



1

(Series Overview Slide and Message Title)



2

I once heard a made-up story about a person who went to heaven. After they got there, they were taken into this great room that was bigger than his eyes could take in. All along the walls there were drawers. He asked, “What is the place?” The believer who had been charged with showing him around replied, “This is the storage room of unclaimed blessings. This is where all the things the LORD wanted to give us but couldn’t are stored.” “Why couldn’t God give us these blessings?” “Because we refused to trust and obey.”

TR: I want to learn how not to squander the chance to be mightily blessed by our Lord, don’t you?

THE BOOK OF JUDGES

1 - 3:6 Introduction

*3:7 - 16 Repeated Cycles of Sin &
Deliverance by the Judges*

*17 - 21 Two Stories of Horror from
the early days of the Judges*

3

That's what we can learn from the OT book called Judges.

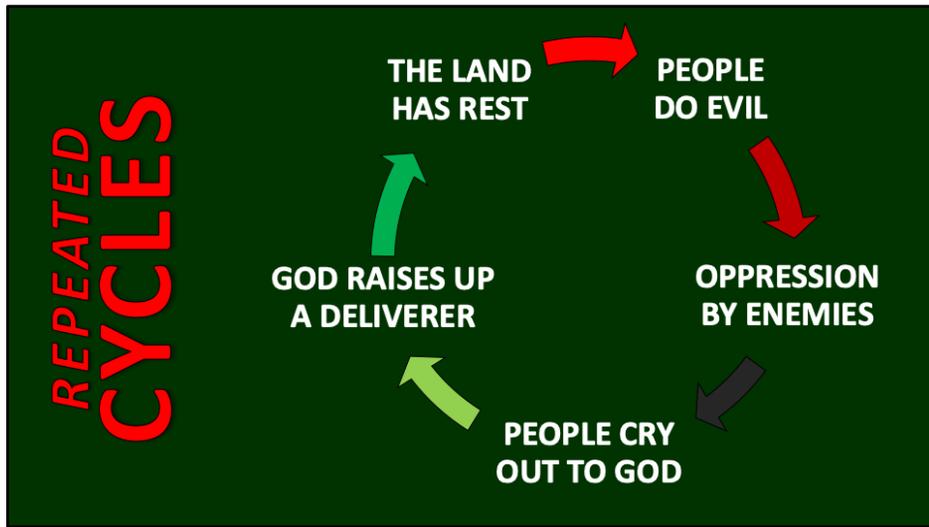
-- It comes after Moses has led the people of Israel out of Egypt through God's great power.

-- It comes after Joshua has led the people into the Promised Land, with great victories.

-- It comes after Joshua has died and now the 12 tribes face the challenge of not only conquering the land but occupying it.

-- The book falls into three main sections . . . READ SLIDE.

TR: The CYCLE that is repeated over and over again hopefully doesn't sound like our lives.



4

REVIEW SLIDE

TR: Did God lead the people into this time of the Judges just to show us this cycle? Wouldn't God have led His people into the promised land for something better?

[THEOCRACY]

"God Rules"

5

OT scholar, Leon Wood, certainly thought He did. He taught that the plan of God was to bless His people with the privilege of living in a THEOCRACY.

- Not a democracy nor a monarchy, but a people ruled by God.
- Not a government by priests or by some other religious leaders in the name of God.
- But actually life under God's rule.
- Virtually no civil government officials and no taxes.
- Victory and a land at rest.
- True peace!

TR: How could these blessings have happened?



6

The teaching of Deuteronomy makes it clear that . . . REVIEW SLIDE.

-- If God's people would believe God, trusting Him and not leaning on their own understanding, and therefore obey God's directives, then they can experience God's great blessings.

TR: As God said through Moses . . .

Deuteronomy 28:13

And the LORD will make you the head and not the tail, and you shall only go up and not down, if you obey the commandments of the LORD your God, which I command you today, being careful to do them . . .

ESV

7

READ SLIDE

TR: Of course, God knew that His people wouldn't trust and obey and be able to fully enjoy the blessings of being in covenant with the LORD. So, how should we look at JUDGES in light of salvation history?



