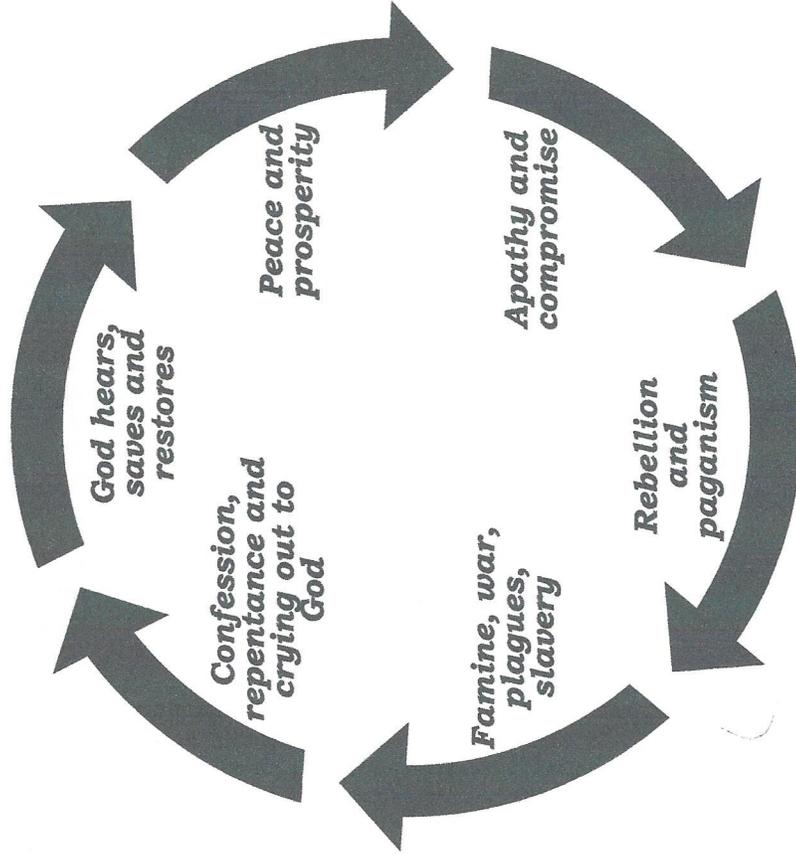


January 6, 2019

Israel's Cycle During the Time of the Judges



The violence featured in Judges—particularly the God ordained violence—flies in the face of modern western sensibilities. Why, we might ask, did God order the Israelite's to wage war against the Canaanites? God had been extraordinarily patient with the Canaanites, but they had become

irredeemably wicked (Genesis 15:16, Deuteronomy 9:5, Leviticus 18:24). God takes no pleasure in the death of the wicked, but he holds his creation accountable for wickedness (Ezekiel 18:23, 32). The wars ordained by God, however, should not be confused with ethnic cleansing, for he spared repentant Canaanites (Joshua 6:25). (See also Genesis 18:22-33.) In time, under his original covenant with his people, God replaced the sword with the prophetic word, and finally, under the new covenant, he commands his people to love their enemies and engage in spiritual warfare not against flesh and blood but against demonic forces (Matthew 5:44, 2 Corinthians 10:3-6, Ephesians 6:12). Believers under the new covenant possess the Holy Spirit, which means that their power to influence for holiness transcends any power that would influence them for unholiness. Therefore, they need to love those they live among, not drive them out. - Pastor Scott Grant

Failure through compromise permeates every page of the book of Judges. The exploits of the judges teach the lesson that a return to the true faith brings renewed victory; yet the very teaching of this accentuates the main, stark reality, that all the failure is due to compromise. Let the words burn into the mind, and burn out any easy-going toleration of the unholy or questionable thing. We can never enjoy God's promised rest for long if we tolerate only "partially crushed" sins to continue with us. If we make league with questionable things because they seem harmless, we shall soon find ourselves wedded to the desires of the flesh again, and down from the heights to which God had lifted us. Failure through compromise! Oh that Israel had heeded the message of this book! Oh that a compromising Church today never disregard it! God's word to His people of today is still that of 2 Cor. 6:17-18. - Bruce Hurt