

## **The Cost of Compromise: Judges 1:27-36 Explained Scriptures for Today**

### **Judges 1:27-36**

Neither did Manasseh drive out the inhabitants of Beth-shean and her towns, nor Taanach and her towns, nor the inhabitants of Dor and her towns, nor the inhabitants of Ibleam and her towns, nor the inhabitants of Megiddo and her towns: but the Canaanites would dwell in that land. 28 And it came to pass, when Israel was strong, that they put the Canaanites to tribute, and did not utterly drive them out. 29 Neither did Ephraim drive out the Canaanites that dwelt in Gezer; but the Canaanites dwelt in Gezer among them. 30 Neither did Zebulun drive out the inhabitants of Kitron, nor the inhabitants of Nahalol; but the Canaanites dwelt among them, and became tributaries. 31 Neither did Asher drive out the inhabitants of Accho, nor the inhabitants of Zidon, nor of Ahlab, nor of Achzib, nor of Helbah, nor of Aphik, nor of Rehob: 32 But the Asherites dwelt among the Canaanites, the inhabitants of the land: for they did not drive them out. 33 Neither did Naphtali drive out the inhabitants of Beth-shemesh, nor the inhabitants of Beth-anath; but he dwelt among the Canaanites, the inhabitants of the land: nevertheless the inhabitants of Beth-shemesh and of Beth-anath became tributaries unto them. 34 And the Amorites forced the children of Dan into the mountain: for they would not suffer them to come down to the valley: 35 But the Amorites would dwell in mount Heres in Aijalon, and in Shaalbim: yet the hand of the house of Joseph prevailed, so that they became tributaries. 36 And the coast of the Amorites was from the going up to Akrabbim, from the rock, and upward.

### **INTRODUCTION**

Have you ever made a small compromise? Not a huge compromise. Not some life-changing decision. Just a small compromise. A shortcut. An exception. A little disobedience. Something that seemed harmless at the time. Most compromises don't look dangerous in the beginning.

That's why people make them. Nobody ruins their life overnight. Nobody destroys a church overnight. Nobody wrecks a marriage overnight. It usually starts with one small compromise. One exception. One excuse. One thing we know is wrong but decide to tolerate anyway.

And that's exactly what happened in Judges 1. God had given Israel a clear command. Drive out the Canaanites. Instead, they compromised. And the consequences lasted for generations.

### **I. THE CANAANITES SHOULD HAVE BEEN GONE**

#### **Judges 1:27**

Neither did Manasseh drive out the inhabitants of Beth-shean and her towns, nor Taanach and her towns, nor the inhabitants of Dor and her towns, nor the inhabitants of Ibleam and her towns, nor the inhabitants of Megiddo and her towns: but the Canaanites would dwell in that land.

Immediately we see a problem. "Neither did Manasseh drive out the inhabitants." Notice those words. **Neither did.** God didn't say: "Try." God didn't say: "Do your best." God said drive them out. But they didn't.

Let me ask you a question. Who knew better? The Canaanites? Or Israel? Israel knew exactly what God had commanded. The problem wasn't ignorance. The problem was disobedience. They were not obeying God's commandment.

Imagine Joshua standing there. Imagine Moses standing there. Imagine hearing all the victories God had already given.

Jericho fell. Ai fell. Many victories over and over again. The land was being conquered because God was with them as they obeyed Him. And then suddenly Israel stops obeying God. Why? Why quit now?

Imagine your favorite basketball team up 20 points with 2 minutes left to play. The other team can't stop them. Victory is certain if they would just keep playing. But they suddenly start helping the other team. On the inbounds pass, they just throw right to the other team over and over again. That's Israel here in Judges. They're winning. God is giving them victory. And suddenly they decide it's all good enough. And they lose the game.

Why stop short of complete obedience? Compromise never stays small. I want you to stop and think about you and the life you are living. Are you stopping certain things? Do you plan to stop? Will you be like Israel here in the book of Judges. Will you obey at times? And other times not obey? Will you experience the same heartaches and pain that they did because you stopped obeying?

Why would you do that? Why did Israel suddenly stop obeying God?

## **II. COMPROMISE OFTEN HAPPENS AFTER SUCCESS**

### **Judges 1:28**

And it came to pass, when Israel was strong, that they put the Canaanites to tribute, and did not utterly drive them out.