8

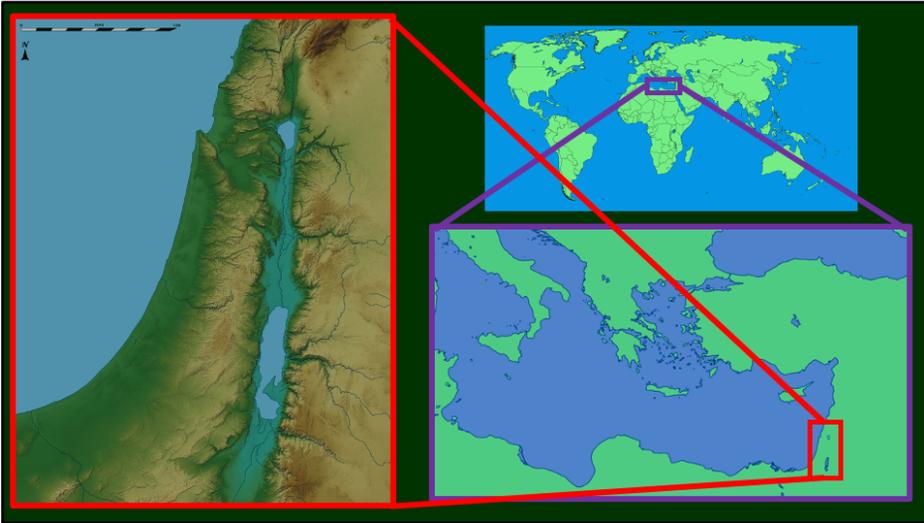
Perhaps this infographic will help.

-- REVIEW SLIDE

-- So, while we remember that we are living at a different point in salvation history, there is still much we can learn as we look forward to living under a THEOCRACY in the Millennial Kingdom and ultimately to the BLESSINGS when sin is absolutely no more in the NEW HEAVENS AND NEW EARTH.

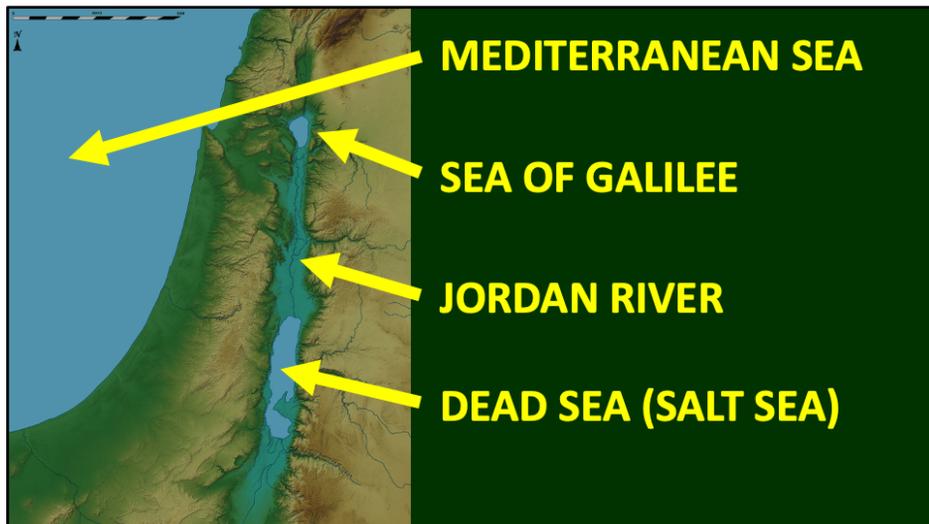
-- Then all God's people will fully trust and obey.

TR: So, let's learn from Judges, beginning by gaining a geographical perspective. After all, this is real history in a real place, not just myth and legend.



Let's zoom in from the world map to the Mediterranean basin and then to the land of Israel.

TR: The physical geography of the land is marked by some key water features.



10

REVIEW SLIDE

-- Cf. the way "Walk thru the Bible" teaches the geography.

TR: The land of the area isn't all flat, like most of our maps.



11

Rather, we find four major areas.

-- REVIEW SLIDE

-- It also helps to note that there is also a mostly east-west valley called the Jezreel Valley.

-- To the south is the Negev which is basically desert.

TR: Joshua has led the tribes to victory but now the time had come for further battles of occupation.



TRIBAL ALLOTMENTS

After the death of Joshua, the people of Israel inquired of the LORD, "Who shall go up first for us against the Canaanites, to fight against them?" (1:1)

12

READ SLIDE

TR: The answer of the LORD was . . .

