



ROUTE 66

“Judges: A Spiritual Vacuum”

Judges 2; 21:25

February 19, 2012 A.M. Service

Good Leadership is Crucial

The People Respond to God’s Blessing with Sin

- ✓ God Blesses
- ✓ God Warns
- ✓ But the People Sin

God’s People Respond to Discipline with Repentance

- ✓ God Disciplines
- ✓ The People Repent

God Temporarily Delivers the People Through Imperfect Judges

- ✓ God Delivers Through Imperfect Judges
- ✓ God Delivers Temporarily

The People Need What God Would Ultimately Give – A Perfect Savior

- ✓ The People Need a Savior
- ✓ God Will Give Them A Savior

LEARN THE WORD

- ✓ Continue Reading the Word of God every day – if are behind or just now joining us, then start where we are – DON’T just QUIT or not start at all!!
- ✓ Be a part of the Winter LifeTraks TONIGHT @ 5 p.m. that will help you get a better grasp on the Bible, how to study, understand, and apply it to your daily life better than ever before!

LOVE THE WORD

- ✓ Make Worship @ Bethsalem a Priority & not simply an option to hear the Word of God proclaimed!!
- ✓ Would you gain a greater understanding and love for our Heavenly Father as we hear the story of Joshua – His Greatness, His Goodness, and His Glory. May we love Him for all that He has done in us and for us. Name some of those specifically & thank Him for it!!

LIVE THE WORD

- ✓ Have you come to the place where you understand that without His deliverance in your life you are doomed? You can make that decision and be delivered today from your sin and self. You can become a follower by accepting this free gift of God; if you will by faith believe, and surrender your heart and life to Him! **Admit** to God you are a sinner, **Ask** for His forgiveness, **Believe** Jesus is God’s Son, **Confess** Him as Savior & **Commit** Your Life to Him as Lord for the rest of your life & being His fully devoted follower!
- ✓ Be willing to share what you learn with others that you come in contact with – don’t just get the Word in you, but also get it out of you!! (Especially your family and most importantly your children!!)
- ✓ *Find specific application this week to what you have heard and experienced* – Where are you in that cycle that we talked about this morning? Make the appropriate changes if to be in God’s Blessings. Remember, partial obedience = disobedience.

ROUTE 66

“Judges: The Spiritual Vacuum”

Judges 2; 17:6 ;21:25

February 19, 2012 AM Service

We pick up from last week where Israel has gone in and conquered much of the land that God had told them was theirs – the Promise Land. For the most part, things had gone well and they had obeyed and Joshua challenges them at the end of his life to be courageous and to choose for them and their families to serve the Lord. To live up to the standard found in Deuteronomy and to lead and teach their families and children. However, we see something entirely different happen. 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.

Usually you can read a book and in the first part you find the key that unlocks the door, but instead in Judges you find the key to the book at the end, the very last verse, [21:25](#) (Also in [17:6](#)). Let's look there and then to on [Chapter 2](#). Notice, didn't say they did what was wrong in their own eyes, but what was right in their eyes – the key – their eyes, not God's and they had rationalized and thought it was right when it was clearly wrong! What we find is a spiritual vacuum, there was no moral compass it would seem, and everyone was doing their own thing – spiritually, morally, relationally – whatever and it has been called spiritually speaking – the dark ages of Israel's history. Joshua rings with the shouts of victory and Judges rings with cries of defeat. Where was the difference? Let's look at [Chapter 2](#) now and see.

Good Leadership is Crucial

The nation of Israel quickly decayed after a new generation took over, a generation that knew neither Joshua nor Joshua's God. ["And the people served the Lord all the days of Joshua, and all the days of the elders that outlived Joshua, who had seen all the great works of the Lord, that He did for Israel... and there arose another generation after them, which knew not the Lord, nor yet the works which He had done for Israel" 2:7,10.](#) We see leadership faltering and as we all know – godly leadership is crucial to the

success of a people. We find here in Judges that there were some leaders, but not enough and their influence didn't last. We see here there were approximately 12 judges depending on how you count certain people who ruled in Israel. They didn't rule all of Israel, but instead they were judges, leaders who lead in battle and also decided some legal issues in their local areas – mostly their tribes. These leaders were varied but most of them were nobodies who God turned into somebody's to deliver his people.

