

# Introduction to the Book of Judges

## Overview

The opening and closing verses of the book set the context. The book follows the death of Joshua and the elders that served under him (1:1-2, 2:7), and preceded the time of the kings (17:6; 18:1; 19:1; 21:25).

We'll begin by applying the WH- questions to the judges.

## What is a Judge?

At the outset, we must distinguish between two Hebrew words translated “judge” (chart). We think of a judge as someone who decides legal cases, and that does fall within the responsibility of the judges in this book, but a specialized family of words, based on the verb  $\text{יָדַן}$  (H1777), describes this function, and that word family never appears in the book. Instead, the writer uses  $\text{שָׁפַט}$  (H8188), a far more common word family (204x vs. 23x). The verb might be translated “lead” or “rule.” The verb describes the Lord (Ps 96:13), Moses (Ex 18:16), Eli (1 Sam 4:18), Samuel (1 Sam 7:15-17), kings (1 Sam 8:5-6; 1 Ki 3:9), and ultimately the Messiah (Ps 72:4).

One scholar<sup>1</sup> remarks of the people of Bible times, “they did not think of themselves as ruled by laws rather than by men as modern people like to suppose themselves to be. The centering of law, rulership, government in a man was deeply ingrained.” As we study this book, we will be looking at these men as examples of leadership. What can they teach us about what a leader should and shouldn't do?

The noun “judge” that repeatedly describes the heroes of our book is a participle of this verb. Abraham uses it to describe God:<sup>2</sup>

Gen 18:25 Shall not the **Judge** of all the earth do right?

But in general, it is applied to lower rulers.<sup>3</sup> Moses is not called a judge, but he appointed judges to help him rule (Num 25:5; Deut 1:16). Each city has its own judges (Deut 16:18; Jos 24:1).<sup>4</sup>

Deut. 16:18 **Judges** and officers shalt thou make thee in all thy gates, which the LORD thy God giveth thee, throughout thy tribes: and they shall judge the people with just judgment.

Recognizing the judges as local leaders leads to our second question.

## Where did they Judge?

The judges in our book come from eight of the tribes of Israel (Reuben, Gad, Simeon, and Asher are not represented). They are local leaders, tribal chiefs, not national rulers like Moses, Joshua, or David. Figure 1 (chart) shows their distribution. The ones highlighted in green are those singled out in Heb 11:32 as examples of faith, something that we will study carefully.

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1 R.D. Culver in TWOT

2 See also Ps 50:6; 75:7; Isa 33:2. See notes for discussion.

3 Absalom's public aspiration to this office (2 Sam 15:4) is in keeping with his tactic to present himself as an accessible magistrate than the lofty, isolated king that David, in his view, has become. See notes.

4 Samuel appointed his sons as judges (1 Sam 8:1-2), an apparent attempt to extend the institution. Their failure led the elders to request a king.

## When did the Judges Function?

In Israel's later history, the time of the judges was recognized as a distinct period:

Ruth 1:1 Now it came to pass **in the days when the judges ruled [judged]**, that there was a famine in the land.

2Kings 23:22 Surely there was not holden such a passover **from the days of the judges that judged Israel**, nor in all the days of the kings of Israel, nor of the kings of Judah;

As the first and last verses of the book show, this period comes between Joshua and the monarchy (Figure 2, chart).<sup>5</sup> Two OT verses form the foundation for this overall scheme. The first part, from Israel's descent into Egypt to the Exodus, is the subject of God's words to Abram,

Gen. 15:13 And he said unto Abram, Know of a surety that thy seed shall be a stranger in a land that is not theirs, and shall serve them; and they shall afflict them **four hundred years**;

1 Kings documents the second, from the Exodus to the founding of the temple:

1Kings 6:1 And it came to pass in the **four hundred and eightieth year** after the children of Israel were come out of the land of Egypt, ... that he began to build the house of the LORD.

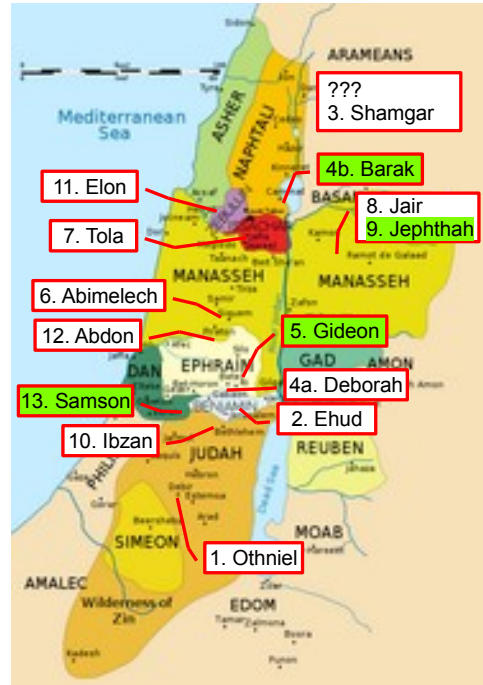


Figure 1: Origins of the Judges

(Jacob → Egypt) to Exodus 400: Gen 15:13, 16; Acts 7:6	Exodus to Temple 1446-966 1 Kings 6:1	
	40: Sinai 7 Joshua, Elders	~300: Judges (Individual times add to 410 years) Eli? Samuel? 40: Saul 40: David 6: Sol.
(Jacob → Egypt) to End of Conquest ~450: Acts 13:19-20		

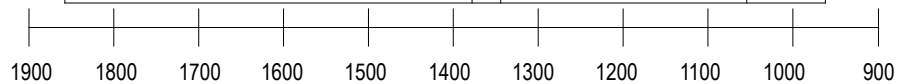


Figure 2: Chronology of Judges. "7" is seven years of conquest (Hoehner note 33).

The book gives lengths for periods of oppression, judgeship, and peace. These add up to 410 years, but given Gen 15:13 and 1 Kings 6:1, there's only room for about 300 years. The solution to this problem lies in what we have already seen, the local character of the judges' work. They functioned in different areas, and in some cases may have operated simultaneously. In four sections, the judges are said to follow one another, and so cannot overlap (chart):

1. Othniel, Ehud, Shamgar, Deborah, ch. 3-5
2. Gideon, Abimelech, Tola, Jair (6-10)
3. Jephthah, Ibzan, Elon, Abdon (11-12)

<sup>5</sup> This chronology follows H. Hoehner, Bib Sac 126:504 (1969), 306-316.

#### 4. Samson (13-16)

But these sequences may overlap with each other.<sup>6</sup>

We've noted that during this book, "there was no king in Israel" (17:6; 18:1; 19:1; 21:25). This lack was not because they didn't have any examples. Twenty-one times we read of the "king of" some country or another. Nor is it for lack of trying. In Joshua 9, Abimelech, the son of Gideon, seeks to capitalize on his father's success to set himself up as king, but does not succeed. It simply was not God's time to bring the nation back under a unified rule.

### Why did God leave them without a Central Ruler?

Joshua led the people in successfully entering Canaan and conquering their major foes. After a false start with Saul, David established the nation as a major force throughout the Near East. But the book of Judges is a repeated story of foreign threats and fallible local rulers. Why did God leave the people in this condition? Why not move directly from Joshua to David?

The book itself answers this question.

Jdg 3:1 Now these are the nations which the LORD left, to prove Israel by them, even as many of Israel as had not known all the wars of Canaan; 2 Only that the generations of the children of Israel might know, to teach them war, at the least such as before knew nothing thereof;

God wanted the people to learn to war, to become like Joshua. The adversaries that Israel faced were intended by God as instructors, for the nation's education.

### How did they Judge?

Hebrews presents four of the judges as heroes of faith, but in their own strength, they are miserable failures. They only triumph when they deploy a secret weapon. A favorite phrase in the book is רוח יהוה, "the Spirit of the Lord"<sup>7</sup> (chart):

Jdg. 3:10 And **the Spirit of the LORD came upon [Othniel]**, and he judged Israel, and went out to war: and the LORD delivered Chushanrishathaim king of Mesopotamia into his hand;

Jdg. 6:34 But **the Spirit of the LORD came upon Gideon**, ...

Jdg. 11:29 Then **the Spirit of the LORD came upon Jephthah**,

Jdg. 13:25 And **the Spirit of the LORD began to move [Samson]** at times in the camp of Dan between Zorah and Eshtaol.

Jdg. 14:6 And **the Spirit of the LORD came mightily upon him**, and he rent him as he would have rent a kid,

6 Steve Rudd, <https://www.bible.ca/archeology/bible-archeology-exodus-route-date-chronology-of-judges.htm> identifies these sequential blocks. He makes 3 and 4 completely concurrent, partially overlaps them with 2, and partially overlaps 2 with 1. Chisholm, distinguishing "the children of Israel did evil" (3:7, 6:1) from "the children of Israel did evil again" (3:12; 4:1; 10:6; 13:1), sees 2-4 as sequential but concurrent with 1. Edersheim, OT History, vol. 3 ch. 18 has still another, as does Wood, who keeps periods of "rest" after one judge from aligning with unrest elsewhere in the country. Wood's scheme deserves further study (12/31/20).

7 Seven of the expression's 29 instances in the OT are here, more than any other book, and denser than any except Micah, which has two in a very short book

Judg. 14:19 And **the Spirit of the LORD came upon him**, and he went down to Ashkelon, and slew thirty men of them, and took their spoil,

Judg. 15:14 And when he came unto Lehi, the Philistines shouted against him: and **the Spirit of the LORD came mightily upon him**,

When the judges act in the power of the Spirit, they achieve great victories. At other times, they fail miserably. This contrast may motivate the frank presentation of their weaknesses: it glorifies the power of God's Spirit to use even weak, sinful beings to win great victories.

## Judges and this Present Evil World

The NT describes the age in which we live as “this present evil world [age]” (Gal 1:4), what Luther called “this world with devils filled.” It offers many parallels to the period of the Judges, similarly characterized by opposition on every side. Let's consider the five dimensions that we have reviewed for Judges, and see how they apply to us today (chart).

Start with *When*. Judges describes the period between the conquest of the Canaanites by Joshua, and the establishment of the kingdom under David. It begins with “after the death of Joshua” (1:1) and ends with “there was no king in Israel” (25:21). We live between our Savior's victory over Satan, and the establishment of his kingdom as David's greater son. The book of Acts begins with the Lord Jesus's ascent to heaven, and ends (28:31) with Paul in Rome, “preaching the kingdom of God.” When we studied Matthew, we noted that the names Joshua and Jesus both mean “Jehovah is salvation,” and in fact, are the same word in Greek, and Hebrews uses Joshua as a type of our Lord. Both in Israel's history and in that of the church, it has pleased God to insert a pause between the conquest and the kingdom, a pause during which his people must struggle with adversaries.

*Why* is that pause in place? In Judges, the reason is to instruct the Israelites in war, so that they could become like the generation that conquered the land. We saw in Hebrews 12 that God, in dealing with us as with sons, allows us to suffer in order to become like his Son. In both cases, suffering is his tool to make us like the one we follow.

*What* corresponds to the judges now? We saw that the judges are more than legal referees. They are leaders, responsible for the well-being of the people. Similarly, in the NT God is pleased to organize his people under mature brothers, described variously as Elders, Overseers (or Bishops), and Pastors. Hebrews 13 calls them “them that have the rule over you.” God has always designated leaders for his people.

*Where* do these leaders function? The judges come from all regions of the nation, and help local groups deal with local threats. In many cases they operate concurrently with one another. They are not subject to a central organization—that awaits the coming of the monarchy. Similarly, in Acts, the churches are local. There is no central institution that manages an elaborate hierarchy. That kind of structure began to emerge in the second century, as bishops assumed responsibility over multiple local churches, and reaches its full expression in groups such as Roman Catholicism and Orthodoxy, as well as Anglican and Methodist traditions. But God's use of local leaders in Judges, and the data from Acts about local churches with their leadership, suggests that this pattern is premature. The only central authority to which we should be subject is the Lord Jesus Christ, and that authority will not have organizational expression until our king returns.

Finally, consider the *how*. We noted the prominence of the Holy Spirit in empowering the judges to do their work. Some have suggested that the book of the Acts of the Apostles is really the Acts of the Holy Spirit through the apostles. In a similar way, the book of Judges is really the Acts of the Holy Spirit through the Judges. How can God’s people face their spiritual battles without the organizational framework of an institution? The answer is the same in both testaments: God’s Holy Spirit.

There is, of course, an important difference between the testaments in this regard. Our Lord explained it to his disciples on the eve of his crucifixion.

John 14:16 And I will pray the Father, and he shall give you another Comforter, that he may abide with you for ever; 17 Even the Spirit of truth; whom the world cannot receive, because it seeth him not, neither knoweth him: but ye know him; for he dwelleth with you, and shall be in you.

Note the change in verb tense in the last two verbs. In the present, “he dwelleth with you.” This is the relation of the Spirit to God’s people before Pentecost. But after Pentecost, “he shall be in you,” fulfilling the New Covenant promise of God’s indwelling Spirit. We should expect that this deeper connection with God’s Spirit would enable our victories to be stronger, and our failings to be much less, than we will see with the Judges. But both accounts bear witness to the importance of God’s Spirit in enabling us to prosper during the time of our spiritual training, while our king is not physically present with us and we must work under the local, distributed guidance of fallible leaders whom God has raised up.