Judges 1:3

And Judah said to Simeon his brother, "Come up with me into the territory allotted to me, that we may fight against the Canaanites. And I likewise will go with you into the territory allotted to you." So Simeon went with him.

ESV

13

. . . that Judah would take the lead.

-- Judah, whose patriarch had it prophesied of him that his lineage would have the scepture.

-- READ SLIDE

TR: The occupation started off fantastically.

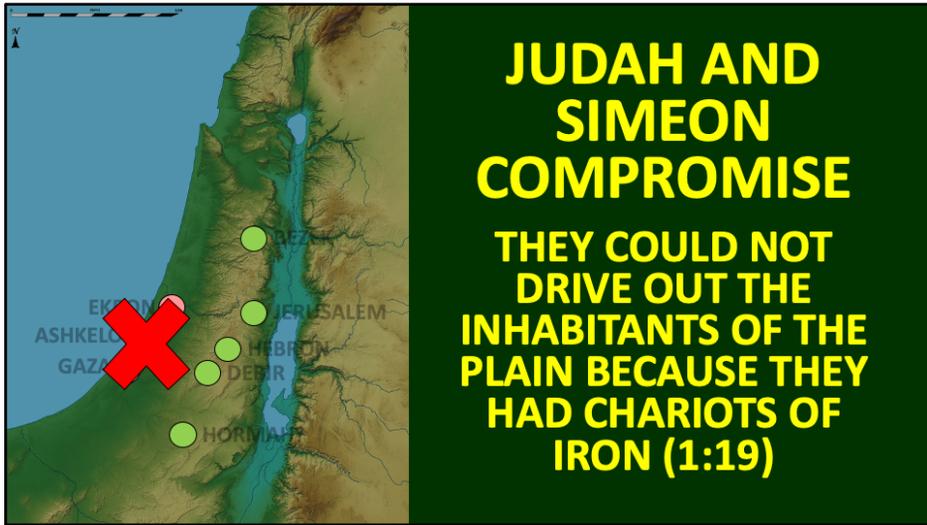


**JUDAH AND
SIMEON WIN
MOVING SOUTH
ALONG THE
MOUNTAINS,
TOWARD THE NEGEV,
THEN NORTH IN THE
COASTAL PLAINS**

14

REVIEW SLIDE – covering verses 1-18

TR: But things start to fall apart.



15

They compromised.

-- READ SLIDE

-- It sounds like they had good reason but remember the promises of God.

-- God had given them victory over powerful enemies.

-- He had blessed them with a string of further wins . . . But something went wrong when things got a bit harder.

-- cf. the plains where the chariots “ruled” verses the mountain areas where they were less useful.

TR: Don't misunderstand, it wasn't a complete face-plant. There were further signs of God's blessing.

Judges 1:20-21

And Hebron was given to Caleb, as Moses had said. And he drove out from it the three sons of Anak. ²¹**But** the people of Benjamin did not drive out the Jebusites who lived in Jerusalem, so the Jebusites have lived with the people of Benjamin in Jerusalem to this day.

ESV

16

**Back in Hebron, the giants of Anak were no match for Caleb.
-- READ SLIDE**

TR: Benjamin, whose allotment was between Judah to the south and Ephraim to the north, didn't finish the job.



17

Another STRIKE of defeat due to compromise.

TR: Then beginning in verse 22 we read . . .

Judges 1:22-23

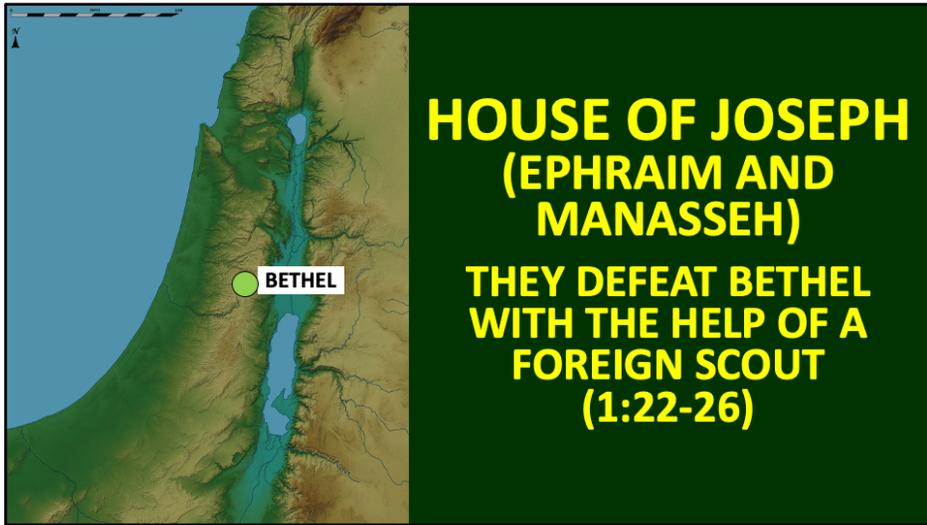
The house of Joseph also went up against Bethel, **and the LORD was with them.** ²³And the house of Joseph scouted out Bethel. (Now the name of the city was formerly Luz.)