This is one of the most important verses. "And it came to pass, when Israel was strong." Stop right there. When were they compromising? Do you see that?

Did they compromise when they were weak? No. They compromised when they were strong. That's surprising. Most people think compromise comes during hard times. Most often it comes during successful times. When things are going good in life, people compromise more and more.

Success creates confidence. Confidence can create complacency. Complacency creates compromise. People ease up on doing the work of the Lord when things are going good.

Think about a football team up by 4 touchdowns. The game isn't over. But they start relaxing. The other team starts fighting. Before long the lead starts shrinking. This happens all the time in sports. The team leading relaxes and stops playing so hard. Why does the lead start shrinking? Because they stopped doing what got them there.

When are Christians most vulnerable? Listen, this is important. Satan will come when you least expect it. You might be the most vulnerable right after a victory. Right after a great church service. Right after a great time out soul winning. Right after God answers prayer. Right after things start going well. Right after you're winning a battle. Compromise never stays small.

### **III. THEY CHOSE PROFIT OVER OBEDIENCE**

Look at the rest of the verse right there in Judges 1:28. "That they put the Canaanites to tribute, and did not utterly drive them out."

In other words: The Canaanites became useful to them. Sometimes sin in your life will become useful to you. It feeds your flesh. And you love it. This is similar here.

The Canaanites became profitable. They became convenient to the Israelites. And suddenly obedience wasn't quite as important. Obedience to God was made far less important because the Israelites were profiting from these people.

Why kill them when they can pay taxes? Why drive them out when they can work for us? Why get rid of perfectly good cattle? Why obey God when compromise appears profitable? Why not take of the accursed thing? Achan in Joshua 7 was told not to take of the accursed thing. He took spoils from the Babylonians. He was commanded not to do that.

But why not? Expensive clothes. Two hundred shekels of silver. A fifty shekel wedge of gold. How could that be bad to take from the people they conquered? God said don't do it. He did it. And Achan, his sons, his daughters, his oxen, his asses, his sheep, his home, and all that he had was lost that day.

That's exactly how compromise works. It always offers a benefit. Your brain will tell you that these physical things look great. Take them. But God said NO. You say YES. You're going to have a big problem because compromise never stays small.

If there were no physical benefit, nobody would be tempted. This is the temptation. Physical benefits. Power. Control. Riches.

Imagine finding mold in your house. You know it needs removed. But removing it is expensive. So you paint over it. The problem looks better. But it isn't better. It's growing. That's compromise. And compromise never stays small. Nobody paints over mold because they want to destroy their house. They do it because it's easier.

## IV. THE SAME STORY REPEATS

### **Judges 1:29-36**

Neither did Ephraim drive out the Canaanites that dwelt in Gezer; but the Canaanites dwelt in Gezer among them. 30 Neither did Zebulun drive out the inhabitants of Kitron, nor the inhabitants of Nahalol; but the Canaanites dwelt among them, and became tributaries. 31 Neither did Asher drive out the inhabitants of Accho, nor the inhabitants of Zidon, nor of Ahlab, nor of Achzib, nor of Helbah, nor of Aphik, nor of Rehob: 32 But the Asherites dwelt among the Canaanites, the inhabitants of the land: for they did not drive them out. 33 Neither did Naphtali drive out the inhabitants of Beth-shemesh, nor the inhabitants of Beth-anath; but he dwelt among the Canaanites, the inhabitants of the land: nevertheless the inhabitants of Beth-shemesh and of Beth-anath became tributaries unto them. 34 And the Amorites forced the children of Dan into the mountain: for they would not suffer them to come down to the valley: 35 But the Amorites would dwell in mount Heres in Aijalon, and in Shaalvim: yet the hand of the house of Joseph prevailed, so that they became tributaries. 36 And the coast of the Amorites *was* from the going up to Akkrabbim, from the rock, and upward

Now something fascinating happens. The chapter starts sounding repetitive. What is God trying to tell us here? Why does He keep repeating the same thing over and over again? Many chapters in the Bible will sound this way. But every word of God is very important. Did God run out of things to say and He's trying to fill the pages? No. He wants us to feel the repetition.

### **2 Timothy 3:16-17**

All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: 17 That the man of God may be perfect, throughly furnished unto all good works.

