What Do We Do Now?

Joshua and the elders who served with him were all dead. What would Israel do?

Prelude:

I. Joshua led Israel into the Land of Canaan, and
   A. they did mighty things,
   B. defeating the giant people who lived there,
      1. who had desecrated the land through their abominations, but then
      2. Joshua died.
         a) What do you do when a powerful leader dies?
         b) Can you continue to do mighty things?

II. Israel knew that Joshua simply followed the Lord, so that
   A. it was truly the Lord who led Israel.
   B. Therefore, they turned to the Lord after Joshua’s death.
      1. Some people leave the Lord or fail to worship Him, but
      2. Israel saw Joshua’s death as a reason to turn to the Lord.

III. Israel knew that the Lord had promised the Land of Canaan to them,
   A. not Joshua.
   B. Therefore, they asked the Lord what to do next.

IV. They knew the Lord began to reveal His plan when He said to Abraham,
   7 “To your descendants I will give this land” (Gen 12.7).
   A. He was using Israel
      1. to set up a nation
2. that would bring a promised blessing to the world.

B. The Book of Judges shows Israel in the land, but
   1. before they had a king.
   2. Joshua helped them enter the land by faith, but
      a) could they keep it by faith?
      b) What would they do once they were settled in the land?

V. The Lord had warned Israel, found in Deuteronomy 8,
   A. that they would trust Him when they did not have a home, but
   B. when they got settled in,
      1. they would then deny Him,
      2. believing they had acquired everything themselves,

   11 “Beware that you do not forget the Lord your God... 12 lest—when you have eaten and are full, and have built beautiful houses and dwell in them... 14 when your heart is lifted up, and you forget the Lord your God... 16 who fed you in the wilderness... 17 then you say in your heart, ‘My power and the might of my hand have gained me this wealth.’ 18 And you shall remember the Lord your God, for it is He who gives you power to get wealth... 19 ...if you by any means forget the Lord your God... I testify against you this day that you shall surely perish... (Deu 8.11–20).

   a) What happened once they entered the land?
   b) What about us? Do we do the same thing?
      1) Do we live by faith when things are tough, but
      2) when things get better do we forget the Lord?

VI. Also, in Deuteronomy 31, Moses knew something about Israel,
   A. which was not an Israelite problem, but
   B. it is a human problem,
27 “for I know your rebellion and your stiff neck. If today, while I am yet alive with you, you have been rebellious against the LORD, then how much more after my death?” (Deu 31.27).

Persuasion:

I. Judges 1.1–2 – Something for Judah

1 Now after the death of Joshua it came to pass that the children of Israel asked the LORD, saying, “Who shall be first to go up for us against the Canaanites to fight against them?” 2 And the LORD said, “Judah shall go up. Indeed I have delivered the land into his hand” (Jdg 1.1–2).

A. What a beautiful picture of God’s people.
   1. They knew what the Lord wanted,
   2. that they were supposed to fight the Canaanites, but
      a) they did not know how to go about doing it,
      b) so they asked the One who was giving them the Land.

B. However, later something changed.
   1. Compare the opening verse with the closing verse,
   2. which summarizes Israel's first three hundred years in the Land,

      25 In those days there was no king in Israel; everyone did what was right in his own eyes (Jdg 21.25).

      a) In Judges 1.1, when Israel sought the Lord's will,
      b) they prospered, but
         (i) by 21.25 when Israel sought its own will,
         (2) they suffered for it.

C. Judah asked the right question.
   1. They knew that God knew best.
2. They wanted to fulfill His command.
   a) They asked God;
   b) they did not dictate to Him.
      (i) Their prayer was
          (a) short,
          (b) simple, and
          (c) to the point.
      (2) It produced results.

II. Judges 1.3 – Something for Brother

3 So Judah said to Simeon his brother, “Come up with me to my allotted territory, that we may fight against the Canaanites; and I will likewise go with you to your allotted territory.” And Simeon went with him (Jdg 1.3).