## Structure of the Book<sup>8</sup>

The central section of the book has a very regular structure, summarized in 2:11-19 and then developed through six cycles, (Table 1, chart). We will consider this structure in more detail when we get to 2:11-19, but for now we focus our attention on what it does *not* cover: five chapters at the end of the book (ch. 17-21), and what comes before 3:7. The result is a symmetrical envelope around a carefully structured core (Figure 3, chart).

The closing chapters emphasize four times that “there was no king in Israel” (17:6; 18:1; 19:1; 21:25). These chapters relate two stories. The first (ch. 17-18), a story of spiritual departure, concerns an idol made by Micah, a man of Mount Ephraim, attended by a Levite from Bethlehem who was Moses’ grandson. The tribe of Dan stole it during their migration. The second (ch. 19-21), about social disintegration, concerns a Levite from Ephraim, his concubine from Bethlehem in Judah, her murder in Gibeah of Benjamin, and the resulting civil war between the other tribes and Benjamin.

Judges: Between Conquest and Kingdom		
1:1-3:6, Prolog		
	1:1-2-5, Social Disintegration	2:6-3:6, Spiritual Departure
The Transition ☉	1:1-20	2:6-10
Later Generations ☉	1:21-36	2:11-19
Warning from the Lord	2:1-3	2:20-23
National Response	2:4-5	3:1-6
3:7-16:31, The Judges		
3:7-11, Othniel		
3:12-32, Ehud and Shamgar		
4:1-5:31, Deborah and Barak		
6:1-10:5, Gideon, Abimelech, Tola, Jair		
10:6-12:15, Jephthah, Ibzan, Elon, Abdon		
13:1-16:31, Samson		
17:1-21:25, Epilog		
17:1-18:31, Spiritual Departure—Micah’s Idol		
19:1-21:25, Social Disintegration—Civil War		

Figure 3: Structure of Judges

<sup>8</sup> I am indebted to Barry Webb (NICOT) and those he cites for the overall structure followed here.

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<b>Rebellion:</b> <i>Did Evil</i> <i>Forsook/served</i>	2:11 :12,13, 17,19	3:7 :7	3:12	4:1	6:1	10:6 :6	13:1
<b>Retribution:</b> <i>Lord angry</i> <i>Spoilers</i>  <i>Years</i>	:12,14 :14-15	:8 :8 Meso- potamia 8	:12-14 Moab  18	:2 Canaan  20	:1-6 Midian  7	:7 :7-9 Philistines, Ammon 18	:1 Philistines  40
<b>Repentance:</b> <i>Cry to Lord</i> <i>Rebuke</i>	:15,18	:9	:15	:3	:6 :7-10	:10 :11-16	
<b>Restoration:</b> <i>Judge</i> <i>Land had rest</i> <i>Years</i> <i>He judged Israel</i> <i>Years</i>	:16,18	:9-11 Othniel :11 40	:15-30 Ehud :30 80	:4-5:31 Deborah, Barak :31 40	:11-8:28 Gideon :28 40	:17-12:7 Jephthah  :7 6	:2-16:31 Samson  15:20, 16:31 20
<b>Other Judges:</b> <i>Years</i>			:32 Shamgar		:29-9:57 Abimelech, 3 10:1,2 Tola, 23 :3-5 Jair, 22	:8-10 Ibzan, 7 :11-12 Elon, 10 :13-15 Abdon, 8	

*Table 1: The Cycles of Judges*

Repetitions in ch. 1:1-3:7 suggest again two major sections. Both begin with the death of Joshua (1:1; 2:6-10). Both conclude with the Lord speaking to the people (2:1-3, 20-23) and their response (2:4-5; 3:1-6). The intervening narrative deals with spiritual apostasy in the second section (an outline of the cycle repeated six times in the body of the book), and the inability of the individual tribes to subdue the land that they had occupied in the first—the same two themes of spiritual departure and social disintegration that we saw in the final two chapters.

The messages from the Lord that conclude the two sections in ch. 1-2 both emphasize that the Lord “will not drive out” the Canaanites that remain. These residual pagans provide the occasion for Israel’s recurrent rebellion, and often the means of God’s retribution upon them.

### 1:1-3:6, Prolog

These chapters describe the social disintegration and spiritual departure of the people. Each part begins with the death of Joshua, describes certain events (military in the first part, spiritual in the second), presents a word from the Lord, and ends summarizing the people’s response.

### 1:1-2:5, Social Disintegration

#### 1:1-20, The Successful Transition

**1:1** Now after the death of Joshua it came to pass,—As spelled out more clearly in 2:6-10, the generation that outlived Joshua did fine. These verses, including the exploits of Caleb, fall into this category.

## Introduction to the Book of Judges

This chapter begins with Judah and Simeon in the south, then moves to the northern tribes. Judah, the tribe that will later produce the king, enjoys victory, but the northern tribes are almost uniformly defeated. We will want to observe what makes the difference.

Joshua's last action was to "let the people depart, every man unto his inheritance" (Josh 24:28). But Judges begins with a joint petition from all of the tribes to the Lord. This is the first key to Judah's success.

**1:1 Now after the death of Joshua it came to pass, that the children of Israel asked the LORD, saying, Who shall go up for us against the **Canaanites**<sup>9</sup> first, to fight against them? 2 And the LORD said, Judah shall go up: behold, I have delivered the land into his hand.**

Throughout the book, whenever the nation cries out to the Lord, he graciously hears and intervenes (Table 1).

The second key is that Judah is not a soloist. The Lord grants his blessing in response to a joint petition, and Judah does not fight alone, but invites Simeon to join him. This theme of cooperation comes up repeatedly in the first 20 verses.

**3 And Judah said unto Simeon his brother, Come up with me into my lot, that we may fight against the **Canaanites**; and I likewise will go with thee into thy lot. So Simeon went with him.**—This invitation is entirely reasonable, since Simeon had no territory of its own, but was allotted cities within the tribal boundaries of Judah. This arrangement was a judgment against Simeon and Levi for their deceit and violence against the inhabitants of Shechem (Genesis 34). In his final blessing on the tribes, Jacob cursed them:

Gen 49:7 Cursed be their anger, for it was fierce; and their wrath, for it was cruel: I will divide them in Jacob, and scatter them in Israel.

As a result, Levi's cities were scattered throughout the other tribes, and Simeon was blended into Judah's territory.

**4 And Judah went up; and the LORD delivered the **Canaanites** and the **Perizzites** into their hand:**—These are two of the six nations often mentioned in the conquest (cf. 3:5).

**and they slew of them in Bezek ten thousand men.**—The location is not certain. The name is preserved north of Shechem,<sup>10</sup> and is where Saul numbered the people in preparation for his war against Jabesh-Gilead, but that is far outside of Judah's territory.

**5 And they found Adonibezek in Bezek:**—"The Lord of Bezek," probably a title.

The location of Bezek is not clear (Figure 4, chart). There is a Bezek in the territory of Ephraim, where Saul marshalled the troops to relieve the Israelites at Jabesh-Gilead (1 Sam 11:8), but that is far from Judah's territory, whose northern boundary was Jerusalem. So the northern Bezek is probably not the city in view here.

**and they fought against him, and they slew the **Canaanites** and the **Perizzites**. 6 But Adonibezek fled; and they pursued after him, and caught him, and cut off his thumbs and his great toes.**—Thus mutilated, he cannot shoot a bow, throw a spear, hold a sword, or run.

**7 And Adonibezek said, Threescore and ten kings, having their thumbs and their great toes cut off, gathered their meat under my table: as I have done, so God hath required me.**—His

9 Red font in this chapter indicates the condemned nations of Deut 20:17.

10 Archaeological Encyclopedia of the Holy Land; the name is preserved at 188197, Kh. Ibziq

judgment satisfies the biblical principle of an eye for an eye. Yet Judah's treatment of him is questionable. Joshua's example was to destroy the kings that ruled over the land, not to apply a Canaanite standard of humiliation (Chisholm). Recall the treatment of the coalition led by the king of Jerusalem, including the kings of Hebron, Jarmuth, Lachish, and Eglon (Joshua 10):

Jos 10:26 And afterward Joshua smote them, and slew them, and hanged them on five trees: and they were hanging upon the trees until the evening.

Ominously, Judah is departing from the example set by Joshua of no tolerance for the enemy, and is rather adopting the enemy's standards, as Saul would later do with Agag.

**And they brought him to Jerusalem, and there he died. 8 Now And the children of Judah had fought against Jerusalem, and had taken it, and smitten smote it with the edge of the sword, and set the city on fire.**—The verb is not a flashback, but continues the narrative. Joshua slew the king, but did not conquer the city.



Figure 4: Places in Judg 1:1-20. Red: Campaign of Judah and Simeon. Blue: movement of the Kenites (1:16).

In a book that looks forward to Israel's king, the status of Jerusalem is important. The south side of the city, formerly called "Jebus," touched the border between Judah and Benjamin (Jos 15:8). The city itself is listed among the cities of Benjamin (Jos 18:28), but its inhabitants interacted extensively with Judah:

Jos 15:63 As for the Jebusites the inhabitants of Jerusalem, the children of Judah could not drive them out: but the Jebusites dwell with the children of Judah at Jerusalem unto this day.

The phrase used here does not mean that Judah destroyed the city, but only that they set fire to it, perhaps on a raid.<sup>11</sup> In 1:21 we read, in language reminiscent of Jos 15:63, that Benjamin was no more successful than Judah in subduing the city, and in Judg 19:10, the Levite returning with his wayward concubine from Bethlehem to Mount Ephraim decides not to spend the night in Jerusalem, because it is "the city of a stranger," unlike the nearby town of Gibeah. Thus the land not only had no king, but it also did not control the city destined by God to be its capital. David conquered the city in 2 Samuel 5, and its location on the border of Judah and Benjamin, the northern and southern tribes, made it an ideal political center for the country.

**9 And afterward the children of Judah went down to fight against the Canaanites, that dwelt in the mountain, and in the south, and in the valley.**—Distinguish these key areas of the country, named often in the OT (Figure 5, chart). Joshua gives a fairly comprehensive list (others include Deut 1:7; Jos 10:40; 11:16; Jdg 1:9; Jer 33:13; the plurals are spurious—other than "springs," the terms are always singular).

Jos 12:7 And these are the kings of the country which Joshua and the children of Israel smote ... 8 In the **mountains**- H02022 הָר, and in the **valleys**- H08219 שְׁפֵלָה, and in the **plains**-

11 Not the usual expression for destroying a city by fire, שָׂרַף בָּאֵשׁ, but שָׂלַח בָּאֵשׁ. Judges knows the other expression (Judg. 9:52; 12:1; 14:15; 15:6; 18:27), and in the last cases uses it of a city.



H06160 ערבה, and in the **springs** H0794 אשדות, and in the **wilderness** H04057 מדבר, and in the **south** country H05045 נגב;

**10 And Judah went against the Canaanites that dwelt in Hebron: (now the name of Hebron before was Kirjatharba:)**—Note three things about Hebron (chart).

First, unlike Jerusalem, Joshua already conquered it.

Josh. 10:36 And Joshua went up from Eglon, and all Israel with him, unto **Hebron**; and they fought against it: 37 And they took it, and **smote it with the edge of the sword**, and the king thereof, and all the cities thereof, and all the souls that were therein; he left none remaining,

But he did not destroy the physical city itself—the Lord’s purpose was to endow Israel with a developed land, not a wilderness.<sup>12</sup>

Deut. 6:10 And it shall be, when the LORD thy God shall have brought thee into the land which he sware unto thy fathers, to Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob, to give thee great and goodly cities, which thou buildedst not, 11 And **houses full of all good things, which thou filledst not**, and wells digged, which thou diggedst not, vineyards and olive trees, which thou plantedst not; when thou shalt have eaten and be full;

The city was ready for them to move in, but “the Canaanites” came first, and “dwelt in Hebron.”

Second, this area was promised to Caleb. When the tribes allotted the land in Joshua, after Reuben, Gad, and half of Manasseh received their portions on the east bank but before the western tribes received theirs, Caleb made a request:

Josh. 14:12 Now therefore give me this mountain, whereof the LORD spake in that day; for thou heardest in that day how the Anakims were there, and that the cities were great and fenced: if so be the LORD will be with me, then I shall be able to drive them out, as the LORD said. 13 And Joshua blessed him, and gave unto Caleb the son of Jephunneh Hebron for an inheritance. 14 **Hebron therefore became the inheritance of Caleb** the son of Jephunneh the Kenezite unto this day, because that he wholly followed the LORD God of Israel.

Third, Hebron became a Levitical city. After Joshua promised Caleb the city, in Joshua 21 the Levites came to Joshua to ask for the distributed inheritance that Moses in Numbers 35 had promised them. Some cities were selected from each tribe by lot (Josh 21:4) for the Levites, and Hebron was one of these, leaving Caleb only with the outlying villages:

Josh. 21:4 the children of Aaron the priest, which were of the Levites, had **by lot** out of the tribe of Judah, and out of the tribe of Simeon, and out of the tribe of Benjamin, thirteen cities. ... 11 And they gave them the city of Arba the father of Anak, which city is Hebron, in the hill country of Judah, with the suburbs thereof round about it. 12 But **the fields of the city**,

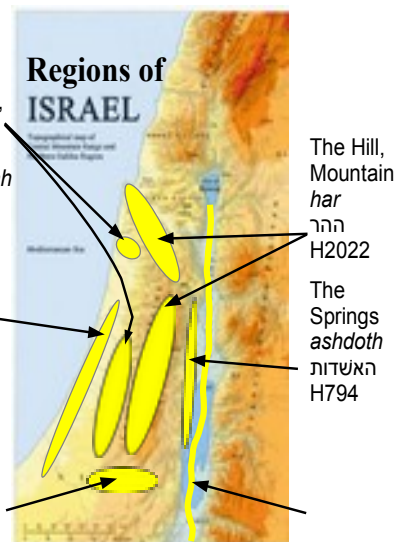


Figure 5: Regions of Israel

<sup>12</sup> This observation is an important response to efforts to date the Exodus by destruction layers in the major cities. Israel did not destroy most of the cities it conquered. “Cities burned to the ground do not yield to their captors houses filled with all kinds of goods” (B. Waltke, *Bib. Sac.* 129:513 (1972) p. 35).

