

Sermon, February 13, 2011,
“My Way – God’s Way”, Judges 3:7-11
Pastor Thomas P. Bellhy

The Books of History

- Joshua, **Judges**, Ruth, 1 & 2 Samuel, 1 & 2 Kings, 1 & 2 Chronicles, Ezra, Nehemiah, Esther
- About 1,000 years of history of the people of God, from 1400BC to 400BC.

From “What the Bible is All About”, H. Mears, p.90:

- There is “*anticipation*” in Deuteronomy
- We see “*realization*” in Joshua
- Then “*degradation*” in Judges

Overview of Judges

- Judge in Hebrew(שפוט *shaphat*) – can mean judge, but also one who defends or delivers; it is the later context that defines the book of saviors or deliverers of the people of Israel
- Likely written by Samuel around 1004BC and covers the time period of approximately 1360 to 1010 BC
- Downward spiral that begins with the tribes of Israel cooperating in conquest and ends with the tribes uniting against one of their own.
- **Scripture Summary of Judges:** “In those days there was no king in Israel; everyone did what was right in his own eyes.” *see (17:6; 18:1; 19:1; 21:25)*
- **Three main sections**
 - 1:1-3:7 Early period after Joshua’s death
 - 3:8-16:31 Period of the Judges
 - 17:1-21:25 Israel’s further decline
- **Major Judges**
 - Othniel, Ehud, Deborah, Gideon, Abimelek, Jephthah, Samson
- **Further decline:** Israel unites to battle one of their own tribes, Benjamin. The legacy of a united Israel left by Joshua has, over 350 years, turned into factional and regional tribal rivalries...making way for a king.

Major Themes of Judges

- The Israelites did not drive all the Canaanites from the land.
- The Israelites did not remember Moses and Joshua’s commands to serve only God and meditate on His commands.
- The Israelites “did evil in the sight of the LORD” (2:11; 3:7,12; 4:1; 6:1; 10:6; 13:1)
- God administers judgment as a result of Israel’s disobedience.
- Israel “cries out to the LORD” and repents from their sin (3:9,15; 4:3; 6:6,7; 7:20; 10:10)
- God remained faithful to His people and “raised up” decreasingly flawed heroes to rescue a decreasingly rebellious Israel from their enemies (2:16,18; 3:9; 3:15; 6:12; 13:5)
- God give the people “rest” (3:11,30; 5:31; 8:28)
 - Life in Israel during Judges followed a downward pattern of relapse, retribution, repentance, rescue, and rest.

The same “cyclical” pattern we find in Judges, we find in our own walk, is it my way or God’s way?.

Relapse: Judges 3:7

⁷ *The Israelites did what was evil in the sight of the LORD, forgetting the LORD their God, and worshiping the Baals and the Asherahs.*

- Israel forgot to love God and obey His commands. They deliberately set aside that which was right and true and gave themselves over to the world around them, the wrong and false.
- Paul reminds us in **1 Corinthians 6:9-11** ⁹ *Or do you not know that the unrighteous will not inherit the kingdom of God?* ¹¹ **Such were some of you;**
- There are times in life that we just don’t remember what you should, the truth of God. Our mind’s go blank, wander off...forget our Lord.
- When we ignore the presence of God in our lives we are not participants in His Kingdom.
- It is during these times of straying that God reminds us of His sovereignty and disciplines His children

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Retribution: Judges 3:8

⁸ Therefore the anger of the LORD was kindled against Israel, and he sold them into the hand of King Cushan-rishathaim of Aram-naharaim; and the Israelites served Cushan-rishathaim eight years.

- As we have learned from Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, Deuteronomy, Joshua...there are consequences to our behavior...God will not be mocked.
- The Father will discipline those He loves: **Hebrews 12:6-7** ⁶ *for those the Lord loves He disciplines...* ⁷ *It is for discipline that you endure; God deals with you as with sons; for what son is there whom his father does not discipline?*
- Suffering the consequences is not fun, but our character is built as we endure, are drawn back to the Lord, and cry out to Him.

Repentance: Judges 3:9

⁹ But when the Israelites cried out to the LORD

- Israel repented from their sins and cried out to God
- They knew they were wrong and wanted to seek the face of God again.
- As we suffer the consequences of sin a truly repentant heart will seek the face of God and cry out to Him, wanting to be obedient to a loving Father, wanting to be back in relationship with Him, wanting to be saved from the many forms of oppression in our lives.
- The savior we seek is Jesus Christ, whom God has sent to reconcile us to Him

Rescue: Judges 3:9-10

...the LORD raised up a deliverer for the Israelites, who delivered them, Othniel son of Kenaz, Caleb's younger brother. ¹⁰ The spirit of the LORD came upon him, and he judged Israel; he went out to war, and the LORD gave King Cushan-rishathaim of Aram into his hand; and his hand prevailed over Cushan-rishathaim.

- God sent a rescuer, a deliverer, a savior to answer the cries of Israel.
- Othniel waged war against those who oppressed God’s people.
- In the same way Jesus Christ wages war against the powers and principalities of this world to rescue us from sin and death.
- When we cry out to the Lord He will answer: **1 John 1:9** ⁹ *If we confess our sins, He is faithful and righteous to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.*
- As you repent and get back on the Lord’s side you are to join His army once again and wage war along with Him against the lies and deceitfulness of the world, the flesh, and the devil that would lead you astray and separate you from God. Then you will receive rest...

Rest: Judges 3:11

¹¹ So the land had rest forty years. Then Othniel son of Kenaz died.

- Israel turned back to the Lord, waged war along side of His deliverer, Othniel, and eventually received rest
- We are promised the same: **Philippians 4:6-7** ⁶ *Be anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God.* ⁷ *And the peace of God, which surpasses all comprehension, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.*
- Even in the midst of turmoil and trouble there is a peace that will settle upon your heart that you cannot explain
- Even though you still have enemies that surround you daily, when you have a restored and strong relationship with the Lord His peace will be in your heart and mind.

Conclusion:

- In Joshua we find that entering, battling for, and taking possession of the “Promised Land” can only be done through the LORD.
- In Judges we find out what happens when you forget to follow the LORD. The Promised Land of the kingdom of God will not be as bountiful for you as intended unless you know and have relationship with the King of this Kingdom and follow Him in love and obedience.
- The message of Judges...know your King, love your King, obey your King.