A. Brothers fighting together
   1. against the Lord’s enemies,
   2. instead of making enemies of one another.

B. Brother helping brother.

C. Why did Judah ask Simeon?
   1 ...their inheritance was within the inheritance of the children of Judah (Jos 19.1).

III. Judges 1.4–7 – Suffering for Sin

4 Then Judah went up, and the LORD delivered the Canaanites and the Perizzites into their hand; and they killed ten thousand men at Bezek. 5 And they found Adoni-Bezek in Bezek, and fought against him; and they defeated the Canaanites and the Perizzites. 6 Then Adoni-Bezek fled, and they pursued him and caught him and cut off his thumbs and big toes. 7 And Adoni-Bezek said, “Seventy kings with their thumbs and big toes cut off used to gather scraps under my
table; as I have done, so God has repaid me.” Then they brought him to Jerusalem, and there he died (Jdg 1.4–7).

A. Even a pagan king could see the truth that we reap as we sow.

B. He did not chop off their arms and legs, nor

1. did he kill these other kings.

2. He let them live, although he made living hard.
   a) Without the big toe, they could not run.
   b) Without the thumb, they could not use a sword.

C. After he chopped off their thumbs and big toes of the first several kings,

1. he may have thought that he could continue to do so with no consequences.

2. He went clear to 70 before he finally reaped what he had sown.
   a) If we sin without repenting,
   b) our sin will find us out (Num 32).

   (1) What we perceive as delay or God overlooking

   (2) is really mercy on the part of God as He waits for us to repent,

2 Or do you despise the riches of His goodness, forbearance, and longsuffering, not knowing that the goodness of God leads you to repentance? (Rom 2.4).

IV. Judges 1.8–11 – Success for Judah

8 Now the children of Judah fought against Jerusalem and took it; they struck it with the edge of the sword and set the city on fire. 9 And afterward the children of Judah went down to fight against the Canaanites who dwelt in the mountains, in the South, and in the lowland. 10 Then Judah went against the Canaanites who dwelt in Hebron. (Now the name of Hebron was formerly Kirjath Arba.) And they killed Sheshai, Ahiman, and Talmai. 11 From there they went against the inhabitants of Debir. (The name of Debir was formerly Kirjath Sepher.) (Jdg 1.8–11).
A. Joshua 12.8–10 says Joshua and Israel had already conquered Jerusalem.

B. Verse 9 here in Judges shows that Judah went on to another battle.
   1. Thus, the Jebusites must have come back, because
   2. verse 21 says that Benjamin could not take Jerusalem.

C. Jerusalem was not fully taken until the time of David (2Sa 5.6–9)!

V. Judges 1.12–15 – Something for Woman

12 Then Caleb said, “Whoever attacks Kirjath Sepher and takes it, to him I will give my daughter Achsah as wife.” 13 And Othniel the son of Kenaz, Caleb’s younger brother, took it; so he gave him his daughter Achsah as wife. 14 Now it happened, when she came to him, that she urged him to ask her father for a field. And she dismounted from her donkey, and Caleb said to her, “What do you wish?” 15 So she said to him, “Give me a blessing; since you have given me land in the South, give me also springs of water.” And Caleb gave her the upper springs and the lower springs (Jdg 1.12–15).

A. The daughter of Caleb
   1. got a brave warrior-husband who became the first judge,
   2. she got land from her father, and
   3. she got plenty of water for her land.

B. She was blessed because her father had been blessed.
   1. God had been generous to Caleb, so
   2. Caleb was generous to his daughter.

   8 Freely [he] have received, freely [he gave] (Matt 10.8b).

C. God blessed Caleb, because
   1. he was a worker,
   2. he initiated good things,
   3. he was determined to win,
a) he was determined to obey God, and

b) he took the lead.

VI. Judges 1.16 – Seeking a Home

16 Now the children of the Kenite, Moses’ father-in-law, went up from the City of Palms with the children of Judah into the Wilderness of Judah, which lies in the South near Arad; and they went and dwelt among the people (Jdg 1.16).

