

DEVOTIONAL STUDIES OF OLD TESTAMENT TYPES

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CHAPTER SEVEN

TYPES IN JUDGES

Reasons for Success or Failure in Driving Out the Enemy in Israel and in Christian Life and Service (Judges 1)

Seeking counsel from the Lord and obeying it brings victory in any age. “Now after the death of Joshua it came to pass that the children of Israel asked the Lord, saying, Who shall go up for us against the Canaanites first, to fight against them? And the Lord said, Judah shall go up” (Judges 1:1, 2).

It is always wise to seek to know God’s will in any matter, but it is doubly important to obey that will when it is known. The apostle Paul asked the Roman believers to pray, “**That I may come unto you with joy by the will of God**” (Romans 15:32). Paul wanted God’s guidance about going to Rome. His going resulted in victory even though he went as the prisoner of Rome.

*Uniting to fight brought victory to certain tribes of Israel, and brings victory today. “**And Judah said unto Simeon his brother, Come up with me into my lot, that we may fight against the Canaanites; and I likewise will go with thee into thy lot**” (Judges 1:3). Simeon helped Judah secure victory; and then verse 17 tells how Judah helped Simeon win a victory. Christians need to help each other in warfare against Satan. Notice that the pronouns in Ephesians 6:10-18 are plural.*

*It was the Lord’s presence and help that gave victory in Old Testament times; and it brings victory in modern times, “**And Judah went up; and the Lord delivered the Canaanites and the Perizzites into their hand . . . And the Lord was with Judah; and he drave out the inhabitants of the mountain**” (Judges 1:4, 19). The secret of victory was that the Lord was with these soldiers of old. No wonder they won battles!*

The Great Commission to the Church is followed by this promise of the Lord’s presence to those who obey, “**And, lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world**” (Matthew 28:20). If we obey Christ’s orders, He promises to go with us in carrying them out.

*Men who have overcome do well to challenge young people to victory as Caleb did. “**And Caleb said, He that smiteth Kirjathsepher, and taketh it, to him will I give Achsah my daughter to wife. And Othniel the son of Kenaz, Caleb’s younger brother, took it, and he gave him Achsah his daughter to wife**” (Judges 1:12, 13). Caleb could challenge young men to do courageous tasks, because he himself was an overcomer. Paul, who was an overcomer also, challenged young Timothy: “**Thou therefore, my son, be strong in the grace that is in Christ Jesus . . . Thou therefore endure hardness, as a good soldier of Jesus Christ**” (II Timothy 2:1, 3).*

*Providential guidance leads to victory as it did in the case of the tribe of Joseph. The tribe of Joseph providentially discovered a man who gave information about a secret entrance to the city of Bethel. By this means they captured the city (Judges 1:22-26). How many times the Lord through His providences leads His people to victory! They must seek His will and be ready to follow it when it is revealed to them. “**And the Lord shall guide thee continually**” (Isaiah 58:11).*

*Failure to unite caused incomplete victory in Bible times; and often does today. “**Now the children of Judah had fought against Jerusalem, and had taken it, and smitten it with the edge of the sword, and set the city on fire . . . And the children of Benjamin did not drive out the Jebusites that inhabited Jerusalem; but the Jebusites dwell with the children of Benjamin in Jerusalem unto this day**” (Judges 1:8, 21). Now the city of Jerusalem was given partially to Benjamin and partially unto Judah, with the larger part going to Benjamin. Judah won over the enemy in his section of the city, but Benjamin did not in his part of the city. The two tribes ought to have co-operated in driving the enemy clear out of the city. Instead of this the enemy remained there until the time of David.*

Today, when God’s children can unite without compromise, it may spell the difference between victory and defeat in the work of the Lord. This does not necessarily mean a union of denominations, but it does mean that we have “**the unity of the Spirit.**” “**Endeavoring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace**” (Ephesians 4:3).

*Fear of the enemy is a chief reason for his victory over God’s people. “**And the Lord was with Judah; and he drave out the inhabitants of the mountain; but could not drive out the inhabitants of the valley, because they had chariots of iron**” (Judges 1:19). Fear of the enemy caused failure to conquer. “**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**” (Judges 1:27).*

Once again it was fear that kept this tribe from conquering these strongholds of the enemy. According to archaeologists, the cities of Beth-shean and Megiddo were especially well-fortified cities. But with God’s help they could have conquered them. Fear causes failure to capture the strongholds of sin. “**And in nothing terrified by your adversaries: which is to them an evident token of perdition, but to you of salvation, and that of God**” (Philippians, 1:28).

Disobedience to God's commands was the explanation of failure in the period of the Judges, and many times today. The oft-recurring expression, *neither did*, in verses 27, 29, 30, 31, 33 of Judges describes the failure of the tribes to obey God and drive out the enemy. God has commanded the Church to take the Gospel into all the world: **"Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature"** (Mark 16:15). Our failure to obey this command is the reason for defeat in the Church. The difficulty in the way is; no excuse for us, as it was no excuse for Israel in the time of the judges.

