

## JUDGES

### 1. Judges is important in the biblical story.

#### a. Joshua 23-24 sets up the book of Judges.

##### (1) Will Israel cling to Yahweh or mix with the Canaanites?

(a) **Jos 23:4-8** 4 Behold, I [Joshua] have allotted to you [Israel] as an inheritance for your tribes those nations that remain, along with all the nations that I have already cut off, from the Jordan to the Great Sea in the west. 5 Yahweh your God will push them back before you and drive them out of your sight. And you shall possess their land, just as Yahweh your God promised you. 6 Therefore, be very strong to keep and to do all that is written in the Book of the Law of Moses, turning aside from it neither to the right hand nor to the left, 7 that you may not mix with these nations remaining among you or make mention of the names of their gods, swear by them, serve them, or bow down to them. 8 But you shall cling to Yahweh your God just as you have done to this day. ... 11 Be very careful, therefore, to love Yahweh your God. 12 For if you turn back and cling to the remnant of these nations remaining among you and make marriages with them, so that you associate with them and they with you, 13 know for certain that Yahweh your God will no longer drive out these nations before you, but they shall be a snare and a trap for you, a whip on your sides and thorns in your eyes, until you perish from off this good ground that Yahweh your God has given you. ... 15 But just as all the good things that Yahweh your God promised concerning you have been fulfilled for you, so Yahweh will bring upon you all the evil things until he has destroyed you from off this good land that Yahweh your God has given you, 16 if you transgress the covenant of Yahweh your God, which he commanded you, and go, serve other gods, and bow down to them. Then the anger of Yahweh will be kindled against you, and you shall perish quickly from off the good land that he has given to you.

##### (b) Will we cling to God or mix with the world?

##### (2) Will Israel follow through on her promise to serve God?

(a) **Jos 24** 1 Joshua gathered all the tribes of Israel to Shechem and summoned the elders, the heads, the judges, and the officers of Israel. And they presented themselves before God. 2 And Joshua said to all the people, Thus says Yahweh, the God of Israel, Long ago, your fathers lived beyond the Euphrates—Terah, the father of Abraham and of Nahor—and they served other gods. 3 Then I took your father Abraham from beyond the River, led him through all the land of Canaan, and made his offspring many. I gave him Isaac. 4 And to Isaac I gave Jacob and Esau. And I gave Esau the hill country of Seir to possess, but Jacob and his children went down to Egypt. 5 And I sent Moses and Aaron, and I plagued Egypt with what I did in the midst of it, and afterward I brought you out. ... 11 And you went over the Jordan and came to Jericho, and the leaders of Jericho fought against you, and also the Amorites, the Perizzites, the Canaanites, the Hittites, the Girgashites, the Hivites, and the Jebusites. And I gave them into your hand. ... 13 I gave you a land on which you had not laboured and cities that you had not built, and you dwell in them.

You eat the fruit of vineyards and olive orchards that you did not plant. 14 Now therefore fear Yahweh and serve him in sincerity and in faithfulness. Put away the gods that your fathers served beyond the River and in Egypt, and serve Yahweh. 15 And if it is evil in your eyes to serve Yahweh, choose this day whom you will serve, whether the gods your fathers served in the region beyond the River, or the gods of the Amorites in whose land you dwell. But as for me and my house, we will serve Yahweh. 16 Then the people answered, Far be it from us that we should forsake Yahweh to serve other gods, 17 for it is Yahweh our God who brought us and our fathers up from the land of Egypt, out of the house of slavery, and who did those great signs in our sight and preserved us in all the way that we went and among all the peoples through whom we passed. 18 And Yahweh drove out before us all the peoples, the Amorites who lived in the land. Therefore we also will serve Yahweh, for he is our God. 19 But Joshua said to the people, You are not able to serve Yahweh, for he is a holy God. He is a jealous God. He will not forgive your transgressions or your sins. 20 If you forsake Yahweh and serve foreign gods, then he will turn, do you harm, and consume you, after having done you good. 21 And the people said to Joshua, No, but we will serve Yahweh. 22 Then Joshua said to the people, You are witnesses against yourselves that you have chosen Yahweh, to serve him. And they said, We are witnesses. 23 He said, Then put away the foreign gods that are among you, and incline your heart to Yahweh, the God of Israel. 24 And the people said to Joshua, Yahweh our God we will serve, and his voice we will obey. 25 So Joshua made a covenant with the people that day, and put in place statutes and rules for them at Shechem. 26 And Joshua wrote these words in the Book of the Law of God. And he took a large stone and set it up there under the terebinth that was by the sanctuary of Yahweh. 27 And Joshua said to all the people, Behold, this stone shall be a witness against us, for it has heard all the words of Yahweh that he spoke to us. Therefore it shall be a witness against you, lest you deal falsely with your God. 28 So Joshua sent the people away, every man to his inheritance. 29 After these things Joshua the son of Nun, the servant of Yahweh, died, being 110 years old. 30 And they buried him in his own inheritance at Timnath-serah, which is in the hill country of Ephraim, north of the mountain of Gaash. 31 Israel served Yahweh all the days of Joshua, and all the days of the elders who outlived Joshua and had known all the work that Yahweh did for Israel.

