

Judges, Sermon #1

Introduction

Turn in your Bibles to the Book of Judges – several years ago – Joshua

This will probably be a two-year study

There are 21 chapters and they are chocked full of Biblical principles.

It's a book of multiple failures and multiple revivals.

The Book of Judges contains some of the worst of times for Israel

Listen to these stories:

Family Feud Leaves 69 Brothers Dead!

Powerful Government Leader Caught in "Love Nest"

Gang Rape Leads to Victim's Death and Dismemberment

Girls at Party Kidnapped and Forced to Marry Strangers

Judge Says Travelers No Longer Safe on Highways

These are sensational headlines but the headlines actually describe some of the events told in the Book of Judges.

Just the tip of the iceberg

I have entitled tonight's message simply "Introduction to the Book of Judges"

First message or a brand new series

Judges 1:1

Let us stand for the reading of God's Holy Word

Judges 1:1 & 21:25

Let us pray

You may be seated

Introduction to the Book of Judges

The Book of Judges takes place between Moses, Joshua—fought the battle of Jericho—and King Saul/King David era – the United Kingdom Joshua dies – Judges 1:1 – no king in Israel – before Saul and David's time

Judges is the book that bridges the gap between Joshua's death and Samuel's anointment of King Saul.

About twenty-five percent of the historical period of Israel in the Old Testament is recorded in Judges.

The journey through Judges covers approximately 325-350 years of history.

There were 15 judges altogether—13 in the Book of Judges and two in Samuel.

The task of the judge was far more than just determining legal cases.

When God raised up a person to become the judge of His people, that judge became the savior, deliverer, and liberator from some oppressor.

He became the leader of the people

If there was ever a book in the Bible more relevant and more appropriate to study in the time we live in, it would be the book of Judges.

The Book of Judges speaks to our time – our day.

It presents us with living illustrations of individuals who served the Lord in difficult times.

The book presents the consequences of spiritual compromise and it reveals what happens to God's people when they conform to the mold of this world.

There is no room for neutrality in the Christian life.

We either submit and serve Christ or we will be swallowed up by the wicked influence of this world.

The events describing the downfall of Israel in Judges can be compared to the same mistakes the United States and other countries of the world are committing now—apathy, apostasy, and anarchy.

Judges 2:7, 10

So, after these Godly men died off, Israel sank into *apathy* (indifferent – I don't care – lack of emotion); instead of obeying the Lord, the people moved into *apostasy*; (willfully moving oneself from the true way to a false one) and instead of the nation enjoying law and order, the land was filled with *anarchy* (chaos).

Indeed, for Israel it was the worst of times.

Israel plunged into moral, spiritual, and political disaster.

One of two things was true: either the older generation had failed to instruct their children and grandchildren in the ways of the Lord, or, if they had faithfully taught them, then the new generation had refused to submit to God's Law and follow God's ways.

The late General Douglas MacArthur at the end of World War II: “. . . History fails to record a single precedent in which nations subject to moral decay have not passed into political and economic decline. There has been either a spiritual reawakening to overcome the moral lapse, or a progressive deterioration leading to ultimate national disaster.” We need revival, a spiritual awakening.

The place for the ship is in the seas, but when the sea gets into the ship, God help her! As the sea water sinks the ship, the flood tides of this world, the lifestyle and philosophy of this age will sink the Church/Christian as it infiltrates.

John warns us in I John 2:15, ***“Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world. If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him.”***

You say, “But, Pastor, this is the Old Testament. “

The Bible tells us that God has a purpose for the stories we find in the Old Testament.

God said in Romans 15:4, *“For whatsoever things were **written aforetime were written for our learning**, that we through patience and comfort of the scriptures might have hope.”*

I Corinthians 10:11-12, *“Now all these things happened unto them for ensamples: **and they are written for our admonition**, upon whom the ends of the world are come. **Wherefore let him that thinketh he standeth take heed lest he fall.**”*

The principles and applications in the book of Judges are VITAL for spiritual survival!
As important as Judges is, it is one of the most neglected books of Scripture.

Why is the Book of Judges in the Bible?

What is the purpose, meaning, and message of this three thousand year old book?

One reason is to warn us of the dangers of compromise with sin.

A second reason is that God's judgment upon sin is certain.

Thirdly, God's forgiveness and restoration are given when we are repentant.

Judges reveals the progression of sinful living.

Seven times Israel does evil in the sight of the Lord.

You will find the common cycle of the book is

Rebellion>Retribution>Repentance> Restoration.

Judges is a book about sin and its consequences.