So all of those words in Judges 1:29-35 that we just read are very profitable to us for doctrine, for reproof, for correct, and for instruction in righteousness. All the Scriptures do each of those things for us. So that we may be perfect, throughly furnished unto all good works.

Ephraim didn't drive them out. Zebulun didn't drive them out. Asher didn't drive them out. Naphtali didn't drive them out. Dan couldn't drive them out. Again. And again. And again. Why does God repeat it? Because compromise spreads between all the tribes.

God simply said, "DRIVE THEM OUT." But they didn't follow that simple command. Why did they not follow this simple command?

Have you ever noticed how compromise rarely stays isolated? One family compromises. Then another. Then another. Then another. Before long everybody is doing it.

One crack in a dam doesn't seem serious. Until the crack grows. Then another appears. Then another. Eventually the entire structure fails. Not following God's commands leads to a real cost to you. Achan's compromise cost him and his family their lives. One man's compromise can lead to the loss of life for the entire family.

Same thing for you and this church. Your compromise can lead to the loss of the entire church family. Compromise never stays small.

## V. WHAT WAS THE REAL COST?

Now let's ask the most important question. What was the cost? Did Israel save money? Maybe. Did Israel gain workers? Maybe. Did Israel avoid some battles? Maybe. But what did they lose?

They lost future generations. They lost their children. The people they refused to remove became the very people who would later corrupt them. The compromise of Judges 1 becomes the disaster of Judges 2.

### **Judges 2:2-3**

And ye shall make no league with the inhabitants of this land; ye shall throw down their altars: but ye have not obeyed my voice: why have ye done this? 3 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.

The people they tolerated became the people who troubled them. "But they shall be as thorns in your sides."

What are you tolerating today that will become a problem tomorrow? That's the question of the chapter. Again, what are you tolerating today that will become a thorn in your side tomorrow. The Bible tells you the truth. This will happen. You should have zero tolerance for sin. Compromise never stays small.

## VI. COMPROMISE ALWAYS LOOKS SMALL AT FIRST

Nobody in Judges 1 thought: "We're going to corrupt future generations." Nobody thought: "We're setting up national disaster." Nobody thought: "This will lead to idolatry."

They just thought: "It's not that big of a deal." That's what compromise always says. "It's not that big of a deal."

When I was growing up, I would have this thought that it's okay to have fun. Well, listen, it's not okay to have fun if you are breaking God's commandments while doing so. That will not be the definition of fun. That so-called fun will cost you.

The appearances are deceiving. Compromise looks small at first but then it catches up with you and takes a huge bite of you. It will devour you. Compromise leads to destruction.

A ship doesn't sink because of the water around it. A ship sinks because of the little bit of water that breaks through a small crack first. And then it just gets worse and worse.

Israel wasn't destroyed by the Canaanites around them. Israel was destroyed when the influence of the Canaanites got inside them. Same thing with this world today. The world around you isn't destroying you. It's the world that gets inside of you that will destroy you because compromise never stays small.

For example, let the nasty music within you, and it will begin to affect you. Songs about murder, fornication, stealing, lying, and drugs will begin to make you think it's not that big of a deal. Songs about the love of money cause that small crack and more and more of the world comes in.

## CONCLUSION

Imagine standing there in Judges 1. The battles are mostly won. The enemy is weakened. Victory is within reach. All they have to do is obey completely. Instead they compromise.

And the rest of Judges is the story of the consequences. The lesson is simple. Compromise always promises something. Convenience. Profit. Comfort. Ease. And you can see the compromise people take in this world in almost everything they do. In working jobs, you see the compromise.

A farmer doesn't destroy a field in one day. He just stops pulling weeds. One day doesn't matter. One week doesn't matter. One month doesn't matter. Then harvest comes. And the field is overrun.

Do things right. Get things right. Compromise never tells you the cost. Israel thought they were gaining something. In reality they were planting seeds of future destruction. And the same is true today. Just a little bit of compromise leads to future destruction.

The question isn't: What am I gaining through compromise? The question is: What will compromise cost me later? If you compromise in raising your children, it will cost you later. If you compromise in loving your spouse, it will cost you later. If you compromise in obeying God's words, it will lead to destruction.

The great lesson of Judges 1 is this: The price of compromise is always higher than it first appears. And just like Rahab's story had a repeated theme: Faith sees victory before the walls fall. The cost of compromise is ALWAYS higher than it first appears. Because compromise never stays small.

Let's pray.