

The Failure of the Theocracy
The Book of Judges

Introduction

The basic nature of man is that he wants to get his own way. Man is born with a sinful bent that includes selfishness. He wants what he wants when he wants it. How people will get along with one another and form a society will be dependent on the social mores that are established among them. There has to be some structure of what is right and what is wrong. But what happens when each man decides for himself and does what is right in his own eyes? Proverbs 16:25 says, *“There is a way [which seems] right to a man, But its end is the way of death.”* We will see the truth of that proverb today in our study of the book of Judges. It is an answer that should give pause to every government as it wrestles with the extent and limits of personal freedoms of those within its society, and for our own in particular.

America has historically functioned well with great personal freedom because the moral virtues of a society so influenced by Christianity resulted in a people who were self-governed having a proper fear of God. The result has been God’s blessing much like that which was experienced by the generation that conquered the promised land under Joshua. However, as an increasing percentage of our population has rejected the true God for false gods, syncretic religions or atheism, there has been a corresponding decline in self-control so that society is not functioning well with the freedoms that it once had. Even as government entities expand their powers to become more intrusive into our lives, there is an increasing percentage of the population that pursue what is right in their own eyes with abominable behavior, blatant immorality, and running amok. We are resembling Israel during the time of the judges, so this study is very applicable to our own time and lives.

Before we dig into the book itself, it is important to note that Judges is written thematically in a selective chronology. There is variation in the time sequences and the areas of the nation in view. It covers a 350 year period between about 1406 B.C when Joshua concluded his conquest of the land and 1055 B.C. when Samson died. Judges was written after the establishment of Saul’s monarchy (Judges 17:6; 18:1; 19:1; 21:25), but prior to David’s capture of Jerusalem from the Jebusites (1:21 cf. 2 Samuel 5:5-9). Its purpose was to give a defense of the establishment of the monarchy by showing the utter failure of the theocracy to obey Yahweh through the judges. The main reason for the failure was that in the succeeding generations *“every man did what was right in his own eyes”* (17:6; 21:25) which resulted in disobedience to God’s law.

Judges can be divided into three main sections.

- 1) Causes for the Period of the Judges (1:1-3:6) which explains the reasons for the failure of the theocracy.
- 2) Cycles of Judges (3:7-16:31) which traces that failure throughout the geographical regions of Israel showing that the failure was widespread and not limited to just a few errant tribes.
- 3) Consequences of Disobeying Yahweh (17-21) which gives two stories showing how depraved the people had become in their idolatry and immorality which resulted in anarchy.

We will be looking at the first two sections this morning and the third section next week. Throughout the book we will find that sin always leads to suffering just as both Moses and Joshua had warned them, but repentance leads to deliverance (Numbers 26; Deuteronomy 27-28; Joshua 23-24).

Causes for the Period of the Judges (Judges 1:1-3:6)

Incomplete Obedience (Judges 1:1-2:5)

The first reason for the failure of the theocracy and the need for judges was the incomplete obedience of the people in driving out and destroying the people that had been in the land. God had very

specifically stated that the Hittite, Amorite, Canaanite, Perizzite, Hivite and the Jebusite people were to be utterly destroyed because of their iniquity and abominations (Genesis 15:16; Exodus 23:23f; Leviticus 18:24-27 Deuteronomy 20:17-18). However, God reveals in both Exodus 23:30 and Deuteronomy 7:22, *“Yahweh your God will clear away these nations before you little by little; you will not be able to put an end to them quickly, for the wild beasts would grow too numerous for you.”* Before his death, Joshua promised them that Yahweh would drive out the pagan nations as promised if they would cling to and obey Yahweh their God, however, if they did not, then He would not drive out those same nations and instead they would become a *“snare and a trap to you, and a whip on your sides and thorns in our eyes”* (Joshua 23). However, after Joshua’s death, the tribes did not completely follow Yahweh’s direction.