Like an untreated wound that becomes infected, sin poisons and infects our life spiritually.

The book begins with compromise and it ends with confusion.

This is exactly what happens to an unsundered life!

When we are disobedient to the Lord we make little progress in our life or the nation's life.

Now look at 1:1.

When we look at the opening curtain of Judges, we find God's people opposing the Canaanites, God's enemies.

Israel compromises with sin, however, and disobeys God.

When the curtain closes on the book, we find God's people fighting among themselves.

They are fighting the tribe of Benjamin (20:18).

Gone from fighting sinners to fighting saints

The same pattern is followed by believers and churches today.

When Christians compromise with sinful living and disobey God's Word, they end up ceasing to serve the Lord and many times begin to fight one another.

Many churches are riddled with gossip, fighting, fussing and eventually splits which devastate people and communities.

These churches have been sidetracked and have lost their spiritual priorities.

We also find Judges to be a book about heroes, like Gideon.

The people God used in this book were not perfect.

Some of them had terrible faults and weaknesses, but when they were submissive to the Lord and yielded to Him, He used them and He will use us, too, if we are surrendered to Him.

God demonstrates in this book that He uses weak things and makes them strong!

Throughout the book we will find the Holy Spirit filling the judges for certain tasks.

He filled Othniel (3:10); Gideon (6:34); Jephthah (11:29); and Samson three times (13:25; 14:6; 15:14).

The Holy Spirit in the Old Testament would fill a person and then depart after the task was complete in most cases.

Today He permanently indwells every believer in Christ.

The Holy Spirit helps us forgive when we are offended and gives peace when we are troubled.

He gives direction and discernment when we are confused, strength when we are weak, and joy when we are lonely.

The prompting within us that urges us to trust Christ as our Savior, repent of sin and dedicate our life to Jesus Christ is the Holy Spirit.

What a difference and change from the book of Joshua when Israel did obey God, love and serve Him, and put Him first in their lives.

A contrast of the two books reveals important insights.

Joshua	Judges
1. <u>Shouts</u> of victory	1. <u>Sobs</u> of defeat
2. At rest, freedom, and <u>liberty</u>	2. In bondage
3. Believed God by <u>faith</u>	3. Demonstrated <u>unbelief</u>
4. <u>Stable</u>	4. Slipping . . . <u>double</u> -minded
5. Going Forward – <u>advancing</u>	5. Going backward – <u>retreating</u>
6. <u>Heavenly</u> -minded	6. <u>Earthly</u> -minded
7. <u>True</u> to God	7. <u>Turned</u> to Baal
8. Enjoyed God's <u>blessings</u>	8. Experienced constant <u>grief</u>
9. Oneness with God	9. At enmity with God (James 4:4)
10. <u>Empowered</u> by God	10. Weakened by the <u>flesh</u>
11. Would not <u>tolerate</u> sin	11. Condone sin and compromise
12. Great joy	12. Great <u>sorrow</u>
13. Obey the Word of God	13. Reject and <u>neglect</u> the Word
14. Follow <u>God's</u> man	14. Do right in <u>own</u> eyes
15. Joshua 24 – we will <u>serve</u> God	15. <u>Forsook</u> God and served Baal Judges 2:13 and 3:7

Every man did that which was right in his own eyes. “There is a way that seemeth right unto a man but the end thereof are the ways of death.”

What's right in man's eyes may not be right in God's eyes.

It was this attitude that led to failure after failure.

What we find in Judges is the same cycle we find in America and other nations of the world today.

We live in the "Me Generation."

Our nation's motto is "Do your own thing! Live For Now! If it feels good do it!"

These were the same attitudes in the times of the Judges.

These attitudes have caused our nation to become increasingly secular, socialistic, pagan, and anti-Christian.

The sins of the closet are now open and condoned.

Homosexuality, adultery, abortion, pornography are rampant.

We have cut ourselves off from our Biblical roots and the petals of our country are beginning to droop, wither, and fall like roses out of water.

The glory of our nation is turning to gloom! We are warned in Proverbs,

"Righteousness exalteth a nation: but sin is a reproach to any people"

Proverbs 14:3.

The Introduction of Judges

Let us stand for closing invitation.

Every eye closed.

No one looking around

No matter how dark the day, God can still work through people who will trust His Word, yield to His Spirit, and do His bidding.

Will you be among them?

Are we apathetic in our Christian life?

Are we apostatizing – moving from the moorings, principles, and convictions we once held?

Are we living in anarchy - chaos?

God and His Word bring order.

1st – Salvation

2nd – Obedience in water baptism

3rd – Holy living