

# Judges

## “Defeat”

### I. Introduction to Judges

- A. Judges is the 7<sup>th</sup> book in the Old Testament canon and the second in the historical Narrative.
  - 1. Covers nearly 350 years;
    - a. From the death of Joshua to the time of Samuel
  - 2. Includes stories of some of the Bible's most well-known and celebrated heroes.
    - a. Deborah, Gideon and Samson to name a few
  - 3. Tradition holds these stories were compiled by Samuel the prophet.
    - a. Structured to tell a divine story of the effects of sin on the nation
    - b. Does not give a time line of the events in the period between Joshua and the Kings
  - 4. Judges gets its name from the 13 rulers who are introduced in its narrative
    - a. The term “Judges” is somewhat misleading
      - i. Original term came from Phoenician word meaning “ruler”
      - ii. Perhaps an even better title might be “Deliverers”, for this book tells the repeated story of God raising up leaders to deliver Israel from bondage.
  - 5. Chronicles one of the darkest periods in Israel's history.
    - a. All that transpires in Judges must be seen in light of the final verse of the book: “In those days there was no king in Israel; everyone did what was right in His own eyes.”
    - b. This verse, repeated in Judges 17:6, is the underlying current that explains all that occurred in Judges
    - c. The people reject the Word, Law and authority of God
    - d. Establish their own standard of right, good and truth
    - e. Records the awful story of what happens to a person, culture or nation that casts off the Laws of God to do what is right in their own eyes.

### II. Why Study Judges

- A. Judges is a book of extreme importance to us today. The philosophy that underlies Judges is the same philosophy that guides the affairs of men today.
  - 1. Existentialism
    - a. In the early 20<sup>th</sup> Century Jean Paul Sartre coined the term “existentialism” to describe the philosophical viewpoint that was shaping Western Europe.
    - b. A philosophy birthed out of the teachings of men like Soren Kierkegaard and Friedrich Nietzsche.
      - i. These men were opposed to Christianity and sought to establish a philosophy that removes us from God's standard. “No king is Israel.”
  - 2. Relativism
    - a. Much of this philosophy (Existentialism) has its roots in Relativism, which essentially states:
      - i. There are no absolutes
      - ii. Ethical and moral truth depends on the individual who holds it
      - iii. Truth, right and good vary from person to person, and situation to situation

- iv. Existentialism, the offspring of relativism states:
    - 1. Each individual, not society or religion is responsible for giving meaning to life.
    - 2. You decide what is a fulfilled life and you alone control it
    - 3. You are encouraged to search within yourself and “find yourself” and be “true to yourself”.
  - b. Praise is given to the “individual thinker”.
  - c. Those who think outside the moral law of God
  - d. One leading philosopher stated: “Let’s remove God so we can do what we want”
3. This philosophy led to a cultural movement in Western Europe in the mid-20<sup>th</sup> century and has since permeated the Western World.
    - a. Started with educators
    - b. Spread throughout Journalism
    - c. Entertainment (books, plays, movies).
  4. A hybrid of Existentialism is the underlying philosophy of our day.
    - a. It has infiltrated:
      - i. Theology
      - ii. Psychology
      - iii. Arts
      - iv. Entertainment
    - b. Passed off as the philosophy of the modern man who has evolved out of his need for God or his law
      - i. A comedian was heard to respond to the question, “Do you believe marriage should be one man and one woman for life?” “No”, he replied, “because I’m not from the past.”
- B. In reality this modern philosophy is nothing more than a re-birth of a 3000 year old philosophy that undid the nation of Israel and led them into one of the darkest periods of their history.
1. It all stemmed from Judges 17:6 & 21:25:
 

“In those days there was no king in Israel; everyone did what was right in his own eyes.”
- C. Judges tells the story of what happens to a people, culture, or nation that accepts that philosophy and disregards God.

### **III. Judges Outline**

- A. Divides into 3 sections
  1. Prologue – Chapters 1 & 2
  2. Judges historical narrative – Chapters 3 -16
  3. Epilogue - Chapters 17 – 21
- B. **Section 1 – Prologue Chapters 1 -2**
  1. Setting the scene
    - a. After Joshua led Israel to victory, 9 ½ tribes set out to occupy their land

