

UNDERSTANDING THE BOOK OF JUDGES

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Judges 2:1-12

1. The book of Judges is not an easy read, but there are several key phrases that help us understand its content.

- a. "The sons of Israel did evil in the sight of the Lord."
- b. "In those days there was no king in Israel."
- c. "Everyone did what was right in his own eyes."

2. Anarchy reigned except during certain periods when God raised up judges to deliver His people and to give some direction to their lives.

3. There is a sad reality that has manifested itself throughout human history; God's intentions always suffer at the hands of men.

4. That reality is clearly revealed in our key passage.

- a. God, through Moses, had clearly communicated His intention. Deut 6:4-9
"Hear, O Israel! The Lord is our God, the Lord is one! 5 "You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your might. 6 "These words, which I am commanding you today, shall be on your heart. 7 "**You shall teach them diligently to your sons** and shall talk of them when you sit in your house and when you walk by the way and when you lie down and when you rise up. 8 "You shall bind them as a sign on your hand and they shall be as frontals on your forehead. 9 "You shall write them on the doorposts of your house and on your gates."
- b. In spite of God's intentions Israel failed miserably related to the above passage.

Judg 2:6-10

When Joshua had dismissed the people, the sons of Israel went each to his inheritance to possess the land. 7 The people served the Lord all the days of Joshua, and all the days of the elders who survived Joshua, who had seen all the great work of the Lord which He had done for Israel. 8 Then Joshua the son of Nun, the servant of the Lord, died at the age of one hundred and ten. 9 And they buried him in the territory of his inheritance in Timnath-heres, in the hill country of Ephraim, north of Mount Gaash. 10 **All that generation also were gathered to their fathers; and there arose another generation after them who did not know the Lord, nor yet the work which He had done for Israel.**

5. Note the inevitable progression that took place.

I. The sons of Israel did evil in the sight of the Lord.

A. The problem was systemic, and manifested itself at all levels of society.

NOTE: This phrase is repeated seven times in the book of Judges.

B. What is right in man's sight and what is right in God's sight are two different things.

1. Prov 12:15

The way of a fool is right in his own eyes, but a wise man is he who listens to counsel.

2. Prov 21:2

Every man's way is right in his own eyes, but the Lord weighs the hearts.

3. Prov 14:12-13

There is a way which seems right to a man, but its end is the way of death.

13 Even in laughter the heart may be in pain, and the end of joy may be grief.

4. Jer 21:8-9

"You shall also say to this people, 'Thus says the Lord, "Behold, I set before you the way of life and the way of death.'"

C. The Apostle Paul set forth what should be the goal of every believer. 2 Cor 5:6-10
2 Cor 5:6-10

Therefore, being always of good courage, and knowing that while we are at home in the body we are absent from the Lord — 7 for we walk by faith, not by sight — 8 we are of good courage, I say, and prefer rather to be absent from the body and to be at home with the Lord. 9 **Therefore we also have as our ambition, whether at home or absent, to be pleasing to Him.** 10 For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, so that each one may be recompensed for his deeds in the body, according to what he has done, whether good or bad.

II. In those days there was no king in Israel. 17:6

A. Moses was dead, Joshua had died, their generation had all passed away, and instead of one man to lead them there was a series of individuals who God raised up at critical times.

B. The last judge was Samuel who was not only the last but also the greatest of the judges.

C. During his ministry he anointed Saul to be Israel's first king, and at a later date he anointed David to replace Saul.

NOTE: The people had requested a king because they wanted to be like the nations around them, and God's response to their request indicated their real desire.

I Samuel 8:7-9

The Lord said to Samuel, "**Listen to the voice of the people in regard to all that they say to you, for they have not rejected you, but they have rejected Me from being king over them.** 8 "Like all the deeds which they have done since the day that I brought them up from Egypt even to this day — in that they have forsaken Me and served other gods — so they are doing to you also. 9 "Now then, listen to their voice; however, you shall solemnly warn them and tell them of the procedure of the king who will reign over them."

D. Most people will accept worldly leaders, but they reject God as their ultimate authority.

E. We see this truth illustrated in Psalm 2:1-6.

Why are the nations in an uproar and **the peoples** devising a vain thing? 2 **The kings** of the earth take their stand and **the rulers** take counsel together against the Lord and against His Anointed, saying, 3 "Let us tear their fetters apart and cast away their cords from us!" 4 He who sits in the heavens laughs, the Lord scoffs at them. 5 Then He will speak to them in His anger and terrify them in His fury, saying, 6 "**But as for Me, I have installed My King upon Zion, My holy mountain.**"

NOTE: However, in spite of man's rebellion God has installed His King, the Lord Jesus Christ, upon His throne, and the time will soon come when every knee will bow and every tongue will confess Jesus Christ as Lord to the glory of God.

F. Have you installed Jesus Christ as King on the throne of your life?

III. Everyone did what was right in his own eyes. 17:6

A. Back in Deuteronomy 12:8-9 we read the following words, "You shall not do at all what we are doing here today, every man doing whatever is right in his own eyes; 9 for you have not as yet come to the resting place and the inheritance which the Lord your God is giving you."

B. The point Moses was making was that certain aspects of the Law could not be fully implemented until the people had possessed the Promised Land.

C. Once the land was in their possession the people were to honor God fully by doing what was right in His sight.

D. Every genuine follower of Jesus Christ has come to see Him as God's anointed Savior and Lord.

E. It is one thing to see and confess Jesus Christ as Lord, while it is another thing to live out that reality.

F. **The church is in the condition it is because the majority of professed believers live the way they want to live rather than the way God wants them to live.**

APPLICATION

1. As stated earlier, God's intentions always suffer at the hands of men.

2. The Gospel of Jesus Christ was intended to rescue us from the Domain of Darkness, and transfer us to the Kingdom of God's Beloved Son, in whom we have redemption, the forgiveness of sins. Colossians 1:13-14

3. Regardless of what is going on in our lives and in our world we who are genuine Christians have a King, and His exalted name is the Lord Jesus Christ.

4. I think we ought to start living accordingly.