

Theme: Tolerating sin in our lives (not sinners, there is no getting away from them, ourselves included) will bring nothing but snares, thorns and death. Ridding ourselves of sin requires a power and a will infinitely stronger and more holy than our own.

Background and Introduction: The book leaves us uncomfortable for a number of reasons:

- It's bloody!
- It's fraught with moral and theological issues and questions

Three questions that must always be in view -

- What does this tell us about God?
- What does this tell us about us?
- How does it reveal Christ and his work? (John 5:39)

I. Setting the Stage

A. The promise of God

1. To Abraham – “I will give you this land” (Genesis 17:8)
2. “I will drive them out” (Exodus 34:11,12)

B. The command of God

- Remove (drive out) the idol worshippers and their idols (Numbers 33:51,52)

C. A faithful response

1. Joshua’s “Blitzkrieg” campaign
2. Taking possession by tribe

II. A New Generation (vv. 1-10)

A. A great start

1. Seeking the Lord – Who shall go up? (1,2)
2. Unity/Cooperation (3)
3. Victory!

B. Justice in conquest

1. Adoni-Bezek and “just recompense” (7)
 - The Canaanites were not “innocent” victims
 - Adoni-Bezek sees this as justice, modern readers don’t
2. The challenge of “Holy War” (Numbers 33:52)
 - God commands what he forbids everywhere else. Why?

1st: This was God’s just and righteous judgment upon a very evil, wicked people. (Leviticus 18:6-30; Deuteronomy 18:9-14)

2nd: Not about racial cleansing or material gain

3rd: No such command has ever been repeated – nor will be, for the Kingdom of God has come. (Matthew 1-28; John 18:36)

C. Blessing in conquest (11-18)

1. Judah’s success
2. Achsah and Othniel (11-15)
3. Blessing to the Kenites (16)
4. An offering to the Lord (17)

D. The challenge of conquest (19-26)

1. Iron chariots!
 - “Could not” or “would not”
2. Sons of Anak – giants! (Numbers 13:33)
3. Benjamin couldn’t clear Jerusalem (21 (also see 8))
4. The house of Joseph (22-26)

III. A Failure To Thrive (27-36)

- A. The downward spiral of defeat
 - Seven times they “did not drive out”
- B. Failure of will, not war
 - Canaan is enslaved
 - Intentionally kept them in their midst
 - The Ammonites territory defined
- C. Open to attack
 1. Strategically vulnerable
 2. Spiritually vulnerable (Exodus 23:33)

NOTE: They knew what God promised and what he commanded – and they did not do it! The Canaanites prove more tenacious than Israel.

APPLICATION: Tolerating the enemy within

- Knowing what is right and doing it are two different things (James 4:17)
- Do I believe God is faithful enough to work even this *sorrow* for good?

IV. The Stage Is Set (2:1-5)

- A. Disobedience brings great sorrow
 1. It was half-hearted obedience
 2. Half-hearted repentance
 - Doesn't say they “repented” – just “wept”
- B. Thorns and snares
 - The fruit of the warning God gave in Exodus!
- C. A broken promise?
 1. I said.... **1** An *unconditional* promise
 2. And I said... **2** To a holy people

Question: How can an unconditional promise have a *condition*?

Consider the character of God.

- Holy, righteous, pure – cannot “tolerate” evil in his people or his presence
- Loving, faithful, full of compassion. He does not crush a bruised reed or fail in his promise

D. Promise kept – In Jesus Christ

- Who fulfills all righteousness and perfect obedience
- Who takes our sin upon himself – and grants us his perfect righteousness
- God, through his work, maintains his holiness and love and fulfills his promise
- 2 Corinthians 12:9