- b. For many reasons they failed to comply with the commands of God and allowed the “ites (Canaanites which included the Perizzites, Jebusites, Hittites, Amorites, Amalekites, Girgashites, and the Hivites) to remain in the land.
  - i. Judges 1:19 Could not
  - ii. Judges 1:21,27 Did not
- c. 8 of the 9 ½ tribes are described as failing to drive them out
- d. Dan is driven out of the territory
- e. Instead of complying with God's commands, they compromised
  - i. Judges 1:28 when they were strong, they put the “ites” under tribute
- 2. Their compromise led naturally to Judges 2:10, a generation that did not know the Lord
  - a. They never saw their parents trust in or serve Jehovah
- 3. A nation founded by heroic men of great faith like Joshua, Caleb, & Othniel (Judges 3:9), are replaced by those who do not know and worship god and instead worship idols.
- 4. This also led to Judges 2:11 – 13
  - a. Not long after compromise with the commands of God, and allowing things to remain that should be removed, Israel was worshipping false gods and involved in immorality.
  - b. These verses speak to us today:
    - i. 2 Corinthians 6:17-18 “Therefore ‘Come out from among them and be separate, says the LORD. Do not touch what is unclean, and I will receive you. I will be a Father to you, and you shall be My sons and daughters’, says the LORD Almighty.”
    - ii. Galatians 5:7 “You ran well. Who hindered you from obeying the truth?”
- 5. This introduces us to the cyclical pattern of Judges
  - a. Cycle seen 6 times in the book of Judges
    - i. Sin - Judges 2:11
    - ii. Suffering - Judges 2:14
    - iii. Supplication – Judges 2:18
    - iv. Salvation – Judges 2:16

### **C. Section 2 – The Judges Chapters 3-16**

- 1. Amidst the darkness of what Israel had become, a few individuals rise above, shining brightly and declaring how to impact the world for the Kingdom of God.
- 2. These men and woman were called” Judges” or “Deliverers”
  - a. They are raised up by God to rescue men from bondage
- 3. Of the 13 Judges are listed, we will highlight a few and glean some important applications on how to serve the Lord.
  - a. Othniel Judges 3:7-11
    - i. The cycle (7-9) sin, suffering (servitude), supplication, salvation
    - ii. Younger brother of Caleb
    - iii. Othniel sought to chart his own course according to the example of his older brother Caleb
    - iv. By now, probably an elderly man
  - b. Ehud Judges 3:12 – 30
    - i. The cycle (12 -15) sin , suffering (servitude), supplication, salvation

- ii. A left handed man
  - 1. Left-handedness was a stigma at the time (mark of ashamed or discredit)
  - 2. Ambidextrous, means 2 right hands
- iii. His story
  - 1. Verses 12 – 30
- c. Deborah and Barack – Judges Chapters 4-5
  - i. Cycle – (1-4) sin, suffering (servitude) supplication, salvation
  - ii. Deborah calls out Barack
    - 1. Judges 4:6 “Has the Lord not commanded?”
  - iii. Barack will only go if Deborah goes with him.
    - 1. No glory at the time
    - 2. Glory given in Hebrews 11:32
  - iv. Their story
  - v. Song (Judges 5:2-31)
    - 1. When leaders lead and people willingly offer themselves (verse 2)
    - 2. Many fail to respond (15-17)
- d. Gideon – Judges Chapters 6-8
  - i. Cycle (Judges 6:1-10) sin, suffering (servitude), supplication, salvation
  - ii. Gideon
    - 1. The mighty man of valor
    - 2. Asked, “Where are all His miracles?” Judges 6:13
    - 3. He became one of the miracles.
  - iii. His story – Chapters 6 - 8
- e. Samson – Judges chapters 13 – 16
  - i. The man who could have been, should have been and wasn’t
  - ii. Samson, the most gifted hero in the Bible is the sad story of compromise
    - 1. Spent his gifts on fleshly living
    - 2. Only act of faith was at the end of his life.
    - 3. He teaches that it is never too late.

#### **D. Section 3 – Epilogue Chapters 17-21**

- 1. This is some of the darkest reading in the Bible. Stories are told of:
  - a. Prophets for hire
  - b. Hybrid religion
  - c. Idolatry
  - d. Robbery
  - e. Harlotry/prostitution
  - f. Homosexuality
  - g. Rape
  - h. Murder
  - i. Civil war
- 2. All this stemmed from the fact that: Judges 21:25  
 “There was no king in Israel and everyone did what was right in his own eyes.

#### **IV. Types of Christ**

John 5:39 "You search the Scriptures, for in them you think you have eternal life; and these are they which testify of Me."

A. No direct prophecies of Christ.

1. Can be seen as the Angel of the Lord who appears to Gideon calling him to ministry.
2. And to Samson's parents, promising a son, and a call to holy living.