

Don't Stop • Judges 1:27-36

INTRO • Read Phil 3:12-16 • Set Scene

1. Israel has broken the back of Canaanite domination of the Promised Land.
  - a. They've conquered the main Canaanite fortresses at Jericho & Hazor.
  - b. And Joshua has assigned each of the 12 tribes of Israel their region.
  - c. It's now time for them to go and taken possession of their territory.
2. They're to finish the task of mopping up the last Canaanite holdouts.
3. That seems harsh to modern sensibilities
  - a. Like Israel was **stealing** land from the native inhabitants.
  - b. God did indeed tell them to take the Land.
  - c. But don't assume the Canaanites were just living there in peace, minding their own business when Israel came along and dispossessed them.
  - d. No; those Canaanites had themselves conquered & taken the land from its **previous** occupants.
  - e. And by the time Israel arrived, Canaanite culture had degenerated into an abominable brutality that victimized the weak & powerless.
  - f. Archaeology makes clear the Canaanites were scraping the bottom of the moral barrel.
  - g. Child sacrifice & grotesque perversion were common place.
  - h. God used Israel as the agent of His judgment on their wickedness.
4. Another reason God told Israel to wipe out the Canaanites was because if allowed to remain, Israel would be tempted to pick up some of their abominable practices.
5. Which is, in fact, exactly what happened.
6. In the vs before this, the Tribe of Judah was successful in claiming its territory. But them . . .

<sup>27</sup> However, Manasseh did not drive out *the inhabitants of* Beth Shean and its villages, or Taanach and its villages, or the inhabitants of Dor and its villages, or the inhabitants of Ibleam and its villages, or the inhabitants of Megiddo and its villages; for the Canaanites were determined to dwell in that land.

1. **These** Canaanites were **no more determined** than the ones who'd lost their territory to Judah.
2. When you're fighting for your life, you're about as determined as you can be.
3. The Canaanites who resisted Manasseh were no more capable or determined than those defeated by Judah.
4. The difference was in the **determination of Manasseh**.
  - a. After the long campaign led by Joshua, they'd had enough.
  - b. They wanted to take a break and settle down.
  - c. So what if there were still 5 centers of Canaanite occupation.
  - d. The big forts of Jericho and Hazor were done.
  - e. And now there was plenty fop land for them to settle.
  - f. Those pesky Canaanites knew better than to attack.
  - g. Let them stay cooped up behind their walls.
5. Manasseh was content with what they had, rather than what God wanted them to have.
6. Again:
7. Hang on to that; we'll come back to it.

<sup>28</sup> And it came to pass, when Israel was strong, that they put the Canaanites under tribute, but did not completely drive them out.

1. As God told so clearly them to!
2. His commands were clear. They were **NOT** to make deals with the Canaanites.
  - a. They were **not** to put them under tribute.
  - b. They were to wipe them out, erasing every last vestige of their occupation.
  - c. Canaanite culture was hideously sick; immoral & perverse to its core.
3. You're in the yard one day, watching your 4 year old doing somersaults and cartwheels.
  - a. Suddenly a dog come rushing into the yard, snarling, slavering, growling and snapping its teeth.
  - b. It's obviously rabid, out of its mind with a disease that will soon kill it.
  - c. But before it dies, it can do a huge amount of damage in the bites it doles out.
  - d. Do you think twice about picking up a shovel and ending that dog? No way.
  - e. You'd rather not, but **have** to because of the very real threat that dog poses.

- f. It's doomed anyway. You're just keeping it's misfortune from spreading.
4. Canaanite society was a rabid dog; doomed to destruction but able to do a lot of damage on its way out.
  5. It needed to be put down. That's the mission God assigned Israel.
  6. But she didn't fulfill that mission.
  7. Having entered a land won for her by Joshua, she settled into what was handed her.
  8. The ancient Jewish historian Josephus says,  
After this the Israelites grew weak as to fighting any more against their enemies, but applied themselves to the cultivation of the land, which producing them great plenty & riches, they neglected the regular disposition of their settlements, & indulged themselves in luxury & pleasures.
  9. Tired of battle, they left off pressing forward to take all God gave them, and decided to camp on what they already had.
  10. Israel had the upper hand. The Canaanites paid tribute.
  11. But it was tribute made off territory Israel had **forfeited** by a lack of faith.
  12. Once you start down that road
    - a. Fudging **here**, backing off **there** –
    - b. A slide starts that ends in ruin.
  13. Watch how things go from bad to worse . . .
- <sup>29</sup> Nor did Ephraim drive out the Canaanites who dwelt in Gezer; so the Canaanites dwelt in Gezer among them.  
1 place – Gezer.
- <sup>30</sup> Nor did Zebulun drive out the inhabitants of Kitron or the inhabitants of Nahalol; so the Canaanites dwelt among them, and were put under tribute.  
2 places – Kitron & Nahalol. Then it snowballs . . .
- <sup>31</sup> Nor did Asher drive out the inhabitants of Acco or the inhabitants of Sidon, or of Ahlab, Achzib, Helbah, Aphik, or Rehob. <sup>32</sup> So the Asherites dwelt among the Canaanites, the inhabitants of the land; for they did not drive them out.
1. 7 places!
  2. And notice, no tribute is given.
  3. The Canaanites aren't living among the tribe of Asher. //; It's flipped
  4. The Asherites are living among the Canaanites!
- <sup>33</sup> Nor did Naphtali drive out the inhabitants of Beth Shemesh or the inhabitants of Beth Anath; but they dwelt among the Canaanites, the inhabitants of the land. Nevertheless the inhabitants of Beth Shemesh and Beth Anath were put under tribute to them.
1. Then the worst case of all . . .
- <sup>34</sup> And the Amorites forced the children of Dan into the mountains, for they would not allow them to come down to the valley; <sup>35</sup> and the Amorites were determined to dwell in Mount Heres, in Aijalon, and in Shaalbim; yet when the strength of the house of Joseph became greater, they were put under tribute.
2. While the other tribes at least settled their allotted territories, Dan couldn't.
  3. They were forced to take refuge in the hills.
    1. The story of ch.1 goes from the victories of Judah to the defeat & humiliation of Dan.
    2. In the 40 yrs Isrl wandered in the wilderness, they were completely dependent on God.
      - a. They looked to Him for direction as He led them by the pillar of cloud & fire.
      - b. He gave them manna and water every day.
    3. But when they entered Canaan, the pillar departed & the manna stopped.
      - a. They didn't **need** the pillar anymore because they were IN the Place of the Promise.
      - b. They didn't **need** manna because they enjoyed the bounty of the Land's springs & fields
  4. Joshua's conquest gave them a few cities, and once he was gone, they settled in & got busy with the task of making a living.
    - a. They knew they ought to finish the conquest,
    - b. But there were fields & houses aplenty.
  5. Ch1 parallels the experience of many Christians.
    - a. They've entered new life in Christ & like Judah in the early vs of the ch, see some great spiritual

