

## BIBLE READING LIST FOR MARCH 27-APRIL 2

Joshua 11 shows that when God's people begin to be victorious, the world will join forces to stop them. But all of them together is no greater problem for God than they would be individually. It just affords the opportunity to defeat all of them at one time and get it over with. We are more than conquerors (Rom. 8:37).

Israel defeated some giants but left others in place (Josh. 11:21–22). One place they left them was Gath, which would cause major problems 400 years later (I Sam. 17:4) when a man from there named Goliath came back to haunt them. Sin in our lives must be rooted out thoroughly; it can't be kept under control.

Judges 1 repeats the story from Joshua 15. After its first telling, the division of the land is described. After its second telling, we see why they couldn't divide up all God had promised them. Settling for partial victory allowed some rest at the time but brought continuing problems as long as they were in the land.

For the first time since Genesis, the chronological order of the Scripture record is changed. These are the reasons for placing Judges 17–21 early in the history of the Judges, just after 3:11.

First, chapter 3 says that Othniel was the first judge. As Caleb's younger brother (1:13), he would have come over Jordan from the wilderness and been in on the beginning of the period. Second, we learn from 20:28 that Phinehas, the grandson of Aaron, was the priest before the Ark of the Covenant during the time of that incident. Since the entire period of the Judges covers over 400 years (Acts 13:20), this event can't come chronologically at the end of the book and still have Phinehas at the Ark, since he would long since be dead. The decimation of Benjamin being early in the time of the Judges explains how they can be a full tribe again early in the Book of I Samuel.

So these horrible events did not take place during or after the rule of the judges. They were illustrations of why judges were needed. When Samuel's sons were bad judges (I Samuel 8), some might have been tempted to resent and resist authority. These last chapters of Judges remind them of what it was like before the judges. Four times (17:6; 18:1; 19:1; 21:25) it is noted that Israel had no king when these things occurred. God ordained government to restrain evil, and the Christian should respect law enforcement as God's ministers (Romans 13).

<u>March 27</u> Joshua 11-13
<u>March 28</u> Joshua 14-17
<u>March 29</u> Joshua 18-20
<u>March 30</u> Joshua 21-22
<u>March 31</u> Joshua 23-24
<u>April 1</u> Judges 1:1–3:11; Judges 17:1–6
<u>April 2</u> Judges 17:7–19:30