**and the villages thereof, gave they to Caleb** the son of Jephunneh for his possession.

Hebron was to be Caleb's reward for his exceptional devotion to the Lord, urging the nation to claim their inheritance when the other ten spies encouraged fear. Then the Lord took it from him by lot, leaving him only with the villages and the countryside. We might think that God would deal more favorably with such a spiritual hero! But the glory awaits the kingdom. Until then, God calls on his most faithful servants to do the most difficult tasks—such as supporting the establishment of a levitical city of refuge—even at great personal sacrifice. Caleb's faithfulness at Kadesh Barnea anticipates his faithfulness here. His willingness to fight for a city that belongs to someone else is a sign of mutual commitment that will often be lacking later in the book.

**and they slew Sheshai, and Ahiman, and Talmi.**—These were the giants feared by the spies:

Num. 13:22 And they ascended by the south, and came unto Hebron; where Ahiman, Sheshai, and Talmi, the children of Anak, were. . . . 33 And there we saw the giants, the sons of Anak, which come of the giants: and we were in our own sight as grasshoppers, and so we were in their sight.

So their defeat (mentioned again in v. 20) is a significant event in the occupation of the land.

The first two cities captured by Judah are thus Jerusalem and Hebron. These were David's royal cities. After the death of Saul, before Saul's family submitted to him, David ruled over Judah from Hebron (2 Sam 2:11). Then, after the northern tribes recognized him, he conquered Jerusalem and made it his capital. Judah's success with these cities at the start of Judges anticipates these events. Through the rest of the book, nothing at all happens in Hebron, and Jerusalem remains alien and inaccessible. Judah's success anticipates the coming of the king, but until David arrives, these two cities are almost unmentioned in the history.<sup>13</sup>

**11 And from thence he went against the inhabitants of Debir: and the name of Debir before was Kirjathsepher:**—Debir (Kh. Rabbud, 151093) lies along the ridge route 13 km to the south of Hebron, so that anyone approaching the city from the south would come that way.

**12 And Caleb said, He that smiteth Kirjathsepher, and taketh it, to him will I give Achsah my daughter to wife.**—Debir was also one of the Levitical cities (Jos 21:25). So it is not included in the surrounding towns and villages that he ultimately inherited. In spite of this, he seeks to motivate his brethren toward the conquest of this town, another indication of his cooperative spirit. In addition, he sees its subjection as increasing the security of the whole region, including his own holdings.

**13 And Othniel the son of Kenaz, Caleb's younger brother, took it: and he gave him Achsah his daughter to wife.**—The younger brother of Caleb might be either Othniel, or Kenaz, which would make Othniel his nephew. The former is more straightforward linguistically,<sup>14</sup> but chronologically it is easier to see him as the nephew of 85-year old Caleb. Othniel subdues the city, but it cannot become his homestead because it is a Levitical city.

“Son of Kenaz” here may be a reference to ancestry rather than immediate paternity. Caleb as a spy represents the tribe of Judah (Num 13:6), but Block notes that he is also called a Kenizzite (Num 32:12<sup>c</sup>cf. Josh 14:6, 14). Kenaz was an Edomite chieftain (Gen 36:11, 15, 42). These Israelite heroes are descended from Esau, yet they are so integrated into the people of God that

13 Before David, Jerusalem appears again only in the record of Benjamin's failure (1:21) and the Levite's rejection of the city (19:10), and Hebron only as a recipient of gifts from David celebrating his raids from Ziklag.

14 “Son of Kenaz” could be a family description equivalent to “the Kenezite,” Num 32:12, Caleb's family.

they are two of the most positive characters in this book. Their mixed ancestry may anticipate the longed-for king, for David's great-grandmother Ruth was also a Gentile, a Moabitess.

Othniel's new wife, Caleb's daughter, asks for two gifts from Caleb's holdings.

**14 And it came to pass, when she came to him, that she ~~moved him to ask of her father~~ moved her father, asking of him a field:**—Her first request is for a field, so that they can make a living. Use of the construction found here in other places suggests that she is not nagging her new husband to ask his father in law, but in fact asking her father himself.<sup>15</sup> This grant would be from the territory that Caleb received in lieu of Hebron in Josh 21:12.

**and she lighted from off her ass; and Caleb said unto her, What wilt thou? 15 And she said unto him, Give me a blessing:**—Her approach to her father is respectful and an example of how children and their parents should interact. She dismounts to show her respect, and asks for the water sources, not as a right or a duty, but as a paternal blessing. She recognizes his parental authority over her and his God-given title to the resources, but also his natural inclination to bless his children and seek their well-being.

**for thou hast given me a south land; give me also springs of water. And Caleb gave her the upper springs and the nether springs.**—She also asks for water sources<sup>16</sup> to water the field, because it is “a south land,” on the border of the arid Negeb.

[This note] provides a delightful picture of normal and positive social relationships as they functioned in this early phase of the conquest. This is one of the few accounts in the book where all the characters are cast in a favorable light. [Block p. 94]

**16 And the children of the Kenite, Moses' father in law,**—In addition to Judah and Simeon, and (via Caleb) the Kenizzites, another group joins the cooperative conflict, the Kenites.

The references to the Kenizzites and Kenites recalls God's promise to Abraham:

Gen.15:18 In the same day the LORD made a covenant with Abram, saying, Unto thy seed have I given this land, from the river of Egypt unto the great river, the river Euphrates: 19 The **Kenites**, and the **Kenizzites**, and the Kadmonites, 20 And the Hittites, and the Perizzites, and the Rephaims, 21 And the Amorites, and the Canaanites, and the Girgashites, and the Jebusites.

We recognize most of these names from the list of the condemned nations in Deut 20:17. But it is overly simplistic to characterize the conquest as Jew against the Gentiles. Judges 1 emphasizes that some members<sup>17</sup> of the first two of these families chose to side with the people of God—the Kenizzites by merging into the tribe of Judah, and the Kenites by alliance with them.

We don't know how the Kenizzites joined Israel, but the Kenite connection comes through Moses' exile from Egypt in the land of Midian (chart).

15 See Mosca, CBQ 46 (1984) 18-22, favored by Block and Chisholm.

16 The translation “springs” for קְנִיזִים H1543 is doubtful. A spring is usually a derivative of עֵין H5869 or יַצַּח H3318. The word elsewhere refers to bowls, and likely is some sort of well (though this is not בְּאֵר H875, the usual word for well, either). Rainey p. 128 supports Debir = K. Raboud partly because of two accessible wells whose Arabic names preserve the names “upper” and “lower.” Or does קְנִיזִים perhaps refer to capture basins along the sides of a wadi, a common technique in the Negeb? Block translates “reservoirs.”

17 Some Kenites fell under God's curse, Num 24:21.

## Introduction to the Book of Judges

- Fleeing from Pharaoh, Moses finds refuge for 40 years with the priest of Midian, whose name is variously reported as Reuel or Raguel (Ex 2:18; Num 10:20) and Jethro (Ex 3:1; 18:1). Moses marries his daughter Zipporah and has multiple sons.
- Moses is caring for his father-in-law's flocks at "Horeb," "the mountain of God" (Ex 3:1), when God meets him at the burning bush. The Lord commands him to return to Egypt, rejoice his brethren, and bring the people back to "serve God upon this mountain" (Ex 3:12).
- Because he is living away from the covenant people, he has neglected to circumcise one of his sons. On the trip back to Egypt, God threatens to kill him for neglecting the covenant (Ex 4:24, 25). His wife angrily circumcises her son, but apparently goes back to her father with the boys.
- When Moses returns to Mount Sinai with the nation (Exodus 18), he is back in the territory of his father-in-law. Jethro meets him, bringing his wife and sons (18:5). He offers sacrifice with the elders of Israel, and encourages Moses to partition the burden of judging the people.
- Jethro returns home (Ex 18:27), but apparently his own son Hobab remains with Moses, for we find him still there when the camp finally leaves Sinai (Num 10:29-32). Moses asks him to remain with the people, because of his familiarity with the territory.
- Now his descendants are still friendly with the nation, as we see later in Judges 4.

**16 And the children of the Kenite ... went up out of the city of palm trees with the children of Judah into the wilderness of Judah, which lieth in the south of Arad; and they went and dwelt among the people.**—Some of Hobab's descendants have an encampment at Jericho. Though the city was assigned to Benjamin (Josh 18:21), when they see Judah moving south, they follow along (Figure 4, blue) to "the Negeb of Arad," which is itself a city in the broader Negeb.

**17 And Judah went with Simeon his brother, and they slew the **Canaanites** that inhabited Zephath, and utterly destroyed it. And the name of the city was called [he, i.e. Judah, called the name of the city] Hormah.**—The name "Hormah" is from the verb חרם H2763 translated here "utterly destroyed. The location is not precisely known (Rainey p. 122), but may be near Arad, where the Kenites are ready to support Judah.

**18 Also Judah took Gaza with the coast thereof, and Askelon with the coast thereof, and Ekron with the coast thereof.**—Now the tribe turns its attention to the sea coast and conquers three cities that were part of the Philistine pentapolis (the other two being Ashdod and Gath).<sup>18</sup> Once again, Judah's victories anticipate David, the coming king, since the Philistines were a persistent foe whom Israel was unable to suppress until the time of David.

**19 And the LORD was with Judah; and he drave out the inhabitants of the mountain; but could not drive out the inhabitants of the valley עמק H6010, because they had chariots of iron.**— "Valley" here is not Shephelah, but a more general term for lower land, not necessarily bounded by mountains.<sup>19</sup> This region includes the Philistine cities of 1:18, and allows chariots.

**20 And they gave Hebron unto Caleb, as Moses said: and he expelled thence the three sons of Anak.**—Again, we hear of Caleb's heroism in support of the tribe and its Levitical guests.

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18 Ekron and Gath (accepting Rainey's identification with Tel es-Safi) are on the western border of the Shephelah.

19 HALOT cites Gordon Introduction 179<sup>1</sup>: "land between a mountain and the water." TDOT cites Schwartzenbach: "א נחל is a "winter watercourse"; גיא denotes a "sharply defined valley, which can be very narrow or very broad," but in any case is flanked by two ranges of mountains or hills. The noun עמק "denotes a 'lowland' with visible boundaries, providing space for dwellings, fields, and pastures ... suitable for military maneuvers," ... א בקעה is a "broad valley ... in contrast to uplands"; מישור denotes a plateau."



**would dwell in that land.**—Manasseh is unsuccessful in controlling the northern edge of her west bank territory, along the southern side of the valley of Jezreel.

Among the cities that she does not subdue is Taanach, which is a Levitical city assigned to Kohath (Jos 21:25) (see note). Two of the cities that Judah and her allies subdued were Levitical cities: Hebron and Debir. The description of the northern campaign names five Levitical cities—Taanach, Gezer, Rehob, Nahalal, and Aijalon—and none of them is subdued. In addition, when Dan abandoned its territory, it left three more Levitical cities behind.

The book of Judges ends with two stories about roaming Levites—the first from Bethlehem in Judah, the second from Mount Ephraim. So it is worth paying attention to references to the Levitical cities in the opening chapters. The Levitical cities, distributed throughout all the tribes of Israel, served an important purpose. When Moses blessed the tribes, he said of Levi (chart),

Dt 33:8 And of Levi he [Moses] said, ... 10 **They shall teach** Jacob thy judgments, and Israel thy law: **they shall put** incense before thee, and whole burnt sacrifice upon thine altar.

The tribe had two duties: maintaining the worship at the tabernacle, but also teaching the nation. In the days before printed books, copies of the law would be costly. We would expect the scrolls to be maintained at the tabernacle, and later the temple, and the Levites would naturally be expected not only to preserve the Scriptures, but also to teach the people their contents.

When Jehoshaphat called the people back to the Lord, he sent Levites out to teach the people:

2 Ch 17:7 Also in the third year of his reign he sent to his princes, even to Benhail, and to Obadiah, and to Zechariah, and to Nethaneel, and to Michaiiah, to teach in the cities of Judah. 8 And with them he sent Levites, even Shemaiah, and Nethaniah, and Zebadiah, and Asahel, and Shemiramoth, and Jehonathan, and Adonijah, and Tobijah, and Tobadonijah, Levites; and with them Elishama and Jehoram, priests. 9 **And they taught in Judah, and had the book of the law of the LORD with them**, and went about throughout all the cities of Judah, and taught the people.

At Hezekiah's passover, the Levites are characterized by this assignment:

2 Ch 30:22 And Hezekiah spake comfortably unto all the Levites that **taught the good knowledge of the LORD**:

Malachi reinforces this duty:

Mal 2:7 For the priest's lips should keep knowledge, and they should **seek the law at his mouth**: for he is the messenger of the LORD of hosts.

The NT analog is the role of teaching, one of the four gifts that Paul calls out in Eph 4,

Eph 4:11 And he gave some, apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, **pastors and teachers**; 12 For the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ:

In every age, God sets apart people with special responsibility to teach the Word of God.

The Levites lived throughout the land, but served periodically at the Tabernacle, a custom that was codified at the temple into the 24 orders of Levites that served for two weeks each. Thus they would know the law of God, and each tribe would have local experts to whom they could appeal. The cities of refuge are a central example of this, providing legal experts who could do an initial review of each fugitive's case in preparation for the official trial.

Thus securing the Levitical cities was critical to maintaining the spiritual health of the people, and the failure of the northern tribes to make these cities available to the Levites contributed to the more rapid decline of those tribes spiritually.

**28 And it came to pass, when Israel was strong, that they put the Canaanites to tribute, and did not utterly drive them out.**—This verse, which echoes Jos 17:13, offers one positive note, but only when Israel (as a group) is strong.

This is the first of four references in Judges 1 to “tribute” (chart). We see it again in 1:30, 33, 35. The Hebrew word מַס H4522 refers, not to financial payment, but to forced labor. It describes Israel’s experience in Egypt:

Ex. 1:11 Therefore they did set over them taskmasters [**chiefs of forced labor**, [שָׂרֵי מַס] to afflict them with their burdens. And they built for Pharaoh treasure cities, Pithom and Raamses.

The appearance of this term in Judges 1 is ominous. God permitted Israel to bring other nations under forced labor, if they were far away from the tribal heartland:

Deut. 20:10 When thou comest nigh unto a city to fight against it, then **proclaim peace** unto it. 11 And it shall be, if it make thee answer of peace, and open unto thee, then it shall be, that all the people that is found therein shall be **tributaries** unto thee, and they shall serve thee. 12 And if it will make no peace with thee, but will make war against thee, then thou shalt **besiege** it: 13 And when the LORD thy God hath delivered it into thine hands, thou shalt **smite every male thereof with the edge of the sword**: 14 But the women, and the little ones, and the cattle, and all that is in the city, even all the spoil thereof, shalt thou take unto thyself; and thou shalt eat the spoil of thine enemies, which the LORD thy God hath given thee. 15 Thus shalt thou do unto all the cities which are very far off from thee, which are not of the cities of these nations.

But it was not to be allowed for the nations in the land of promise:

Dt 20:16 But of the cities of these people, which the LORD thy God doth give thee for an inheritance, **thou shalt save alive nothing that breatheth**: 17 But thou shalt utterly destroy them; namely, the Hittites, and the Amorites, the Canaanites, and the Perizzites, the Hivites, and the Jebusites; as the LORD thy God hath commanded thee: 18 That they teach you not to do after all their abominations, which they have done unto their gods; so should ye sin against the LORD your God.

Twenty-two times in 18 verses, this chapter emphasizes how Israel fails to destroy the condemned nations of Deut 20:17. Instead, it brings them into servitude. It may be economically beneficial to have free labor, but it turns out to be spiritually disastrous.

**Neither did Ephraim drive out the Canaanites that dwelt in Gezer; but the Canaanites dwelt in Gezer among them.**—As reported in Jos 16:10. Like Manasseh, Ephraim is not successful alone. Gezer is another of Kohath’s Levitical cities (Jos 21:21).

Zebulun, Asher, nor Naphthali are no more successful individually:

**30 Neither did Zebulun drive out the inhabitants of Kitron, nor the inhabitants of Nahalol; but the Canaanites dwelt among them, and became tributaries.**—Again, a Levitical city goes unsubdued, Nahalol, assigned to Merari (Jos 21:35, Nahalal).

**31 Neither did Asher drive out the inhabitants of Accho, nor the inhabitants of Zidon, nor**

of Ahlab, nor of Achzib, nor of Helbah [location unknown], nor of Aphik, nor of Rehob: 32 But the Asherites dwelt among the **Canaanites**, the inhabitants of the land: for they did not drive them out.—Asher could not even reduce its adversaries to forced labor. Once more, a Levitical city (Rehob, assigned to Gershon, Jos 21:31) is among them.

**33 Neither did Naphtali drive out the inhabitants of Bethshemesh, nor the inhabitants of Bethanath; but he dwelt among the Canaanites, the inhabitants of the land: nevertheless the inhabitants of Bethshemesh and of Bethanath became tributaries unto them.**

**34 And the Amorites forced the children of Dan into the mountain: for they would not suffer them to come down to the valley:**—Dan is last, in view of its ultimate northern position, but the events in view recall its original inheritance in the south, next to Ephraim and Benjamin. The Amorites forced them up into the hill country, where Ephraim and Benjamin were. This crowding ultimately led to their migration northward, described in ch. 19-21. As a result, all four Levitical cities assigned to Dan (Eltekeh, Gibbethon, Ajalon, and the western Gathrimmon, cities of Kohath, Jos 21:23-24) are abandoned to the Amorites.

**35 But the Amorites would dwell in mount Heres in Aijalon, and in Shaalbim: yet the hand of the house of Joseph prevailed, so that they became tributaries.**—Again, we see a partial victory when Joseph works together.

**36 And the coast of the Amorites was from the going up to Akrabbim, from the rock, and upward.**—The “going up to Akrabbim” is on the southern border of Judah. Thus the Amorites dominate the southern part of the land.

## 2:1-3, Warning from the Lord

**2:1 And an angel of the LORD**—We should read, as elsewhere “the angel of the Lord.”<sup>20</sup> The angel later speaks as God himself, so this is one of the ancient “goings forth” of the one who would later be born as a man in Bethlehem (Micah 5:2).

This is his first mention in Judges, where he appears more frequently than in any other book. Our Lord promised his disciples that between his conquest and his kingdom, “I am with you always” (Matt 28:19). As the Angel of the Lord, that same constant presence was with Israel during the corresponding period of their history.

**came up from Gilgal to Bochim,**—Both the origin and the destination of his journey are interesting (Figure 7, chart).

Gilgal was Israel’s first encampment after they crossed the Jordan, where they circumcised those who had been born in the wilderness, and celebrated the passover. This would be the first site of the Tabernacle in the land. Later, after the conquest, the hill country was considered secure enough to move the tabernacle to Shiloh:

Josh. 18:1 And the whole congregation of the children of Israel assembled together at Shiloh, and set up the tabernacle of the congregation there. And the land was subdued before them.

But the angel of the Lord does not set out from Shiloh, but from Gilgal. The implication, reinforced by his words, is that the people have not maintained the hill country in the condition



Figure 7: Geography of the Angel's Rebuke

<sup>20</sup> A noun in construct with a definite noun is itself definite.



of security and holiness required for his residence there.

The location of Bochim is not clear, and as v. 5 makes clear, the name is simply a nickname from how the people behaved. The Angel might have come to the tabernacle at Shiloh. But it is worth noting that the LXX adds “Bethel” in its translation of this verse:

Judg. 2:1 And an angel of the Lord went up from Gilgal to the place of weeping, and to Bethel, and to the house of Israel, ...

This location was the one success of the northern tribes in their attempt to subdue the land. Ironically, it would later become one of the rival sanctuaries that Jeroboam set up to keep the people of the north from going to Jerusalem.

**and said, I made you to go up out of Egypt, and have brought you unto the land which I swear unto your fathers; and I said, I will never break my covenant with you. 2 And ye shall make no league with the inhabitants of this land; ye shall throw down their altars:—**

The Lord recalls his gracious acts toward the nation, and his requirement, which we have recalled from Deuteronomy 20, to utterly destroy them.

**but ye have not obeyed my voice: why have ye done this?—**As we have seen, the nation violated these instructions by bringing the indigenous population into forced labor.

**3 Wherefore I also said, I will not drive them out from before you; but they shall be as thorns in your sides, and their gods shall be a snare unto you.—**This ominous verdict sets the stage for the entire book, which shows Israel’s repeated seduction by these gods and their struggles with these nations.

## A Contrast with the NT

Before we examine Israel’s response, consider the implications of this rebuke for us.

We have suggested that Judges, between Israel’s conquest and kingdom, can guide us between the cross and the Lord’s return. The Lord expected Israel not only to subdue its own land, but also to proclaim peace to the whole world, according to Deuteronomy 20. Is the church similarly responsible for Christianizing the world, and is the Lord is unhappy with us for failing to do so?

The Lord has given us a charge, and we should be diligent to carry it out. But that charge ocuses on preaching, teaching, and bearing witness, not conquest (chart):<sup>21</sup>

Matt. 28:19 Go ye therefore, and **teach** all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost: 20 **Teaching** them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world.

Mark 16:15 And he said unto them, Go ye into all the world, and **preach** the gospel to every creature.

Luke 24:46 And said unto them, Thus it is written, and thus it behoved Christ to suffer, and to rise from the dead the third day: 47 And that repentance and remission of sins should be **preached** in his name among all nations, beginning at Jerusalem.

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21 John probably understands his counterpart to the Great Commission to be 20:21-23, emphasizing their empowerment by the Holy Spirit and the effect of their ministry in dealing with sin. As in the case of the Last Supper and John 6, he does supplements prominent synoptic elements with other incidents that provide insight into their spiritual meaning.

## Introduction to the Book of Judges

Acts 1:8 But ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you: and ye shall **be witnesses** unto me both in Jerusalem, and in all Judaea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth.

Like Israel, we are responsible for preaching peace throughout the world (compare Dt 20:10 and Acts 10:36). And there is certainly room for us to repent of our laxness in this duty. But there is an important difference between this period in Israel's history and our age.

Israel was a civil as well as a spiritual institution. The instructions of Deuteronomy 20 are not only to "proclaim peace unto" the cities far off (v. 10), but also, if they do not submit, to besiege them and destroy all the males. Our Lord's instructions in Matthew 10 are very different:

Matt. 10:14 And whosoever shall not receive you, nor hear your words, when ye depart out of that house or city, shake off the dust of your feet. 15 Verily I say unto you, It shall be more tolerable for the land of Sodom and Gomorrha **in the day of judgment**, than for that city.

If people do not receive our proclamation of peace, we are to leave them in their rejection, not compel their submission. The reason is that our Lord himself taught a coming "day of judgment," a future time when he would return to implement civil rule (chart):

Matt. 16:27 For the Son of man shall come in the glory of his Father with his angels; and then he shall reward every man according to his works.

He reserves physical judgment to himself, when he returns. In the meanwhile, as he told Pilate,

John 18:36 Jesus answered, My kingdom is not of this world: if my kingdom were of this world, then would my servants fight, that I should not be delivered to the Jews: but now is my kingdom not from hence.

Israel's task was to subdue the nations physically as well as spiritually. They were not waiting patiently for a king that God had promised them. Rather, they rejected the Lord's kingship and demanded a king in imitation of their pagan neighbors.

1 Sam 8:4 Then all the elders of Israel gathered themselves together, and came to Samuel unto Ramah, 5 And said unto him, Behold, thou art old, and thy sons walk not in thy ways: now make us a king to judge us **like all the nations**. 6 But the thing displeased Samuel, when they said, Give us a king to judge us. And Samuel prayed unto the LORD. 7 And the LORD said unto Samuel, Hearken unto the voice of the people in all that they say unto thee: for they have not rejected thee, but **they have rejected me**, that I should not reign over them. 8 According to all the works which they have done since the day that I brought them up out of Egypt even unto this day, wherewith they have forsaken me, and served other gods, so do they also unto thee. 9 Now therefore hearken unto their voice: howbeit yet protest solemnly unto them, and shew them the manner of the king that shall reign over them.

Our case is very different. We have been promised a king—one who is the Lord from heaven. Until he comes, our challenge to people is spiritual, not civil or physical.

How does Israel respond to this rebuke?

### 2:4-5, National Response

**4 And it came to pass, when the angel of the LORD spake these words unto all the children of Israel, that the people lifted up their voice, and wept. 5 And they called the name of that place Bochim: and they sacrificed there unto the LORD.**—The people, confronted directly by

the angel, are cowed into a show of repentance, backed up by sacrifice. But animal sacrifice is only worthwhile as a pledge of the offering of ourselves in obedience (cf. Rom 12:1 “present your bodies a living sacrifice”). Otherwise it is an offense to God (chart).

About 1000, Saul thinks he can excuse his disobedience in sparing the Amalekites by offering the animals to the Lord. But Samuel sets him straight:

1Sam. 15:22 And Samuel said, Hath the LORD as great delight in burnt offerings and sacrifices, as in obeying the voice of the LORD? Behold, **to obey is better than sacrifice, and to hearken than the fat of rams.**

About 700, Isaiah rebukes the people for their presumptive sacrifices without obedience:

Isa 1:11 **To what purpose is the multitude of your sacrifices unto me?** saith the LORD: I am full of the burnt offerings of rams, and the fat of fed beasts; and I delight not in the blood of bullocks, or of lambs, or of he goats. 12 When ye come to appear before me, who hath required this at your hand, to tread my courts? 13 **Bring no more vain oblations;** incense is an abomination unto me; the new moons and sabbaths, the calling of assemblies, I cannot away with; it is iniquity, even the solemn meeting. 14 Your new moons and your appointed feasts my soul hateth: they are a trouble unto me; I am weary to bear them. 15 And when ye spread forth your hands, I will hide mine eyes from you: yea, when ye make many prayers, I will not hear: your hands are full of blood. 16 **Wash you, make you clean; put away the evil of your doings from before mine eyes; cease to do evil; 17 Learn to do well; seek judgment, relieve the oppressed, judge the fatherless, plead for the widow.** 18 Come now, and let us reason together, saith the LORD: though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool. 19 **If ye be willing and obedient,** ye shall eat the good of the land: 20 But if ye refuse and rebel, ye shall be devoured with the sword: for the mouth of the LORD hath spoken it.