ESV

18

READ SLIDE

TR: The house of Joseph was made of the two tribes from the two children of Joseph, Ephraim and Manasseh.

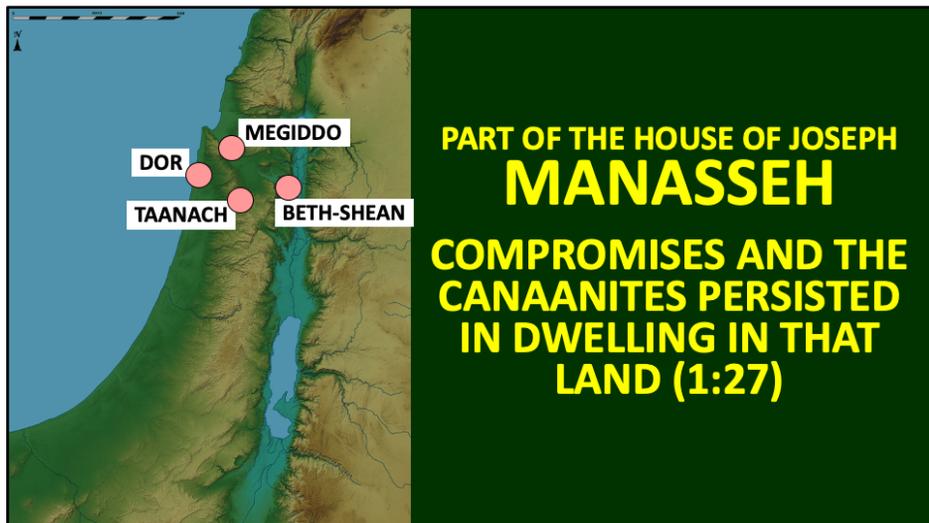


19

Together they defeated Bethel.

-- But perhaps there is even a hint of compromise in how they won, considering that they did not devote ALL the people to destruction as the Lord commanded.

TR: One part of the house of Joseph, Manasseh, had a lot more territory to occupy. In addition to what God gave them on the eastern side of the Jordan, they were to take a lot of land on the western side.



20

In verse 27 we read that key cities weren't fully occupied, including the ones at either end of the Jezreel Valley.

TR: Perhaps these persistent Canaanites could be dealt with after Manasseh was a bit stronger. They probably thought, we'll deal with this when we are in a better position to do so.



21

But the defeat caused by compromise marked another stroke against the people of God.

-- READ SLIDE

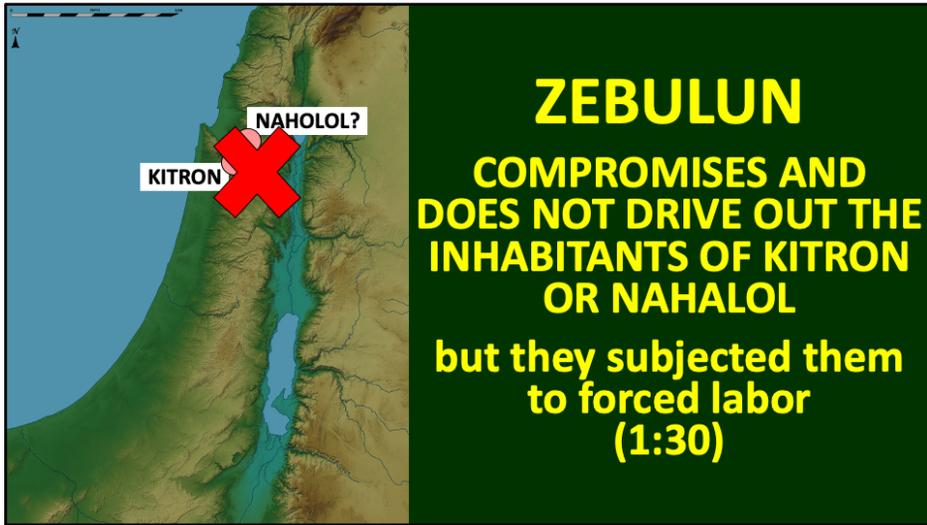
TR: Things weren't faring better for the other part of the house of Joseph, Ephraim.



