

Israel's Foreign Affairs

I. Slide1 Announce:

- A. Slide2 Children at Risk - Part of helping “children at risk” is by trying to prevent them from becoming “at risk”. Sunday the 20th, from 3-5pm. *Jennifer O’Farrel, the regional executive director of Big Brother Big Sisters of the Inland Empire*, will be sharing. She will share about their mentoring program. Come and hear what’s going on in our valley, the difference mentoring can make in the life of a child, and how you can be involved, whether or not you can actually be a mentor yourself.

II. Slide3 Intro: Israel's Foreign Affairs

- A. Theologically, the book of Judges shows *the need for a savior*.
1. Without **divine** intervention, the people are **hopelessly lost**.
 2. The Decisions of individuals affect other people and society at large, all of which stand in need of God’s redemption. Shepherd’s Notes, pg. 59.
- B. *Cornelius Plantinga Jr.* beautifully described, No matter what we sow, the law of returns applies. Good or evil, Love or hate, justice or tyranny, grapes or thorns, a gracious complement or a peevish this complaint - whatever we invest, we tend to get it back with interest. Lovers are loved; haters, hated. Forgivers usually get forgiven; those who live by the sword die by the sword. ‘God is not mocked, for you reap whatever you sow.’”¹
- C. Slide4 Labeling it a “*bird’s eye view of the cycle of men and nations,*” one historian has summarized history in this way:
1. from bondage to spiritual faith.
 2. from spiritual faith to great courage.
 3. from courage to liberty.
 4. from liberty to abundance.
 5. from abundance to selfishness.
 6. from selfishness to complacency.
 7. from complacency to apathy.
 8. from apathy to dependency.
 9. from dependency back to bondage.
 - a) At what level is our country? The church today? Our church? Yourself?

¹ Not The Way It’s Supposed To Be, p.68.

III. Slide5 **RECAP** (Ch.2:1-6)

A. Read vs.1,2

IV. Slide6 **OLD GENERATION** (Ch.2:7-10) *Death of Joshua*

- A. They were not even familiar with God's reputation. Far from **knowing Him**, in worship & love & obedience, they did not even know **about Him**.
- B. (10) Importance of passing these truths to the next Gen. Ps.78:4,6 **We will not hide them from their children, Telling to the generation to come the praises of the Lord, And His strength and His wonderful works that He has done. 6 That the generation to come might know them, The children who would be born, That they may arise and declare them to their children.**

V. Slide7 **NEW GENERATION** (Ch.2:11-15) *Israel's Unfaithfulness*

- A. (11) Religious nature, like any other nature *abhors a vacuum*, as Aristotle postulated.
- Those who did not actively **know the Lord** must quite as actively serve & worship someone else. Barclay
- B. (13) **Baal** (m) & **Ashtoreths** (fem)
- Baal**: lord, **sun god**. chief of the male deity. **Ashtoreth**: **moon goddess**. Chief fem deity.
 - Slide8** *Each Baal had a wife which was a colorless reflection of himself.*²

VI. Slide9 **BOOK OVERVIEW** (Ch.2:16-23)

- A. (18) **The Lord was moved to pity by their groaning** - a rare word, also found at the beginning of Exodus (6:15). *And I have also heard the **groaning** of the children of Israel whom the Egyptians keep in bondage, and I have remembered My covenant.*
- Only once in NT** (once in Acts but was quoting Exodus), **it was used by Jesus standing at Laz tomb, Then Jesus, again **groaning** in Himself, came to the tomb.** Jn.11:38
 - And used of Jesus words in Ps.22:1 My God, My God, why have You forsaken Me? Why are You so far from helping Me, And from the words of My groaning?**
- B. Rev.3:1-3nlt **I know all the things you do, and that you have a reputation for being alive - but you are dead. Wake up! Strengthen what little remains, for even what is left is almost dead. I find that your actions do not meet the requirements of my God. Go back to what you heard and believed at first; hold to it firmly. Repent and turn to me again.**

² Easton's Bible Dictionary, Baal.

