

JUDGES

INTRODUCTION TO JUDGES

The title of this book in the Hebrew copies is Sepher Shophetim, the Book of Judges; but the Syriac and Arabic interpreters call it,

“the Book of the Judges of the Children of Israel;”

and the Septuagint only Judges; so called, not because it was written by them, though some think it was compiled out of annals and diaries kept by them; but it seems to be the work of one person only: the true reason of its name is, because it treats of the judges of Israel, gives an account of their lives and actions, and especially such as concerned their office; which office was different from that of kings, and seems only to have been occasional, and chiefly lay in delivering the people out of the hands of their enemies, when oppressed, distressed, or carried captive by them; in protecting them in the enjoyment of their country, rights, and liberties; in leading out their armies against their enemies when needful; and in settling differences, judging law suits, and administering justice. The government of the nation, during their time, was a theocracy. It is not certain who was the penman of this book; some ascribe it to King Hezekiah, others to Ezra; but the Jewish writers ^{f1} are generally of opinion that it was written by Samuel, which is most likely, who was the last of the judges; and it seems plainly to be written before the times of David, us appears from a speech of Joab, (~~1012~~ 2 Samuel 11:21); and from some passages in (~~1988~~ Psalm 68:8,9) (~~1975~~ Psalm 97:5), which seem to refer or allude to (~~0074~~ Judges 5:4,5); and from Jerusalem being called Jebus, which shows it to be inhabited by the Jebusites in the time of the writer of this book, whereas it was taken out of their hands by David; besides, Samuel himself refers to the annals of this book; (~~0919~~ 1 Samuel 12:9-11); and from whose testimonies, as well as from others in the New Testament, there is no doubt to be made of its being genuine and authentic, and written by divine inspiration; as is evident from the use the Apostle Paul, and the author of the epistle to the Hebrews, have made of it, (~~4133~~ Acts 13:20 ~~5813~~ Hebrews 11:32); it is useful as an history, and without which the history of the people of Israel would not be complete; it containing an account of all their judges, excepting the two

last, Eli and Samuel, of whom an account is given in the following books, and of some facts incidental to those times, related in an appendix at the end of it, concerning the idol of Micah, and the war of Benjamin; and furnishes out many useful moral observations concerning God's displeasure at sin in his own people Israel, and his corrections for it; and about his providential care of them in raising up for them deliverers in their time of need, as well as points at various virtues and excellencies in great and good men, worthy of imitation. It contains, according to Piscator, Dr. Lightfoot, and others, an history of two hundred ninety and nine years.

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION TO JUDGES 1

The children of Israel, after Joshua's death, inquiring of the Lord which tribes should first go up against the remaining Canaanites, Judah is ordered to go up, who with Simeon did, (^{<0001>}Judges 1:1-3); and had success against the Canaanites under Adonibezek, whom they brought to Jerusalem (^{<0004>}Judges 1:4-8); and against the Canaanites in Hebron, Debir, Zephath, Hormah, Gaza, Ashkelon, and Ekron, (^{<0009>}Judges 1:9-20); the Benjamites had not such good success as Judah against the Jebusites in Jerusalem, (^{<0021>}Judges 1:21); nor as the house of Joseph had against Bethel, (^{<0022>}Judges 1:22-26); nor could the tribes of Manasseh, Ephraim, Zebulun, Asher, and Naphtali, drive out the Canaanites from several places which belonged unto them, though many of them became their tributaries, (^{<0027>}Judges 1:27-33); and as for the Amorites, they were too powerful for the tribe of Dan, though some of them became tributaries to the house of Joseph, (^{<0034>}Judges 1:34-36).

