

## Israel Takes Possession of the Land (c. 1380 – c. 1365 BC)

Judges 1:1–19a, 20, 22–26

Joshua 15:14–19

### Introduction

1 Now it came about after the death of Joshua that the sons of Israel inquired of the LORD, saying, “Who shall go up first for us against the Canaanites, to fight against them?”

2 The LORD said, “Judah shall go up; behold, I have given the land into his hand.”

### Judah and Simeon’s Upland Campaign

3 Then Judah said to Simeon his brother, “Come up with me into the territory allotted me, that we may fight against the Canaanites; and I in turn will go with you into the territory allotted you.” So Simeon went with him.

4 Judah went up, and the LORD gave the Canaanites and the Perizzites into their hands, and they defeated ten thousand men at Bezek.

5 They found Adoni-bezek in Bezek and fought against him, and they defeated the Canaanites and the Perizzites.

6 But Adoni-bezek fled; and they pursued him and caught him and cut off his thumbs and big toes.

7 Adoni-bezek said, “Seventy kings with their thumbs and their big toes cut off used to gather up *scrap*s under my table; as I have done, so God has repaid me.” So they brought him to Jerusalem and he died there.

### The Conquest of Jerusalem

8 Then the sons of Judah fought against Jerusalem and captured it and struck it with the edge of the sword and set the city on fire.

### Judah and Simeon’s Lowland Campaign

9 Afterward the sons of Judah went down to fight against the Canaanites living in the hill country and in the Negev and in the lowland.

### Caleb Conquers Hebron (Kiriath Arba)

10 So Judah went against the Canaanites who lived in Hebron (now the name of Hebron formerly *was* Kiriath-arba); and they struck Sheshai and Ahiman and Talmai.

14 Caleb drove out from there the three sons of Anak: Sheshai and Ahiman and Talmai, the children of Anak.

### Othniel Conquers Debir (Kiriath Sepher)

11 Then from there he went against the inhabitants of Debir (now the name of Debir formerly *was* Kiriath-sepher).

12 And Caleb said, “The one who attacks Kiriath-sepher and captures it, I will even give him my daughter Achsah for a wife.”

13 Othniel the son of Kenaz, Caleb’s younger brother, captured it; so he gave him his daughter Achsah for a wife.

14 Then it came about when she came *to him*, that she persuaded him to ask her father for a field. Then she alighted from her donkey, and Caleb said

15 Then he went up from there against the inhabitants of Debir; now the name of Debir formerly *was* Kiriath-sepher.

16 And Caleb said, “The one who attacks Kiriath-sepher and captures it, I will give him Achsah my daughter as a wife.”

17 Othniel the son of Kenaz, the brother of Caleb, captured it; so he gave him Achsah his daughter as a wife.

18 It came about that when she came *to him*, she persuaded him to ask her father for a field. So she alighted from the donkey, and Caleb said

to her, “What do you want?”  
 15 She said to him, “Give me a blessing, since you have given me the land of the Negev, give me also springs of water.”  
 So Caleb gave her the upper springs and the lower springs.

to her, “What do you want?”  
 19 Then she said, “Give me a blessing; since you have given me the land of the Negev, give me also springs of water.”  
 So he gave her the upper springs and the lower springs.

#### **The Settlement of Arad**

16 The descendants of the Kenite, Moses’ father-in-law, went up from the city of palms with the sons of Judah, to the wilderness of Judah which is in the south of Arad; and they went and lived with the people.

#### **The Conquest of Zephath/Hormah**

17 Then Judah went with Simeon his brother, and they struck the Canaanites living in Zephath, and utterly destroyed it. So the name of the city was called Hormah.

#### **The Conquest of the Lowland**

18 And Judah took Gaza with its territory and Ashkelon with its territory and Ekron with its territory.

#### **Conclusion of the Judah-Simeon Alliance**

19a Now the LORD was with Judah, and they took possession of the hill country;  
 20 Then they gave Hebron to Caleb, as Moses had promised; and he drove out from there the three sons of Anak.

#### **Joseph’s Conquest of Bethel**

22 Likewise the house of Joseph went up against Bethel, and the LORD was with them.  
 23 The house of Joseph spied out Bethel (now the name of the city was formerly Luz).  
 24 The spies saw a man coming out of the city and they said to him, “Please show us the entrance to the city and we will treat you kindly.”  
 25 So he showed them the entrance to the city, and they struck the city with the edge of the sword, but they let the man and all his family go free.  
 26 The man went into the land of the Hittites and built a city and named it Luz which is its name to this day.

### **Israel’s Failure to Completely Obey God’s Command (c. 1380 – c. 1365 BC)**

Joshua 13:13; 15:63; Judges 1:19b, 21, 27–36

Joshua 17:12–13; 16:10

#### **Failure of Reuben, Gad, and East Manasseh**

Josh 13:13 But the sons of Israel did not dispossess the Geshurites or the Maacathites; for Geshur and Maacath live among Israel until this day.