A. In Exodus 18, Moses invited his father-in-law to join Israel, but

1. he turned down the offer.

2. However, it may have been safer for Jethro’s family to join Israel, because

a) their neighbors probably hated them for their association with Isarel.

b) Therefore, they sought for a home in Israel’s land.

B. Among the Israelites, the Kenites found love and acceptance.

VII. Judges 1.17–19a – Something for Simeon

17 And Judah went with his brother Simeon, and they attacked the Canaanites who inhabited Zephath, and utterly destroyed it. So the name of the city was called Hormah. 18 Also Judah took Gaza with its territory, Ashkelon with its territory, and Ekron with its territory. 19 So the LORD was with Judah. And they drove out the mountaineers... (Jdg 1.17–19a).

A. Judah did not forget the help of his brother.

B. Therefore, the Lord was with Judah.

1. Is it possible that sometimes we do not do well in life because

2. we have failed to help someone who helped us?

a) Does the Lord withhold blessings

b) until we bless others?

VIII. Judges 1.19b – Success for Nothing
19b ...but they could not drive out the inhabitants of the lowland, because they had chariots of iron (Jdg 1.19b).

A. The first half of verse 19 sounds wonderful.

1. If the Lord was with Judah,

2. they could have done anything in the world!
   a) What are chariots of iron to the God
      (i) who put the ten plagues on Egypt,
      (ii) who divided the Red Sea,
      (iii) who provided for their every need in a wilderness?
   b) Why do we believe God has helped us in the past, but
      (i) that He cannot help us in the present?
      (ii) Or do we believe that we just got lucky in the past?

B. When we read Joshua 17.18 we may wonder about Judges 1.19,

18 “but the mountain country shall be yours. Although it is wooded, you shall cut it down, and its farthest extent shall be yours; for you shall drive out the Canaanites, though they have iron chariots and are strong” (Jos 17.18).

1. That is what Joshua said to Ephraim and Manasseh.

2. He knew the problem they would face in the Land of Canaan.
   a) Joshua knew that if the Lord delighted in them,
   b) they could do anything.

C. In Joshua 23, Joshua reminded Israel of what the Lord had already done,

9 “For the LORD has driven out from before you great and strong nations; but as for you, no one has been able to stand against you to this day” (Jos 23.9).

a) However, the children of Israel were having troubles
b) doing as God commanded during Joshua’s life,

3 Then Joshua said to the children of Israel: “How long will you neglect to go and possess the land which the LORD God of your fathers has given you?” (Jos 18.3).

2. Therefore,


“Why couldn’t Judah drive out the inhabitants of the valley? Because his eyes were fixed on the iron chariots rather than on Almighty God” (Jon Courson, p. 7).

a) Just like Peter walking on water, but

b) the boisterous wind distracted him from looking at Jesus.

c) Then Peter sank.

Exhortation:

I. A gift is given freely, but it must be taken.

A. Notice Judges 1.2 again,

2 And the LORD said, “Judah shall go up. Indeed I have delivered the land into his hand” (Jdg 1.2).

B. If God had already delivered the land into Judah’s hand,

1. why did Judah have to go up,

2. fight the Canaanites, and

3. take the land?

C. While a gift is given freely, it must be taken, opened, and used.

II. God gives you salvation freely, but
A. you have to take it,
B. open it, and
C. use it.

III. Learn from Israel to receive God's gifts, and then

A. use them as He intends.
B. He wants you to become a spiritual person.
   1. He wants you to live for what is right.
   2. He wants you to resist what is evil.
      a) He wants you now.
      b) Do not refuse Him.

IV. Is your life like the Book of Joshua or the Book of Judges?

From Victory To Defeat

Just as Joshua was all about winning,
so is Judges the book about sinning.
   Joshua's vic-try complete
   became Judges defeat
even though they had God's under-pinning.

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