

Union Chapel M.B. Church

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“Judges”

(Study Material from Through The Bible: A Complete Old & New Testament Bible Study)

- A. The book of Judges covers the history of Israel during their first 480 years in the Promised Land. Judges unfolds for us how God’s people are expected to live once they have entered Canaan – from both historical and spiritual perspectives.
- B. Israel was to be theocracy (leadership by God and communicated through the Levites) – obedient to the God who has chosen her – not subject to the dictates of man. Yet, God intermittently raised up leaders, or “judges,” to lead His people and to deliver them from their enemies, hence to book’s descriptive title, “Judges.”
- C. **Chapters 1 – 3** set the stage historically and give the basic perspective of the entire book.
- D. **Chapter 1** emphasizes the failure of Israel to drive out her enemies as the Lord had commanded, 1.19, 21, 28-31, 33.
- E. **Chapter 2** is filled with failure! God had told the Israelites to drive out the inhabitants of Canaan completely, or the Canaanites would be a snare and a trap. The Israelite’s failure to do this was *not* because a lack of ability, but a lack of obedience.
- F. The main body of the book of Judges (**3.7-16.31**) was written in “cycles” built around the judges.
- G. **Sin**
- Each cycle begins with, “then Israel did evil in the eyes of the Lord,” 3.7, 12; 4.1; 6.1; 10.6; 13.1.
 - These periods are characterized by *apostasy* – the worship of other gods and an association with the detestable practices of the Canaanite pagan religions. There is moral and spiritual decay – “everyone did as he saw fit (17.6; 21.25). Notice the contrast between doing what is right in the eyes of man and doing what is right *in the eyes of the Lord*. Israel is relying on a depraved conscience to tell them what is right. They are living as if there is no absolute standard of morality. How similar does this sound to the situation of ethics confronting us today?

H. Suffering

- In each cycle the Lord brings judgment on His sinful people by “giving,” “selling” or “delivering” them into the hands of their enemies, 3.8, 12;4.2; 6.1; 10.7; 13.1. God allows them to pay the consequences for their sin, just as He stated in the “curse and blessings” of His covenant with them (Deuteronomy 28). Where there is sin, there is always judgment, and this is no exception. But the purpose of these repeated oppressions is to turn the people back to God – and they do turn back!

I. Supplication

- Each time, after years of oppression, Israel finally cries out to God. And God proves himself to be patient, long-suffering and merciful. He never fails to bring them...

J. Salvation

- Judges 3.9, 15; 4.3-4; 6.6; 10.10.

K. **Chapters 17-21** turns the focus from the heroes to the immorality of the times. Israel’s religious life (Chapters 17-18), moral life (Chapter 19, which records the depths of Israel’s immorality), and national life (Chapter 21) are in a state of decay.

L. The final verse reaps the key theme: *“In those days Israel had no king; everyone did as he saw fit”* (21.25). God tries to teach them that, in order to survive in the Promised Land, they have to submit to God’s reign.

M. Throughout the NT, Jesus is commonly referred to as “The Lord Jesus Christ.” In the book the Revelation, the Lamb is seen seated on the throne and is described as the “King of kings and Lord of lords.” Just as Israel needed to submit to God as their King in the Promised Land, so we as Christians, must submit to the Lordship of Christ in our lives.

N. The book of Judges should prompt us to ask who is sitting on the throne of our hearts. Are we submitting to His rule or just doing what is right in our own eyes?

NOTES: