

God never fails us-
even though we fail Him

The book of Judges shows us that the Bible is not a “Book of Virtues;” it is not full of inspirational stories. Why? Because the Bible (unlike the books on which other religions are based) is not about following moral examples. It is about a God of mercy and long-suffering, who continually works in and through us despite our constant resistance to his purposes.

- Tim Keller

Judges 1:1-15

After the death of Joshua, the people of Israel inquired of the LORD, “Who shall go up first for us against the Canaanites, to fight against them?” The LORD said, “Judah shall go up; behold, I have given the land into his hand.” And Judah said to Simeon his brother, “Come up with me into the territory allotted to me, that we may fight against the Canaanites. And I likewise will go with you

into the territory allotted to you.” So Simeon went with him. Then Judah went up and the LORD gave the Canaanites and the Perizzites into their hand, and they defeated 10,000 of them at Bezek. They found Adoni-bezek at Bezek and fought against him and defeated the Canaanites and the Perizzites. Adoni-bezek fled, but they pursued him and caught him and cut off his thumbs and his big toes...

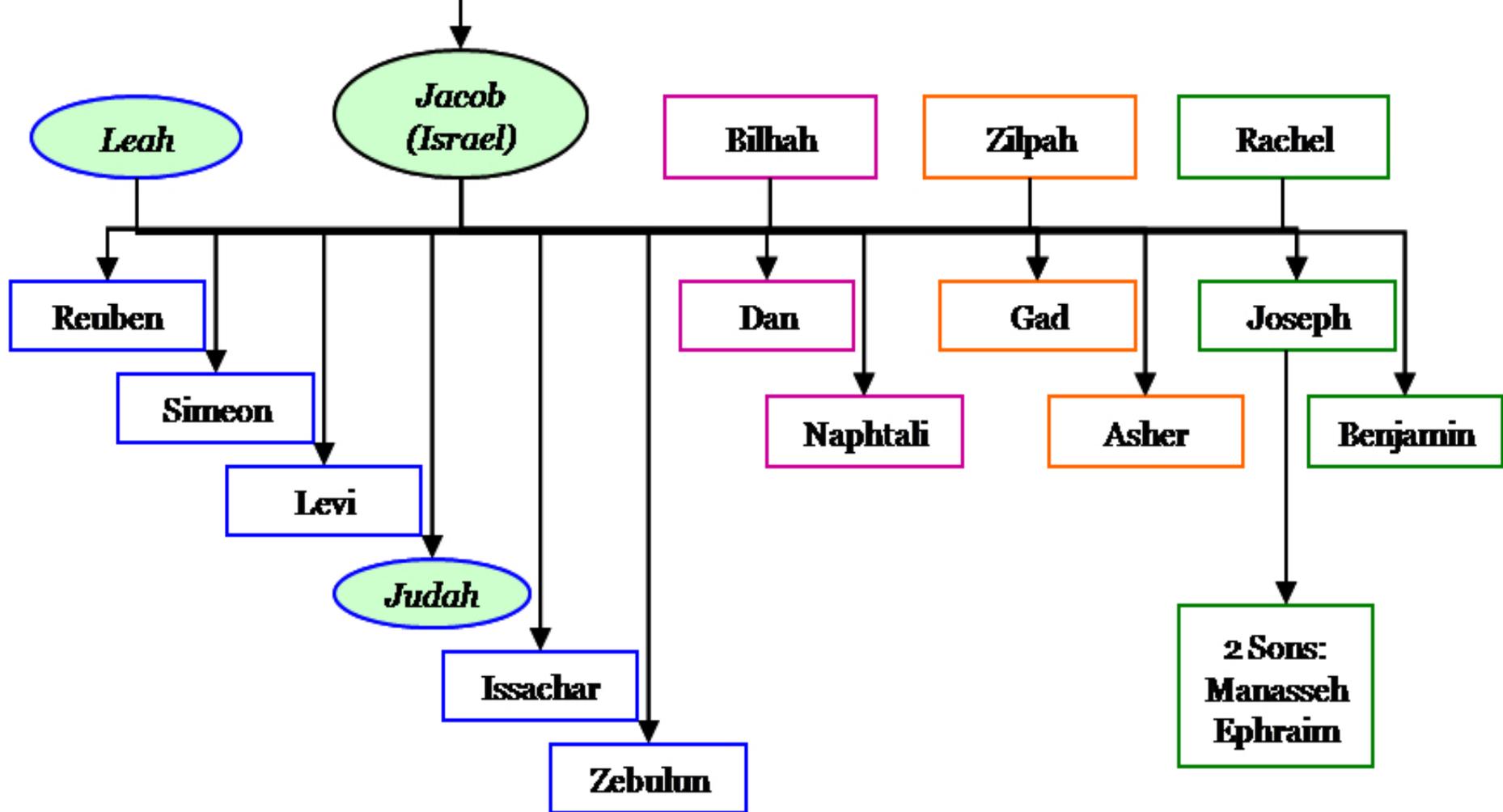
And the men of Judah fought against Jerusalem and captured it and struck it with the edge of the sword and set the city on fire. And afterward the men of Judah went down to fight against the Canaanites who lived in the hill country, in the Negeb, and in the lowland. And Judah went against the Canaanites who lived in Hebron (now the name of Hebron was formerly Kiriath-arba), and they defeated Sheshai and Ahiman and Talmai.

