

## 5-12-24 The Book of Judges

### Judges 1:1–2:23.

**Big Idea of the Message:** Israel shows us a pattern of life that leads to compromise with the world.

The book of Judges covers the years between Joshua and the monarchy (1350-1030bc). There were 14 judges in all. Eli and Samuel were the last. Judges is about how the spiritual condition of Israel affected its military and political situation. For us it is about what happens when we try to live our lives outside of the grace, wisdom, discipline, and power of the Lord.

The book is broken up into three parts: the success and failure of Israel in Canaan (**1:1 - 2:5**), the period of the judges (**2:6 - 16:31**) and two stories of the consequences of sin and corruption (**17:1 - 21:25**)

In this new series, we are going to look at a different type of decay that is happening. We are living right now in a time of spiritual decay and if something doesn't change quickly there is not going to be anything left.

*“Those who cannot remember the past are condemned to repeat it.”* As individuals and even as a society, we can get caught up in a cycle that doesn't seem to end, in which we repeat the mistakes of our parents—and their parents—repeatedly. As we work through the book of Judges, you may discover that the mistakes we read about resemble our mistakes! The world you'll encounter in the book of Judges has several scary resemblances to our world today.

As you read, you encounter indiscriminate violence, political disorder, objectification of humans to an end, the absence of both public and personal faith, and the notion that Truth with a capital T, doesn't exist. All of this is summed up in a repeated theme in Judges: **“In those days there was no king in Israel. Everyone did what was right in his own eyes” (17:6).**

The nation of Israel was enslaved to the Egyptians. A great man by the name of Moses rose up as their leader and led them out of Egypt. They spent forty years wandering in the wilderness, searching for the promised land that would be their permanent home. After Moses died, Joshua became the leader of the Israelites. We learn at the start of **chapter 1** that Joshua has now died. So, Israel is in a period of transition in terms of having a recognized leader.

Steps away from God:

1. **“Friendship with the world.” James 4:4**
2. **“Love the world” 1 John 2:15**
3. **“Conformed to this world” Rom. 12:2**
4. **“Condemned with the world” 1 Cor. 11:32**

Burger Kings slogan fits the book of Judges: Have it your way, you rule!

You see, there is God's way, and then there is our way. Judges is a book where we see humanity decide they know better than God. Again, the theme for the book of Judges can be found in **21:25 “In those days there was no king in Israel. Everyone did what was right in his own eyes.”** Not being ruled by God's Spirit and obeying what you think is right, rather than what God says is right, is a recipe for hardship, defeat, weakness, sin, debauchery, and death.

**Proverbs 14:12 There is a way that seems right to a man, but its end is the way to death.**

**(Jimmy Scroggin's 3 circle slide)**

As a Christian we face a choice every day: do I live today in God's strength, or do I attempt to accomplish things by my own wits and power?

If we don't learn from the past, we will repeat the mistakes of the past. Decay can creep into our homes, our families, and our churches. Do you know where decay begins?

**Read Judges 1:1-3.**

**I. Compromise Leadership.**

- In Israel it began with compromised leadership.
- Joshua had died and now the Nation of Israel was seeking direction. Now they did go to the right place- God; but no one was seemingly stepping up as the leader. When a leader can't be found, the people begin to take on the habits and actions of those around them and that is what the Israelites had done.
- Israel up till this point had great leadership.
- We have all witnessed how compromised leadership has led to decay. We must be alert in the church that we don't allow it to happen.
- At Bethel we need some competent, God-fearing men and women to be willing to take on some leadership roles.
- If we are not careful, prayerful and intentional (through discipleship) we could end up with compromised leadership.

**II. Compromised Attitudes.**

- **Read Judges 1:4-7.**
- Here we find a compromise in attitude. Israel was supposed to go in and destroy the enemy. They were to not leave any of the enemy alive. We see that they did go in and destroy the Canaanites and Perizzites at Bezek; but instead of just killing Adoni-Bezek they cut off his thumbs and big toes. This was an act to humiliate the enemy and it was something that many other nations did.
- Since when did God want His people to take on the actions of other nations?
- As God's children, we struggle with this temptation of compromising our attitudes. Comments like, "There were only a few "bad words, or compromising scenes" in that movie"; are good examples. Notice how small of a thing this is. Those small things grow bigger and bigger. All the devil needs are a small foothold. (Poop brownies)
- In **verses 8-15**, we see some very slight compromises within Caleb's family. Othniel won Acsah's hand in marriage and Acsah quickly began to work her charm on her husband and her daddy.
- In **verse 14** it says that Acsah urged her husband to talk to her dad about getting some property. The word used here in the Hebrew means "to nag". She was "nagging" her husband to get this field for her and instead of leading his family, Othniel quickly gave in.

- Not only did she get the land, but once she got it; it wasn't good enough. She was given desert land and so she wanted more. This time she went to daddy herself and asked for some springs of water and she got them.

