

## THRU THE BIBLE EXPOSITION

### **Judges And Ruth: Personal Blessing Amid Group Apostasy**

#### **Part I: Prologue To The Era Of The Judges: The Cause And Solution To Israel's Difficult Problems (Judges 1:1-2:5 et al.)**

Introduction: (To show the need . . .)

Mankind today stands in need of a wide range of solutions to seemingly humanly insurmountable problems:

(1) The lead story in the September 8, 2015 issue of The Wall Street Journal (Nour Malas and Joe Parkinson, "Gains Inspire More Migrants," p. A1) told how "migrants . . . from Iraq to Nigeria" are trying "to rush out . . . from countries long plagued by war and instability . . . into Europe" while Europe tries to absorb so many of them so soon.

(2) William McGurn's column (Ibid., p. A11, "Why Must Kim Davis Be Jailed?") on the jailing of a Kentucky County Clerk for refusing to put her name on wedding licenses of same-gender couples, commented, "There is a view in polite society that if the issue is simply forced, opposition to same-sex marriage will wither away. Then again, polite society may not be that familiar with people who have a fear of God and are willing to suffer for it." Mr. McGurn added, "We are . . . a long way from common decency and common sense."

The next day, Arian Campo-Flores' report, "Kentucky Clerk Freed From Jail," Ibid., September 9, 2015, p. A3 told how the judge then released Kim Davis, but the issue is far from resolved: the "American Civil Liberties Union . . . represented plaintiffs who sued Ms. Davis" that led to her confinement, and this "case has galvanized religious conservatives nationwide who oppose the Supreme Court's gay-marriage decision," Ibid.

(3) Then, Pope Francis is moving to soften his Church's stance relative to marriage annulments, divorce and remarriage, abortion and same-gender unions to the concern of many devout laymen of the Roman Catholic Church.

(4) Even we believers in Christ at the local level face humanly insurmountable challenges: last Sunday I was either told by other members or I myself witnessed a variety of seemingly humanly insurmountable issues.

Need: *Thus, we ask, "What is the cause and the solution to the humanly insurmountable problems man faces?!"*

- I. After Joshua died, Israel had a mixed record of success in heeding Joshua's goal to remove all of Canaan's pagans, and that due to various seemingly humanly insurmountable reasons, Judges 1:1-36:**
  - A. In the case of the tribes of Judah and Simeon, they jointly heeded the Lord's call to defeat their tribal lands' remaining Canaanites and Perizzites in the hill country (Judges 1:1-19a, 20), but they failed to drive out the Canaanites in the plains since those pagans possessed iron chariots, Judges 1:19b.
  - B. In the case of Benjamin, that tribe failed to drive out the pagan Jebusites that inhabited their seemingly impregnable fortress (later known as Zion) in Jerusalem, Judges 1:21; 2 Samuel 5:6-7.
  - C. In the case of Ephraim, that tribe defeated Luz (later Bethel) by showing favor to a pagan who informed them how to enter the city, but the informant then moved to Hittite territory and built a city named Luz to sustain its pagan memory, Jud. 1:22-26. Judges 1:29 then adds that Ephraim even let Canaanites dwell among them.
  - D. In the case of Manasseh, that tribe was unable to drive out the Canaanites because the latter were "determined" (*ya'al*, B. D. B., A Heb.-Eng. Lex. of the O. T., p. 383-384) to remain! (Judges 1:27-28)
  - E. In the case of Zebulun, that tribe did not drive out the pagans, but made them forced laborers, Judges 1:30.
  - F. In the case of Asher, that tribe not only did not drive out the pagans, but it lived among them, Jud. 1:31-32.
  - G. In the case of Naphtali, that tribe also lived among some of the Canaanites as the minority though some of the Canaanites were subjected to the people of Naphtali as forced laborers, Judges 1:33.
  - H. In the case of Dan, the Amorites confined, or "squeezed" (*lahas*, Ibid., p. 537) that tribe of Israel to stay up in the hills, though when the tribe of Ephraim increased, they subjected the Amorites to slavery, Judges 1:34-36.
  - I. In summary, then, Israel's tribes faced the humanly insurmountable obstacles of iron chariots, an impregnable fortress and city defense, determined pagan opposition or retaliatory confinement pressures from pagan dwellers in the land, making Israel's completed conquest of the land seemingly humanly impossible!
- II. However, the Angel of the Lord came up from Gilgal to Bochim in Israel's hill country, explaining that the REAL reason for Israel's failure was her disobedience to God in making leagues with pagans and not destroying their altars, that He was thus no longer driving out the pagans from their land, Judges 2:1-3a.**
- III. The Biblical record explains and validates this action and statement by the Angel of the Lord:**
  - A. Back in Exodus 23:20-24, God at Mount Sinai (Exodus 20:1ff) had told Israel that He was sending His Angel, the Preincarnate Christ (John F. Walvoord, Jesus Christ Our Lord, 1974, p. 52), to bring Israel into the