From there they went against the inhabitants of Debir. The name of Debir was formerly Kiriath-sepher. And Caleb said, “He who attacks Kiriath-sepher and captures it, I will give him Achsah my daughter for a wife.” And Othniel the son of Kenaz, Caleb’s younger brother, captured it. And he gave him Achsah his daughter for a wife. When she came to him, she urged him to ask her father for a field.

And she dismounted from her donkey, and Caleb said to her, “What do you want?” She said to him, “Give me a blessing. Since you have set me in the land of the Negeb, give me also springs of water.” And Caleb gave her the upper springs and the lower springs.

After the **death of Joshua**, the people of Israel inquired of the LORD, “Who shall go up first for us against the Canaanites, to fight against them?”

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Genesis 49:8-10

“Judah, your brothers shall praise you; your hand shall be on the neck of your enemies; your father’s sons shall bow down before you. Judah is a lion’s cub; from the prey, my son, you have gone up. He stooped down; he crouched as a lion and as a lioness; who dares rouse him?”

The scepter shall not depart from
Judah, nor the ruler's staff from
between his feet, until tribute comes to
him; and to him shall be the obedience
of the peoples.

Matthew 1:1-2

The book of the genealogy of Jesus Christ, the son of David, the son of Abraham. Abraham was the father of Isaac, and Isaac the father of Jacob, and **Jacob the father of Judah and his brothers**

Have you ever noticed how new beginnings are punctuated by the earthly end of God's servants?

- Exodus begins with the death of Joseph.
- Joshua begins with the death of Moses.
- Judges begins with the death of Joshua.
- 1 Kings begins with the death of David.

And yet for all that, God's kingdom does not collapse, not even when death takes God's most useful servants.

Dale Ralph Davis

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Deuteronomy 7: 1-5

When the LORD your God brings you into the land that you are entering to take possession of it, and clears away many nations before you...and when the LORD your God gives them over to you, and you defeat them, then you must devote them to complete destruction. You shall make no covenant with them and show no mercy to them...

for they would turn away your sons from following me, to serve other gods. Then the anger of the LORD would be kindled against you, and he would destroy you quickly. But thus shall you deal with them: you shall break down their altars and dash in pieces their pillars and chop down their Asherim and burn their carved images with fire.

Joshua 17:17

Then Joshua said to the house of Joseph, to Ephraim and Manasseh, “You are a numerous people and have great power. You shall not have one allotment only, but the hill country shall be yours, for though it is a forest, you shall clear it and possess it to its farthest borders. For you shall drive out the Canaanites, though they have chariots of iron, and though they are strong.”

Judges 1:19

And the LORD was with Judah, and he took possession of the hill country

but he could not drive out the inhabitants of the plain because they had chariots of iron.

The narrator explicitly attributes Judah's successes in the hill country not to equivalent military power but to the presence of Yahweh. Then why could they not take the lowland? Why is Yahweh's presence canceled by superior military technology? The narrator does not say, but presumably the Judahites experienced a failure of nerve at this point, or they were satisfied with their past achievements.

- Daniel Block

Judges 1:23-26

And the house of Joseph scouted out Bethel.
(Now the name of the city was formerly Luz.)

And the spies saw a man coming out of the city, and they said to him, “Please show us the way into the city, and we will deal kindly with you.” And he showed them the way into the city. And they struck the city with the edge of the sword, but they let the man and all his family go.

And the man went to the land of the Hittites and built a city and called its name Luz. That is its name to this day.

Manasseh did not drive out the inhabitants of
Beth-shean and its villages...

And Ephraim did not drive out the Canaanites
who lived in Gezer.

Zebulun did not drive out the inhabitants of
Kitron

Asher did not drive out the inhabitants of
Acco,

The Amorites pressed the people of Dan back into the hill country, for they did not allow them to come down to the plain.

It is not our lack of strength that prevents us from enjoying God's blessings, or from worshiping God wholeheartedly; it is our lack of faith in his strength.

- Tim Keller

Judges 2:1

Now the angel of the LORD went up from Gilgal to Bochim.

Judges 6:22

Gideon perceived that he was the angel of the LORD. And Gideon said, “Alas, O Lord GOD! For now I have seen the angel of the LORD face to face.” But the LORD said to him, “Peace be to you. Do not fear; you shall not die.”

Judges 2:1

Now the angel of the LORD went up from Gilgal to Bochim.

Joshua 4:19-20

The people came up out of the Jordan on the tenth day of the first month, and they encamped at Gilgal on the east border of Jericho. And those twelve stones, which they took out of the Jordan, Joshua set up at Gilgal.

Judges 2:1-2

And he said, “I brought you up from Egypt and brought you into the land that I swore to give to your fathers. I said, ‘I will never break my covenant with you, and you shall make no covenant with the inhabitants of this land; you shall break down their altars.’ But you have not obeyed my voice. What is this you have done?”

Judges 2:3-4

So now I say, I will not drive them out before you, but they shall become thorns in your sides, and their gods shall be a snare to you.”
As soon as the angel of the LORD spoke these words to all the people of Israel,

the people lifted up their voices and wept.
And they sacrificed there to the LORD.

There is mercy for a sinner, but there is no mercy for the man who will not own himself a sinner.

- Charles Spurgeon