Judges 1:1-20 records that Judah and Simeon agreed to go together to conquer the remaining people in their lands and so they did have victory over the Canaanites & Perizzites in their lands and conquered the cities of Jerusalem, Dibir, Hebron, Zephath/Hormah, Gaza, Ashkelon and Ekron with their surrounding territories. However, they took Adoni-bezek captive instead of killing him and they remained in the hill country because they did not drive out the inhabitants of the valleys. Benjamin did not drive out the Jebusites and instead lived with them (1:21). And while the house of Joseph did capture Bethel (Luz), Manasseh did not take possession of Beth-shean, Taanach, Dor, Ibleam, Megeddo or Gezer so that the Hittites and Canaanites continued to live among them (1:22-28). When they were strong they put them to forced labor instead of destroying them as Yahweh had commanded. The same was true for the tribes of Zebulun, Asher, and Naphtali. Dan did not fare even that well for the Amorites controlled the valleys and forced Dan to remain in the hill country (1:29-36).

This failure brought the rebuke from Yahweh recorded in Judges 2:1-5. *“Now the angel of Yahweh came up from Gilgal to Bochim. And he said, ‘I brought you up out of Egypt and led you into the land which I have sworn to your fathers; and I said, ‘I will never break My covenant with you,’² and as for you, you shall make no covenant with the inhabitants of this land; you shall tear down their altars.’ But you have not obeyed Me; what is this you have done?”³ “Therefore I also said, ‘I will not drive them out before you; but they shall become [as thorns] in your sides, and their gods shall be a snare to you.’”⁴ And it came about when the angel of Yahweh spoke these words to all the sons of Israel, that the people lifted up their voices and wept.⁵ So they named that place Bochim (weepers); and there they sacrificed to Yahweh.”* Yahweh would do just as He had warned them in Numbers 33:55 and Joshua 23:13.

Failure to Teach the Next Generation (Judges 2:6-10)

Judges 2:7 states, *“The people served Yahweh all the days of Joshua, and all the days of the elders who survived Joshua, who had seen all the great work of Yahweh which He had done for Israel.”* However, after Joshua and all that generation that had followed him died, *“there arose generation after them that did not know Yahweh, nor yet the work which He had done for Israel”* (vs. 8-10). It may seem incredible that a nation can so quickly turn from its own cultural heritage, but history records it happening over and over again both within individual families and nationally. It happens because the early generation does not teach the succeeding generation its history in declaring the mighty deeds of God to them. A people that are separated from their past lose the historical perspective of God’s hand at work as well as their own heritage. This makes them very susceptible to being led astray by the lies of those with evil motives, or by their own selfish desires. To this is added the more serious failure to follow Moses’ command in Deuteronomy 6 to love Yahweh with all your heart, soul, and strength and diligently teach your children to know Him, His ways and His commands. It is not uncommon that the descendants of very godly individuals will have turned away from the faith by the third or fourth generation. What was much on their own heart was less so to their children and then even less to their grandchildren, and the following generation will not even have a memory of their godly ancestors. How many of you know much of anything about your great-grandparents?

Idolatry (Judges 2:11-3:4)

Without a memory of what Yahweh had done, they also did not know Him or His commands resulting in them violating them by serving the false gods of the people in the land who were around them and bowing down to Baal and Asheroth. When this happened, Yahweh would turn against them in His anger and fulfill the warnings He had given them resulting in them being severely distressed from being plundered and sold in to the hands of their enemies (vs. 11-15). However, the punishment was not only the just response for their sins, but it also had a positive purpose in turning them back to Yahweh. When they would turn back and cry out to Him, Yahweh was true to His promise. He would be moved to pity by their groaning because of their oppression and He would deliver them by raising up a judge to deliver them (vs. 16,18).

These were not judges in the sense that we think of them as those who decide the law between to parties in a law suit, but rather individuals whom God would raise up to be the head some portion of Israel. They would then direct that portion of the nation to make peace or war and lead the armies over whom they presided. They would also reign with sovereign power to administer justice the remaining years of their life.

However, the cycle would then repeat itself because even while the judge was alive the people did not always listen, and when the judge died, the next generation would turn away from Yahweh and act corruptly disobeying the His commands and bowing down to the gods of the surrounding nations (vs. 17, 19-20). Yahweh would then allow those surrounding nations to suppress them again as the means of chastisement. It was because of this that Yahweh would no longer drive out before them the nations which were still left when Joshua died. They would become a test whether Israel would walk in the ways of Yahweh or not (vs. 20-23). Among the nations left for this purpose were the five Lords of the Philistines, all the Canaanites, as well as the Sidonians and Hivites that lived in Mount Lebanon (Judges 3:1-4).