22

READ SLIDE

TR: Things continue to spiral out-of-control. Verse 30 tells us . . .



23

READ SLIDE

TR: Then, in verses 31-32 . . .



24

... we read of failure toward the north.
-- READ SLIDE

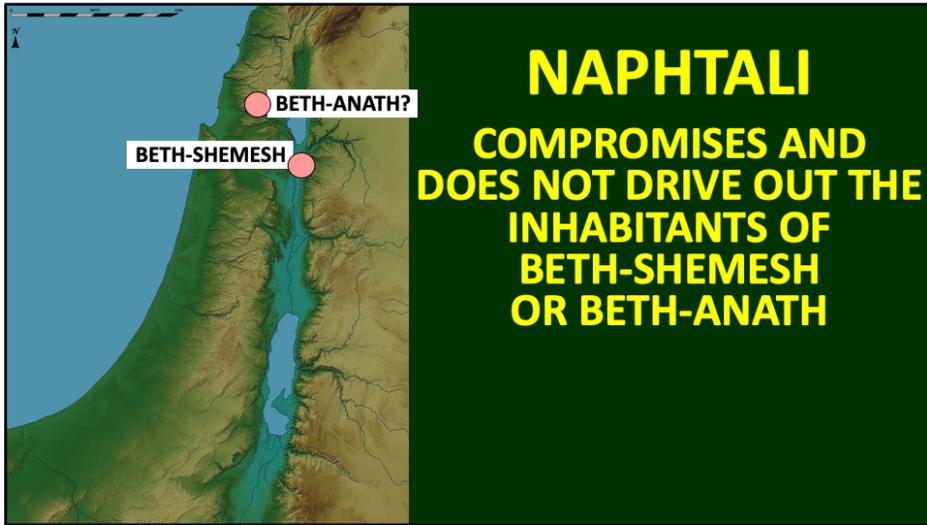
TR: The result . . .



25

. . . another strike caused by compromise.

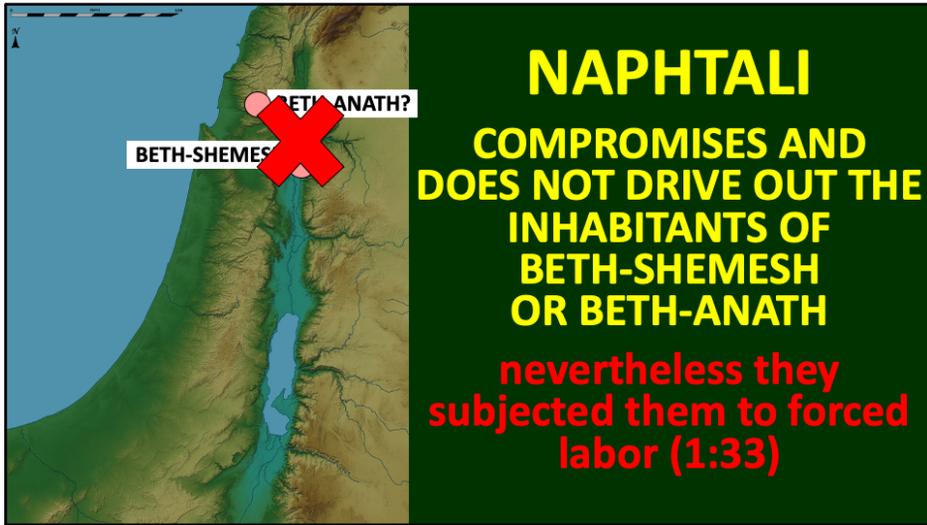
TR: Another tribe with an allotment in the northern area didn't do any better.