There are 2 notable family compromises here that we are dealing with in America right now:

1. The role of husband and wife, and parent were confused. The problem we face in today's culture is there needs to be a balance. You will find situations where the man tries to rule his home with an "iron fist" and that is not right; or he just checks out and let's his wife do everything. In other situations, there can be a woman who isn't going to let anyone come along side and tell her what to do. God instructed that husband and wife are to leave their parents and cleave to each other.
2. Children want everything their parents have right now. Their parents have worked years and years to get the things they do, and these young adults want the same thing or more at no cost. Just as Caleb did, we often give those things to our kids without any thought of what we are teaching them. I know we all want the best for our children, but sometimes the best thing you can do for them is allow them to struggle a little bit like you did when you first got married (Give them the gift of no). It will make them stronger and will teach them how to trust in the Lord and how to manage what they have.

### III. **Compromised Listening.**

- **Judges 1:16-36.**

- There are numerous compromises found here concerning the warfare and taking of the Promised Land. I need you to go back to **verse 8** for a moment to see our first compromise.

1. **They won but did not occupy.**

- Jerusalem was not actually occupied by the Israelites until David took it. Judah attacked Jerusalem and burned it; but then left. In time the people of the land moved back into Jerusalem.
- Many of us have victory over spiritual battles in our lives; but then we just walk away from them, and they come back. For example: How many times have you corrected a problem in your life that you have been fighting for a long time and then suddenly fall back into it.
- That is why Jesus said we must deny ourselves, take up our cross daily, and follow Him!

2. **They followed part of God's instructions but not all of them.**

- One of the first steps the new generation neglected was the Word of God.
- God had told them many times that when they took a city that they were not leave any of the people alive (**Deut. 7**); but we read here several times where instead of killing everyone they just made them slaves. Now what would be wrong with that? They could get the best of both worlds. They didn't have to kill anyone, and they could get someone to do their manual labor and the types of things they didn't want to do.
- God tells us to completely get rid of the sin in our life, Paul says we are to "mortify" the flesh, meaning to put it to death. Every day we are alive we are in spiritual warfare and when we get rid of most of it (our sin), but not all of it; it will surely come back to haunt us. Get rid of all of it! By God's power we can!

- Not only was it more difficult to do it God's way, but God's way was dangerous. Notice in **verse 19** that they could not take the "lowlands" because the people had chariots of iron.
- Now could they not take the lowlands, or did they just not want to because of the danger? This verse also says that God was with them so either they just didn't want to take the risk or God couldn't handle it. Which one is it?
- **God's way is never easy, we must put in the work!** Yes, what God ask us to do can be risky and dangerous in our eyes; but if God is with us who can be against us?

Compromising on God will have consequences!

### Read Judges 2:1-5

There are always consequences to compromise. For the Israelites, their consequences were that those people they did not drive out of the land would become thorns in their sides. Their reaction to this news was sadness and crying.

I want to tell you that when you do not drive out sin in your own life, those sins will become thorns in your side. You will be left in sadness and tears. But you can have victory!

### Conclusion

I want to tell you that as your pastor, I need to confess to you that I have been guilty of some compromises, in my attitude and listening to God. I have allowed myself to settle with just part of what God is blessing us with instead of taking all that He has promised. I have allowed myself to be discouraged and stalled rather than forging ahead.

When I as pastor let things slide such as apathy, gossip, fear of danger, fear of the task being difficult, etc....; I have compromised, and **WE** will suffer. What about you? Have you too fallen into an attitude of apathy, trust in what you can see and understand with your eyes but not your faith? Maybe you have dabbled in sin and haven't given it to the Lord.

Will you join me in getting on your faces before God, join me in some spring cleaning, whatever you have allowed to settle in your own life, find out what God has called you to do, and join with me as we storm the gates of hell and allow God to reign victorious in our community and church!

Will you join me and adopt my leadership statements?

My three "I am" leadership statements.

1. I am a servant leader who builds, trusts, and empowers others.
2. I am a servant leader who inspires others, and never gives up on the hope we have for a better future. (Best days are still ahead of us!)
3. I am a faith filled, bold, risk-taking servant leader. I refuse to insult God with small thinking.

We have been given a commission from God. We are to raise our families up His way, our marriages are to be His way, our churches are to be led His way.

Are we doing that? For those of you that are, thank you, keep being an example to the rest of us. For those of that aren't, are you willing to join with me and place a stake in the ground stating that we will not allow ourselves to settle, or grow weary of doing good in God's name, for His honor and glory?

We are done with the cycle of sin in our lives. Satan is no longer allowed to have free reign in our homes and lives. Our flesh will be placed under the authority of Jesus, and we will seek to be obedient. We will remind both Satan and our flesh that we are no longer the same person, we have been redeemed, we will no longer believe the lies, the doubt, and fears, we are stepping up so that we can empower others to take their next step. From this day forward we will do our part in being an example for others to follow so they can grow closer to God.

Fear, doubt, hopelessness, you are no longer welcome in our lives anymore. Thank you, Jesus!!