victories.

- b. But then, like Manasseh, they settle into what we might call a “normal” Christian life.
  - c. They look around at where other Christians are at, average the total, and resign themselves to that.
  - d. They know there’s a lot more spiritual growth they *could* pursue, but hey; why bother?
  - e. After all, they don’t do; smoke, don’t chew & don’t go with those who do.
  - f. They go to church; know most of the songs; when to stand, sit.
  - g. They have their lil group of acquaintances they check-in with.
  - h. Their Bible is a medium-sized study Bible with just the right amount of wear on cover & edges.
  - i. They know enough of the vocabulary of Evangelicals to get by; “inspiration, inerrancy, Trinity, Rick Warren.”
6. Every once in a while, when they have a moment for quiet reflection, there’s a little voice that urges them to go deeper with God.
  7. But afraid of where that might take them, of what might be required, they turn on the radio or TV.
  8. Some are wondering how to turn it off right now.
1. God had so much more for Israel; but possessing it meant more battle.
  2. They were content with what they had rather than what God wanted for them.
  3. And because they stopped moving forward in faith, they started drifting away.
    - a. Unarrested drift always accelerates as the current of culture nudges us along.
    - b. You see, the world isn’t neutral. It’s under the control of the evil one.
    - c. If we aren’t focused and intentional in our pursuit of God, the winds of the world *will* carry us along.
  4. Think of the tribes we just read about; Manasseh, Ephraim, Zebulun, Asher, Naphtali, Dan.
  5. There was territory under the Canaanite’s feet God wanted Israel to have.
    - a. Possessing it would mean work, battle.
    - b. But if Israel looked to the Lord, victory was certain, as it always was when they trusted Him.
  6. But they decided they’d had enough, had gone far enough, & allowed territory God gave them to lie under enemy dominion.
    - a. Then, from there, the corrupting influence of Canaanite culture polluted Israel.
    - b. It wasn’t long till the people of Israel worshipped the Canaanite gods & aped their gross wickedness.
  7. Christian: Don’t settle for average or a “normal” Christian life; whatever that is.
    - a. Don’t look around at what others do and allow.
    - b. Don’t park your spiritual life on the side of the street in some cultural Christian ghetto and call it quits on going further with Jesus.
    - c. Don’t call a truce with your spiritual Canaanites; sins camped out on territory God wants you to possess.
  8. Don’t Stop pursuing Christ – that the fullness of His image would be installed in you.
  9. Those who *start* like Manasseh, compromising in one thing, end up like Dan, banished to the back-hills.

## CONCLUSION

<sup>36</sup> Now the boundary of the Amorites *was* from the Ascent of Akkrabbim, from Sela, and upward.

1. This was the geographical center of all Israel.
2. The Amorites were the rankest of the Canaanites; the most corrupt.
3. They made the average Canaanite blush.
4. Picture a woman wearing a beautiful formal gown.
  - a. She’s stunning! With elbow length white gloves; gorgeous heels.
  - b. Her hair & make-up is perfect.
  - c. She’s wearing an exquisite matching diamond earrings & necklace.
  - d. But on her nose is a massive, angry red boil a ½” across, huge head on it.
  - e. No matter how elegant she looks everywhere else, the one thing everyone sees is that boil.
5. It seems every few yrs we hear of another leaders’ fall.
  - a. Sexual sin.
  - b. Greed.
  - c. Anger.
  - d. Whatever: Down they go after yrs of fruitful work.

6. Why? Because they failed to heed the Spirit's call long time ago to go after territory in their soul on which sin was sitting.

7. What we DON'T hear is the many MORE stories of those who **heed** the Spirit's voice and go against those things. By faith, they TAKE that territory and submit it to the Lordship of Christ.

Philippians 3:12–16

<sup>12</sup> Not that I have already attained, or am already perfected; but I press on, that I may lay hold of that for which Christ Jesus has also laid hold of me. <sup>13</sup> Brethren, I do not count myself to have apprehended; but one thing *I do*, forgetting those things which are behind and reaching forward to those things which are ahead, <sup>14</sup> I press toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus.

<sup>15</sup> Therefore let us, as many as are mature, have this mind; and if in anything you think otherwise, God will reveal even this to you. <sup>16</sup> Nevertheless, to *the degree* that we have already attained, let us walk by the same rule, let us be of the same mind.