- (b) Will we follow through on our promise to serve God?
- b. Will Israel drive out the Canaanites and fulfil her promises to Yahweh?
- (1) At Joshua's death, Israel is to finish conquering the land of Canaan.
- (a) **Jdg 1:1** 1 After the death of Joshua, the people of Israel inquired of Yahweh, Who shall go up first for us against the Canaanites, to fight against them?
- (2) Israel fails to drive out the Canaanites and begins intermarrying with them.
- (a) **Jdg 2:20-22** 20 The anger of Yahweh was kindled against Israel, and he said, Because this people have transgressed my covenant that I commanded their fathers and have not obeyed my voice, 21 I will no longer drive out before them any of the nations that Joshua left when he died, 22 in order to test Israel

by them, whether they will take care to walk in the way of Yahweh as their fathers did, or not.

(3) The Canaanites become a test for Israel.

(a) **Jdg 3:1-2** 1 Now these are the nations that Yahweh left, to test Israel by them, that is, all in Israel who had not experienced all the wars in Canaan. 2 It was only in order that the generations of the people of Israel might know war, to teach war to those who had not known it before.

(b) The world is a test for us. Are you passing the test? Are you learning war?

c. Judges sets up Ruth and 1 Samuel.

(1) Ruth.

(a) **Ru 1:1** 1 In the days when the judges ruled there was a famine in the land, and a man of Bethlehem in Judah went to sojourn in the country of Moab....

(b) **Ru 4:17** 17 The women of the neighbourhood gave him a name, saying, A son has been born to Naomi. They named him Obed. He was the father of Jesse, the father of David.

(2) 1 Samuel.

(a) **1 Sa 3:20-21** 20 All Israel from Dan to Beersheba knew that Samuel was established as a prophet of Yahweh. 21 And Yahweh appeared again at Shiloh, for Yahweh revealed himself to Samuel at Shiloh by the word of Yahweh.

(b) **1 Sa 7:4** 4 The people of Israel put away the Baals and the Ashtaroth, and they served Yahweh only.

(c) **1 Sa 8:1-5** 1 When Samuel became old, he made his sons judges over Israel. 2 The name of his firstborn son was Joel, and the name of his second, Abijah; they were judges in Beersheba. 3 Yet his sons did not walk in his ways but turned aside after gain. They took bribes and perverted justice. 4 Then all the elders of Israel gathered together and came to Samuel at Ramah 5 and said to him, Behold, you are old and your sons do not walk in your ways. Now appoint for us a king to judge us like all the nations.

(d) **1 Sa 10:1** 1 Then Samuel took a flask of oil and poured it on [Saul's] head, kissed him, and said, Has not Yahweh anointed you to be prince over his people Israel? And you shall reign over the people of Yahweh, and you will save them from the hand of their surrounding enemies. And this shall be the sign to you that Yahweh has anointed you to be prince over his inheritance.

(e) **1 Sa 15:23** 23 Rebellion is as the sin of divination, and presumption is as iniquity and idolatry. Because you have rejected the word of Yahweh, he has also rejected you from being king.

(f) **1 Sa 16:1** 1 Yahweh said to Samuel, How long will you grieve over Saul, because I have rejected him from being king over Israel? Fill your horn with oil, and go. I will send you to Jesse the Bethlehemite, for I have provided for myself a king among his sons.

d. Judges was likely written by Samuel in support of David.