The People Respond to God's Blessing with Sin

We see a pattern emerge that will happen over and over again from Chapter 2 and quite frankly that can be in our lives as well if we are not so careful to follow the Lord with our whole heart and life! **SEE IMAGE**

✓ **God Blesses 2:1**

God had richly blessed His people and had done everything that He had promised to do for them. Look back over the last several books we have studied together and see all that the Lord had done on their behalf and how He provided for them and lead them, and forgave them. The plagues and deliverance, the many miracles, Red Sea, Jordan River, battles they didn't even have to fight, and many, many more!

✓ **God Warns 2:2**

It wasn't just here that he warned them but all the way back to Exodus, God had warned them time and time again. Look @ [Deut. 7:1-6; 20:17a-18 & Joshua 23:6-13a](#) It was not like they had no idea, or it took them by surprise of how they were supposed to live their lives. God had spelled it out clearly just as He has for us today!

✓ **But the People Sin Vs 2b-3 Partial obedience = disobedience**

Things were going well in Chapter one, but in verse 19 a big change – “[but they were unable to drive the people from the plains...](#)” This becomes the theme – [1:21, 27, 29, 30, 31, 33](#)

They settled for less than what God was able to give to them!

They only partially obey God's commands – they do not wipe the Canaanites out. They don't do what they should – sins of omission, but then it quickly goes beyond that to sins of commission and they join in on with the Canaanites and their pagan religion and false gods [2:6-13 & 3:5-6](#) They forsook the Lord and His Law for something more convenient, more acceptable to them, what seemed right or better to

them. Boy does that sound familiar. Notice though – it wasn't that they forget God or put Him aside, it's just that they simply added Him to all the gods of the people around them – God just wasn't #1 which is the greatest sin of all and one that Satan loves. Sure, go to church, worship God occasionally but don't get too radical – just be a fan, that is enough, following is too much!

They had come to a place where they got complacent and started to tolerate the enemy and take taxes from them or put them into slavery, they compromised by beginning to mix with them and become incredibly careless and reckless and basically surrendered to them. One commentator referred to it as one long painful account of the Canaanization of Israel. Yes, the people were to enter and take the land, but the land ended up taking them.

Let's pause a minute and examine our own lives. We have been blessed with so much haven't we? Maybe this week you might take time to write down all the ways God had blessed you (better have a long pad!) And yet in spite of the fact of how He has blessed us and then because of His great love and mercy He has warned us for our own good – to stay away from sin and the ways of the world – we fall into the trap that they did. We become complacent, we compromise and become careless and give in and instead of changing our world, we become like it! This morning, where are those areas in your life and mine? Where have we settled down into our sin and patterns of compromise like Israel? We need to repent and confess of those today. Let's not take God's rich blessings and throw them back into His face by our sinning!

As a church – He has richly blessed us – may we not be prideful in that or think we did anything, but instead point people to the Lord – who did it all – no confidence in us or our abilities – but us relying on the Lord!

God's People Respond to Discipline with Repentance

We find here the Lord's great tender mercy and love on display and great patience with the people of Israel. Remember, God disciplines us because He loves us – not because He hates us! See [Hebrews 12:1-11](#)

✓ **God Disciplines 2:14-15**

We must be reminded that God is not indifferent to our sin – God hates sin for our sin put His only Son on the cross and caused great

devastation to His creation. God acts against their sin for the glory of His Name! God's desire here is to drive His people to repentance and He uses the pagan nations around them to do just that.

Arameans – 3:7-8; Moabites – 3:12-14; Canaanites 4:1-3; Midianites 6:1-6, Ammonites 10:6-9; & Philistines 13:1

Instead of enjoying the rest that God had promised them, they were in and out of slavery for hundreds of years! God uses Israel's enemies for His own ends. Those people were acting entirely in selfish human malice. God's sovereignty and mankind's choices all at work.

✓ **The People Repent**

After 8 years under the Arameans they cried out to the Lord (3:9a)

After 18 years under Moabites they cried out to the Lord (3:15a)

After 20 years under Canaanite rule, they cried out to the Lord (4:3b)

After 7 years of Midianite rule, they cried out to the Lord (6:6)

After 18 years under the Ammonites, they cried out to the Lord (10:10-16a) The pattern repeats itself over and over again – they were riding the roller coaster we sometimes call it of Christianity we choose.