Ver. 1. *Now after the death of Joshua*, etc.] With the account of which the preceding book is concluded, and therefore this very properly follows after that; though Epiphanius ^{f2} places the book of Job between them:

it came to pass that the children of Israel asked the Lord; that is, the heads of them who gathered together at Shiloh, where the tabernacle was; and standing before the high priest, either Eleazar, or rather Phinehas his son, Eleazar being in all probability dead, inquired by Urim and Thummim:

saying, who shall go up for us against the Canaanites first, to fight against them? for they had no commander in chief, Joshua leaving no successor, though the Samaritan Chronicle ^{f3} pretends he did; one Abel, a son of Caleb's brother, of the tribe of Judah, on whom the lot fell, out of twelve of the nine tribes and a half, to whom Joshua delivered the government of the nation, and crowned him: but this inquiry was not for any man to go before them all as their generalissimo, but to know what tribe should first go up, and they were desirous of having the mind of God in it, when they might expect to succeed; which to do, at their first setting

out, would not only be a great encouragement to them to go on, but strike dread and terror into their enemies; and this is to be understood of the Canaanites who remained unsubdued, that dwelt among them, and in cities, which though divided to them by lot, they were not in the possession of; and these being troublesome neighbours to them, and besides the Israelites daily increasing, needed more room and more cities to occupy, and more land to cultivate.

Ver. 2. *And the Lord said,* etc.] By an articulate voice, which it is probable was the usual way of answering by Urim and Thummim:

Judah shall go up; not Judah in person, who was long ago dead, but the tribe of Judah; it was the will of the Lord that that tribe should engage first with the Canaanites, being the principal one, and the most numerous, powerful, and valiant, and perhaps had the greatest number of Canaanites among them; and who succeeding, would inspire the other tribes with courage, and fill their enemies with a panic:

behold, I have delivered the land into his hands; that part of it which belonged to that tribe as yet unsubdued, the conquest of which they are assured of for their encouragement.

Ver. 3. *And Judah said unto Simeon his brother,* etc.] The men of the tribe of Judah said to those of the tribe of Simeon, they being not only brethren by father's and mother's side, which was not the case of all the sons of Jacob, but their possessions and inheritances lay near together; and indeed those of Simeon were within the inheritance of the tribe of Judah, (^{<1690>}Joshua 19:1); so that as they lived in great nearness and familiarity with each other, their interests were closely united together:

come up with me into my lot, that we may fight against the Canaanites; conjunctly: the meaning is, that the tribe of Simeon, as many of their warlike men as could, would come and join their forces with those of the tribe of Judah, in order to reduce such cities, in the lot of that tribe, the Canaanites as yet were in the possession of:

and I likewise will go with thee into thy lot: the cities being conquered which were in the lot, of the tribe of Judah, that tribe proposed to bring their united forces into the lot of the tribe of Simeon, and reduce such cities as were in that lot:

so Simeon went with him: the tribe of Simeon agreed to the proposal, and went along with the tribe of Judah against their common enemy.

Ver. 4. *And Judah went up*, etc.] Simeon being along with him, from the southern parts of the land, where they dwelt, and went more northward towards Jerusalem, and which therefore is called a going up:

and the Lord delivered the Canaanites and Perizzites into their hands: into the hands of Judah and Simeon: the Canaanites here is not the common name of the seven nations, but the name of one of those nations, distinguished from the rest, as here from the Perizzites, who otherwise were also Canaanites; and both these, at least many of them, dwelt in those parts, and were subdued by the united forces of Judah and Simeon, whereby the Lord's promise was fulfilled, (^{<0700>}Judges 1:2);

and they slew of them in Bezek ten thousand men: that is, in and about Bezek, first and last, in the course of this war, as after related. Jerom says ^{f4} there were two villages of this name in his time near one another, seven miles from Neapolis, as you go to Scythopolis; and our countryman Mr. Sandys ^{f5} says, that when they departed from Bethlehem, bending their course from the mountains of Judea lying west from it, near to which, on the side of the opposite hill, they passed a little village called Bezek, as he took it, two miles from Bethsur, (see ^{<0108>}1 Samuel 11:8).

Ver. 5. *And they found Adonibezek in Bezek*, etc.] Who was king of, the place, and whose name signifies lord of Bezek; not that they took him there, for he is afterwards said to make his escape from thence, but here he was when they came against that city, and into which they rushed upon him, and fell upon him as follows:

and they fought against him; entering the city with their forces:

and they slew the Canaanites and the Perizzites: that were in it, or about it, even to the number of ten thousand, as before related, (^{<0704>}Judges 1:4).

