

Old Testament History

Lesson #10

Joshua 13:1-Judges 7:25

Outline

I. **Allotment Of The Land (Joshua 13:1-21:45)**

- A. The land yet to be conquered (13:1-7).
- B. East of the Jordan: Reuben, Gad, and Manasseh (13:8-33).
- C. West of the Jordan (14:1-19:51).
 1. Overview of the allotment (14:1-5).
 2. Allotment for Caleb (14:6-15).
 3. Allotment for Judah (15:1-63).
 4. Allotment for Joseph: Ephraim and Manasseh (16:1-17:18).
 5. Allotment for the remaining tribes (18:1-19:48).
 6. Allotment for Joshua (19:49-51).
- D. Cities of refuge (20:1-9).
- E. Levitical cities (21:1-45).

II. **Epilogue (Joshua 22:1-24:33)**

- A. The altar of witness by the Jordan (22:1-34).
- B. Joshua's farewell address (23:1-16).
- C. The covenant renewed at Shechem (24:1-28).
- D. The deaths of Joshua and Eleazar (24:29-33).

III. **Israel's Failure To Complete The Conquest (Judges 1:1-2:5)**

IV. **Cycles Of Apostasy, Judgment, And Deliverance (Judges 2:6-16:31)**

- A. The pattern of Israel's apostasy (2:6-3:6).
- B. Failure of the judges to maintain Israel's faithfulness (3:7-16:31).
 1. Othniel (3:7-11).
 2. Ehud (3:12-30).
 3. Shamgar (3:31).
 4. Deborah and Barak (4:1-5:31).
 5. Gideon (6:1-9:57).
 - a) The call of Gideon (6:1-40).
 - b) The conquests of Gideon (7:1-8:35).

Notes

Joshua 13:1-21:45

- The continuance of unsubdued races and areas soon became a source of danger, although in a direction different from what one would have been anticipated.

- A nature like Israel, accustomed to the nomadic habits of the wilderness, would hardly feel the need of a fixed plat of land, and would readily grow weary of the warfare in which each tribe had separately engaged in to secure its borders.
- Looking to His promises, God wanted Israel to consider the whole land as theirs, and simply go forward in faith of that promise and in obedience to His command.
- Although Manasseh occupied by far the largest area, it also lay most open to constant nomadic incursions, and possessed comparatively few settled cities. The lot only determined the situation of each inheritance, whether north or south, inland or by the sea, not its extent and precise boundaries. That would depend upon the size of each tribe. Judah had to give up part of its possession to Simeon (Joshua 19:9), while Dan, whose portion was too small, was given cities from both Judah and Ephraim.
- Because of their exceptional faithfulness, Moses, by direction of the Lord, gave Joshua and Caleb the right of special and personal choice (Numbers 14:24, 30; Joshua 19:49-50). Six times it was said that Caleb "wholly followed the Lord" (Numbers 14:24; 32:12; Deuteronomy 1:36; Joshua 14:8-9, 14). Caleb was born a slave, but he died a hero. Unbelief looks at the giants; faith looks to God.
- The first signs of future weakness and disagreement appeared early when the possession of the children of Joseph was designated. They were apparently afraid to drive out the Canaanites. When they wanted an extra portion Joshua refused. This murmuring gave sad indications of dangers in the near future.
- Finally, the cities of refuge, the Levitical cities, and the cities of the priests were formally set aside, marking the end of the conquest of the land (cf. 1 Kings 8:54-56). This is very significant for Premillennialists make the argument that the land was not given to Israel, but will be when Christ comes again. But Joshua is clear that everything God promised in reference to the land was completed.

Joshua 22:1-24:33

- Now that God had given them rest, Joshua dismissed the men with a blessing, bidding them only to fight in their own homes that other warfare, in which victory meant loving the Lord, walking in His ways, keeping His commandments, and cleaving unto and serving Him.
- They parted from Shiloh to travel a far distance, to be separated from their brethren by the Jordan, and scattered among the large tracts, in which their nomadic, pastoral life would bring them into frequent and dangerous contact with heathen neighbors.

