

Title: *'As We See Fit'*: A study of the book of Judges- Part 1: Background & context

Key verse: Judges 21:25 (read)

Key text: Joshua 24:14-33 & Judges 2:6-23

Suppl. texts: Joshua 13:1, Joshua 1:1-5, 11:23, 13:1

Introduction: Tonight, we begin a new journey that piggybacks on our study of Ruth, as her story took place during the time of the Judges. We are way past the Exodus generation, post the main conquest of Canaan & entry to the Promised Land by God's people, Israel. The book of Judges is a fascinating book that teaches us that moral relativism is nothing new. It also shows how God's people are constantly pressured to conform to the culture around them. Another major theme is blessing & discipline. Obey God, & God blesses His people. Disobey God, & God will discipline His children. Let's start, not in the book of Judges, but in Joshua.

Outline: read Joshua 24:14-33 & Judges 2:6-23

1. **A quick decay**

- The title of the book is appropriate, considering God appoints unique leaders to save & rule His people time & again.
- The Hebrew word, 'judge,' can also mean: **leader**, **deliverer**, or **savior**.
- There are **twelve** major judges outlined in the book.
- In the book of Judges, eleven were **men**, & one **woman**.
- Some also include Eli and Samuel, making a total of **fourteen**, overall.
- The judges were usually not **national** leaders but more **tribal** chiefs who God used to defeat the national enemies of Israel.
- There are clear cycles of decay & their moral & spiritual decline:
 - **Disobedience**: the people didn't totally defeat their enemies as commanded.
 - **Idolatry**: because the pagan peoples weren't wiped out, false religions & deities remained & infiltrated God's people.
 - **Intermarriage**: this was often accomplished through intermarriage. As God's people assimilated into & with the surrounding people groups, the idolatry & worship of demonic 'gods' were incorporated.
 - **Temporary turn**: God's people experienced a short-lived remorse & return to the worship of Yahweh, only to return to their sinful ways. Not true repentance.
 - **No longevity**: when God raised a judge, the people would follow & obey the leader while they lived, but then go their own way after that leader's death.
- The total timeline encompasses around **350** years; 1398BC-1043BC.
- There is no author **identified** in this book. Many believe that **Samuel** was the author.

2. No more half measures

- Judges is a sad & tragic sequel to the book of Joshua.
- In Joshua, the people were obedient & God gave them victory in entering the Promised Land.
- In Judges, the people are disobedient & are often disciplined while being saved.
- Even worse, the people of God abandoned their God & worshipped false gods who weren't gods at all.
- They did this because they failed to trust Yahweh & completely wipe out the people groups God commanded because of fear.
- On numerous occasions, they partially destroyed the Canaanites but then settled down & became comfortable with enemies right outside their city gates.
- When the going got tough, they folded.
- **History repeated itself:**
 - Israel forsook God.
 - God allowed the defeat of His people.
 - Israel cries out for relief.
 - God saves & redeems.
 - Israel repeats its apathy & apostasy.

3. Owned, but not possessed

- One of the major issues in their spiritual decline is their lack of full obedience.
- God had fully given them all the Promised Land; all they had to do was to take it.
- They also stopped short of the boundaries God had promised them.
- **Joshua 1:1-5;** *"After the death of Moses, the servant of the LORD, the LORD said to Joshua son of Nun, Moses' aide: 'Moses My servant is dead. Now then, you and all these people, get ready to cross the Jordan River into the land I am about to give to them, to the Israelites. I will give you every place where you set your foot, as I promised Moses. Your territory will extend from the desert to Lebanon, and from the great river, the Euphrates, all the Hittite country, to the Great Sea on the west. No one will be able to stand up against you all the days of your life. As I was with Moses, I will be with you; I will never leave you nor forsake you."*
- **Joshua 11:23;** *"So Joshua took the entire land, just as the LORD had directed Moses, and he gave it as an inheritance to Israel according to their tribal divisions. Then the land had rest from war."*
- Joshua fully obeyed the Lord's command & was blessed accordingly.
- **Joshua 13:1;** *"When Joshua was old and well advanced in years, the LORD said to him, 'You are very old, and there are still very large areas of land to be taken over.'"*
- What follows is a list of areas & people groups that were not completely conquered.

