

The Book of Judges: Introduction

Though God's people fall away, God remains faithful and will bring deliverance.

Judges 1:1-3:6

March 31, 2019/ April 3, 2019

TODAY'S TEXT

Text: **Judges 2:1-23**

The angel of the Lord went up from Gilgal to Bokim and said, "I brought you up out of Egypt and led you into the land I swore to give to your ancestors. I said, 'I will never break my covenant with you, ² and you shall not make a covenant with the people of this land, but you shall break down their altars.' Yet you have disobeyed me. Why have you done this? ³ And I have also said, 'I will not drive them out before you; they will become traps for you, and their gods will become snares to you.'" ⁴ When the angel of the Lord had spoken these things to all the Israelites, the people wept aloud, ⁵ and they called that place Bokim. There they offered sacrifices to the Lord. ⁶ After Joshua had dismissed the Israelites, they went to take possession of the land, each to their own inheritance. ⁷ The people served the Lord throughout the lifetime of Joshua and of the elders who outlived him and who had seen all the great things the Lord had done for Israel. ⁸ Joshua son of Nun, the servant of the Lord, died at the age of a hundred and ten. ⁹ And they buried him in the land of his inheritance, at Timnath Heres in the hill country of Ephraim, north of Mount Gaash. ¹⁰ After that whole generation had been gathered to their ancestors, another generation grew up who knew neither the Lord nor what he had done for Israel. ¹¹ Then the Israelites did evil in the eyes of the Lord and served the Baals. ¹² They forsook the Lord, the God of their ancestors, who had brought them out of Egypt. They followed and worshiped various gods of the peoples around them. They aroused the Lord's anger ¹³ because they forsook him and served Baal and the Ashtoreths. ¹⁴ In his anger against Israel the Lord gave them into the hands of raiders who plundered them. He sold them into the hands of their enemies all around, whom they were no longer able to resist. ¹⁵ Whenever Israel went out to fight, the hand of the Lord was against them to defeat them, just as he had sworn to them. They were in great distress. ¹⁶ Then the Lord raised up judges, who saved them out of the hands of these raiders. ¹⁷ Yet they would not listen to their judges but prostituted themselves to other gods and worshiped them. They quickly turned from the ways of their ancestors, who had been obedient to the Lord's commands. ¹⁸ Whenever the Lord raised up a judge for them, he was with the judge and saved them out of the hands of their enemies as long as the judge lived; for the Lord relented because of their groaning under those who oppressed and afflicted them. ¹⁹ But when the judge died, the people returned to ways even more corrupt than those of their ancestors, following other gods and serving and worshiping them. They refused to give up their evil practices and stubborn ways. ²⁰ Therefore the Lord was very angry with Israel and said, "Because this nation has violated the covenant I ordained for their ancestors and has not listened to me, ²¹ I will no longer drive out before them any of the nations Joshua left when he died. ²² I will use them to test Israel and see whether they will keep the way of the Lord and walk in it as their ancestors did." ²³ The Lord had allowed those nations to remain; he did not drive them out at once by giving them into the hands of Joshua.

FIRST THOUGHTS

Have you ever made the same mistake over and over and over? Or tried to do the same thing over and over in the same way and fail? Remember the definition of insanity attributed to Albert Einstein: "Doing the same thing over and over and expecting different results."

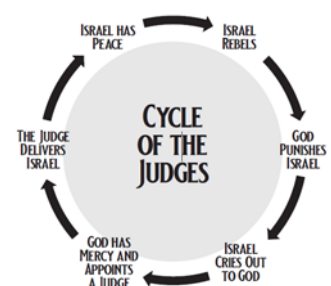
- Why do you think we tend to make the same mistakes and not learn from the consequences?
- What helps you learn from your mistakes?