A century later, Jeremiah tells the people that given their disobedient attitude, they might as well put their whole burnt offering, which was supposed to be completely consumed on the altar, on their dinner table along with the (peace) offering זֶבֶח, which they were allowed to consume:

Jer. 7:21 Thus saith the LORD of hosts, the God of Israel; **Put your burnt offerings unto your sacrifices, and eat flesh.** 22 For I spake not unto your fathers, nor commanded them in the day that I brought them out of the land of Egypt, concerning burnt offerings or sacrifices: 23 But this thing commanded I them, saying, **Obey my voice,** and I will be your God, and ye shall be my people: and walk ye in all the ways that I have commanded you, that it may be well unto you.

The proof of the pudding is in the eating. The proof of the sacrifices at Bochim is in the obedience of the people. How do they do? The next panel of the prolog answers this question.

## 2:6-3:6 Spiritual Departure

Here we have the same four sections as in ch. 1-2a: the death of Joshua, a series of events (this time with spiritual rather than social focus), a rebuke from the Lord, and the nation's response.

## 2:6-10, The Successful Transition

The writer begins with an extensive quotation from an episode late in Joshua (Table 2, chart). The perfect tense “when Joshua had” is not justified. We are supposed to recognize the echoes of Joshua 24, which take us back to the epoch of Judg 1:1-20, as though he had written,

*Table 2: Judges 2 recalls Joshua 24 (italics mark material not quoted)*

Josh 24	Judg 2
28 So Joshua let the people depart, every man unto his inheritance.	6 And <i>when Joshua had</i> let the people go, <i>the children of Israel went</i> every man unto his inheritance <i>to possess the land.</i>
31 And Israel served the LORD all the days of Joshua, and all the days of the elders that overlived Joshua, and which had known all the works of the LORD, that he had done for Israel.	7 And the people served the LORD all the days of Joshua, and all the days of the elders that outlived Joshua, who had seen all the great works of the LORD, that he did for Israel.
29 <i>And it came to pass after these things,</i> that Joshua the son of Nun, the servant of the LORD, died, being an hundred and ten years old. 30 And they buried him in the border of his inheritance in Timnathserah, which is in mount Ephraim, on the north side of the hill of Gaash.	8 And Joshua the son of Nun, the servant of the LORD, died, being an hundred and ten years old. 9 And they buried him in the border of his inheritance in Timnathheres, in the mount of Ephraim, on the north side of the hill Gaash.

A few moments ago I mentioned the death of Joshua. You all recall what our scrolls tell us: “And Joshua let the people go ...”

The first new information he gives us is v. 10, which takes us on one more generation in time.

**10 And also all that generation were gathered unto their fathers:**—“That generation” is “the elders that outlived Joshua,” v. 7, who knew “the Lord.” Eventually they died as well.

Judges 1 reflects the chronological distinction marked between 2:7 and 2:10. The victories of Judah and Simeon feature the deeds of Caleb, who was one of “the elders that outlived Joshua.” The victories of 1:1-20 are parallel to 2:7, while 1:21-36, the history of the northern tribes, reflects “another generation,”<sup>22</sup> of whom we read next:

**and there arose another generation after them, which knew not the LORD, nor yet the works which he had done for Israel.**—Contrast 2:7. Two things were true of “the elders that outlived Joshua”:

1. They “served the Lord.”
2. They “had seen all the great works of the Lord.”

This next generation fails on both points. Instead of serving the Lord, they don’t even know him, and they certainly do not know his works.

We have a number of examples in Scripture of a prominent leader whose influence lasts only for a while after his death, before people turn away (chart).

<sup>22</sup> I am grateful to Anita Parunak for this suggestion.

Joseph delivered not only his own family, but the nation of Egypt, and when he died, the Egyptians embalmed him as though he were one of their own. As long as his memory endured, life was good for the Israelites. But then we read,

Ex 1:8 Now there arose up a new king over Egypt, which knew not Joseph.

And he turned the nation from honored guests to slaves.

The Lord raised up Moses to bring Israel out of bondage and give them the law, and during his life they experienced God's blessing. As his death approached, he commissioned Joshua, and warned the people,

Deut 31:29 For I know that after my death ye will utterly corrupt yourselves, and turn aside from the way which I have commanded you; and evil will befall you in the latter days; because ye will do evil in the sight of the LORD, to provoke him to anger through the work of your hands.

That disaster was suspended during the time of Joshua and the elders that outlived him, but now we will read how Moses' prophecy was fulfilled.

We are exploring the notion that Judges shows principles of life between the Conquest and the Kingdom, principles that apply during the age in which we live between the cross and our Lord's return. If Joshua anticipates our Lord, then the elders that outlived him correspond to the apostles. They anticipate that after their departure, people will depart from the faith. Thus Paul warns the Ephesian elders,

Act 20:29 For I know this, that **after my departing shall grievous wolves enter in** among you, not sparing the flock.

And Jude reports that other apostles shared this warning:

Jud 1:17 But, beloved, remember ye the words which were spoken before of the **apostles** of our Lord Jesus Christ; 18 How that they told you there should be **mockers in the last time**, who should walk after their own ungodly lusts.

John tells us that by the time of his first epistle, this era<sup>23</sup> had arrived:

1Jn 2:18 Little children, it is **the last time**: and as ye have heard that antichrist shall come, even now are there many **antichrists**; whereby we know that **it is the last time**.

Human tradition is a weak support for spiritual hope. One generation can remember things pretty well, but beyond that point, things deteriorate unless we go back to the source.

## 2:11-19, The Failure of Later Generations

This section introduces the basic themes of Rebellion, Retribution, Repentance, and Restoration (Table 1) that shape the central body of the book. In those cycles, the themes progress pretty much linearly. But in this section, there is much repetition and apparent backtracking. We have

- Rebellion: sin against the Lord in 11a, 12a, and 13a;
- Rebellion: idolatry in 11b, 12b, 13b, 17, and 19;
- Retribution: the Lord's anger in 12c and 14a;
- Repentance: the people's distress and cry to the Lord in 15b and 18b;

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23 Jude speaks of the ἐσχάτος χρόνος, John of the ἐσχάτη ᾠρα; these verses are the only instances of these expressions in the NT.

- Restoration: the provision of judges in 16 and 18a.

First, we observe how the author organizes these elements with different patterns of symmetry into three distinct sections, that together emphasize the theme of Rebellion. Then we will see how this important pattern pervades later revelation.

**The Structure of 2:11-19**

The first pattern used by the author to present the four themes is a staircase<sup>24</sup> that develops the themes of Rebellion and divine Retribution (Table 3, chart). The first panel describes their

Rebellion: Sin	11 And the children of Israel <b>did evil</b> in the sight of the LORD,	12 And they <b>forsook</b> the LORD God of their fathers, which brought them out of the land of Egypt,	13 And they <b>forsook</b> the LORD,
Rebellion: False Gods	and <b>served Baalim</b> :	and <b>followed other gods</b> , of the gods of the people that were round about them, and bowed themselves unto them,	and <b>served Baal and Ashtaroth</b> .
Retribution: Lord's Anger		and <b>provoked the LORD to anger</b> .	14 And the <b>anger of the LORD was hot</b> against Israel,
Retribution: Delivery to Foes			and he delivered them into the hands of spoilers that spoiled them, and he sold them into the hands of their enemies round about, so that they could not any longer stand before their enemies. 15 Whithersoever they went out, the hand of the LORD was against them for evil, as the LORD had said, and as the LORD had sworn unto them:

Table 3: The Rebellion-Retribution Staircase

rebellion in doing evil and serving other gods. The second panel adds the Lord's angry response to these actions, while the third repeats the previous elements and adds the judgment that God brought on them because of their sin.

The next section is chiasmic (Table 4), introducing the themes of Repentance (the

Theme	2:15b-17		2:18
Repentance	15b and they were greatly <b>distressed</b> .		18b for it repented the LORD because of their <b>groanings</b> by reason of them that oppressed them and vexed them.
Restoration	16 Nevertheless the LORD raised up <b>judges</b> , which delivered them out of the hand of those that spoiled them.		18a And when the LORD raised them up <b>judges</b> , then the LORD was with the <b>judge</b> , and delivered them out of the hand of their enemies all the days of the <b>judge</b> :
Rebellion: False Gods	17 And yet they would not hearken unto their judges, but they <b>went a whoring after other gods</b> , and bowed themselves unto them: they turned quickly out of the way which their fathers walked in, obeying the commandments of the LORD; but they did not so.		

Table 4: The Repentance-Restoration-Rebellion Chiasm

<sup>24</sup> The construction is an expansion of repeated anadiplosis, or gradation. See Bullinger, Figures of Speech, 256.

people’s distress) and Restoration (the provision of judges). But ominously in the focal position at the center, the people return to their false gods.

Finally, a single verse repeats the only theme that the first two structures have in common, the people’s rebellion in following after other gods:

**2:19 And it came to pass, when the judge was dead, that they returned, and corrupted themselves more than their fathers, in following other gods to serve them, and to bow down unto them; they ceased not from their own doings, nor from their stubborn way.**—Thus the writer has summarized the main elements of the book’s cycles, emphasizing the risk of idolatry.

***The Pattern Persists***

The basic framework of Rebellion, Retribution, Repentance, and Restoration not only dominates the body of Judges, but is a recurring theme in other passages as well: Asaph’s Psalm 78 from the time of David, Psalm 106, and Isaiah 63:7-14. It is a constant feature of our relation with God.

Asaph was one of David’s chief musicians, presiding over the worship at the tent in Jerusalem where the ark was kept before the temple was built (1 Chr 16:4-5). He is designated the king’s seer (2 Chr 35:15; cf. repeated use of “prophesy” in 1 Chr 25), and many of his Psalms do have a prophetic emphasis, but here his focus is more historical.

Each of Asaph’s cycles (Table 5, chart) begins with an account of God’s gracious care of his people. This element is not part of the cycles in Judges, perhaps because the author considers the book of Joshua as the background to what he records. In addition, his first cycle contains divine Rebuke, attested in the Gideon and Jephthah cycles, though not in the summary of Judges 2.

	Judges							Psalm 78	
Stage	2:11-19 summary	3:7-11	3:12-30	4:1-5:31	6:1-8:28	10:6-12:7	13:1-15:20	:12-39	:42-72
Gracious Care	Book of Joshua							:12-16	:42-55
Rebellion	:11-13,17,19	:7	:12	:1	:1	:6	:1	:17-20	:56-58
Retribution	:12,14-15	:8	:12-14	:2	:1-6	:7-9	:1	:21-33	:59-64
Repentance	:15,18	:9	:15	:3	:6	:10		:34-35	
Rebuke					:7-10	:11-16		:36-37	
Restoration	:16,18	:9-11 Othniel	:15-30 Ehud	4:4-5:31 Deborah & Barak	:11-8:32 Gideon	:17-12:6 Jephthah	:2-16:31 Samson	:38-39	:65-72 David

*Table 5: The Cycles in Psalm 78*

The first cycle of Psalm 78 describes Israel’s experiences in the wilderness, referring to the manna (Exod 16:35, Ps 78:24) and the quail (Numbers 11, Ps 78:26-31):

Psa. 78:24 And had rained down **manna** upon them to eat, and had given them of the corn of heaven.

Psa. 78:26 He caused an east wind to blow in the heaven: and by his power he brought in the south wind. 27 He rained flesh also upon them as dust, and **feathered fowls** like as the sand of the sea:

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The second cycle includes the destruction of Shiloh and the capture of the Ark (1 Samuel 4) in 78:59-61:

Psa. 78:59 When God heard this, he was wroth, and greatly abhorred Israel: 60 So that he forsook the tabernacle of Shiloh, the tent which he placed among men; 61 And delivered his strength into captivity, and his glory into the enemy's hand.

Thus the tendencies we see in Judges go back far before the period of the conquest and persist beyond the judges, through the era of the kings.

Psalm 106 is the final Psalm in the fourth book of Psalms, the book that describes the mature faith of the people in captivity. The Psalm summarizes Israel's struggles in the wilderness, expanding the first cycle of Psalm 78 (Table 6, chart).

<b>Prolog</b>	1-6						
	Exodus 14	Numbers 11	Numbers 16	Exodus 32	Numbers 14	Numbers 25	Numbers 20 2 Ki 17:17
<b>Rebellion</b>	7 <b>Murmuring</b> at Red Sea	13-14 <b>Lusting</b> for Meat	16 <b>Rebellion</b> of Dathan	19-22 <b>Golden</b> <b>Calf</b>	24-25 <b>Despised</b> the Land	28 <b>Fornication</b> at Baal-Peor	32-39 Waters of <b>Strife</b> ; infant sacrifice
<b>Retribution</b>		15 Leanness	17-18	23a Promised destruction	26-27	29 Anger, Plague	40-42 Subject to Enemies
<b>Repentance</b>							
<b>Restoration</b>	8-12 Parting the Red Sea			23b Moses' intercession		30-31 Phinehas	
<b>Summary</b>							43-48

*Table 6: The Cycles in Psalm 106*

The seven cycles are not chronological, but chiasmic by topic. The first and last emphasize the murmuring by the people. The second and sixth concern the lust of the flesh. The third and fifth show the rebellion of the people against authority. At the center is the archtypical sin of the exodus, the golden calf.