Laziness is the explanation of much of the failure to do God's will in ancient and in modern times. Much of Judges is a list of cities Israel failed to take (vv. 28, 30, 33, 35, etc.). Instead of driving out the enemy, it was easier to let them stay and put them to tribute. One of the tribes let the enemy force it into the mountain, **"For they would not suffer them to come down to the valley"** (Judges 1:34). God's children are often guilty of taking the easiest course rather than the hard course. The easiest way out of a situation is not always the best way for Christians. The Bible says, **"Resist the devil, and he will flee from you"** (James 4:7). And, **"Neither give place to the devil"** (Ephesians 4:27).

Ancient Types of Modern Foes of the Church (Judges 3-16)

(It is true that the Lord used these foes to punish the Israelites for their apostasy. But if we look at them from a different viewpoint, we find in them a picture of enemies the Church needs to overcome in the modern world).

Mesopotamians — a type of spiritual declension in the Church.

Israel served Chushan-rishathaim, king of Mesopotamia, for eight years (Judges 3:8-11). Mesopotamia is **"the country between the two rivers,"** i.e., the Tigris and the Euphrates Rivers. It was the northern half of this land from which this invasion took place. It was the southern portion of this same territory from which Abraham and Sarah migrated to come to Canaan. So here is a foe coming from the vicinity that Abraham turned away from to enter the Promised Land. This foe is, therefore, a type of spiritual declension in the Church, or going back to what was once forsaken or given up, i.e., going back to a lower standard of life. Othniel was the judge who led in delivering Israel from the Mesopotamians. **"And the Spirit of the Lord came upon him, and he judged Israel, and went out to war"** (Judges 3:10).

Revival begins with the Holy Spirit and His work with the individual. After the Spirit came upon Othniel, he judged Israel, i.e., he doubtless reprov'd the people and called them to account for their sins, and endeavored to get them to return to the Lord. Following this, he gathered an army and went forth to win a victory over the enemy. This is the true order in any revival. First, the Spirit coming upon an individual who becomes an instrument in reviving others, and then the transformation of the great body of professing Christians. In the Book of Acts a perennial revival was maintained by the disciples' being **"filled with the Holy Spirit"** and then refilled.

Moabites — a type of outward relationship without inward reality.

Israel served Eglon the king of Moab for eighteen years (Judges 3:12-30). The Moabites were descendants of Lot and therefore related to the Jews. At Baal-Peor they defiled God's people through unholy alliances. They are a type of professing Christians who do not possess spiritual life. They are outwardly related to the Church, but are without a born-again experience.

Ehud, the judge, dealt vigorously with the Moabites. He drove them from their headquarters at Jericho, and then he **“took the fords of Jordan toward Moab, and suffered not a man to pass over”** (Judges 3:28). He cut off all possible retreat until they could be dealt with. Such professors today who do not really possess must be dealt with in a vigorous manner. When the Sword of the Spirit is used effectively (Ephesians 6:17), then all the avenues of escape will be cut off, and these Moabites will be smitten down with conviction of sin and their lives transformed.

Canaanites — a type of modern false cults.

Israel served Jabin, king of Canaan, for twenty years (Judges 4-5). The ancient Canaanites became merchants or “traffickers” (cf. Prov. 31:24, mar.). Thus they are a fitting type of the teachers of false cults who “traffic with Bible teaching.” They make wrong use of “the truth.” Deborah and Barak put to rout the Canaanites when they obeyed the Word of the Lord. **“Hath not the Lord God of Israel commanded, saying, Go”** (Judges 4:6). A real victory will be won over the false teachings of the cults, if the churches will first teach the Word in its simplicity and purity, and second, will put into practice the Word in daily life and action.

The way to overcome the wrong use of the Bible is by making the right use of it. Most church members who are won over to the teachings of false cults are those who have attended a church where the Word is not taught or practiced. **“Take heed therefore unto yourselves, and to all the flock, over the which the Holy Ghost hath made you overseers, to feed the church of God, which he hath purchased with his own blood. For I know this, that after my departing shall grievous wolves enter in among you, not sparing the flock . . . And now brethren, I commend you to God, and to the word of his grace, which is able to build you up”** (Acts 20:28, 29, 32).

The coming of the Midianites — a type of an invasion of the world into the Church.

Israel served the Midianites seven years (Judges 6-7). It was a band of Midianites who carried Joseph down into Egypt (Genesis 37:28), and it was Midianites who invaded Israel in the days of Gideon. Gideon started out to fight the Midianites with an army of 32,000 soldiers. But as God put the men to the test, only three hundred men were left. But these three hundred men won a marvelous victory over the Midianites. When the world invades the Church, let the minister preach **“separation from the world,”** and the ranks will begin to thin out, but those who are left will be able to win victory for God. In getting the Lord's work done, better have a few consecrated workers than a great army of worldly workers. **“Not by might, nor by power, but by my Spirit, saith the Lord of hosts”** (Zechariah 4:6).