VII. Slide 10 **NATIONS REMAIN (Ch.3:1-6)**

- A. People do as they please. God has provided guidance for His people, **but** the natural tendency is to ignore **His** ways for **our own**.

VIII. Slide 11 **OTHNIEL (Ch.3:7-11) 1st Judge**

- A. **Cushan's** *doubled-barreled* name...**Rishathaim** = twice wicked. [*i.e. twice-bad Chushan*] cush/Ethiopia
- B. Othniel was from Caleb's family & grew up under his famous uncle.
1. He showed faith & courage...**but** his strength didn't come from his family **nor** from his own capabilities...it was **the Spirit of the the Lord coming upon him**.
 2. **Explain**, OT saints were not **permanently** indwelt by the HS. He **temporarily** came upon them.
- C. Othniel was the only judge to not fight an immediate neighbor. He fought the mighty empire of the East. **Also**, most judges only activate 1 or a few tribes, Othniel appears to have delivered all Israel. No other judge met this standard.
- D. **Slide 12a (9,10) Timing is everything - God is continually preparing His heroes, & when the opportunity is right, He puts them into position in an instant.**³
1. He works so fast the world wonders where they came from.
 2. Let the Holy Spirit prepare you, through the discipline of life. And when the finishing touch has been made on the sculpture, it will be easy for God to put you on display in the perfect place.
 3. It's allowing God to work through **our present trials &** in **the little victories**.
 - a) **Slide 12b Human strength & human greatness**
*Spring not from life's sunny side,
Heroes must be more than driftwood
Floating on a waveless tide.*
 - b) Every **highway of life** descends into the valley now & then. And everyone must go through the **tunnel of tribulation** before they can travel on the **high road of triumph**.

IX. Slide 13 **EHUD (Ch.3:12-30) a left-handed assassin from a rt handed tribe**

- A. The story of **Ehud** is entertaining & full of intrigue.
1. The king of Moab came across the Jordan River & took Jericho in the middle of the **country**. Very strategic in controlling the Israelite religious center (Gilgal) & the crucial highway in & out of the hill country.

³ Streams in The Desert, pg.174, April 28th.

2. Eglon was retracing Joshua's footsteps in order to take claim of Israel's Promised Land for Moab. [tribe of Benjamin, being most effected]
- B. Slide14 Our left-handed hero is from the tribe of Benjamin (i.e. son of my right hand).
1. What an *improbable assailant* for the Lord to use. Yet, improbable characters are almost the norm in the bible.
 2. God has a wonderful sense of humor about those whom He uses & chooses.
 3. Left-handedness - about 10% of our world pop. Aug13 Int Left-handed Day. Kangaroos & other marsupials are left-hand dominant. Also called sinister.
 - a) "If the *right* side of the brain controls the *left* side of the body, only *lefties* are in their *right* mind."
 - b) So, in many societies, left-handed people have suffered great disadvantages. Until recently in China, forced to write right-handed because of stroke order.
 - c) However, for God, Ehud's *handicap* was a positive advantage: it gave him the benefit of surprise, like a left-handed tennis player.
- C. Look what God did **against** Israel vs.8 & 12. Look what God did **for** Israel vs.9 & 15.
1. What caused Him to do the **first**? What caused Him to do the **2nd**?
 2. Read God's principle in dealing with His kids Ps.103:8-14.
- D. (13,14) Sad/ironic - that Jericho, the 1st city conquered by the Israelites was back under Canaanite control.
- E. (22) Irony with Eglon...his name means calf, so the author foreshadows his fate, portraying him as *a fattened calf ready for slaughter*.
1. Shouldn't have rebuilt Jericho, maybe didn't know about the curse? (Deut.13:12-16, Josh6:26)

X. Slide15 SHAMGAR (Ch.3:31) ShamWow

- A. Ox goad = a long shaft w/a sharp prod on one end to direct the oxen on a plow.
- B. Well, Ehud & Shamgar willingness to be used by God, provided Israel the means by which to live in peace for 2 generations. But slowly the *noose* of sin & punishment begin to tighten.