- It was an anxious time when the whole congregation gathered, by their representatives, at Shiloh, not to worship, but to consider the question of going to war with their own brethren. The conduct of the two and a half tribes had been self-willed and neglectful of one of the first duties -- not giving offense to the brethren, nor allowing their liberty to become a stumbling block to others.
- On two successive occasions Joshua gathered Israel, through their representative "elders," to address them for the last time. The first discourse discussed the future of Israel and the second the past mercies of God. Joshua was careful to give all the glory to God. It is the language of one who, after long and trying experience, could sum up all he knew and felt in these words: "As for me and my house, we will serve the Lord" (Joshua 24:15).
- The first address, about 15 years after the final division of the land, probably took place in either his own city of Timnath-serah or at Shiloh. Joshua's main concern was that Israel be a separated people and not mingle with the heathen nations. To obey God's word meant victory and blessing; to disobey it meant defeat and trial. The second address took place at Shechem, between Mounts Ebal and Gerizim, where the blessings and the cursings of the law were enumerated to the children of Israel.
- In memory of this event a great stone was set up under the memorable tree at Shechem which had been the silent witness of so many solemn transactions in the history of Israel.
- It was no doubt on the occasion when he led Israel in their decisive victory over Amalek that Joshua's name was changed from Oshea, "help," to Jehoshua, "Jehovah is help" (Numbers 13:16). This name is the key to his life and work. To this outward calling his character also corresponded. It is marked by singleness of purpose, directness, and decision. He set a goal before him, and unwaveringly followed it.

Judges 1:1-3:4

- The book of Judges is a book of defeat and disgrace. A summary of the book is in 2:10-19: blessing, disobedience, chastening, repentance, and deliverance. The time of the judges spanned approximately 350 years. Ever since the sin of Peor, if not before, idolatry had its hold on the people. Not that the service of the Lord was discarded, but it was combined with the heathen rites of the nations around them.
- The completion of their possession of Canaan depended upon their faithfulness to God. Faith is never in the past. For this reason, God allowed a remnant of those nations to continue in the land for four reasons: (1) To punish Israel (2:3, 20-21); (2) to prove Israel (2:22;

- 3:4); (3) to provide Israel with experience in warfare (3:2); and, (4) to prevent the land from becoming a wilderness (Deuteronomy 7:20-24).
- The history of the Bible primarily relates to the kingdom of God, and secondarily to individuals and periods of time. This is the reason why we have no record at all of five of the judges -- not even that God had raised them up. The history of the judges overlaps each other; their reigns are contemporaneous in different parts of the land.
 - The book of Judges divides itself into three parts: a general introduction (1:1-3:6), a sketch of the period of the judges (3:7-16:31), arranged in six groups of events (3:7-11, 12-31; 4:1-6:40; 10:6-12:15; 13:1-16:31), and a double appendix (17:1-21:25). The two series of events, recorded in the latter, evidently took place at the commencement of the period of the judges (cf. Judges 18:1; 1:31 and Judges 20:38; Joshua 22:13; 24:33).
 - The first of the two narratives mainly describes the religious, and the second the moral decadence among the tribes of Israel. After the death of Joshua, Israel declined spiritually and nationally. Side by side with the decay of Israel there is a similar decline in the spiritual character of the judges from an Othniel and Deborah down to Samson. The judges were Israel's representative men -- representative of its faith and its hope, but also of its sin and decay. There were 13 judges over Israel, but only eight have any special deeds recorded. With Samson the period of the judges reached at the same time its highest and its lowest point. He was devoted to God via a Nazarite vow, but he fell and failed through spiritual adultery.
 - In Joshua 23-24, Joshua had warned them against compromising with the enemy, but now they were falling into that exact trap. Before entering in their new war, the children of Israel asked God which tribe was to take the lead. In reply, Judah was designated, in accordance with ancient prophecy (Genesis 49:8). Judah, in turn, invited the cooperation of Simeon.
 - All that follows after the campaign of Judah and Simeon is a record of failure and neglect, with the single exception of the taking of Bethel by the house of Joseph. Gilgal had been the scene of great victory for Israel, but now the Lord moved from Gilgal to Bochim, "the place of weeping."
 - National unfaithfulness was followed by national judgments (Judges 2:10-14). This kind of people could only learn in the school of sorrow.

