

JUDGES

I hope that you are as excited as I am about studying this book. There is much to learn about the world around us, and our own relationship to God through His son Jesus, in this book from the Old Testament.

Judges picks up where the book of Joshua ends, with the death of Joshua and Israel's failure to follow the commandment of God to continue the taking and occupation of the promised land. I also explained that we currently use the term "judge" differently than the Hebrews did during the time of this book. Seen as an administrator, judge, leader, and deliverer; the "Judge" was someone used by God to restore Israel's relationship with Him.

We see in the book of Judges a continuing cycle that worsens as time moves on. With the death of each deliverer, or Judge, Israel follows after other gods. God then gives them over to the hands of their oppressors, Israel cries out for deliverance, and God sends a deliverer – a Judge. At the leading of this new Judge, Israel obeys God while the deliverer he sent is alive, but then sinks back into disobedience, and the cycle begins again.

Some of the lessons that we will discover during our study are:

- Failure to keep your walk with God strong leads to chaos;
- In spite of our failures God sends a deliverer;
- God often uses the weak to confound the strong;
- No weapon of any kind can destroy people that put their faith in God;
- Faith in God is stronger than a thousand armies;
- Chaos will always reign when man believes that he is "free to do what is right in his own eyes" and
- We need both God's law and His love in order to find true happiness.

Read Judges Chapter 1 through Chapter 3:6; then answer the following:

1. What has happened, as described in Chapter 1? What have the Jews failed to do? (see Judg. 1:19-21 and 1:27-36)
 - a. ANSWER: Israel begins to occupy the territories within the land God has given them, some with great success and others not so much. The defeats appear to be the result of Israel's unwillingness to completely drive out or eliminate the enemy from the land; compromise with the enemy becomes the by-word for many of them.
2. What had God promised to the Hebrews from before the time they began their wilderness wanderings? (see Joshua 1:5 and Judges 2:1)
 - a. ANSWER: He had sworn to give them this land and to never break His promise, His Covenant, with them.
3. Do we have that same promise today? (see Matthew 28:20)
 - a. ANSWER: Yes. Christ is with us today and into eternity. He will never leave us, nor forsake us.
4. In Chapter 2, how long did the "people serve the Lord" after the death of Joshua? (see Judg. 2:7)
 - a. ANSWER: They served the Lord throughout Joshua's lifetime and throughout the lifetime of his Elders who served after his death.

5. What was significant about Joshua and all of the elders? (see Judg. 2:7)
 - a. ANSWER: They had personally seen or witnessed all of the great things that the Lord God had done for Israel as he brought them out of Egypt, through the Wilderness Wanderings and into the Promised Land.
 6. What happened after the death of the elders? (see Judg. 2:10)
 - a. ANSWER: The next generation did not know God. They did evil and served Baal.
 7. Do the verses in 2:10-11 indicate that Joshua and the elders were at fault for not teaching the new generation about God? (see Judg. 2:16-17 and 2:19 for examples)
 - a. ANSWER: No; in fact they indicate quite the opposite. These people would not listen to wise counsel or sound instruction and at every turn reverted back to their evil and idolatrous ways.
 8. The Israelites lived among foreigners and their enemies. Did they keep themselves apart from the world, even though they were "in" the world? (see Judg. 3:6)
 - a. ANSWER: No; in fact they intermarried and worshipped the gods and idols of those around them, exactly the opposite of what they were instructed to do.
 9. What instruction are we given about our behavior "in the world"? (see John 15:18-19, John 17:14-19, Romans 12:2, and James 4:4)
 - a. ANSWER: We are not to be "of this world". While we are in this world, we are to depend on God to protect us from the evils of it. We are told not to conform to the ways of this world, but to the will of God. If we choose the world around us and its ways, we become an enemy of God.
 10. What is wrong with being "of the world"? (see 1 John 2:15-17)
 - a. ANSWER: The cravings of man, the lust of man, and the pride of man come from this world - not from God. We must make every attempt to avoid becoming ensnared in the traps of this world.
 11. Who "overcomes the world"? (see 1 John 5:5)
 - a. ANSWER: Anyone who believes that Jesus is the Son of God.
-

Let us resolve to be "in the world" but not "of the world". Following the gods, wisdom, and pleasures of this world will only lead to death; while following Christ and the leadership of the Holy Spirit will bring everlasting life and an eternal peace that passes all understanding. Let us also commit today to renew our walk with Jesus and ask Him to cleanse us from all unrighteous, as we seek His righteousness in all that we do.

In our next lesson, we will examine the first two Judges: Othniel and Ehud. Before studying Lesson 2, see what you can find out about these two Judges that God used in mighty ways to deliver and restore His people.

May God richly bless you this week as you study His Holy Word.

Yours in Christ,

Wes