#### **Failure of Judah and Simeon**

Josh 15:63 Now as for the Jebusites, the inhabitants of Jerusalem, the sons of Judah could not drive them out; so the Jebusites live with the sons of Judah at Jerusalem until this day.  
 Judg 1:19b but they could not drive out the inhabitants of the valley because they had iron chariots.

#### **Failure of Benjamin**

Judg 1:21 But the sons of Benjamin did not drive out the Jebusites who lived in Jerusalem; so the Jebusites have lived with the sons of Benjamin in Jerusalem to this day.

**Failure of West Manasseh**

Judg 1:27 But Manasseh did not take possession 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; so the Canaanites persisted in living in that land.

28 It came about when Israel became strong, that they put the Canaanites to forced labor, but they did not drive them out completely.

**Failure of Ephraim**

Judg 1:29 Ephraim did not drive out the Canaanites who were living in Gezer; so the Canaanites lived in Gezer among them.

Josh 17:12 But the sons of Manasseh could not take possession of these cities,

because the Canaanites persisted in living in that land.

13 It came about when the sons of Israel became strong, they put the Canaanites to forced labor, but they did not drive them out completely.

Josh 16:10 But they did not drive out the Canaanites who lived in Gezer, so the Canaanites live in the midst of Ephraim to this day, and they became forced laborers.

**Failure of Zebulun**

30 Zebulun did not drive out the inhabitants of Kitron, or the inhabitants of Nahalol; so the Canaanites lived among them and became subject to forced labor.

**Failure of Asher**

31 Asher did not drive out the inhabitants of Acco, or the inhabitants of Sidon, or of Ahlab, or of Achzib, or of Helbah, or of Aphik, or of Rehob.

32 So the Asherites lived among the Canaanites, the inhabitants of the land; for they did not drive them out.

**Failure of Naphtali**

33 Naphtali did not drive out the inhabitants of Beth-shemesh, or the inhabitants of Beth-anath, but lived among the Canaanites, the inhabitants of the land; and the inhabitants of Beth-shemesh and Beth-anath became forced labor for them.

**Failure of Dan**

34 Then the Amorites forced the sons of Dan into the hill country, for they did not allow them to come down to the valley;

35 yet the Amorites persisted in living in Mount Heres, in Aijalon and in Shaalbim; but when the power of the house of Joseph grew strong, they became forced labor.

36 The border of the Amorites ran from the ascent of Akrabbim, from Sela and upward.

**God Confronts Israel (c. 1380 – c. 1365 BC)**

Judges 2:1–5

1 Now the angel of the LORD came up from Gilgal to Bochim. And he said, "I brought you up out of Egypt and led you into the land which I have sworn to your fathers; and I said, 'I will never break My covenant with you,

2 and as for you, you shall make no covenant with the inhabitants of this land; you shall tear down their altars.’ But you have not obeyed Me; what is this you have done?  
 3 Therefore I also said, ‘I will not drive them out before you; but they will become *as thorns* in your sides and their gods will be a snare to you.’”  
 4 When the angel of the LORD spoke these words to all the sons of Israel, the people lifted up their voices and wept.  
 5 So they named that place Bochim; and there they sacrificed to the LORD.

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## **Chronological Notes**

### 1) Judges 1:1–2:5.

- A) In a previous reading, we derived a date of c. 1380 BC for the death of Joshua. The next chronological notation we have is of the Mesopotamian oppression mentioned in Judges 3:8 which lasted for 8 years. How many years elapsed between Joshua’s death and the beginning of that first oppression?
- B) One indication of the length of this interval is found in Joshua 24:31: “Israel worshiped the LORD throughout Joshua’s lifetime and as long as the elderly men who outlived him remained alive. These men had experienced firsthand everything the LORD had done for Israel” (cf. Judges 2:7). Who are these men? Clearly, they cannot be part of the Exodus generation—that entire group of people wandered in the wilderness until they died (Num 14:26–35; 26:64–65). They must be those men who were under the age of 20 at the time of the Kadesh-barnea rebellion (military service age—cf. Num 14:29), most likely in their late teens (ages 17–19).
- C) For the sake of argument, let’s say that the elderly men who outlived Joshua were 19 at the time of the Kadesh-barnea rebellion of 1445 BC (Joshua was 45 at the time and so around 26 years older). This means that they were 84 when Joshua died in 1380 BC and thus already old. Most of them would have died within the next 5–10 years. This moves the calendar to c. 1375–1370 BC.
- D) The other relevant piece of textual data is found in Judges 2:10–11: “That entire generation passed away; a new generation grew up that had not personally experienced the LORD’s presence or seen what he had done for Israel. The Israelites did evil before the LORD by worshiping the Baals.” Once the elderly men who outlived Joshua died, another generation took their place. This generation consisted of the young men who had been growing up during the last years of the elders. If we allow 5–10 years for this generation to mature and fall into idolatry, the calendar has now moved to c. 1370–1360 BC, with 1370 representing the lower estimate of 10 years and 1360 representing the higher estimate of 20 years.
- E) In conclusion, we estimate approximately 15 years between Joshua’s death and the beginning of the first oppression—a date of c. 1365 BC.