Remember, sometimes God allows or brings trials into our lives to cause us to examine ourselves and our allegiances, and to teach us where we need to change – repent. Don't let trials in your life drive you away from the Lord, but instead draw us closer to Him! They teach us things we will not learn any other way and remind us what matters the most. **ILLUS: John Adams leads over to Benjamin Rush** – early on in the American Revolution while in Congress, Rush leaned over to Adams and whispered – do you think America will succeed in their struggle against Britain and he replied, “Yes, if we fear God and repent our sins” Christianity is not about affirming who we are as much as it is about our repenting of our sins. Every other major religion will explain everything you must do to make yourself right with God while Christianity alone explains we have already failed and will never measure up, we have rebelled against Him and only our only hope lies in acknowledging our sin, crying out for Him to forgive us – what we needed is a Savior.

God Temporarily Delivers the People Through Imperfect Judges

✓ **God Delivers Through Imperfect Judges** 2:16-19

The word judge means deliverers or saviors as well as judges. These people that God used were nobody's who were not perfect but in fact most had checkered past. We read about Gideon, Samson, Barak, and Debroah and Jephthah and how God uses them to deliver His people. Despite their faults and failures, their past and their seemingly obscurity, God uses them in miraculous ways. Remember that Gideon, Barak, Samson, and Jephthah are mentioned in the Hall of Faith in Hebrews 11.

✓ **God Delivers Temporarily** 2:19

God only delivers them partially and temporarily. Each of these judges were human, they lived and then they died. These judges were simply God's messengers and warriors to do their calling in their time. They were human just like you and me. Just like your preachers and church leaders, we are temporary, and have sin and struggles just like you do. My calling is not to be the one who gives the message, but instead only the one who delivers God's message to all of us. I am a waiter who brings a meal that someone else prepared! It reminds us that we live in a temporary world and that we are not home yet! Why, we live in an imperfect world – yet we are made for a perfect one – heaven!

The People Need What God Would Ultimately Give – A Perfect Savior

There was a sense of desperation among many living in Israel and there were many who kept on going about their lives as if nothing ever happened, doing their own thing and living their own way – still doing the God thing while doing all the things of the world as well!

✓ **The People Need a Savior**

They didn't need a someone to help them feel better about themselves, someone to talk to, but they needed someone to save them from the godless worship and tolerating the gods that surrounded them. Their beliefs had changed radically – it was a slow process over some 300 + years, but oh what a precipitous slope! Remember, what we believe about God affects you and everyone around you! When you change the religion of a people, you change the nation.

Quote: from James Montgomery Boice

Instead of changing the land around them, they became like them. We read in the final chapter of 17-21 where there was no repentance at all,

the sins gets worse and worse. These judges ultimately could not deliver them but only point the way to the Only One who could! Adam & Eve cast out of the Garden – God let them see they couldn't save themselves. God calls Abraham – his faith couldn't save his descendants – all the patriarchs died. God gave Israel His Law and priests – to save them through them? No, but to show them their sin and need for forgiveness that only sacrifice could bring. Then the judges – so they could save them – no, but they needed a great judge. What about the kings? – NO, but it would teach them about the soon coming King. And the prophets – to save them, no but to point the way to the Savior. That people would be so desperate and at the end of their rope and see their need for a Savior – that is the kind of world Jesus came into by the way – a world waiting and looking and desperate.

✓ **God Will Give Them A Savior**

The great news is not only did they need a Savior, but God would give them one! The judges could only deliver some of the people from some of the raiders some of the time, but God would send a deliverer who would offer salvation for all the people at any time for all time!

This Savior by the way will change us – from the inside out – we must see how desperately we need a Savior first! And that Savior will create in us a desire to be His follower and not simply His fans! He didn't send a Savior to gain a lot of fans who say wow, thanks I'll take that, but instead Followers who say I don't deserve that, but I know I need it and I will follow you my Savior who gave everything so what else could I give to you?

Have you found your need for a Savior? - You can do that today!

Have found Christ, but have you become like the Israelites and instead of changing your world, you have become like it? How are you different?

Need to repent and confess that today!

Are you passing down the truths of the Word of God – oh that we as a church family would be obedient to our calling as families and also collectively as a church family to pass down our Faith to them!!

And students and children – may you receive it and walk in it!