26

READ SLIDE

TR: Again, it seemed that they had a better idea than God when they merely . . .



27

. . . subjected them to forced labor.
-- Interestingly, Issachar isn't even mentioned.

TR: The last tribe mentioned is Dan. Their allotment was on the coastal plain by the Mediterranean Sea. In the heart of Philistine country.



28

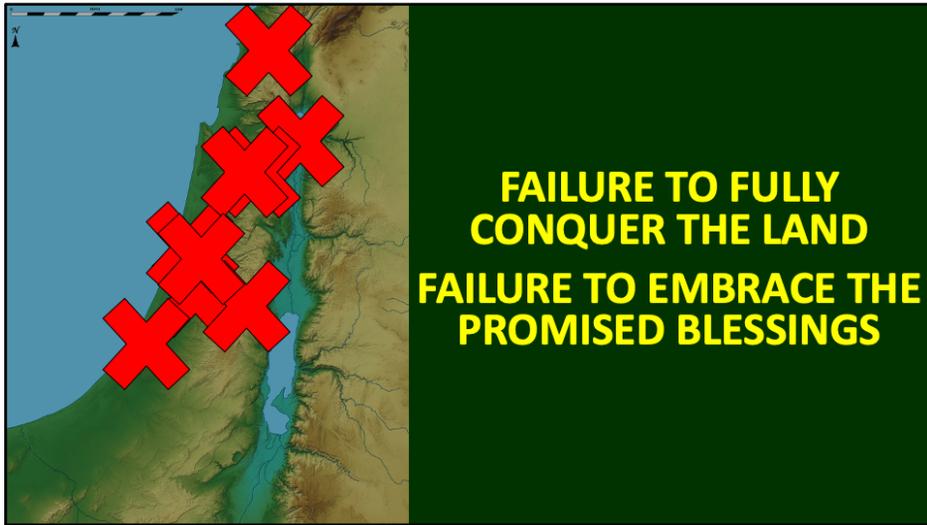
Dan's failure was even bigger. They couldn't even take occupation of their inheritance.

-- Their blessings "stayed in their drawer."

-- We'll learn more as we study Judges, but a clue as to what happens is found in where the city of Dan is located . . . way north, by Mount Hermon.

-- This was no where near the allotment God had promised them.

TR: Put all this together

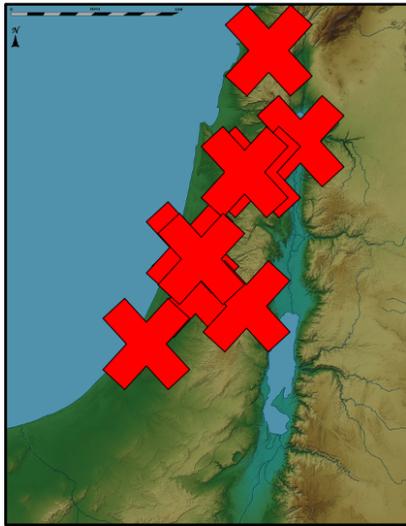


29

... and you get ... strike, strike, strike, strike ...

TR: The flow of chapter one makes clear that the situation was . .

.



“DETERIORATING”

**vv. 27-30 – Canaanites
dwell among the people**

**vv. 31-33 – Canaanites
dominate Asher and
Natphali**

**v. 34 – Dan is completely
dispossessed**

30

... continuing to deteriorate.

-- READ SLIDE

TR: So, what happened? Back in Deuteronomy we read . . .

Deuteronomy 28:13

And the LORD will make you the head and **not the tail**, and you shall only go up and not down, if you obey the commandments of the LORD your God, which I command you today, being careful to do them . . .

ESV

31

READ SLIDE

- Israel was **NOT** the head, but the tail.
- They had **NOT** gone only up but had gone down.

TR: What had happened?



32

They did not trust and obey.

**-- And the promised blessings that God had prepared for them
“sat in the drawer.”**

**TR: This understanding is made clear in the opening verses of
chapter 2.**



While we don't know exactly where Gilgal was, it was a place where the Tabernacle had been stationed.

-- It was a place of God's blessing because the people trusted and obeyed.

-- Gilgal is where the men of Israel were circumcised and "rolled away" the reproach of Egypt (Joshua 5:2-9).