Judges 3:5-31

- The first deliverer raised up by God was Othniel, the younger brother of Caleb, whose bravery had formerly gained him the hand of his wife

(1:12-15). This is the first time in the book of Judges that it is said that the "Spirit of God" was upon someone.

- The next judgment to rebellious Israel came likewise from the east. Moab allied himself with the old enemies of Israel, Ammon and Amalek. Eglon reduced Israel to servitude for 18 years.
- Ehud placed himself at the head of a deputation charged to bring Eglon "a present," or, more probably, the regular tribute, as we gather from the similar use of the word (2 Samuel 8:2, 6; 2 Kings 17:3-4).
- The silence is here the severest condemnation. They did not cunning and murder to effect deliverance. Not one word of excuse is said for this deed. It was not under the influence of the "Spirit of God" that this deliverance was wrought.
- Shamgar is not called a judge, although he is listed with them. God is able to use a "foolish" weapon, like an ox goad, to bring about deliverance.

Judges 4:1-5:31

- The clouds which gathered around Israel grew darker and darker, and stranger and more unexpected was the deliverance which was fashioned for them. The nation had fallen so low that it was now judged by a woman, which would humiliate the men in this male-dominated society (cf. Isaiah 3:12).
- The occupation of the north of Palestine by Sisera had lasted 20 years. Relief must have seemed hopeless. On one hand, the population was completely disarmed (Judges 5:8); on the other, Sisera had 900 war chariots -- a means of attack which Israel dreaded. However, it would become their means of defeat.
- One of the most painful circumstances in the history of the judges is the utter silence which all this time seems to envelop Shiloh and its sanctuary. No help comes from the priesthood until the close of the period.
- With Deborah, we read of the first time in this history of someone with prophetic ability. Barak was going to learn the folly of believing in man; and Deborah predicted that a woman, completely unconnected with the battle, would have the real triumph.
- Megiddo has always been the great battlefield of Israel. It was located where the Kishon River flowed down from Mt. Tabor. This was the first of many times that its soil would be exposed to the blood of men. In Revelation 16:16, it was symbolic of a great and decisive victory between the forces of God and Satan.
- "Discomfited" indicates the direct interference of the Lord through a terrible natural phenomenon (Exodus 14:25; Joshua 10:10). A fearful storm swept down from heaven in the face of the advancing army.

- Jael, the wife of Heber, was among the Kenites (or Midianites, descendants of Abraham by Keturah -- probably a Bedouin tribe), what Deborah was in Israel, but possessing all the fierce characteristics of her race.

Judges 6:1-7:25

- With the calling of Gideon, the second period in the history of the judges begins. It lasted less than 100 years. The Midianites oppressed Israel, and it had been 200 years since Israel had avenged itself on Midian (Numbers 31:3-11).
- We can understand how the humiliating circumstances under which Gideon was working in his father's God-given possession, in one of the remotest corners of the land, must have filled his soul with sadness and longing. The angel called him a "mighty man of valor," recognizing what he would become by faith. Gideon's confession was a confession of Israel's sin and of God's justice.
- No one is fit for His work in the world until he has begun it in himself and in his own house, and put away all sin and rebellion, however hard the task. Gideon threw down the altar of Baal and from that received the name "Jerubabbaal," or "let Baal strive."
- Gideon sought a sign from God. The sign was of Gideon's choosing, but graciously given to him by God. It was twofold with each part being significant. In condescension to Gideon's weakness, and to show how completely the Lord had prepared the victory, God first allowed him to ascertain for himself the state of matters in the camp of Midian.
- The Lord's instructions probably came as a surprise to Gideon, who was already outnumbered four to one. But the size of the army was not the crucial factor: God could give victory to a few men as easily as to a large army (cf. 1 Samuel 14:6). On the night of the battle, God saw that there was still fear in Gideon's heart, so He once again graciously gave him a special sign assuring him that he would win the battle.
- Gideon also called on the powerful tribe of Ephraim to cut off the Midianites at the fords of the Jordan (cf. Judges 3:28). Many of the enemy forces had not yet crossed when the men of Ephraim attacked them and captured Oreb and Zeeb, probably leading generals of the army. The two were promptly put to death at sites later named to commemorate the occasion (cf. Isaiah 10:26). When the Ephraimites met with Gideon, they brought the heads of these leaders.