## 2. Israel was to drive out the Canaanites. So, in a sense, must we.

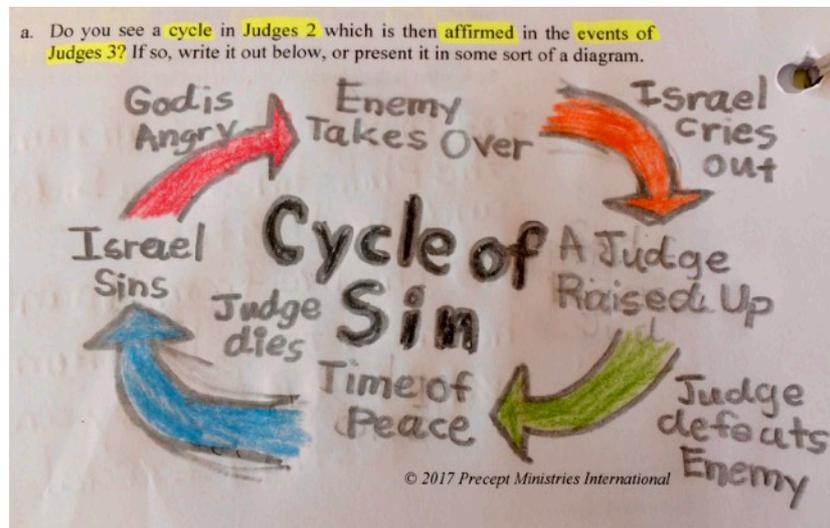
a. At Joshua's death, Israel's number one job was to finish driving out the Canaanites.

(1) **Jdg 1:1** 1 After the death of Joshua, the people of Israel inquired of Yahweh, Who shall go up first for us against the Canaanites, to fight against them?

- b. The twelve tribes differed in their ability to carry out this task.
    - (1) Judges 1 is a catalog of success and failure that sets the stage for the rest of the book.
    - (2) There are more problems with idolatry in northern Israel because that's where most of the Canaanites remained.
    - (3) We differ in our ability to carry out the task of "driving out the Canaanites."
    - (4) Our "enemies" are idolatrous people and things that pull us away from consistent worship of the one, true God.
  - c. Like Israel separating from the Canaanites, the Church is to separate from the world.
    - (1) **2 Co 6:14-18** 14 Do not be unequally yoked with unbelievers. For what partnership has righteousness with lawlessness? Or what fellowship has light with darkness? 15 What accord has Messiah with Belial? Or what portion does a believer share with an unbeliever? 16 What agreement has the temple of God with idols? For we are the temple of the living God. As God said, I will make my dwelling among them and walk among them, and I will be their God, and they shall be my people. 17 Therefore go out from their midst, be separate from them, says the Lord, and touch no unclean thing. Then I will welcome you, 18 and I will be a father to you, and you shall be sons and daughters to me, says the Lord Almighty.
  - d. What enemies have you driven out? What enemies remain? What Canaanites continue to live in your inheritance? Why haven't you driven them out?
- 3. When a nation does what is right in its own eyes, decline is inevitable.**
- a. Each Israelite did what was right in his own eyes.
    - (1) **Jdg 17:6** 6 In those days there was no king in Israel. Everyone did what was right in his own eyes.
    - (2) **Jdg 21:25** 25 In those days there was no king in Israel. Everyone did what was right in his own eyes.
  - b. Israel's individualism resulted in:
    - (1) Idolatry.
    - (2) Invasion.
    - (3) Injustice.
    - (4) Insurrection.
  - c. Nations and communities go into a downward spiral when they forget God.
    - (1) The individualism in Judges compares to the individual we see in the West today.
    - (2) Western civilisation very much resembles Israel in the book of Judges.
  - d. Will we do what is right in our own eyes, or what is right in God's eyes?
- 4. Sin is a downward spiral.**
- a. **Jdg 2:11-19** 11 The Israelites did evil before Yahweh by worshiping the Baals. 12 They abandoned Yahweh, the God of their ancestors, who brought them out of the land of Egypt. They followed other gods—the gods of the nations who lived around them. They worshiped them and made Yahweh angry. 13 They abandoned Yahweh and worshiped Baal and the Ashtars. 14 Yahweh was furious with Israel and handed them over to robbers who plundered them. He turned them over to their enemies who lived around them. They could not withstand their enemies' attacks. 15 Whenever

they went out to fight, Yahweh did them harm, just as he had warned and solemnly vowed he would do. They suffered greatly. 16 Yahweh raised up leaders who delivered them from these robbers. 17 But they did not obey their leaders. Instead they prostituted themselves to other gods and worshiped them. They quickly turned aside from the path their ancestors had walked. Their ancestors had obeyed Yahweh's commands, but they did not. 18 When Yahweh raised up leaders for them, Yahweh was with each leader and delivered the people from their enemies while the leader remained alive. Yahweh felt sorry for them when they cried out in agony because of what their harsh oppressors did to them. 19 When a leader died, the next generation would again act more wickedly than the previous one. They would follow after other gods, worshiping them and bowing down to them. They did not give up their practices or their stubborn ways.