-- Gilgal is where the LORD appeared to Joshua and assured him of victory (Joshua 5:13-15)

TR: But the Angel of the LORD, Who many think was Jesus the Son before He took on humanity (pre-incarnate), led them to Bochim. Probably leading them to move the Tabernacle to there.

Judges 2:1

Now the angel of the LORD went up from Gilgal to Bochim. And he said, “I brought you up from Egypt and brought you into the land that I swore to give to your fathers. I said, ‘I will never break my covenant with you . . .’”

ESV

34

Let’s read beginning in 2:1 . . . READ SLIDE

TR: Verse 2

Judges 2:2-3

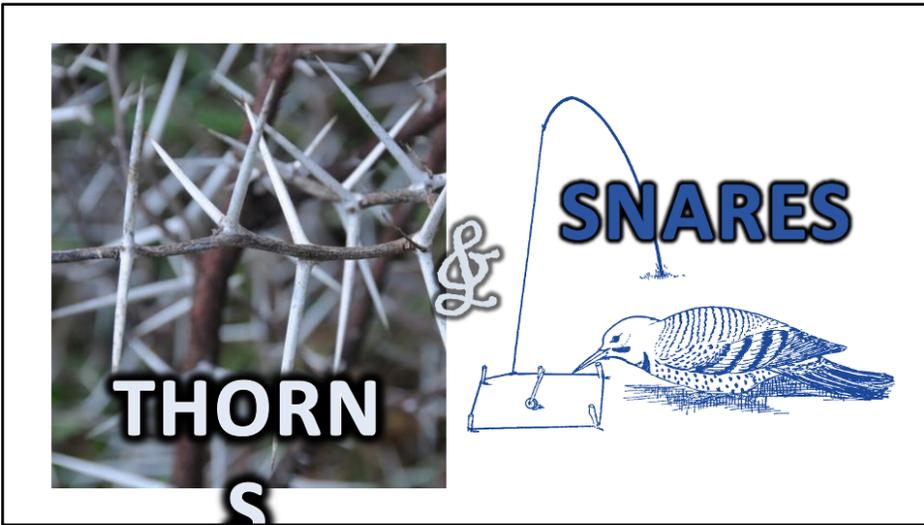
“. . . and you shall make no covenant with the inhabitants of this land; you shall break down their altars.’ **But you have not obeyed my voice. What is this you have done?** ³So now I say, I will not drive them out before you, but they shall become thorns in your sides, and their gods shall be a snare to you.”

ESV

35

READ SLIDE

TR: What a horrid word from the LORD . . . there would be great consequences for the disobedience . . . the rebellion against Him.



**The unconquered peoples would be the thorns of affliction,
-- . . . and their worship of false gods would be snares of
entrapment.**

TR: The response in verses 4-5 . . .

Judges 2:4-5

As soon as the angel of the LORD spoke these words to all the people of Israel, the people lifted up their voices and wept. ⁵And they called the name of that place Bochim. And they sacrificed there to the LORD.

ESV

37

READ SLIDE

- [Bochim] = weeping
- But were these tears of remorse or repentance?
- That's something that our further study will reveal.

TR: So how can this apply to us today?

EXCUSES OF COMPROMISERS:

38

For me it exposed some of the excuses that I sometimes give when I compromise my obedience to God.

-- Cf. compromises: not finish emptying the dishwasher, weeding the garden, vacuuming the house, cleaning our rooms

-- I excuse my incomplete obedience as all I could do.

-- We want to imagine that delayed obedience is anything but rebellion.

-- cf. delay: I'll do the report tomorrow, I send the note the Spirit prompted me to later . . .

-- And as we excuse our compromises, we end up leaving blessings in the drawer.

TR: Our excuses really aren't that different than what I imagine the people of the 12 tribes gave . . .

EXCUSES OF COMPROMISERS:

- **“It’s too hard!”**
(Iron Chariots – 1:19)

39

READ SLIDE

- “Come on, be realistic! They’ve got better weapons. They’ve got the fighter jets and cruise missiles of their day.”
- We would say, “It’s too hard!” (Said in whining voice)

TR: Similarly, we might excuse our delayed obedience by saying . . .

.

EXCUSES OF COMPROMISERS:

- **“It’s too hard!”**
(Iron Chariots – 1:19)
- **“I’ll do it later!”**
(Canaanites persisted – 1:27)

40

READ SLIDE

-- Saying “I was going to do it. If you’d only given me a bit more time.”
-- But, as verse 28 told us . . . even when Israel grew strong, they still did not drive them out completely.