UNDERSTAND THE CONTEXT

The Book of Judges (the 7th book in the Old Testament) immediately follows the stories of God using Moses to deliver Israel from Egypt and then using Joshua to lead them into the Promised Land (Canaan) and conquer it. The events in the Book of Judges take place approximately 1500 years before the birth of Jesus. Although the author is not identified, most Bible scholars believe Samuel (who was the last of the Judges before the rise of King Saul) wrote it. It is clearly written by someone reflecting back on recent history of Israel (the phrase "in those days . . ." is used in 17:6, 18:1, 19:1, and 21:25).

Judges continues the story of God fulfilling the covenant promises he made to Abraham in Genesis 12 to provide a home for Abraham's descendants. Over and over Israel forgets the acts of God that brought them to this new home. They lose sight of their unique identity and calling from God. They fall into disloyalty and disobedience and reject God. They then suffer the consequences (as laid out in the covenant promises) until God raises up a deliverer (a Judge) to save them. The theme of Judges is the Lord's faithfulness to his promises even as his people are unfaithful. God's amazing patience and grace is demonstrated in the face of human stubbornness and sinfulness. The judge/deliverers that God uses are also a precursor to the arrival of the ultimate Deliverer, Jesus Christ.

The recurring cycle of the Book of Judges looks like this:



WATCH THE VIDEO / EXPLORE THE TEXT**SMALL AREAS OF DISBELIEF LEAD TO LARGE AREAS OF DISASTER (Lesson #1)****> Read Judges 1:1-4 and Judges 1:19**

- What was God's command and promise to the men of Judah?

> Read Judges 2:1-5

- What happens when we fail to fully obey God? Why does God want complete devotion from his people? How would the presence of godless nations in and around Israel threaten their complete devotion to God?
- How do little areas of sin in our lives lead to disaster? How do we compromise with sin by not completely driving it out?
- How do I know the difference when I'm saying "I can't" and God is saying "You can, but you won't"?

COMPROMISE LEADS TO BONDAGE (Lesson #2)**> Read Judges 2:10-15**

- What were the consequences of Israel not completely obeying God? Who experienced these consequences?
- How can the sins of one generation affect the next one? Where have you seen this happen?
- How is sin "bondage" and "slavery"?
- Why is it often so easy to forget what God has done for us? What happens when we forget Him?

SPIRITUAL AMNESIA LEADS TO SPIRITUAL APOSTASY (Lesson #3)

- What is "spiritual amnesia"?

- What is "spiritual apostasy"?

> Read Judges 2:16-19

- How does God's provision of the judges show His faithfulness? Why did God continue to save Israel even though they continued to sin against Him?
- Has your life ever looked like this cycle? What can we do to break this cycle in our lives?

SUMMARIZE AND CHALLENGE

Select one of these things to do this week:

PRAY: Ask God to show you the areas of your life that aren't completely devoted to Him. Pray that He would lead you to repentance and change.

DISCUSS: Talk with a Christian friend about what it means to compromise your beliefs for the things of this world. Discuss if that's been happening in your life and pray for each other.

MEMORIZE: Memorize the cycle of the judges this week. It will be a helpful tool as you go through the rest of the book of Judges.

PREPARING FOR NEXT WEEK

- In the video it was mentioned that next week we will look at Ehud, the left-handed judge. We're actually skipping ahead to get all the lessons in. But you can watch J.D. Greear's teaching on Ehud by logging on to www.rightnowmedia.com. If you don't have a log in, visit www.chetscreek.com/rightnow to request your free access. Search for the Judges series (it's on the Chets Creek Channel on the left hand side) and watch Session 2: Judges 3:7-31. - Read Judges 3:7-31

READ THROUGH THE BIBLE

31st – Judges 9-10; Psalm 49; 1 Corinthians 16 | **1st** – Judges 11-12; Psalm 50; 2 Corinthians 1 | **2nd** – Judges 13-16; 2 Corinthians 2 | **3rd** – Judges 17-18; Psalm 89; 2 Corinthians 3 | **4th** – Judges 19-21; 2 Corinthians 4 | **5th** – Ruth 1-2; Psalm 53, 61; 2 Corinthians 5 | **6th** – Ruth 3-4; Psalm 64-65; 2 Corinthians 6