

**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?
    - 1<sup>st</sup>: This was God's just and righteous judgment upon a very evil, wicked people. (Leviticus 18:6-30; Deuteronomy 18:9-14)
    - 2<sup>nd</sup>: Not about racial cleansing or material gain
    - 3<sup>rd</sup>: 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