Ver. 6. *But Adonibezek fled, and they pursued after him, and caught him*, etc.] It is very probable his view was to get to Jebus or Jerusalem, a strong and fortified city and he made his way thither as fast as he could, but was pursued and overtaken by some of the forces of Judah and Simeon; and the rather it may seem he took this course, since when he was taken by them, they brought him thither, as follows:

and cut off his thumbs and his great toes; whereby he was disabled both for fighting and for fleeing. So the Athenians cut off the thumbs of the right hand of the Aeginetae, the inhabitants of the island of Aegina, to disable them from holding a spear, as various writers^{f6} relate. Whether the Israelites did this, as knowing this king had used others in like manner, and so, according to their law of retaliation, “eye for eye”, etc. (⁴⁰²²³Exodus 21:23-25), required it; or whether, ignorant of it, were so moved and directed by the providence of God to do this, that the same measure might be measured to him which he had measured to others, is not certain; the latter seems most probable, since the Israelites did not usually inflict such sort of punishments; and besides, according to the command of God, they should have put him to death, as they were to do to all Canaanites.

Ver. 7. *And Adonibezek said*, etc.] To the men of Judah, after his thumbs and toes were cut off, his conscience accusing him for what he had done to others, and being obliged to acknowledge he was righteously dealt with:

threescore and ten kings, having their thumbs and their great toes cut off; that is, by him, or by his orders, whom he had conquered and made captives; according to Josephus^{f7}, they were seventy two; the number may be accounted for by observing, that in those times, as appears by the preceding book, every city had a king over it; and besides, these seventy kings might not be such who had had the government of so many cities, but many of them such who had reigned successively in the same city, and had fallen into the hands of this cruel and tyrannical king, one after another, and their sons also with them might be so called: and these he says

gathered [their meat] under my table: were glad to eat of the crumbs and scraps which fell from thence, and might in their turns be put there at times for his sport and pleasure, and there be fed with the offal of his meat, as Bajazet the Turk was served by Tamerlane, who put him into an iron cage, and carried him about in it, and used him as his footstool to mount his horse, and at times fed him like a dog with crumbs from his table^{f8}:

as I have done, so God hath requited me; whether he had any knowledge of the true God, and of his justice in dealing with him according to his deserts, and had a real sense of his sin, and true repentance for it, is not certain; since the word for God is in the plural number, and sometimes used of Heathen deities, as it may be here by him; however, the righteous judgment of God clearly appears in this instance:

and they brought him to Jerusalem; to that part of Jerusalem which belonged to the tribe of Judah; (see ^{<0658>}Joshua 15:8,63); here they brought him alive, and dying, buried him, as Josephus ^{f9} says; which might be their view in carrying him thither, perceiving he was a dying man; or they had him thither to expose him as a trophy of victory, and as an example of divine justice:

and there he died: whether through grief and vexation, or of the wounds he had received, or by the immediate hand of God, or by the hands of the Israelites, is not said; neither are improbable.

Ver. 8. *Now the children of Judah had fought against Jerusalem, and had taken it*, etc.] Which accounted for their carrying Adonibezek thither. This they had done in the times of Joshua; for when the king of that place was taken and slain by Joshua, it seems that he and Israel went and fought against the city, and took that in which the tribe of Judah had a principal concern; so Kimchi and Ben Gersom interpret it; but Jarchi and Abarbinel are of opinion, that now from Bezek they went up to Jerusalem, and fought against it, and took it; and so others think, because only the children of Judah are mentioned, and not all Israel, who fought together in Joshua's time; nor is there any mention made of its being taken in his time, and yet it seems plain that it was inhabited in part by the children of Judah, (^{<0658>}Joshua 15:63); some therefore have thought that it was twice taken; that after Joshua had taken it, he and the children of Israel being employed in making conquests in other parts of the land, the Jebusites repossessed it, from whence they were now again in part driven, not wholly; and Josephus says ^{f10}, the lower part was taken, and all the inhabitants killed, but the upper part was hard to be taken, because of the strength of the walls, and the nature of the place:

and smitten it with the edge of the sword; the "inhabitants of it", so far as they got possession of it:

and set the city on fire; some part of it only, for in some part of it dwelt the children of Judah, and in another part the Jebusites.