The Philistines are a type of unconverted men or carnal church members who insist on managing church affairs. Israel served the Philistines for forty years (Judges 13-16). The Philistines intruded into the Promised Land without going through the Jordan River as did the Israelites. After getting into the land, they attempted to dominate all the territory of Israel. It took real warfare to keep them from doing so.

Samson as a Nazarite became a one-man army for God against the Philistines. But when he repudiated his vow, he lost his power. **“He wist not that the Lord was departed from him”** (Judges 16:20).

Many churches today are having trouble with modern Philistines, who either have never been born again and yet are determined to run the church on worldly standards, or they are carnal Christians who allow self to dominate rather than the Holy Spirit. It takes a real battle to keep these people from having their way in the churches. The weapons used against them must always be spiritual and not carnal weapons. **“For the weapons of our warfare are not carnal, but mighty through God to the pulling down of strongholds”** (II Corinthians 10:4). We must use the Sword of the Spirit which is the Word of God, accompanied by prayer warfare in order that God’s will shall be fulfilled in the churches.

**Gideon’s Victory,
A Type of the Church Overcoming the Enemy**
(Judges 7)

Gideon and his men took a stand against the enemy, and the enemy fled; and this is what we must do in relation to Satan’s trying to hinder the Church. **“And he divided the three hundred men into three companies, and he put a trumpet in every man’s hand, with empty pitchers, and lamps within the pitchers . . . And all the host ran, and cried, and fled”** (Judges 7:16, 21). The method Gideon used caused the enemy to fear and flee. He divided the men into three companies of one hundred men on three sides of the enemy’s camp. It was night and each man carried a lamp hidden away within a pitcher. At a signal from Gideon the pitchers were broken, and thus the enemy saw the lights on three sides of the camp. Trumpets were sounded, and the enemy was frightened and ran in the only direction open to them. Gideon’s men pursued them, and the victory was complete. Now if we take a stand against our enemy, the Devil, God’s Word promises that he will flee from us. **“Resist the devil, and he will flee from you”** (James 4:7).

When he is resisted in the name of the Lord, the Devil is a coward. There is no need for us to be overcome by the Devil when God has promised us victory over him. Let us take a stand against him and possess victory.

The lamps Gideon’s men used symbolize the Christ-life within Christians. **“And lamps within the pitchers”** (Judges 7:16). Gideon’s lamps are beautifully symbolical of Christ the Light of the world dwelling in our hearts. **“For God, who commanded the light to shine out of darkness, hath shined in our hearts, to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ”** (II Corinthians 4:6). Real victory is won only when men see Christ living in us; only then can the enemy be defeated.

*The pitchers which covered up the lights represent the self-life which must be broken. “**And brake the pitchers**” (Judges 7:19). Our self-life is what hinders the world from seeing Christ shine forth from us. “**But we have this treasure in earthen vessels, that the excellency of the power may be of God, and not of us**” (II Corinthians 4:7). Self is the one big hindrance to our life and testimony. When our self-life is broken, then the Christ-life or light will shine forth from us.*

*The sounding of the trumpets symbolizes the sending forth of the Gospel message. “**And the three companies blew the trumpets**” (Judges 7:20). As Gideon’s trumpets sounded forth, so we are commanded to sound forth the message of the glad tidings that Christ died for sinners. The apostle Paul complimented the Thessalonian Christians for having done this. “**For from you sounded out the word of the Lord, not only in Macedonia and Achaia, but also in every place your faith to Godward is spread abroad**” (I Thessalonians 1:8). Trumpeting the Gospel message is the chief duty of the Church.*

*The battle-cry of the three hundred men was: “**The Sword of the Lord and of Gideon!**”; and our battle-cry should be: “**Take the Sword of the Spirit, which is the Word of God.**” “**And they cried, The sword of the Lord, and of Gideon**” (Judges 7:20). God had a part to perform in the battle, and Gideon and his men had a part. Both parts were important. “**And take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God**” (Ephesians 6:17). Our part is to take God’s Word and use it as a sword. It is the Spirit’s part to direct our use of the Word, and give power to its use. The enemy will be routed as we co-operate with the Holy Spirit in the use of the Word.*

*Every one of Gideons men stood in his place, and we could have victory if every member of the Church was to be found in his place ready for God’s orders. “**And they stood every man in his place round about the camp**” (Judges 7:21). Each man was in his place where he belonged, and did what he was told to do. “**Watch ye, stand fast in the faith, quit you like men, be strong**” (I Corinthians 16:13).*

There is a place in God’s army for every Christian, and a task for him to perform. Our Captain expects us to fulfill our task as good soldiers of His army.

~ end of chapter 7 ~

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