- Promised Land, that only if she heeded Him would He cause her to defeat the Amorites, Hittites, Perizzites, Canaanites, Hivites and Jebusites, the parties Israel had failed to overcome in Judges 1, and then some!
- B. Accordingly, the Angel of the Lord had brought Israel through the wilderness, across the flooded Jordan and into the land at Gilgal where the manna from God finally ceased as Israel ate of Canaan's food, Jos. 1:1-5:12.
  - C. Since Israel had initially obeyed the Angel of the Lord, the obstacles they had failed to overcome in Judges 1 had all been overcome in Joshua's era when Israel initially invaded the Promised Land (as follows):
    1. Israel's foot soldiers had defeated a great host of Canaanites with many chariots back in Joshua 11:1-15.
    2. Israel's army had taken the humanly seemingly impregnable fortress of Jericho with its dual wall defense back in Joshua 6:1-27, and that by the supernatural involvement of the Angel of the Lord, Joshua 5:13-15.
    3. Israel's army had destroyed the emboldened men of Ai following Israel's initial defeat there, and that due to the Lord's help after they had punished the sin of Achan in their midst back in Joshua 7:1-8:29.
    4. Israel's army had avoided being confined to Gilgal lest the northern kings of Canaan sweep down to crush her families, for they had taken the fight to the Canaanites on foot at the Waters of Merom, and there defeated the pagans hordes with their chariots back in Joshua 11:6-15; Bible Know. Com., O. T., p. 353.
  - D. Thus, the Angel of the Lord would have **continued** to equip Israel after Joshua's death to defeat iron chariots, fortified cities and fortresses, determined Canaanites and confining Amorites had they *truly* followed the Lord.
  - E. However, the very actions of Israel in Judges 1 exposed their sin of disobeying Deuteronomy 7:1-6:
    1. Back in Deuteronomy 7:1-6, God through Moses had told Israel to destroy the pagan Canaanites and not to make any league with them lest they influence Israel to idolatry that would result in God's judgment.
    2. However, as we have seen, Judges 1:29-36 reports Israel's tribes both tolerated pagans living among them, and that some of the tribes of Israel actually went to live as a minority group among the pagans, peacefully co-existing with them in direct opposition to the revealed Biblical will of God in Deuteronomy 7:1-6.
- IV. Consequently, the Angel of the Lord, the Preincarnate Christ, had come up from Gilgal, the place where He had previously led Israel into the Promised Land, and He arrived at Bochim to tell the nation that He was no longer driving out the remaining pagans, but leaving them as troublesome parties to Israel, so the people of Israel wept and sacrificed to God, grieving over their loss of future divine blessing, Jud. 2:1-5.**

***Lesson:*** *The REAL cause behind the humanly insurmountable problems Israel faced in defeating the pagans left in Canaan was her failure to trust in and to heed the Lord. Had she done so, God would have handled the humanly insurmountable aspects of Israel's problems so she could finish His call that she defeat the pagan foes.*

***Application:*** *(1) May we trust in Christ for salvation from sin, John 3:16. (2) Then, may we (a) rely on the indwelling Holy Spirit of God for behavior control (Galatians 5:16-23) to (b) obey Scripture, (c) to live separate from sin and (d) sinful relationships and (e) to stay committed to the Lord. (f) We will then see the Old Testament Angel of the Lord, Jesus Christ, defeat the superhuman obstacles we face so we can fulfill our callings from Him.*

**Conclusion:** (To illustrate the message . . .)

Faith in Christ and relying on the Holy Spirit to heed Scripture solves each problem noted in our introduction:

(1) The problem of the rush of migrants from Africa and the Middle East long troubled by war and instability could be solved if men heeded Christ's Gospel to be saved and indwelt by the Holy Spirit, for He produces love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness and temperance, stable and peace-loving characteristics in behavior that eradicate the causes for people to flee from their homelands, John 3:16; Rom. 8:9; Gal. 5:16-23.

(2) The problems of same-gender marriage licenses and the Pope's softening on marriage annulments, divorce and remarriage and same-gender unions could be solved by salvation and reliance on the Holy Spirit for behavior control mentioned in "(1)" above, and by heeding Jesus' words at Mark 10:6-9 KJV: "But from the beginning of the creation God made them male and female. For this cause shall a man leave his father and mother, and cleave to his wife; and they twain shall be one flesh: so then they are no more twain, but one flesh. What therefore God hath joined together, let no man put asunder." Marriages of one man and one woman for life solves all of these problems!

(3) On abortion, Exodus 21:22-25 teaches that if a man caused a woman to miscarry so that her fetus died, he was to be put to death, so abortion at any trimester kills a human! Thus, not practicing abortion solves its problems.

(4) The many humanly seemingly insurmountable issues we believers face could equally be solved: since we believers are indwelt by the Holy Spirit, we need to confess any sins outstanding (1 John 1:9) and simply rely on the Holy Spirit to obey Scripture, for Galatians 5:16 unconditionally promises a holy walk if we rely on the Holy Spirit.

**May we trust in Christ for salvation and rely on the Holy Spirit and trust in Christ for blessing in life!**