Ver. 9. *And afterwards the children of Judah*, etc.] After the taking of Bezek, and the king of it, having him to Jerusalem, where he died: they

went down; from Jerusalem; which was on high ground:

to fight against the Canaanites that dwelt in the mountain, and in the south, and in the valley; into which several parts the lot of the tribe of Judah was divided; in each of which they had cities, and some, as it seems, yet unsubdued, and in the hands of the Canaanites; of these several parts, and the cities in them, (see ^{<6152>}Joshua 15:21,33,48).

Ver. 10. *And Judah went against the Canaanites that dwelt in Hebron,* etc.] Hebron was first taken by Joshua, and the inhabitants of it put to the sword, (^{<6105>}Joshua 10:36,37); but while Joshua was employed in making other conquests, the Canaanites found ways and means of getting into the possession of it again; wherefore, when a grant of it was made to Caleb, he, with the assistance of the tribe of Judah, of which he was prince, regained it, (^{<6152>}Joshua 15:12,14); wherefore what is recorded here is only a repetition of what was then done; unless it can be thought that this fact was there inserted by anticipation, or that there were two expeditions of the children of Judah against this place:

now the name of Hebron, before [was] Kirjatharba: (see ^{<6145>}Joshua 14:15); in the first of which Caleb, with the assistance of this tribe, drove out the three giants only, who afterwards got possession again, and in this put them to death, as follows:

and they slew Sheshai, and Ahiman, and Talmi; (see ^{<0132>}Numbers 13:22) (^{<6154>}Joshua 15:14); but what follows concerning their going from hence to Debir, and the offer of Caleb to give his daughter in marriage to whomsoever should take it, does not seem so well to agree with times after the death of Joshua; since it is highly probable that Caleb, who was contemporary with him and Eleazar, was now dead, and at least cannot well be thought to have a young daughter at this time undisposed of in marriage; wherefore these facts are only repeated upon observing Judah's having taken Jerusalem, to show what exploits were performed by men of that tribe; wherefore for what is after said, (^{<0011>}Judges 1:11-15), as is said in (^{<6155>}Joshua 15:15-19), where the same things are related in express words as here, containing the request of Caleb's daughter: such an one, as made to Domitian, is related by Martial ^{f11}.

Ver. 11. *And from thence he went against the inhabitants of Debir: and the name of Debir before [was] Kirjathsepher.*] (See Gill on "^{<6155>}Joshua 15:15").

Ver. 12. *And Caleb said, He that smiteth Kirjathsepher, and taketh it, to him will I give Achsah my daughter to wife.]* (See Gill on “^{<6156>}Joshua 15:16”).

Ver. 13. *And Othniel the son of Kenaz, Caleb’s younger brother, took it: and he gave him Achsah his daughter to wife.]* (See Gill on “^{<6157>}Joshua 15:17”).

Ver. 14. *And it came to pass, when she came [to him], that she moved him to ask of her father a field: and she lighted from off [her] ass; and Caleb said unto her, What wilt thou?] (See Gill on “^{<6158>}Joshua 15:18”).*

Ver. 15. *And she said unto him, Give me a blessing: for thou hast given me a south land; give me also springs of water. And Caleb gave her the upper springs and the nether springs.]* (See Gill on “^{<6159>}Joshua 15:19”).

Ver. 16. *And the children of the Kenite, Moses’ father in law, etc.]* The posterity of Jethro, the father-in-law of Moses; for though Jethro returned to his own country, after he had paid a visit to Moses in the wilderness, yet Hobab his son, at the persuasion of Moses, travelled with him and Israel through the wilderness, and went with them into Canaan, at least some of his descendants, and settled there, some in one part of the land, and some in another, of whom we read in several places of Scripture; they continued to the days of Jeremiah, and then went by the name of Rechabites, so called from Rechab, a descendant of Jethro: these