-- Perhaps we’ve compromised and not done what the Lord told us.
-- We told Him that we were too emotionally crippled to go work on reconciliation. We were too broke to go make restitution for what we stole. We were too . . .
-- . . . but the thing is, for many of us, we are not that anymore. And yet we still won’t deal with our rebellion . . . we won’t deal completely with what is hindering our experiencing God’s full drawer of blessing.

-- And many of us are sad or even mad at God about it.

TR: Oh, how we can rationalize. Can’t we?

EXCUSES OF COMPROMISERS:

- **“It’s too hard!”**
(Iron Chariots – 1:19)
- **“I’ll do it later!”**
(Canaanites persisted – 1:27)
- **“My way is better, it works for me!”**
(Using forced labor – 1:28,30,33)

41

When I read of the forced labor, it is hard to imagine that they were not thinking . . . READ SLIDE

- I can handle any temptations they might bring . . .
- . . . and I can use this for my good. “It’s even a blessing.”
- “I know the porn is wrong, but it helps my marriage.”
- “I know cheating my clients is wrong, but it helps put food on the table for my kids.”
- “I know just giving others the silent treatment is wrong, but it is all that I can do right now.”
- “I know that I should “cut off my hand or pluck out my eye,” but God hasn’t made me that strong.”
- “I know I should share the Gospel with them, but it is better if I didn’t since I might push them further away from the Lord.”

TR: What are our excuses for compromising? Will we let our compromises lead to thorns of affliction and snares of entrapment? Or perhaps we already are scraped and trapped.

Judges 2:4-5

As soon as the angel of the LORD spoke these words to all the people of Israel, the people lifted up their voices and wept. ⁵And they called the name of that place Bochim. And they sacrificed there to the LORD.

ESV

42

And you are weeping because of the consequences.

-- The place where you are at could be called "Bochim."

-- Weeping for a marriage lost, for children whose hearts have become hardened, for testimonies soiled, for reputations now in the manure pile, for inheritances squandered, for health compromised by our youthful choices?

-- Or are we weeping the tears of true repentance?

TR: We studied this winter in 2 Corinthians. Do you remember this verse?

2 Corinthians 7:10

For godly grief produces a repentance that leads to salvation without regret, whereas worldly grief produces death.

ESV

43

READ SLIDE

- Perhaps it is time to stop repeating, “I’m so sorry” . . . “I’m so sorry.”
- Isn’t it time to take up the full armor of God and obey **COMPLETELY?**

TR: Won’t you ask the Spirit of the Lord right now and pray this prayer . . .

TRUST & OBEY

**“LORD, show me where my trust and obedience
have been INCOMPLETE.**

Help me repent and not just weep.

**Show me what You want
the fruits of repentance to look like.”**

44

READ SLIDE

TR: Are you able to “conquer the land?” Even against enemies with iron chariots? In the mountains and in the plains? In the south and in north? Over the persistent enemies that seem to be more than you can handle at this time?



45

- Yes . . . because God is for us, as Romans 8:31 reminds us.**
- We can learn from the time of the Judges . . .**
 - . . . but we must remember that we live in the time of the New Covenant.**
 - The time of the Holy Spirit's dwelling in each person who has trusted Christ as Lord and Savior.**
 - The time when we all can be more than conquerors through Christ.**

TR: Let us not forsake any longer the blessings God has for us. Through trust and obedience, allow Him . . .



46

. . . to open the drawer and give us all that He has in store for us now . . .

-- Don't say, "It's too hard. I'll do it later. I've got a better plan the Lord."

-- Trust and obey . . .

-- . . . and look forward to the even more He has for us then . . . when Christ returns, when His Kingdom is here on earth, and finally, when sin will be no more!

TR: The next slide has some questions that can help you welcome God's truth. Talk them through with your household or give a friend a call.

Share a time when you forgot you had something good. Perhaps you opened a box or a drawer and found it again. How did it make you feel?

From the 3 mentioned, decide which excuse is each person's "favorite." (*It's too hard. I'll do it later. I've got a better plan.*)

Is God showing you any places in your life where you are "weeping" about the costs of your compromises, but now you know you need to really turn away (repent) from them?