

## Judges, Sermon #2

Judges 1

Last week we surveyed the Book of Judges.

Tonight, we enter our verse by verse study.

I have entitled tonight's message "A Good First Step"

Judges 1:1

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

Judges 1:1-4a

Let us pray

You may be seated

## A Good First Step

From Genesis – 12 sons of Jacob – most famous – Joseph

To the tribes God promised the land of milk and honey.

The boundary lines for the twelve tribes had been determined years before, but the people had not yet fully claimed their inheritance by dislodging the entrenched inhabitants of the land. These people were called Canaanites – vs. 1. They were descendants of a man called Canaan who just happened to be the son of Ham and Ham was the son of Noah. Hittites, Jebusites

The Bible says, “*Now Joshua was old and stricken in years; and the LORD said unto him, ‘Thou art old and stricken in years, and there remaineth yet very much land to be possessed’*” Joshua 13:1.

The people of Israel *owned* all the land, but they didn’t *possess* all of it; and therefore, they couldn’t *enjoy* all of it.

And Joshua had personally led the Israelites in the conquest of the promised land of Canaan. Not all cities of the Canaanites had been conquered, but a good portion of the work had been accomplished by the time of his death.

Each tribe was personally responsible for driving out the enemy that remained upon its inherited land.

But, they had no leader, for Joshua is dead and he had named no successor.

In this their first major crisis decision, they went to the Lord in prayer.

Prayer is the first essential for victory (vs. 1).

Right before he died, Joshua gave a very special challenge to all the Israelites.

He challenged them to rededicate their lives to God, to renew their covenant, their commitment to God.

The people accepted the challenge and made a public decision to obey and follow the LORD. They were still operating under this banner. So they sought the LORD in prayer, asking Him for guidance.

Which tribe was to take the initiative in leading the nations as a whole, especially in national matters?

This was the question the Israelites were now asking their King and Commander-in-Chief, God Himself.

Keep in mind that the Israelites had looked to God as their King and Commander-in-Chief.

This was true during the leadership of Joshua, and it was still true in these opening verses of Judges.

So, a drastic change has taken place in the nation because of the turnover in leadership.

Joshua, the man of God, was dead.

There is a serious danger of compromise or apostasy when strong spiritual leaders die and a new generation of leaders arise. This time is a dangerous time for a business, country and even the church.

Forsaking of principles, convictions. People who were reined in because of strong leadership, will now push when the leader is dead or gone.

You will find many times when great men move on in death or departure, it is difficult to find men of equal or greater ability.

For this reason we need God's help.

Generational transitions – How to have continuity – start with prayer.

We need direct contact with God to affirm spiritual continuity.

The children of Israel started out on the right foot in finding a leader.

They needed wisdom and direction and asked the Lord for His choice of leadership.

We too should follow their example.

We are promised wisdom if we will ask the Lord for it.

James 1:5, *“If any of you lack wisdom, let him ask of God, that giveth to all men liberally, and upbraideth not; and it shall be given him.”*

Israel’s work began in sincerity and earnest, but it ended in weakness.

Chapter one is the chapter of victory and defeat.

- Victory for the obedient
- Defeat for the disobedient

God’s people are about to find out that their greatest threat was not a military threat, but a spiritual one. The same is true of America.

We are decaying from within to the point where right is considered wrong and wrong is considered right.

The battlefield for this nation is not in the area of war, but in worship.

What we worship and value will dictate what our allegiances will be and how we will live.

The worship of our planet effects environmental and legislative decisions.

The worship of man effects our decisions about abortion, homosexuality, euthanasia, and drug usage as men demand their rights to do whatever they want in their own eyes.

God’s blessings have made America great because we were dependent upon Him.

But we are forsaking the Lord as a nation now and are reaping and will continue to reap the severe consequences of this decision (Judges 2:13,14).

Look back at vs. 2. They prayed and God Spoke – Answered

Let us be revived in our belief in God, our trust in Him and our prayer life.

Notice God's choice for leadership was the tribe of Judah – A very important tribe.

This is the tribe that the Messiah was to come through.

They asked the Lord and the Lord said who should go.

This reminds us that everyone is not to attempt everything; for Judah is to fight the enemy, and the other tribes are to remain at home.

God promises victory, not to every person who might volunteer to take the field, but to the tribe whom the Lord shall order to the battle.

Success is for those whom the Lord shall send.

With God's choice comes God's assurance – Vs. 2b

The Lord hath delivered the land into His hand. It was as good as done!

God's Word and assurance. He gave them His Word.

God gave them great assurance, promising them.

Judah believed God's promise, obeyed God's counsel, and even asked the people of the tribe of Simeon to go to battle with them.

Since Leah had given birth to Judah and Simeon, these tribes were blood brothers (Gen. 35:23).

So, Judah asks Simeon to come up and fight with him – vs. 3

- Why?

Judah may have asked Simeon for several reasons.

- Simeon lived with Judah. In Judah's boundaries you could find the Tribe of Simeon
- There is strength in unity.

One essential for victory is that of prayer but we see another essential in Vs. 4. That is obedience

A victorious life – does God promise us that? Is it possible? Then why do we see so much failure?

Obedience is essential.

Obedience to God is essential for living a victorious life. Obedience always brings victory to God's people.

When we obey God, He empowers us to conquer.

No trial, no temptation can ever defeat us, not if we are obedient to God.

Immediate obedience – gives us the victory.

Obeying God makes us more than conquerors through Christ who loved us and gave Himself for us.

God delivered the Canaanites and Perizzites into Judah's hands.

Ten thousand were defeated in Bezek.

This was a good first step!

Let us stand for closing invitation.

Are we a praying people?

Do we have a praying family?

Do we seek God's blessings apart from obedience?