went up out of the city of palm trees; from the city of Jericho, as the Targum, so called from the great number of palm trees which grew near it, (see ^{<6143>}Deuteronomy 34:3). This is to be understood not of the city itself, that was utterly destroyed by Joshua, and the rebuilding of it was forbidden under a curse, but the country adjacent, the valley in which it stood, which was set with palm trees; here was a grove of palm trees ^{f12}, and the garden of balsam, which grew nowhere else, as Strabo ^{f13} says; and who also observes, that here was a royal palace in his time; this belonged to Herod king of Judea in the times of Augustus Caesar, to whose palm tree groves there Horace ^{f14} refers. Here the Kenites first settled when they came first over Jordan with Joshua, being a most pleasant and delightful place, and suitable to such persons who dwelt in tents, as they did, and answered to the promise of Moses to Hobab, (^{<6102>}Numbers 10:29); and here it seems they had remained to this time: and now they left it, and came

with the children of Judah into the wilderness of Judah; which was also a convenient place for the habitation of such persons, who loved a solitary life. Perhaps the Canaanites about Jericho might be troublesome to them, and therefore chose to stay no longer, there; or, having a peculiar affection for the tribe of Judah, they chose to be within their lot; and the rather, as they were a warlike and valiant tribe, they might expect the greater safety and protection among them:

which [lieth], in the south of Arad; that is, which wilderness of Judah lay there, of which name there was a country or city, (see ^{<0201>}Numbers 21:1) (^{<0124>}Joshua 12:14); and here some of them dwelt to the times of Saul, the Amalekites then having got possession of the southern parts, which they infested and were troublesome to, (see ^{<0156>}1 Samuel 15:6 30:1);

and they went and dwelt among the people; of the tribe of Judah, near some of the cities which were in the wilderness; of which (see ^{<0156>}Joshua 15:63).

Ver. 17. *And Judah went with Simeon his brother*, etc.] Having subtitled his Canaanites which were in his own lot, according to his promise, he went with his brother Simeon, or the tribe of Simeon, into their lot to reduce those that were in that:

and they slew the Canaanites that inhabited Zephath, and utterly destroyed it: where and what this city was is not certain; there was a place of this name in upper Galilee, mentioned in Jewish writings ^{f15}, which cannot be meant here; and we read of the valley of Zephathah, (^{<1410>}2 Chronicles 14:10); which might have its name from hence, and if so it was near Mareshah:

and the name of the city was called Hormah; from the destruction made of it, and of the country about it; for now what had been vowed by Israel in the wilderness, when near Arad, was fulfilled, (^{<0201>}Numbers 21:1-3).

Ver. 18. *Also Judah took Gaza, with the coast thereof*, etc.] Which by lot fell to that tribe, (^{<0157>}Joshua 15:47); it was not till now subdued:

and Ashkelon with the coast thereof; which, according to our countryman Sandys ^{f16}, was ten miles from Gaza:

and Ekron with the coast thereof; this also is the lot that fell to Judah, but was afterwards given to the tribe of Dan, (^{<0155>}Joshua 15:45 19:43); for

whom Judah now fought and took it; but in a short time all these places were retaken, and possessed by the Philistines, and were three of their five principalities which they ever after retained, (see ^{<00B>}Judges 3:3 ^{<006>}1 Samuel 6:16).

Ver. 19. *And the Lord was with Judah*, etc.] Encouraging, strengthening, succeeding, and giving the tribe victory over the Canaanites; the Targum is,

“the Word of the Lord was for the help of the house of Judah:”

and he drove out [the inhabitants of] the mountains; the mountainous part of Judea, such as was about Jerusalem, and where Hebron stood, and other cities, (see ^{<015>}Joshua 15:48), etc. which though fortified both by nature and man, yet God being with them, they were easily subdued:

but could not drive out the inhabitants of the valley; God forsaking them, because they were afraid of them, for a reason after mentioned, or through slothfulness, and being weary of fighting, or because they fell into some sins, which occasioned the divine displeasure; so the Targum,

“after they had sinned, they could not drive out the inhabitants of the valley:”

because they had chariots of iron; but this was no reason why they could not drive them out, if God was with them, who could as easily have delivered these into their hands, as the inhabitants of the mountains; but is the reason why they were afraid to fight with them, and to attempt to drive them out, and which they themselves gave why they did not.

