

JUDGES AND RUTH: FACING GROUP APOSTASY AS INDIVIDUALS
Part I: Explaining The Variations Of Divine Spiritual Blessings Among Believers
(Judges 1:1-36)

I. Introduction

- A. A fascinating part of Christ's parable of the sower in Matthew 13:3-9 NIV is that even with the "good soil," there was a produce variation where some yielded three times as much as did the others, Matt. 13:8.
- B. We might think this variation is due to hardships outside of the "good soil" itself, meaning that hardships faced even by those who are receptive to God's Word (Matthew 13:23) can stunt their spiritual blessings.
- C. However, Judges 1:1-36 offers us insight that this variation is due to the individual's own walk with God:

II. Explaining The Variations Of Divine Spiritual Blessings Among Believers, Judges 1:1-36.

- A. After the death of their commander, Joshua, Israel appropriately asked God which of their tribes should fight first to complete conquering their allotted land inheritances, Judges 1:1 with Numbers 27:19-21.
- B. God responded that Judah should be the tribe to be the **first** to finish taking its tribal allotment, Jud. 1:2.
- C. Judah's **response** exposed a **limited** amount of trust and obedience in the tribe's relationship with God:
 - 1. The smaller tribe of Simeon was to reside within the boundaries of Judah, Joshua 19:9.
 - 2. Thus, from a **human** perspective, it **seemed fitting** to Judah that Simeon should **help** them take the land allotted for both tribes; accordingly, Judah asked Simeon to join them in the effort, Judges 1:3.
 - 3. However, as good as the idea **seemed**, it **violated** the **Word of GOD** that Judah **only** take the land!
- D. The result proves how God can contrast **group** with **individual** blessings due to variations between the group and the individual in trusting and obeying the Lord, Judges 1:4-19:
 - 1. On the **individual** level, God richly blessed Caleb in regard to his personal inheritance, 1:12-15, 20:
 - a. Caleb was one of the twelve spies of Canaan, and he belonged to the tribe of Judah, Num. 13:6.
 - b. He had trusted God with Joshua when the faithless wilderness generation of Israel had feared to enter the Promised Land to fight the giant Anakim there, cf. Numbers 13:30-33.
 - c. Thus, God promised Caleb would enter the land and have his offspring possess it, Num. 14:24.
 - d. We learn from Joshua 14:10 that the Lord preserved Caleb's physical strength from age 40 when God first promised him his inheritance: in contrast to his faithless generation that died off in the wilderness, Caleb's strength was preserved so that, 45 years later, at age 85, he was as able as he had been at age 40 to take the land God of promise!
 - e. We also learn from Joshua 14:12-13 that Caleb conquered the land of the very Anakim giants that had so terrified the faithless generation, a personal triumph for him, cf. Numbers 13:33!
 - f. Accordingly, Caleb's conquest of his tribal portion of the Anakim is documented in Jud. 1:12-15.
 - g. In fact, Caleb "shared" his inheritance with his kin, rewarding them for their **own** exhibitions of personal faith, Judges 1:12-13 re: Caleb's reward of his daughter to Othniel, and Judges 1:14-15 re: Caleb's reward **to** a daughter for her request in faith of springs!
 - 2. However, on the **tribal** level of Judah, Caleb's tribe, partial faith in God resulting in partial obedience resulted in partial divine blessing of a partial victory, Judges 1:4-11, 16-19.
 - a. Judah and Simeon conquered various territories in their land allotment, Judges 1:4-11, 16-19a.
 - b. However, in failing to trust the Lord to fight alone first as God had directed, the men of Judah failed to drive out the Canaanites in the flat lands where their chariots had a superior **human** fighting advantage, Judges 1:19b! For relying partly on HUMAN strength in seeking SIMEON'S help to obey what God wanted JUDAH ALONE to do, Judah was LIMITED in blessing because of that RELIANCE on HUMAN strength regarding the Canaanite chariot issue!
- E. From Judges 1:21-35, we have a long list of similar **PARTIAL** victories over the Canaanites by the other tribes in the land due apparently to the variations in faith and obedience in their relationships to God!

Lesson: The blessings GOD plans for EACH generation are as great as the INDIVIDUAL believer in EACH generation WANTS them to be, for the DEGREE each one TRUSTS and OBEYS God's Word will he be blessed! This applies to Caleb's wilderness generation, the generation that later took the land or our OWN generation today!

Application: May we TODAY heed the example of CALEB of old and FULLY trust and obey the Lord!