The individual cycles in Psalm 106 are partial. None of them has all four components from Judges 2 (Rebellion, Retribution, Repentance, Restoration). In particular, none of them has Repentance. But the author is aware of repentance. He concludes the psalm with a summary that includes all four elements (Table 7, chart), and he wraps the entire sequence in a prayer of confession and cry for deliverance that appropriates the historical lessons to his own situation.

Psa 106:4 **Remember me**, O LORD, with the favour that thou bearest unto thy people: O visit me with thy salvation; 5 That I may see the good of thy

43 Many times did he deliver them;	Restoration
but they provoked him with their counsel,	Rebellion
and were brought low for their iniquity.	Retribution
44 Nevertheless he regarded their affliction,	Restoration
when he heard their cry:	Repentance
45 And he remembered for them his covenant, and repented according to the multitude of his mercies. 46 He made them also to be pitied of all those that carried them captives.	Restoration

*Table 7: The Cycle in Ps 106:43-46*



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chosen, that I may rejoice in the gladness of thy nation, that I may glory with thine inheritance. 6 **We have sinned with our fathers, we have committed iniquity, we have done wickedly.** ... 47 **Save us, O LORD our God, and gather us from among the heathen, to give thanks unto thy holy name, and to triumph in thy praise.**

The editor of the Psalter puts this psalm at the end of the Book of Maturation (Table 8, chart), just before the description of the coming Kingdom, to reflect the attitude of a chastised people ready to submit to the Lord's authority.

Isaiah 63 begins with the blood-stained hero who has trodden the winepress alone in redemption and now comes to tread down the peoples (plural, not singular as AV) in judgment (chart):

Books of Psalms	History	Prophecy	Personal
1-41, Confrontation	David vs. Saul & Absalom	Messiah vs. Herod	The Lord vs. Us
42-72, Communication	Solomon's rule over all the earth	Messiah's Earthly Ministry	Sanctification & Witness
73-89, Devastation	Assyria and Babylon	Rejection of Messiah	Persecution
90-106, Maturation	Faith without Temple or Palace	Present Evil Age	Mature Faith
107-150, Consummation	Restoration by Ezra-Nehemiah	Millennium	Blessed Hope

Table 8: The Five Books of Psalms

Isa 63:3 **I have trodden the winepress alone**; and of the peoples there was none with me: for **I will tread them in mine anger**, and trample them in my fury;

The temporal context is thus the return of our Lord from glory, his redemptive work in the past, entering into his final judgment of the nations.

Zechariah predicts that when the Lord returns, Israel will turn to him:

Zech. 12:10 And I will pour upon the house of David, and upon the inhabitants of Jerusalem, the spirit of grace and of supplications: and they shall look upon me whom they have pierced, and they shall mourn for him, as one mourneth for his only son, and shall be in bitterness for him, as one that is in bitterness for his firstborn.

Isaiah anticipates this response 160 years earlier. After the vision of the Lord's return, he speaks on behalf of Israel, praising God for his faithfulness toward them, while confessing their persistent rebellion. His confession follows the pattern of Judges (Table 9), with amplification: the Repentance begins with an extensive Recollection of the Lord's past care, and the Restoration in ch. 65 alternates God's deliverance with condemnation on the hypocrites.

Thus the elements of Rebellion, Retribution, Repentance, and Restoration (against the background of God's gracious care), and once (Psalm 78) supplementing the Repentance with Rebuke, are a constant pattern through Israel's history.

This pattern should not be a surprise to us. It is the principle of Prov 3:12, that we saw developed in Hebrews 12,

Heb 12:6 For whom the Lord loveth he chasteneth, and scourgeth every son whom he receiveth.

Moses declared to Pharaoh

Exo 4:22 Thus saith the LORD, Israel is my son, even my firstborn:

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<b>Prolog</b>	7 I will mention the lovingkindnesses of the LORD, and the praises of the LORD, according to all that the LORD hath bestowed on us, and the great goodness toward the house of Israel, which he hath bestowed on them according to his mercies, and according to the multitude of his lovingkindnesses.
<b>Gracious Care</b>	8 For he said, Surely they are my people, children that will not lie: so he was their Saviour. 9 In all their affliction he was afflicted, and the angel of his presence saved them: in his love and in his pity he redeemed them; and he bare them, and carried them all the days of old.
<b>Rebellion</b>	10 But they rebelled, and vexed his holy Spirit:
<b>Retribution</b>	therefore he was turned to be their enemy, and he fought against them.
<b>Recollection</b>	11 Then he [Israel] remembered the days of old, Moses, and his people, saying, Where is he that brought them up out of the sea with the shepherd of his flock? where is he that put his holy Spirit within him? 12 That led them by the right hand of Moses with his glorious arm, dividing the water before them, to make himself an everlasting name? 13 That led them through the deep, as an horse in the wilderness, that they should not stumble? 14 As a beast goeth down into the valley, the Spirit of the LORD caused him to rest: so didst thou lead thy people, to make thyself a glorious name.
<b>Repentance</b>	15 Look down from heaven, and behold from the habitation of thy holiness and of thy glory: where is thy zeal and thy strength, the sounding of thy bowels and of thy mercies toward me? are they restrained? ... 64:1 Oh that thou wouldest rend the heavens, that thou wouldest come down, that the mountains might flow down at thy presence, ... 12 Wilt thou refrain thyself for these things, O LORD? wilt thou hold thy peace, and afflict us very sore?
<b>Restoration</b>	65:9 And I will bring forth a seed out of Jacob, and out of Judah an inheritor of my mountains: and mine elect shall inherit it, and my servants shall dwell there. ... 18 But be ye glad and rejoice for ever in that which I create: for, behold, I create Jerusalem a rejoicing, and her people a joy. 19 And I will rejoice in Jerusalem, and joy in my people: and the voice of weeping shall be no more heard in her, nor the voice of crying. ...

*Table 9: The Cycle in Isaiah 63-65*

So this pattern is just God’s faithful paternal dealing with the nation. As we saw in Hebrews 12, we are also his children, and he deals in this same way with us. The history of the church for the past 2000 years reflects these same cycles:

- Rebellion in the form of institutional hardening that is insensitive to the voice of the Lord,
- Retribution in the form of strife,
- Repentance as people seek the Lord, and
- Restoration in the many instances of reform.

Orthodoxy is not found in a great river flowing faithfully through the ages and distinguished from the little streams that from time to time break off in times of storm. It is a constant process of reformation, guided by the Spirit of God. Institutions will fail us. The Tabernacle was established in Shiloh in the days of Joshua (Jos 18:1), but it is never mentioned in Judges, and the next time we hear of it, in 1 Samuel 2, we learn of the weakness of Eli and the corruption of his sons. David with great enthusiasm made preparation for the temple, but by the time of Jeremiah the priests sought to kill God’s prophet. Human sin corrupts institutions, even those ordained by God, but he graciously ministers to his people, correcting their sin, and leading them in the paths of righteousness—in the book of Judges, throughout the Old Testament, and in this present evil age as well.

## 2:20-23, Warning from the Lord

In spite of the outward sacrifices in the first response of the nation, the presentation of the four stages in 2:11-19 emphasizes the persistence and dominance of the Rebellion stage of the cycle. So once again we hear a warning from the Lord, but with an ominous change. In 2:1-3, he came to visit them and addressed his concern directly *to* them. This time he makes a statement *about* them. We are not told to whom he said this. This statement may be his internal counsel, not revealed until he inspired the author of Judges to record this history. For example (chart),<sup>25</sup>

Gen 2:18 And the LORD God said, It is not good that the man should be alone; I will make him an help meet for him.

Gen 6:7 And the LORD said, I will destroy man whom I have created from the face of the earth; both man, and beast, and the creeping thing, and the fowls of the air; for it repenteth me that I have made them.

He has already warned them once, and as a wise parent, knows better than to keep warning without acting. Now he resolves to carry out the action of which he warned.

**20 And the anger of the LORD was hot against Israel;**—Judges uses this expression most densely of any OT book, here and 2:14; 3:8; 10:7. Only Numbers uses it more times (5x in 25k words vs. 4x in 15.5k in Judges).

**and he said, Because that this people הגוי הזה hath transgressed my covenant which I commanded their fathers, and have not hearkened unto my voice;**—Usually, Israel is called a “people” עַם H5971, emphasizing their family relation with each other and their covenant relation with God. Here, they are גוי H1471, usually translated “nation.” This term most often refers to a nation outside the covenant.<sup>26</sup> It appears only four times in Joshua, all within five verses, and the other three times (2:21, 23; 3:1) it describes the pagan inhabitants of the land. God’s chosen people, who should be distinct from the nations of Canaan, have become like them.

**21 I also will not henceforth drive out any from before them of the nations which Joshua left when he died:**—Because Israel has become like one of the pagan nations already in the land, they should expect to live among them and deal with them.

Compare this warning with that in the first panel, 2:1-3 (Table 10). The two warnings are similar in four ways:

1. Both refer to God’s relation with the *fathers*.
2. Both characterize this relation as a *covenant*.
3. Both emphasize that Israel has *rebelled* against the Lord.
4. Both declare that he *will not drive out* the pagan nations.

But they differ in two ways.

1. As we have noted, the first time God speaks directly to them, but the second appears to be his divine purpose, expressed to himself.
2. The motive for leaving the pagan nations is amplified. The first time they are simply an annoyance. The second time, we learn the reason for this annoyance: to prove Israel.<sup>27</sup>

<sup>25</sup> Compare Gen 1:26; 11:6–7; 18:17–21; and the use of “say” for “think” in 20:11.

<sup>26</sup> Though it can emphasize Israel’s political identity: A. Cody, *Vetus Testamentum* Vol. 14:1 (Jan., 1964), 1-6.

<sup>27</sup> Webb understands 2:22 as subordinate to “Joshua left” in 21, which is certainly the nearer antecedent, but the AV rendering agrees with the emphasis in 3:1-5 that the Lord left the nations in order to prove them.

The Lord Speaks to Israel	The Lord Speaks to Himself
2:1 And an angel of the LORD came up from Gilgal to Bochim, and said, I made you to go up out of Egypt, and have brought you unto <b>the land which I swear unto your fathers</b> ; and I said, <b>I will never break my covenant</b> with you. 2 And ye shall make no league with the inhabitants of this land; ye shall throw down their altars: but <b>ye have not obeyed my voice</b> : why have ye done this? 3 Wherefore I also said, <b>I will not drive them out from before you</b> ; but <b>they shall be as thorns in your sides, and their gods shall be a snare</b> unto you.	2:20 And the anger of the LORD was hot against Israel; and he said, Because that <b>this people hath transgressed my covenant which I commanded their fathers</b> , and <b>have not hearkened unto my voice</b> ; 21 <b>I also will not henceforth drive out any from before them</b> of the nations which Joshua left when he died: 22 <b>That through them I may prove Israel</b> , whether they will keep the way of the LORD to walk therein, as their fathers did keep it, or not.

Table 10: The Warnings of 2:1-3 and 20-22

**23 Therefore the LORD left those nations, without driving them out hastily; neither delivered he them into the hand of Joshua.**—This divine resolve explains why God did not give Joshua a complete victory, and why the tribes failed. “Hastily” does not imply that eventually they would be driven out. God has already resolved, “I will not henceforth drive out” (2:21). He will never completely remove them. They still held cities in David’s day (chart):

2Sam. 24:4 And Joab and the captains of the host went out from the presence of the king, to number the people of Israel. . . . 6 Then they came to Gilead, and to the land of Tahtimhodshi; and they came to Danjaan, and about to **Zidon**, 7 And came to the strong hold of Tyre, and to all the cities of the **Hivites**, and of the **Canaanites**: and they went out to the south of Judah, even to Beersheba.

Solomon brought them under tribute (recall the northern tribes in Judges 1),

1Kings 9:20 And all the people that were left of the **Amorites, Hittites, Perizzites, Hivites, and Jebusites**, which were not of the children of Israel, 21 Their children that were left after them in the land, whom the children of Israel also were not able utterly to destroy, upon those did Solomon levy a tribute of bondservice unto this day.

The persistence of Baal worship down to the time of the captivity shows that those who remained were not converted to the God of Israel, but continued to tempt the nation to apostasy.

Both the purpose for leaving the nations, and the duration of their presence in the land, contrast with earlier promises of a slow victory in order to keep the land from turning wild.<sup>28</sup>

Ex. 23:28 And I will send hornets before thee, which shall drive out the Hivite, the Canaanite, and the Hittite, from before thee. 29 I will not drive them out from before thee in one year; lest the land become desolate, and the beast of the field multiply against thee. 30 By little and little **I will drive them out** from before thee, until thou be increased, and inherit the land.

Deut. 7:22 And the LORD thy God **will put out** those nations before thee by little and little: thou mayest not consume them at once, lest the beasts of the field increase upon thee.