- The Israelites failed to dislodge some people groups because they had chariots, advanced weaponry, or held the high ground. Ultimately, their failure to possess the land was because of their disobedience & lack of trust in God's ability over theirs.
- Their tribal inheritances were cut short because of this & these people groups became a snare to Israel time & again.
- Compromise is always callous in the end, & it robs you of God's intended blessing.

As We See Fit

A Study of the Book of Judges- Part 1

Tonight, we begin a new journey that piggybacks on our study of Ruth, as her story took place during the time of the Judges. We are way past the Exodus generation, post the main conquest of Canaan & entry to the Promised Land by God's people, Israel. The book of Judges is a fascinating book that teaches us that moral relativism is nothing new. It also shows how God's people are constantly pressured to conform to the culture around them. Another major theme is blessing & discipline. Obey God, & God blesses His people. Disobey God, & God will discipline His children. Let's start, not in the book of Judges, but in Joshua.

Let's read Joshua 24:14-33 & Judges 2:6-23.

1. A _____
 - The Hebrew word, 'judge,' can also mean: _____, _____, or _____.
 - There are _____ major judges outlined in the book.
 - In the book of Judges, eleven were _____, & one _____.
 - Some also include Eli and Samuel, making a total of _____, overall.
 - The judges were usually not _____ leaders but more _____ chiefs who God used to defeat the national enemies of Israel.
 - There are clear cycles of decay & their moral & spiritual decline:
 - _____: the people didn't totally defeat their enemies as commanded.
 - _____: because the pagan peoples weren't wiped out, false religions & deities remained & infiltrated God's people.
 - _____: this was often accomplished through intermarriage. As God's people assimilated into & with the surrounding people groups, the idolatry & worship of demonic 'gods' were incorporated.
 - _____: God's people experienced a short-lived remorse & return to the worship of Yahweh, only to return to their sinful ways. Not true repentance.
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2. No more *half* _____

- Judges is a _____ & _____ sequel to the book of Joshua.
- In Judges, the people are _____ & are often _____ while being saved.
- Even worse, the people of God abandoned their God & worshipped false gods who weren't gods at all.
- They did this because they _____ to _____ Yahweh & completely _____ the people groups God commanded because of fear.
- On numerous occasions, they _____ destroyed the Canaanites but then settled down & became _____ with enemies right outside their city gates.
- ***History repeated itself:***
 - Israel _____ God.
 - God _____ the defeat of His people.
 - Israel _____ out for _____.
 - God _____ & _____.
 - Israel _____ its _____ & _____.

3. _____, but not _____

- One of the major issues in their spiritual decline is their lack of _____ obedience.
- God had fully given them all the Promised Land; all they had to do was to _____ it.
- They also _____ short of the _____ God had promised them.
- Joshua _____ obeyed the Lord's command & was blessed accordingly.
- Their tribal inheritances were cut short because of this & these people groups became a _____ to Israel time & again.
- _____ is always _____ in the end, & it robs you of God's intended blessing.

Small group discussion questions & prayer:

1. We also live in a time of moral, civil, & political decay. Perhaps you believe that this decay is coming faster & faster in recent years. Discuss ways that you can stand out & lead during such turmoil in this world.

2. Discuss the clear cycles of moral & spiritual decay under the first point. Do you recognize any of these failures in your life? Share with the group your stories in these areas. Be willing to share how God brought you through them or if you're still struggling in such an area.

3. Have you been guilty of partial obedience or disobedience? Ask the Holy Spirit to reveal any such areas to you for repentance. Discuss the discipline of the Lord. Read Hebrews 12:6 & discuss.

4. Discuss the snare of comfort. What areas are most Christians troubled by in this area? Why do we always tend towards apathy & apostasy? How can we move towards full obedience to His commands?

5. Spend time with your group reviewing this week's prayer list. Pray over these needs. Perhaps split the prayers into parts, such as one person prays for those sick, another for cancer, etc.

Write down any additional prayer requests & needs:
