

Judges 5:19

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

The kings came and fought, then fought the kings of Canaan in Taanach by the waters of Megiddo; they took no gain of money.

Analysis

The kings came and fought, then fought the kings of Canaan in Taanach by the waters of Megiddo; they took no gain of money.

This passage relates to the Song of Deborah celebrating divine victory, demonstrating God's sovereign choice and empowerment of deliverers. The judges themselves display varying degrees of faith and character flaws, yet God works through these imperfect human instruments to accomplish His purposes. This illustrates the biblical pattern that God's power is made perfect in human weakness (2 Corinthians 12:9).

Theologically, these early judges establish the pattern of divine deliverance through unlikely means. God chooses the weak, marginalized, and flawed to demonstrate that victory comes from His power, not human strength. This anticipates Paul's teaching that "God hath chosen the foolish things of the world to confound the wise; and God hath chosen the weak things of the world to confound the things which are mighty" (1 Corinthians 1:27).

The military victories recorded here serve spiritual purposes—they deliver Israel from physical oppression but more importantly provide opportunity for spiritual renewal. Each deliverance creates space for Israel to return to covenant faithfulness. However, the repeated cycles show these deliverances provided only temporary relief, pointing to the need for the ultimate Deliverer who would provide

permanent victory over sin and spiritual oppression through His death and resurrection.

Historical Context

Historical Setting: The Book of Judges spans approximately 350-400 years (c. 1375-1050 BCE) during the Late Bronze Age collapse and early Iron Age. This period saw the disintegration of major empires (Hittites, Mycenaeans) and weakening of Egyptian control over Canaan, creating a power vacuum filled by emerging peoples including Philistines (Sea Peoples), Aramaeans, and regional kingdoms. The decentralized tribal structure left Israel vulnerable to external oppression and internal chaos.

Cultural Context: This passage relates to the Song of Deborah celebrating divine victory. Canaanite religion dominated the region, centered on Baal (storm/fertility god), Asherah (mother goddess), and Anat (war goddess). Archaeological discoveries at Ugarit (Ras Shamra) have provided extensive information about Canaanite mythology and religious practices. Baal worship involved ritual prostitution, child sacrifice, and fertility rites tied to agricultural seasons. Israel's persistent attraction to these gods demonstrates the strong cultural pressure to conform to surrounding nations' religious practices.

The material culture of this period shows gradual Israelite settlement in the Canaanite hill country, with simpler pottery and architecture than coastal Canaanite cities. Iron technology was beginning to spread, giving military advantage to peoples who mastered it (note the Philistines' iron monopoly, 1 Samuel 13:19-22). The absence of centralized government during the judges period stands in stark contrast to the bureaucratic city-states of Canaan and the imperial administration of Egypt and Mesopotamia. This political structure reflected Israel's theocratic ideal—God as king—yet the repeated cycles of apostasy showed this ideal required more than political structures; it demanded heart transformation.

Related Passages

Romans 1:17 — The righteous shall live by faith

Hebrews 11:1 — Definition of faith

Study Questions

1. How does this passage about the Song of Deborah celebrating divine victory reveal God's character in dealing with persistent human rebellion and incomplete obedience?
2. What patterns of spiritual compromise or incomplete obedience in your own life mirror Israel's failures during the judges period?
3. How does understanding the cyclical nature of sin and deliverance in Judges help you appreciate Christ's perfect and final deliverance from sin's power?

Interlinear Text

בָּאוּ	מֶלֶכִּי	וַיִּלָּחֲמוּ	אֶזְרָא	וַיִּלָּחֲמוּ	מֶלֶכִּי	כְּנָעַן	
came	The kings	and fought	H227	and fought	The kings	of Canaan	
H935	H4428	H3898		H3898	H4428	H3667	
בְּתַעֲנַן	עַל	יַם	מִגְדּוֹ	בְּצֵעַ	כֶּסֶף	לֹא	לָקְחוּ:
in Taanach	H5921	by the waters	of Megiddo	no gain	of money	H3808	they took
H8590		H4325	H4023	H1215	H3701		H3947

Additional Cross-References

Judges 5:30 (Parallel theme): Have they not sped? have they not divided the prey; to every man a damsel or two; to Sisera a prey of divers colours, a prey of divers colours of needlework, of divers colours of needlework on both sides, meet for the necks of them that take the spoil?

Judges 1:27 (Parallel theme): Neither did Manasseh drive out the inhabitants of Beth-shean 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: but the Canaanites would dwell in that land.

1 Kings 4:12 (Parallel theme): Baana the son of Ahilud; to him pertained Taanach and Megiddo, and all Beth-shean, which is by Zartanah beneath Jezreel, from Beth-shean to Abel-meholah, even unto the place that is beyond Jokneam:

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