These passages, unlike 2:21, do anticipate a complete removal of the pagan nations: “I will drive them out by little and little.” In view of the nation’s sin, that promise is replaced by the ongoing testing described here. The shift reflects a principle that God makes explicit much later:

<sup>28</sup> Chisholm points out the tension.

Jer 18:7 At what instant I shall speak concerning a nation, and concerning a kingdom, to pluck up, and to pull down, and to destroy it; 8 If that nation, against whom I have pronounced, turn from their evil, I will repent of the evil that I thought to do unto them. 9 And at what instant I shall speak concerning a nation, and concerning a kingdom, to build and to plant it; 10 If it do evil in my sight, that it obey not my voice, then I will repent of the good, wherewith I said I would benefit them.

The general principle is, “Let him that thinketh he standeth, take heed lest he fall” (1 Cor 10:12).

### 3:1-6, National Response

This paragraph is chiasitic, with a list of the nations in v. 3 surrounded by statements about why they were left. These surrounding statements serve to clarify one another (Table 11, chart).

- 3:1a and 4a both introduce the theme of using these nations to prove (test) Israel.
- 2a and 4b both use the verb “to know.” In v. 4, this verb amplifies “prove,” with Israel’s behavior as the object of the knowledge, not the subject, and the syntax allows this reading in v. 2. One way to learn about someone is to try to teach them, which is the method used here.

3:1 Now these are the nations which the LORD left, <b>to prove Israel by them</b> , ...	4 And they were <b>to prove Israel by them</b> ,
2 Only <del>that the generations of the children of Israel might know</del> <b>to know</b> the generations of the children of Israel,	<b>to know</b>
to teach them war,	whether they would hearken unto the commandments of the LORD,
1 ... even as many of Israel as <b>had not known</b> all the wars of Canaan; 2 ... at the least such as before <b>knew nothing</b> thereof;	which he commanded <b>their fathers</b> by the hand of Moses.
3 Namely, five lords of the Philistines, and all the Canaanites, and the Sidonians, and the Hivites that dwelt in mount Lebanon, from mount Baalhermon unto the entering in of Hamath.	

Table 11: Proving Israel

- 2b and 4c both specify the objective of the knowledge to be gained by this proving. The way that Joshua succeeded in war was by keeping the Lord’s commandments, and the parallel thus elucidates the meaning of “to teach them war.”
- Both 1 and 2 end with a restriction to those Israelites who had not known the wars of Canaan. This focus on the generation after the conquest is reflected in “their fathers” in 4d.

The central verse, v. 3, lists the nations to be conquered. It echoes Jos 13:1-6, “the land that remaineth” at the time that Joshua was “old and stricken in years” (chart)

Josh. 13:2 This is the land that yet remaineth: all the borders of the **Philistines**, and all Geshuri, 3 From Sihor, which is before Egypt, even unto the borders of Ekron northward, which is counted to the **Canaanite**: five lords of the Philistines; the Gazathites, and the Ashdothites, the Eshkalonites, the Gittites, and the Ekronites; also the Avites: 4 From the south, all the land of the Canaanites, and Mearah that is beside the **Sidonians**, unto Aphek, to the borders of the Amorites: 5 And the land of the Giblites, and all Lebanon, toward the sunrising, **from Baalgad under mount Hermon unto the entering into Hamath.**

Because this land was still unsubdued, Joshua is to “divide this land for an inheritance” (Jos 13:7) so that the tribes can finish the work.

**5 And But the children of Israel dwelt among the Canaanites, Hittites, and Amorites, and Perizzites, and Hivites, and Jebusites:**—Note the disjunctive clause<sup>29</sup>, marking a contrast. Israel miserably fails the test that God has given them. Instead of fighting the nations and driving them out, she dwells among them as though she were just another pagan nation.

How do these six nations relate to the four listed in v. 3?<sup>30</sup> Both lists recall earlier Scriptures, with different emphases. The list in v. 3 reminds the readers of Jos 13:1-6, emphasizing the obligation of the tribes to subdue these regions of the country, while the list in v. 5 recalls the original promise to Abraham in Gen 15:18-21.

Gen. 15:18 In the same day the LORD made a covenant with Abram, saying, Unto thy seed have I given this land, from the river of Egypt unto the great river, the river Euphrates: 19 The Kenites, and the Kenizzites, and the Kadmonites, 20 And the Hittites, and the Perizzites, and the Rephaims, 21 And the Amorites, and the Canaanites, and the Girgashites, and the Jebusites.

We know nothing of the Kadmonites. The Rephaim became extinct with Og king of Bashan before Israel crossed the Jordan (Deut 3:11). The Kenites (Moses' family by marriage) and Kenizzites (Caleb's family) join Israel, and the Hivites are not in Genesis 15 because they do not emerge as a power until 200 years later. The Girgashites were in the land when Israel arrived (Josh 3:10), but then disappear, perhaps one group that was successfully destroyed. Otherwise the lists name the same groups.

By dwelling at peace with these nations, Israel thus departs from its heritage at two points. v. 5 reminds it that it abandons its patriarchal inheritance going back to Abraham, and v.3 shows that it departs from the mission left to it by Joshua.

**6 And they took their daughters to be their wives, and gave their daughters to their sons, and served their gods.**—This practice is a direct violation of Moses' instructions, and led to the result against which he warned:

Deut. 7:1 When the LORD thy God shall bring thee into the land whither thou goest to possess it, and hath cast out many nations before thee, the Hittites, and the Girgashites, and the Amorites, and the Canaanites, and the Perizzites, and the Hivites, and the Jebusites, seven nations greater and mightier than thou; 2 And when the LORD thy God shall deliver them before thee; thou shalt smite them, and utterly destroy them; thou shalt make no covenant with them, nor shew mercy unto them: 3 Neither shalt thou make marriages with them; thy daughter thou shalt not give unto his son, nor his daughter shalt thou take unto thy son. 4 For they will turn away thy son from following me, that they may serve other gods: so will the anger of the LORD be kindled against you, and destroy thee suddenly.

Israel's experience with the world carries a sober warning to us. We also live in the midst of pagans. We are to preach the gospel to them, but unlike Israel's charge to destroy them, we are to await our Lord's return for them to be abolished. But we face the same risk that Israel does, of being sucked into their sinful, godless beliefs and practices.

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29 *Waw* + noun + verb, rather than *waw*-consecutive + prefix conjugation

30 It is tempting to say that these are ethnic descriptions while v. 3 gives political ones, but Deut 7:1 calls these גוים, the same title that v. 1 gives to the entities in v. 3. See notes for discussion.

## Notes

### Hebrew Vocabulary for Judges and Judging

The book throughout uses שפט H8188; an alternative is דין H1777, while ריב H7378, 7379 is more between peers.

דין and שפט are parallel in Jer. 5:28; Psa. 7:8; 9:8; Prov. 31:9

	κρίνω, κριτής, κρίσις	δικάζω, δικαστής	ἐκδικέω	μάχη, μάχομαι	Total
שפט	164	18	12	0	204
דין	24	0	0	0	23
ריב	52	3	2	13	132
פקד			23		304
Total	584	34	89	53	

### The Lord is our Judge

Our study shows two characteristics of שפט:

1. It describes broad care for the people, not just jurisprudence.
2. In general, the noun שופט describes local rulers, those under a higher authority.

Focus on the second of these. Moses uses the noun to describe his assistants that he set up:

Deut 1:9 And I spake unto you at that time, saying, I am not able to bear you myself alone: ... 12 How can I myself alone bear your cumbrance, and your burden, and your strife? 13 Take you wise men, and understanding, and known among your tribes, and I will make them rulers over you. ... 15 So I took the chief of your tribes, wise men, and known, and made them heads over you, captains over thousands, and captains over hundreds, and captains over fifties, and captains over tens, and officers among your tribes. 16 And I charged your **judges** at that time, saying, Hear the causes between your brethren, and judge righteously between every man and his brother, and the stranger that is with him. 17 ... and the cause that is too hard for you, bring it unto me, and I will hear it.

He envisioned them as city-level officials:

Deut. 16:18 **Judges** and officers shalt thou make thee in all thy gates, which the LORD thy God giveth thee, throughout thy tribes: and they shall judge the people with just judgment.

Kings do judge (the verb), but only once does someone who wants to be a king describe himself as a judge. Yet this exception proves the rule. When Absalom seeks to gain support against his father David, he speaks to the people as they enter the gate of the city (where the city elders transact their business), and takes the role of a judge rather than a king:

2Sam. 15:2 And Absalom rose up early, and stood beside the way of the gate: and it was so, that when any man that had a controversy came to the king for judgment, then Absalom called unto him, and said, Of what city art thou? And he said, Thy servant is of one of the tribes of Israel. 3 And Absalom said unto him, See, thy matters are good and right; but there is no man deputed of the king to hear thee. 4 Absalom said moreover, Oh that I were made judge in the land, that every man which hath any suit or cause might come unto me, and I would do him justice! 5 And it was so, that when any man came nigh to him to do him obeisance, he put forth his hand, and took him, and kissed him. 6 And on this manner did Absalom to all Israel that came to the king for judgment: so Absalom stole the hearts of the men of Israel.

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He deemphasizes the royal role to which he aspires. He accuses David of being aloof and unconnected with the people, promises to deal with individual problems, and when someone tries to bow to him a member of the royal family, he rejects it and instead embraces them.

In light of the local and subordinate nature of judges, it is remarkable that God is repeatedly called a judge. Abraham thus addresses the One with whom he bargains in Genesis 18:

Gen 18:25 Shall not the **Judge** of all the earth do right?

Asaph proclaims,

Psa. 50:6 And the heavens shall declare his righteousness: for God is **judge** himself.

Psa. 75:7 But God is the **judge**: he putteth down one, and setteth up another.

In one of his many visions of the coming Day of the Lord, Isaiah proclaims,

Is. 33:22 For the LORD is our **judge**, the LORD is our lawgiver, the LORD is our king; he will save us.

Given the local implications of the term and its contrast in Judges with the longed-for global king, it is natural to see in these OT texts an anticipation of the time when the Lord would become a man and dwell among his people (as indeed he did with Abraham in Genesis 18). His local concern is reflected in how our Lord ministered:

Matt. 9:35 And Jesus went about **all the cities and villages**, teaching in their synagogues, and preaching the gospel of the kingdom, and healing every sickness and every disease among the people.

Matt. 11:1 And it came to pass, when Jesus had made an end of commanding his twelve disciples, he departed thence to teach and to preach **in their cities**.

Mark 6:56 And whithersoever he entered, **into villages, or cities**, or country, they laid the sick in the streets, and besought him that they might touch if it were but the border of his garment: and as many as touched him were made whole.

Luke 4:43 And he said unto them, I must preach the kingdom of God **to other cities** also: for therefore am I sent.

Luke 13:22 And he went through the **cities and villages**, teaching, and journeying toward Jerusalem.

His half-brothers were frustrated that he did not promote himself more centrally:

John 7:2 Now the Jews' feast of tabernacles was at hand. 3 His brethren therefore said unto him, Depart hence, and go into Judaea, that thy disciples also may see the works that thou doest. 4 For there is no man that doeth any thing in secret, and he himself seeketh to be known openly. If thou do these things, shew thyself to the world.

In fact, at that last feast of Tabernacles, he did later appear and openly proclaim himself (John 7:37-38), but only after he had become widely known through local teaching.

Thus our Lord's earthly ministry follows the pattern of the Judges—local, not central, and dealing with every aspect of the needs of the people. In him, truly, The Lord is our Judge—not a distant, hidden God, but one who knows us intimately, has lived among us, and represents every single one of us before his Father every day.



## Chronology of the Judges

1 Kings 6:1 allows only 480 years from the exodus to the founding of the temple.

Adding up the years in Judges gives 450 years, allowing no time in 1 Kings 6:1 for the 40 years in the wilderness, the conquest, the lives of the elders that outlived Joshua, the life of Samuel, and the reigns of Saul and David. Josephus appears to follow this (Ant 8.3.1), and the AV in Acts 13:20 TR (endorsed by Meyer and Alford as the more difficult reading) agrees.

Some understand the dative of TR to express duration:

Bengel Gnomon: In marking time, the Dative case or the Accusative is sometimes employed indiscriminately; but here purposely between the Accusative, which goes before in ver. 18, and that which follows in ver. 21, the Dative in this one instance is put. The Accusative answers simply to the question, how long? But by the Dative there is implied how great a period of years intervened from the beginning of an event until the event itself came to pass. Comp. John 2:20 ...

Meyer on dative: The dative ἔτεσι τετρακ. is dative of the time, during which something happens (comp. 8:11). Comp. Joseph. Antt. i. 3. 5: τὸ ὕδωρ ἡμέραις τεσσαράκοντα ὄλαις κατεφέρετο. John 2:20; Rom. 14:2–5; Winer, p. 205 [E. T. 274].

But Bruce (Acts) says it represents a point, and Wallace agrees:

The root idea of the (pure) genitive is quality, attribute, or kind. Thus, the genitive of time expresses kind of time (or time during which). The root idea of the accusative is limitation as to extent. Thus, the accusative of time expresses extent of time. The root idea of the local dative is position. Thus, the dative of time expresses a point in time.