Ver. 20. *And they gave Hebron unto Caleb, as Moses said*, etc.] Which was done in the times of Joshua, both by him and all the people, according to the order of Moses. This is to be understood not of the city which was given to the Levites, but of the fields and parts adjacent, (^{<014>}Joshua 14:13 21:11,12);

and he expelled thence the three sons of Anak: whose names are given (^{<010>}Judges 1:10); this shows that this refers to the same expedition as in (^{<015>}Joshua 15:14); and is expressed in the same manner.

Ver. 21. *And the children of Benjamin did not drive out the Jebusites that inhabited Jerusalem*, etc.] That is, that part of it which belonged to them, for it lay between Judah and Benjamin; and neither of them separately, nor both conjunctly, could drive out the Jebusites from it, particularly the

strong hold on the top of Mount Sion, which they held to the times of David. Abarbinel is of opinion, that Jerusalem in those times was not a city enclosed about, but was a large province, part of which belonged to the tribe of Judah, and another to the tribe of Benjamin, and another was possessed by the Jebusites; and so Jarchi says it was a province, the name of which was Jebusi:

but the Jebusites dwelt with the children of Benjamin unto this day; when this book was written, which was done by Samuel, as Kimchi and Ben Gersom; and it is certain from hence it must have been written before the reign of David, who dispossessed the Jebusites, (^{<4086>}2 Samuel 5:6-9).

Ver. 22. *And the house of Joseph, they also went up against Bethel*, etc.] Which lay upon the borders of the sons of Joseph, Ephraim and Manasseh, (^{<4086>}Joshua 16:1,2); and though it seems to have been taken when Ai was, (^{<4087>}Joshua 8:17); yet it appears that it was now in the possession of the Canaanites; wherefore the tribes of Ephraim and Manasseh being desirous of enlarging their borders after the example of Judah, went against this place in order to take it:

and the Lord [was] with them; the Word of the Lord, as the Targum, directing, assisting, and succeeding them in their attempt.

Ver. 23. *And the house of Joseph sent to descry Bethel*, etc.] To reconnoitre the place, to observe its passes and avenues, which were most accessible, and to examine the walls of it, where they were weakest and least defended:

now the name of the city before [was] Luz; which signifies a “nut”; perhaps it was so called from large numbers of nut trees which grew near it; the Jews suggest as if it was like a nut, no entrance into it but through a cave or some subterraneous passage, (see ^{<4089>}Genesis 28:19).

Ver. 24. *And the spies saw a man come forth out of the city*, etc.] Or “the keepers”^{f17}; those that were sent to watch, and observe, and get what intelligence they could of the city, and the way into it:

and they said unto him, show us, we pray, thee, the entrance into the city; not the gate or gates of it, which no doubt were visible enough, but some private way into it; the Jews, as before observed, think the entrance was by the way of a cave, or some hidden passage, of which Jarchi and Kimchi make mention:

and we will show thee mercy; give him a reward for it, or spare him and his family when the city came into their hands.

Ver. 25. *And when he showed them the entrance, into the city*, etc.] Pointing to it with his fingers, as the same writers observe:

they smote the city with the edge of the sword; they gave notice of what intelligence they had got to the body of the army, who came up, entered the city, took it, and put the inhabitants of it to the sword, as they were ordered to do with all the Canaanites:

but they let go the man and all his family; who had returned to it, encouraged by the promise made him, and for the sake of saving of his family; which though not expressed, he might have asked the favour of sparing them, which might be promised, as was in the case of Rahab; provided he would either renounce Heathenism, and embrace the true religion, or depart to another country, the latter of which he chose.

Ver. 26. *And the man went into the land of the Hittites*, etc.] With his family; Kimchi says this was not one of the seven nations of Canaan; and it is very clear from this narrative, that the land this man went to was not in the land of Canaan; though it is certain a people of this name formerly dwelt there, (⁽¹¹⁵⁰⁾Genesis 15:20 23:3 26:34); and the land of Canaan is called the land of the Hittites, (⁽¹¹⁰⁹⁾Joshua 1:4); these either might flee to another country upon Joshua's entry into the land of Canaan, or a colony of them from thence might settle elsewhere, to which this man chose to go, who might be originally of them:

and built a city; his family was numerous, and he a man of wealth, and was allowed to carry all his substance with him:

and called the name of it Luz; in memory of the place he left, and had long lived in. There is a city called Loussa, among the cities which Josephus says ^{f18} were taken by the Jews from the Arabians; and which is very probably the Lysa of Ptolemy ^{f19}, which he places in Arabia Petraea, and might be the same with this Luz; and, if so, this shows the land this man went into was in Edom, which is not unlikely; there is another Luza, which Jerom ^{f20} says fell to the lot of the sons of Joseph, near Sichem, three miles from Neapolis:

which [is] the name thereof unto this day: the time of the writing of this book; (see Gill on "⁽¹⁰¹²⁾Judges 1:21").

