

(Judges 1) - *Judges* is the story of God preserving Israel in the promised land despite their unbelief, sinfulness, and rebellion. We see here the power and faithfulness of God Who had determined to use this nation to accomplish the salvation of His elect (spiritual Israel) by bringing the Messiah into the world through them. Israel is in the promised land, and the task before them is to conquer the other nations and take possession of the entire land. In *Judges 1:1*, after Joshua's death, *"the children of Israel asked the LORD, saying, Who shall go up for us against the Canaanites first, to fight against them?"* The answer - *"And the LORD said, Judah shall go up: behold, I have delivered the land into his hand"* (*Judges 1:2*). Just as Joshua was a type of Christ, Judah also typified our Savior. As Joshua went before them in crossing the Jordan River and conquering Jericho, Judah would go before them to defeat their enemies. This pictures Christ Who has gone before us bringing us out of our bondage to sin, Who has conquered all our enemies and put us safely and securely in the promised land of salvation and eternal life. Having finished the work of redemption and righteousness, Christ has arisen and gone before us unto the Father where He lives to make intercession for us. We also know that Judah was the tribe from which Christ would come into the world according to the flesh (*Gen. 49:8-9*).

Throughout this history, we see some victories for Israel and some failures. The victories came when they depended upon the LORD and were in obedience to the covenant. The defeats came when they depended upon themselves and other nations and were in unbelief and disobedience. In *Judges 1* we see that Israel failed to drive out all of theirs and God's enemies, and they sought to gain by placing a tax on the Canaanites - *"And it came to pass, when Israel was strong, that they put the Canaanites to tribute, and did not utterly drive them out"* (*Judges 1:28*). This was because of unbelief and greed.

(Judges 2:1-5) - This *"Angel of the LORD"* was the Lord Jesus Christ Who appeared to Moses and to Joshua before this. He is the Messenger of the Covenant. He brings judgment upon the people because they had broken the covenant they had promised to keep. But even though they broke the covenant, God would never break His promise as long as that covenant was in force, again, because of His promise to Abraham. God would keep this nation together in the promised land until the time of the Messiah. He did punish the people for their disobedience - *"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"* (*Judges 2:3*). Throughout their time in the land of promise, Israel was constantly plagued with opposition from their enemies. The people then wept, and they named this place *"Bochim,"* which means "weepers" or "place of weeping." And having been taught by Moses, Aaron, and Joshua what it took to appease the anger of God, *"they sacrificed there unto the LORD"* (*Joshua 2:5*). Whether or not the majority of these Israelites understood the true meaning of the sacrificial worship prescribed by God through Moses, we to whom God has revealed Himself and to whom God has revealed ourselves in our sins, know that it took the perfect sacrifice of Christ (God manifest in the flesh) to put away and cleanse us from all our sins (*Heb. 10:14*). We are so blessed by God's grace to know that our sins were charged to Christ, and His righteousness has been charged to us.

(Judges 2:6-15) - Joshua died when he was 110 years old. It seems that during Joshua's time in the promised land and immediately following his death, under the leadership of elders, the majority of the people were in obedience to the Old Covenant Law (*Judges 2:7*). But when a new generation rose up *"which knew not the LORD, nor yet the works which He had done for Israel,"* they *"did evil in the sight of the LORD, and served Baalim"* (*Judges 2:10-13*). Instead

of enjoying the temporal blessings of God within the promised land, they became objects of God's anger (*Judges 2:14-15*).

(Judges 2:16-22) - Because of His promise and His faithfulness to keep His promise to Israel through Abraham, God raised up judges (deliverers, leaders) to rescue Israel from their enemies. These were not judges as those in our law courts judging cases by the law. These were deliverers and leaders whom God was with to enable them to perform their task of preserving the people. We are told here that the people "*would not hearken unto their judges*" but went after idols, again, breaking the covenant. God did this, nevertheless, not because Israel deserved such a deliverer, but in spite of the fact that they were undeserving. This was God's way of preserving them in the land in spite of their sins - "*for it repented the LORD because of their groanings by reason of them that oppressed them and vexed them.*" The repentance here attributed to the LORD was not any change of mind or purpose in God. It merely describes God's compassion upon the people because of the oppression of their enemies. But the people continually broke the covenant and sinned against the LORD.

Throughout this period, there were fourteen judges listed, from Othniel to Eli, leading up to the time Israel would ask for a king to rule over them. Four of these judges are listed in *Hebrews 11:32*. The most famous of these judges are Gideon and Samson, but all of these judges were types of the supreme Judge of all, the Lord Jesus Christ. Christ is our Deliverer, Preserver, and our Judge - "*For the Father judgeth no man, but hath committed all judgment unto the Son: That all men should honour the Son, even as they honour the Father. He that honoureth not the Son honoureth not the Father which hath sent Him*" (*John 5:22-23*). Not only is Christ the supreme Judge of all, He is also the standard by which all judgment is based - "*Because He hath appointed a day, in the which He will judge the world in righteousness by that Man whom He hath ordained; whereof He hath given assurance unto all men, in that He hath raised Him from the dead.*"

We learn from this that the only way that we as sinners can appear before God and pass the judgment of God is to appear before Him IN CHRIST - washed in His blood and clothed in His righteousness imputed to us. Keep in mind that throughout the recorded history of Israel, the Lord was showing the utter sinfulness and depravity of all mankind by nature and the impossibility of sinners being saved by their works and/or obedience to the law (*Rom. 3:9-20*). He was showing OUR need of salvation by His grace based on the righteousness of Christ as our Surety, Substitute, Redeemer, and Preserver (*Rom. 3:21-26*). The psalmist wrote, "*God judgeth the righteous, and God is angry with the wicked every day*" (*Psalms 7:11*). We are all sinners and deserve nothing more than God's anger and wrath. But "*the righteous*" describes all sinners saved by God's grace and justified in HIS sight by the blood of Christ, His righteousness imputed. "*The wicked*" describes all sinners who are without Christ and forever lost in their sins.

We must, therefore, be aware of the certainty of God's righteous judgment - "*And as it is appointed unto men once to die, but after this the judgment*" (*Heb. 9:27*). The psalmist wrote that the LORD "*hath prepared His throne for judgment,*" and "*He shall judge the world in righteousness*" (*Psalms 9:7-8*). "*The LORD is known by the judgment which He executeth: the wicked is snared in the work of his own hands*" (*Psalms 9:16*). It is the glory of the LORD to make Himself known to His people both in judgment and in mercy. By His grace, through the Lord Jesus Christ, God is both a just God and a Savior, both just and Justifier of all who believe in Christ and are submitted to Him as the LORD their Righteousness - "*For Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to every one that believeth*" (*Rom. 10:4*).