Possible harmonizations:

1. Perhaps the phrase modifies the preceding ταῦτα rather than the following ἔδωκεν: “and after these things, which lasted about 450 years, ...”
2. Or perhaps the point is that God gave them 450 years of Judges, though some of those years, being in different parts of the country, occurred simultaneously.
3. Most simply, and consistent with dative-as-a-point, “After these things, about year 450 [after what I have just described], God gave them Judges ... “

Paul’s focus is not on the chronology of the OT, but on the rule by Judges.

Use of ὡς with nouns to express time (BDAG 6): usually follows the verb.

Ruth 1:14 κατόκησαν ἐκεῖ ὡς δέκα ἔτη. Follows the verb

Ant 6.95 Οὗτος δ’ ἐπιλέξας ἐκ τοῦ πλήθους ὡς τρισχιλίους τοὺς μὲν δισχιλίους Again follows verb

1 Sam 14:2 Οὗτος δ’ ἐπιλέξας ἐκ τοῦ πλήθους ὡς τρισχιλίους τοὺς μὲν δισχιλίους

Mark 5:13 Οὗτος δ’ ἐπιλέξας ἐκ τοῦ πλήθους ὡς τρισχιλίους τοὺς μὲν δισχιλίους

Mark 8:9 Ἦσαν δὲ οἱ φαγόντες ὡς τετρακισχίλιοι

Luke 1:56 Ἐμεινεν δὲ Μαριάμ σὺν αὐτῇ ὥσει μῆνας τρεῖς,

Jn 1:39 ὥρα ἦν ὡς δεκάτη.

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Jn 4:6 ὥρα ἦν ὡς δεκάτη.

John 6:19 Ἐλληλακότες οὖν ὡς σταδίου εἰκοσι πέντε ἢ τριάκοντα,

Jn 21:8 οὐ γὰρ ἦσαν μακρὰν ἀπὸ τῆς γῆς, ἀλλ' ὡς ἀπὸ πηχῶν διακοσίων

Acts 4:4 καὶ ἐγενήθη ὁ ἀριθμὸς τῶν ἀνδρῶν ὡσεὶ χιλιάδες πέντε.

Rev 8:1 ἐγένετο σιγὴ ἐν τῷ οὐρανῷ ὡς ἡμῶριον.

No verb, but follows noun modified:

Luke 1:56 Ἐμεινεν δὲ Μαριάμ σὺν αὐτῇ ὡσεὶ μῆνας τρεῖς,

Jn 6:10 τὸν ἀριθμὸν ὡσεὶ πεντακισχίλιοι.

John 19:14 ἦν δὲ Παρασκευὴ τοῦ Πάσχα, ὥρα δὲ ᾧ ὡσεὶ ἕκτη

Jn 19:39 μίγμα σμύρνης καὶ ἀλόης ᾧ ὡς ἑλίτρας ἑκατόν.

Acts 5:36 ἀριθμὸς ἀνδρῶν ὡσεὶ τετρακοσίων·

Instances where ὡς precedes what it modifies:

Acts 5:7 Ἐγένετο δὲ ὡς ὥρῶν τριῶν διάστημα,

Acts 13:18 Καὶ ὡς τεσσαρακονταετῆ χρόνον ἐτροποφόρησεν αὐτοὺς ἐν τῇ ἐρήμῳ.

The dative expresses point in time (Wallace, Bruce on Acts 13), not (as other suggest) duration. Conclusion: while a quantity introduced by ὡς may apply to a following noun or verb (Acts 5:7; 13:18), it usually applies to what precedes. Translate: “And after these things (at about year 450), he gave them judges ...”

## The Tribes in Judges (to be updated)

Mother	Order	Tribe	Ch. 1-2	Ch. 3-16	Ch. 17-25
Leah	4, 2	Judah and Simeon	1:2	Othniel; 10:9; 15:9-11	
Rachel	12	Benjamin	1:21		
Rachel	11	Joseph	1:22-26		
(Rachel)	13	Manasseh	1:27-28		
(Rachel)	14	Ephraim	1:29		
Leah	10	Zebulun	1:30		
Zilpah (L)	8	Asher	1:31-32		
Bilhah (R)	6	Naphthali	1:33		
Bilhah (R)	5	Dan	1:34-36		
Leah	1	Reuben			
Leah	9	Issachar			
Zilpah (L)	7	Gad			
Leah	3	Levi			

## Conquest and Reconquest

Some of Israel's failures in ch. 1 may result, not from Joshua's failure to exterminate the inhabitants of cities, but from the failure of the Israelites to occupy the conquered cities.

The discussion in 1:10 shows that this was the case of Hebron. It may also be true of Jerusalem. 1:8 records that Judah smote the city "with the edge of the sword." The phrase refers to the utter extermination of an enemy population (cf. Dt 13:15; 20:13). The Jebusite occupation of Jerusalem may, like the Canaanite occupation of Hebron, have followed the initial conquest. When Joshua initially engages the king of Israel's future capital, it is as the king of Jerusalem, not the king of Jebus, and when Abraham meets Melchizedek, he is king of Salem, not Jebus.

## Levitical Cities in ch. 1

Hebron and Debir, which were subdued, are Levitical cities. Are other Levitical cities named? If so, are they subdued, or do some remain in Canaanite hands? Simeon has no Levitical cities.

Summary: Judah subdues two Levitical cities (Hebron, Debir), and both are subdued, but Manasseh (Taanach, 1:27), Ephraim (Gezer, 1:29), and Asher (Rehob, 1:31) each leave one unconquered.

City	Home Tribe	Levitical? Ref. Josh	Subdued?	Resistant?
Kedesh (Refuge)	Naphthali	20:7; 21:32 Gershon		
Shechem (Refuge)	Ephraim	20:7; 21:21 Kohath		
Hebron (Refuge)	Judah	20:7; 21:11 Aaron	1:10	
Bezer (Refuge)	Reuben	20:8; 21:36 Merari		
Ramoth Gilead (Refuge)	Gad	20:8; 21:38 Merari		
Golan (Refuge)	Manasseh	20:8; 21:27 Gershon		
Libnah	Judah	21:13 Aaron		
Jattir	Judah	21:14 Aaron		
Eshtemoa	Judah	21:14 Aaron		
Holon	Judah	21:15 Aaron		
Debir	Judah	21:15 Aaron	1:11	
Ain	Judah	21:16 Aaron		
Juttah	Judah	21:16 Aaron		
Gibeon	Benjamin	21:17 Aaron		
Geba	Benjamin	21:17 Aaron		
Anathoth	Benjamin	21:18 Aaron		
Almon	Benjamin	21:18 Aaron		
Gezer	Ephraim	21:21 Kohath		1:29
Kibzaim	Ephraim	21:22 Kohath		
Bethhoron	Ephraim	21:22 Kohath		

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City	Home Tribe	Levitical? Ref. Josh	Subdued?	Resistant?
Eltekeh	Dan	21:23 Kohath		1:34-35
Gibbethon	Dan	21:23 Kohath		1:34-35
Ajalon	Dan	21:24 Kohath		1:34-35
Gathrimmon (Dan)	Dan	21:24 Kohath		1:35
Tanach	Manasseh	21:25 Kohath		1:27
Gathrimmon (Man.)	Manasseh	21:25 Kohath		
Beeshterah	Manasseh	21:27 Gershon		
Kishon	Issachar	21:28 Gershon		
Dabareh	Issachar	21:28 Gershon		
Jarmuth	Issachar	21:19 Gershon		
Engannim	Issachar	21:19 Gershon		
Mishal	Asher	21:30 Gershon		
Abdon	Asher	21:30 Gershon		
Helkath	Asher	21:31 Gershon		
Rehob	Asher	21:31 Gershon		1:31
Hammothdor	Naphthali	21:32 Gershon		
Kartan	Naphthali	21:32 Gershon		
Jokneam	Zebulun	21:34 Merari		
Kartah	Zebulun	21:34 Merari		
Dimnah	Zebulun	21:35 Merari		
Nahalal	Zebulun	21:35 Merari		1:30
Jahazah	Reuben	21:36 Merari		
Kedemoth	Reuben	21:37 Merari		
Mephaath	Reuben	21:37 Merari		
Mahanaim	Gad	21:38 Merari		
Heshbon	Gad	21:39 Merari		
Jazer	Gad	21:37 Merari		

## Syntax of 3:2

This verse presents several interesting questions:

1. Is the purpose expressed here as God's only purpose, at variance with his purpose for leaving the Gentiles expressed in Ex 23:27–33 and Dt 7:22, to keep wild animals from overrunning the land? (Chisholm)
2. Is לרֹת the subject or object of the infinitive construct דָּעַת?

- Does the following prepositional clause *ללמדם* modify *דעת*, or is it parallel to *למען* and thus to *לנסות* in 3:1 (as though a second *למען* appeared before *ללמדם*)? Cassell advocates the second, but his translator has an extensive note arguing for the first, which is followed by most commentators.

It is interesting that the paragraph ends with a subsequent reference to testing and knowledge (3:4), *וַיְהִי לְנִסּוֹת בָּם אֶת־יִשְׂרָאֵל לְדַעַת הַיְשָׁמְעוּ אֶת־מִצְוֹת יְהוָה אֲשֶׁר־צִוָּה אֶת־אֲבוֹתָם בְּיַד־מֹשֶׁה*;

In this summary, *לדעת* amplifies *לנסות*, just as in 3:2. In 3:4, it takes an accusative of indirect speech, *הישמעו את־מצות יהוה*. It would make sense if 3:2 were understood in the same way, with *לדעת* the object of *לדעת*: “to know the generations of the sons of Israel, to teach them war.” See Keil on what this teaching involved: learning to obey the Lord. That is how you make war.

## The Nations Promised to Israel

Table 12 shows the various lists of the nations whom Israel was to subdue. The first column is the sons of Canaan from Genesis 10. Observations:

	Gn 10:15-18	Gn 15:18-21	Ex 3:8	Ex 3:17	Ex 23:23	Ex 33:2	Ex 34:11	Dt 7:1	Dt 20:17	Jos 3:10	Jos 9:1	Jos 11:3	Jos 12:8	Jos 24:11	Jdg 3:5	1K 9:20	Neh 9:8
Sidon	1																
Kenites		1															
Kennizites		2															
Kadmonites		3															
Hittites	2	4	2	2	2	3	3	1	1	2	1	3	1	4	2	2	2
Perizzites		5	4	4	3	4	4	5	4	4	4	4	4	2	4	3	4
Rephaim		6															
Amorites	4	7	3	3	1	2	1	3	2	6	2	2	2	1	3	1	3
Canaanites		8	1	1	4	1	2	4	3	1	3	1	3	3	1		1
Girgashites	5	9						2		5				5			6
Jebusites	3	10	6	6	6	6	6	7	6	7	6	5	6	7	6	5	5
Hivites	6		5	5	5	5	5	6	5	3	5	6	5	6	5	4	
Others	7-11																

Table 12: The Nations Promised to or fighting with Israel

- The list of Canaan’s decendants includes five that are common in the lists, but six others that do not appear. But perhaps these are grouped under the title “Canaanites” used later.
- All of the nations in later lists are in the original grant to Abraham in Genesis 15, except for the Hivites.
- Of the list in Genesis 15, the Kenites (Moses’ relatives), Kennizites (the people of Caleb, Num 32:12), Kadmonites, and Rephaim are not mentioned elsewhere. Mathews speculates that the Kadmonites, like the Kenites and Kennizites, assimilated with Israel, though Keil (on Josh 14:6-7) insists that Kenaz the ancestor of Caleb is from Judah, not

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to be identified with the Kennizites. The Rephaim were an ancient race of giants that ended with Og, king of Bashan, whom Israel slew before crossing the Jordan (Num 21:33-35; Deut 3:11), so they are not mentioned later as a nation. But see Jos 17:15 etc.

4. Rashi on Ex 33:2; 34:11 claims that the Girgashites emigrated on their own before the arrival of the Israelites. But Jos 3:10 has them still in the land at the start of the conquest. Their absence in later passages suggests that they were small, and indeed wiped out by Joshua. They are not mentioned in Scripture outside of these lists.
5. The Jebusites usually come last, perhaps anticipating David's conquest of the city.

Other lists describe the nations, but don't promise them or command their destruction:

Josh. 11:2 And to the kings that were on the north of the mountains, and of the plains south of Chinneroth, and in the valley, and in the borders of Dor on the west, 3 And to the Canaanite on the east and on the west, and to the Amorite, and the Hittite, and the Perizzite, and the Jebusite in the mountains, and to the Hivite under Hermon in the land of Mizpeh.

Notes on the Hivites. Why are they omitted in Genesis, though named in all the other lists?

They, along with several of the other nations, are listed as descendants of Canaan in the table of nations:

Gen. 10:15 And Canaan begat Sidon his firstborn, and Heth, 16 And the Jebusite, and the Amorite, and the Girgashite, 17 And the **Hivite**, and the Arkite, and the Sinite, 18 And the Arvadite, and the Zemarite, and the Hamathite: and afterward were the families of the Canaanites spread abroad.

We find two individual Hivites in Genesis: Shechem the son of Hamor, who desired Jacob's daughter Dinah (34:2), and one of Esau's wives (36:2).

Perhaps their situation is the mirror of the Rephaim. The Rephaim are active at the time of Abraham (Gen 14:5), but have been exterminated by the time Israel enters the land, so they appear in Genesis 15 but not in the later lists. Conversely, the two references to Hivites in Genesis, two generations and perhaps 200 years after God's promise to Abraham in Genesis 15, may reflect their emergence as a group during that period.