Ver. 27. *Neither did Manasseh*, etc.] One of the sons of Joseph before mentioned; and it respects that half tribe of Manasseh, which had its portion on this side Jordan in the land of Canaan: these did not

drive out the inhabitants of Bethshean 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: all which were places the half tribe had assigned them in Issachar and Asher; of which (see Gill on “^{4671b}Joshua 17:11”). This tribe seems to have been sluggish, and not to have exerted itself at all, or made any attempts to drive out these people:

but the Canaanites would dwell in that land; not only desired it, but were determined on it, and rather chose to submit to a tribute than be expelled, at least would not depart unless they were forced.

Ver. 28. *And it came to pass, when Israel was strong*, etc.] All the tribes of Israel were become numerous, and able to drive the Canaanites out of the land everywhere, and particularly were able to assist Manasseh in expelling the Canaanites out of the above places, yet they did not; but all they did was,

that they put the Canaanites to tribute, and did not utterly drive them out; which flowed from covetousness, and a love of ease; they did not care to be at the trouble of expelling them, as they found it turned more to their account and present advantage to make them tributaries; and this was true of the Israelites in general, and of the half tribe of Manasseh in particular; which, as Abarbinel thinks, is here respected.

Ver. 29. *Neither did Ephraim drive out the Canaanites that dwelt in Gezer*, etc.] Not so much as made them tributaries, but made a covenant with them, it is probable, contrary to the express will of God:

but the Canaanites dwelt in Gezer among them; the Ephraimites agreeing to it, and here they dwelt to the times of Solomon; (see Gill on “⁴⁶⁶⁰Joshua 16:10”); where indeed they are said to be under tribute; but that seems to respect some later time, and not when they were first admitted to dwell among them, since no mention is made of it here.

Ver. 30. *Neither did Zebulun drive out the inhabitants of Kitron, nor the inhabitants of Nahalol*, etc.] The first of these seems to be the same with Kattah or Kartah, and the latter with Nahalal, both cities given to the

Levites, (⁽⁶⁹¹⁵⁾Joshua 19:15 21:34,35); which perhaps was the reason of their sloth in driving them out; though it aggravated their sin not to take care to rid those cities of the Canaanites, which were given to religious persons:

but the Canaanites dwelt among them, and became tributaries; which is observed so far in their favour, that they exerted themselves to make them tributaries, which was more than was done by some others.

Ver. 31. *Neither did Asher drive out the inhabitants of Accho*, etc.] The same with Ptolemais, (see Gill on “⁽⁴²⁰⁷⁾Acts 21:7”); so called from the first Ptolemy king of Egypt, who enlarged it; but it has since recovered its ancient name pretty nearly, and is now called Acca or Acra.

“On its north and east sides (Mr. Maundrell says ^{f21}) it is encompassed with a spacious and fertile plain; on the west it is washed by the Mediterranean sea; and on the south by a large bay, extending from the city as far as Mount Carmel:”

nor the inhabitants of Zidon; a well known city in Phoenicia, belonging to this tribe, (see ⁽⁶⁹²⁸⁾Joshua 19:28);

nor of Ahlab, nor of Achzib, nor Helbah, nor Aphik, nor of Rehob; two of these places, Ahlab and Helbah, are not mentioned among the cities of the tribe of Asher, (⁽⁶⁹²⁴⁾Joshua 19:24-31); unless Helbah is the same with Helkath, (⁽⁷⁰²⁵⁾Judges 1:25); of the rest, Achzib, (see Gill on “⁽⁶⁹²⁹⁾Joshua 19:29”), Aphik, and Rehob, (see Gill on “⁽⁶⁹³⁰⁾Joshua 19:30”).

