

March 13, 2021

Read Judges 1

Key verse: Judges 1:1

After the death of Joshua, the Israelites inquired of the Lord, 'Who shall go up first for us against the Canaanites, to fight against them?'

Stopped Short of the Goal Line

The Book of Joshua is all about the Israelites' conquest of Canaan, aka The Promised Land. The land was not vacant; lots of tribes lived throughout territory, and while the Children of Israel achieved some great military victories, they didn't exactly evict all the tenants.

We discover that truth in the first chapter of the Book of Judges. This fascinating chapter describes a culture marked by brutality, misogyny, and violent warfare. And despite all of the hardships that Israelites have endured from the Book of Exodus forward, their conquest of Canaan is not so simple.

Sometimes I feel that the march of moral progress is too slow, that violence and bullying are still glorified in cultures up to the present day. But I can be thankful that it was the God of Israel who prevailed over the enemies of Israel, because as poor as we are at following this God's statutes, we still respect them as statutes. We strive to welcome the stranger, to care for the poor and the disenfranchised *because that's what our God tells us to do*. And we would have no other God before this God!

Prayer: God of Patience, we are thankful that at a time when your people were struggling to form a nation – and struggling to keep your divine Laws – you helped them prevail over their enemies. Lord, we pray for a day when there will be no reason for violence, and we pray that in our relationships we would always strive for peace. In Jesus' name we pray. Amen.