- b. Idolatry leads to evil acts that would have been thought unthinkable before.  
(1) In our day abortion, euthanasia, and the legalisation of marijuana are celebrated. One hundred years ago, they would have been unthinkable.



## 5. Corporate evil and idolatry is the general trend of fallen humanity.

- a. Our promise that we will never serve other gods is absolutely foolish.  
(1) **Jos 24:16** 16 The people [of Israel] answered, Far be it from us that we should forsake Yahweh to serve other gods....
- b. **Jdg 2:11** 11 The Israelites did evil before Yahweh by worshiping the Baals.
- c. **Jdg 3:7** 7 The Israelites did evil in Yahweh's sight. They forgot Yahweh their God and worshiped the Baals and the Asherahs.
- d. **Jdg 3:12** 12 The Israelites again did evil in Yahweh's sight. Yahweh gave King Eglon of Moab control over Israel because they had done evil in Yahweh's sight.
- e. **Jdg 4:1** 1 The Israelites again did evil in Yahweh's sight after Ehud's death.
- f. **Jdg 6:1** 1 The Israelites did evil in Yahweh's sight, so Yahweh turned them over to Midian for seven years.
- g. **Jdg 10:6** 6 The Israelites again did evil in Yahweh's sight. They worshiped the Baals and the Ashtars, as well as the gods of Syria, Sidon, Moab, the Ammonites, and the Philistines. They abandoned Yahweh and did not worship him.

- h. **Jdg 13:1** 1 The Israelites again did evil in Yahweh's sight, so Yahweh handed them over to the Philistines for forty years.

**6. To pass on the Christian faith to the next generation is very difficult.**

- a. **Jos 24:31** 31 Israel served Yahweh all the days of Joshua, and all the days of the elders who outlived Joshua and had known all the work that Yahweh did for Israel.
- b. **Jdg 2:10-11** 10 All that generation also were gathered to their fathers. And there arose another generation after them who did not know Yahweh or the work that he had done for Israel. 11 And the people of Israel did what was evil in the sight of Yahweh and served the Baals.
- c. **Jdg 2:19** 19 Whenever the judge died, [Israel] turned back and were more corrupt than their fathers, going after other gods, serving them and bowing down to them. They did not drop any of their practices or their stubborn ways.

**7. When we cry out when being disciplined, God hears.**

**8. God raises up leaders to restore nations, but that restoration is only temporary.**

- a. Leadership matters.
- b. Without God, the general trend of nations is downward, like the law of entropy.
- c. Israel needs unity, cleansing, and a king like David.
  - (1) **Eze 37:22-25** 22 I [Yahweh] will make [Israel] one nation in the land, on the mountains of Israel. And one king shall be king over them all, and they shall be no longer two nations and no longer divided into two kingdoms. 23 They shall not defile themselves anymore with their idols and their detestable things, or with any of their transgressions. But I will save them from all the backslidings in which they have sinned and will cleanse them. And they shall be my people, and I will be their God. 24 My servant David shall be king over them, and they shall all have one shepherd. They shall walk in my rules and be careful to obey my statutes. 25 They shall dwell in the land that I gave to my servant Jacob, where your fathers lived. They, their children, and their children's children shall dwell there forever, and David my servant shall be their prince forever.

**9. Israel needs a new heart and the empowerment of the Holy Spirit. So do we.**

- a. Israel's promise to serve God is quickly broken. She lacks the heart she needs.
- b. Under the New Covenant, Israel will get a new heart and Spirit empowerment.
- c. To love and serve God, we need a new heart and the empowerment of the Spirit.

**10. Israel needs a king, and so do we.**

- a. A man after God's own heart, like David, is needed.
  - (1) **1 Sa 13:14** 14 Now your [Saul's] kingdom shall not continue. Yahweh has sought out a man after his own heart, and Yahweh has commanded him to be prince over his people, because you have not kept what Yahweh commanded you.
- b. Jesus is the king we need.
  - (1) **Ge 3:16** 16 Your desire shall be for your man, and he shall rule over you.
- c. Jesus is the king who won't die.

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*Notes*