Ver. 32. *But the Asherites dwelt among the Canaanites, the inhabitants of the land*, etc.] They were in a worse condition than those before mentioned; for the Canaanites were possessed of their country, especially of the above cities, and were masters of them; and the Asherites only dwelt among them upon sufferance:

for they did not drive them out; either they did not attempt it, or they could not do it, and contented themselves with having leave to dwell among them.

Ver. 33. *Neither did Naphtali drive out the inhabitants of Bethshemesh, nor the inhabitants of Bethanath*, etc.] Of which places (see Gill on “⁽⁶⁹³⁸⁾Joshua 19:38”);

but he dwelt among the Canaanites, the inhabitants of the land; in the same disgraceful manner as Asher did, owing to cowardice or sloth:

nevertheless, the inhabitants of Bethshemesh, and of Bethanath, became tributaries unto them; these two cities did at length exert themselves, and got the mastery over the Canaanites, as to make them pay tribute to them; though they ought to have expelled them, and even destroyed them, according to the command of God, but avarice prevailed over them.

Ver. 34. *And the Amorites forced the children of Dan into the mountain,* etc.] Into the mountainous part of the tribe of Dan; the most noted mountains in it were Sear and Baalah, which lay on the border of Judah, (⁴⁶⁵⁰Joshua 15:10,11); Joppa in this tribe was built on an high rock, and so Gibbethon, as its name seems to import, perhaps was built on a hill or mountain, as were the cities after mentioned:

for they would not suffer them to come down to the valley; which lay between Joppa and Caesarea, the plain of Sharon, in which were Lydda, Jamnia, etc. which belonged to their tribe, and they afterwards enjoyed; (see Gill on "⁴⁶⁹⁸Joshua 19:48").

Ver. 35. *But the Amorites would dwell in Mount Heres in Aijalon, and in Shaalbim,* etc.] And they would not suffer the Danites to dwell in the valley, a fruitful and delightful part of their country, terrifying them with their iron chariots, which in the vale they could make use of to great advantage; so neither would they let them dwell alone in the mountainous part of their tribe, but would dwell with them, particularly in three places mentioned: where Mount Heres was is not certain; it signifies the "sun"; very probably it had its name from the worship of the sun on it, or from the sun standing still near it; for Aijalon, where that miracle was wrought, is next mentioned. Perhaps it might be near to Timnathheres, which was in Mount Ephraim, (⁴⁷⁰⁰Judges 2:9); since Ephraim assisted in making these places tributaries; of the two cities, Aijalon and Shaalbim, (see ⁴⁶⁹⁹Joshua 19:42);

yet the hand of the house of Joseph prevailed, so that they became tributaries; or "the hand of [it] became heavy"^{f22}; by which it does not clearly appear whether the hand of Joseph was made heavy, and to hang down, by the Amorites; or whether it was heavy upon them, and so prevailed over them, as our version; but the Septuagint puts it out of doubt, reading the words,

"and the hand of the house of Joseph was heavy upon the Amorites;"

the Ephraimites being near to the tribe of Dan, and observing how they were pressed by the Amorites, took up arms in their favour, and obliged the Canaanites of the above places to become tributaries to the Danites.

Ver. 36. *And the coast of the Amorites [was] from the going up to Akrabbim*, etc.] Of which (see Gill on “⁶⁹⁴⁰Numbers 34:4”) and (see Gill on “⁶⁹⁵³Joshua 15:3”):

from the rock, and upwards; even from the city Petra in Idumea, and beyond that; and there was a country near Idumea, called Acrabatane, from this mountain Akrabbim, “Then Judas fought against the children of Esau in Idumea at Arabattine, because they besieged Gael: and he gave them a great overthrow, and abated their courage, and took their spoils.” (1 Maccabees 5:3) such was the extent of these people, that their coast reached from the places, mentioned to the mountains where the above cities of Dan were; they were the most powerful people among the Canaanites, and lay on both sides of Jordan, and were very troublesome to Israel, yet were at length destroyed, (³¹¹⁹Amos 2:9).