, we get lost and bitter and careless. The way to remain undamaged is to *stay awake at all times, praying that you may have strength to escape*. But we often think we're here on vacation during this time in history. The danger around us and the need to stay awake is just as grave.

Vs. 37-38 And we see Jesus, facing a violent death, yet teaching right up to the end. A disciple is not above his Master. We are to work in the harvest following our Lord until the end.

Luke 22:1-13

Interesting that you have four persons preparing for the Passover: Satan and Jesus, and over all God the Father and the Spirit. You see what Satan is doing, and you see what Jesus is doing, and in everything (even Satan's madness), God is working all things together for good. This would be a good point to remember what Paul and the Spirit wrote in 1 Corinthians 2:8, *None of the rulers of this age understood this, for if they had, they would not have crucified the Lord of glory.*

Vs. 1-6 It seems like the occasion for Judas doing this came on Thursday morning. The night before, Mary of Bethany had anointed Jesus' feet and Judas had raised a ruckus. Feeling snubbed, the next morning Judas prepared to do Satan's business, while Peter and John were doing Jesus' business and making the preparations for the Passover.

Vs. 7-13 Apparently there were two days to eat the Passover lamb. This was probably because of the crowds and the large numbers of sheep to be killed. Jerusalem didn't have a lot of rooms to rent for this day and the next week of feasting. Jesus and His disciples used the earlier day. That means that the day Jesus was killed was actually the normal day for killing the Passover lamb.

With the thousands of people in Jerusalem, waiting until the last minute like Jesus did to seek a room, it was a miracle that they found a place. But I think that is the point. Tradition points to this room belonging to the family of John Mark, the writer of the Gospel of Mark and Barnabas' nephew. This is also the room they think the disciples were in when the Spirit came on Pentecost.

Psalms 90-91

Both of these psalms are written by Moses.

Psalm 90

As you read Psalm 90, imagine that Moses is writing this as the nation is under God's punishment after Kadesh-barnea. They endured a very long 38 years in the wilderness, as they waited for the rebellious generation of adults to die. All psalms are inspired, but when you read this, you can sense the depth of Moses' person and his maturity with God. It's like every word is gold. Somewhere on our lists of "what to memorize," Psalm 90 should appear.

Vs. 1-2 Notice v. 1 referring to a *dwelling place*. We've seen references to dwelling with God in a lot of The Psalms. Here, Moses is referring to the fact that though they constantly moved around the wilderness without a home or destination for those long 38 years, God Himself was their dwelling place.

Vs. 3-11 Look at the way Moses describes our mortality and our frailty under God's judgment. It is interesting to think that although we are saved in Christ, our bodies are still under the penalty of sin and the judgment of the fall. And as if that were not enough, God knows our hearts. We know that without the righteousness of our Lord, we would all be subject to judgment, rejection and a trip to hell. Moses lived in the reality of this for 38 years.

V. 12 This is something we should all do, given the disaster happening on this planet. No nation had a better view of the temporary nature of life than Israel did during those 38 years. The reality of this life on earth and the urgency of the harvest are vitally connected to our relationship with Jesus. How can we be saved and not number our days as we work in the harvest?

Vs. 13-16 This is Moses and God telling us that our true joy and fulfillment come from God. The heart of wisdom from v. 12 is what should make a person simplify and focus their life to be filled with God.

V. 17 This is something I pray. Only the Lord can *establish the work of our hands*. The question is, as a disciple, what do you want Him to establish? Joshua served God, and as a result, an entire generation served the Lord. I think for disciples, the work we want God to prosper is the making of disciples, who make disciples, who make disciples, who make disciples.

It is interesting to me that as Moses was ending his ministry to Israel, hoping the people would go beyond him and serve God, God told him they would fail. We've begun to see this failure today in Judges. The failure comes quickly. Yet someday, the Lord will establish the work of Moses' hands as the nation succeeds in the Tribulation and is honored during the Millennium.

Psalm 91

This psalm has a more victorious and confident tone. If Moses was the author, I would guess He wrote this for the next generation going into the land. The writer wanted the people to be confident in the Lord.

Vs. 1-2 Notice the idea of dwelling in God. Verse 2 is probably where Elizabeth Elliot got the title for her book, The Shadow of the Almighty.

Vs. 3-8 This is the victory promised to Israel, but it is really a description of God's love and faithfulness to them.

Vs. 9-16 Notice how this section has two parts, each introduced with the cause for God's blessing, signaled by the word *because*.

Vs. 11-12 Satan quoted these verses to Jesus to entice Him to jump off the pinnacle of the temple. It amazes me that Satan saw these verses and knew that they referred to the Jew's Messiah. I don't think we would have known that any other way. Like it or not, as a spiritual being, Satan's knowledge of the Bible is better than ours. Having the Spirit and a regenerated spiritual life that is drawn to God in love and obedience makes all the difference and gives us the victory. Love and obedience are greater than knowledge.

Vs. 14-16 These verses make me think of Jabez entering the land, and of Jesus in Isaiah 53, making Himself a sacrifice for us and then being honored by God.

Proverbs 13:24-25

It seems that the parent's discipline of the child in v. 24 leads the child to a life of contentment and gratitude to God as seen in v. 25. Disciplining a child does more than keep him out of trouble; it creates a godly perspective of our life on earth.