Intermarriage with the Heathen (Judges 3:5,6)

A major factor in these heathen nations being able to influence Israel was intermarriage with them. This was in direct violation of Yahweh's command in Deuteronomy 7:3 that they were not to intermarry with them. The results were just what Yahweh had warned them since their children were taught foreign ways to turn away from Yahweh to serve false gods. This in turn would result in them being cursed by Yahweh just as He had warned.

The cycles of judges began with their failure to fully obey Yahweh to drive out the pagan nations and allowing them to remain. The pagan nations then influenced Israel to worship their false gods. Intermarriage with them made that influence much stronger. When they turned from Yahweh to serve the idols, Yahweh would turn from them and allow the curses they had been warned about to come upon them resulting in oppression. Confession of sin and repentance would bring them back to Yahweh who would deliver them and restore their blessings.

Cycles of Judges (Judges 3:7-16:31)

The next section of the book of Judges traces this cycle of disobedience and idolatry followed by oppression resulting in repentance and then deliverance through the various judges Yahweh raised up. This section is neither an exhaustive nor strict chronological account of what God did. It is arranged somewhat geographically to demonstrate the widespread nature of Israel's rebellion. They were in need of a king because they were not faithful to Yahweh when they "*did what was right in their own eyes.*"

Southern Campaign (Judges 3:7-31)

Othniel (Judges 3:7-11).

After Joshua and the elders that had served with him had died, the sons of Israel had done evil, forgot

Yahweh and had served the Baals and the Asheroth. Yahweh then allowed Cushan-rishathaim king of Mesopotamia to oppress the sons of Israel for eight years. The people finally cried out to Yahweh and He raised up Othniel to judge and lead them to war. Othniel was from the tribe of Judah and was the nephew of Caleb. Yahweh gave the king of Mesopotamia into his hand and the land had rest for forty years while Othniel was still alive.

Ehud (Judges 3:12-30).

After Othniel died *“the sons of Israel again did evil in the sight of Yahweh. So Yahweh strengthened Eglon the king of Moab against Israel.”* He made an alliance with Ammon and Amalek and together they defeated Israel and possessed the city of the palm trees in the Jordan Valley. Eglon oppressed Israel for 18 years (vs. 12-14). Finally the sons of Israel cried out to Yahweh and He raised up Ehud from the tribe of Benjamin, a left handed man.

Ehud developed a plan to kill Eglon. He made an 18" two edged sword for himself and bound it to his right thigh under his cloak. Since this is opposite of where most people would put a weapon, no one noticed it. He then went to Eglon to present their tribute to him. After the tribute was presented Ehud said to the king, *“I have a secret message for you, O king.”* The king had everyone else leave the room so he could hear it. Then Ehud came close to where the king was sitting and said, *“I have a message from God for you.”* When the king arose, Ehud took his sword and thrust it into the king’s belly and killed him. The king was so fat that the handle went in after the blade and Ehud could not draw the sword out. Ehud then escaped through the vestibule and shut and locked the doors of the roof chamber behind him. By the time the king’s servants had figured out something was wrong and found the dead king, Ehud had escaped across the Jordan to Seriah in the hill country of Ephraim (vs. 15-25).

Ehud then gathered the sons of Israel and told them *“Pursue [them], for Yahweh has given your enemies the Moabites into your hands.”* They then descended from the hill country, seized the fords of the Jordan and struck down about ten thousand Moabites and subdued Moab. The land was then undisturbed for eight years (vs. 26-30).

Shamgar (Judges 3:31)

Shamgar came some time after Ehud and saved Israel from oppression by the Philistines by striking down 600 of them with an oxgoad (a stick used to prod oxen to move). All three of these judges, Othniel, Ehud and Shamgar were from tribes in the south and Yahweh used them to give Israel peace.

Northern Campaign I (Judges 4:1-5:31)

Deborah & Barak (Judges 4)

Sometime after Ehud died, Israel once again did evil in the sight of Yahweh. This time Yahweh gave them into the hands of Jabin king of Canaan who reigned in Hazor. You might recall that Hazor is north of the Sea of Galilee just west of the Jordan river. Joshua had destroyed the city in the initial conquest, but it had been rebuilt and was once again a stronghold of the Canaanites. They had a strong army that included iron chariots, so they oppressed Israel for twenty years (vs. 1-3).

The sons of Israel finally cried out to Yahweh and He revealed Himself through the prophetess, Deborah, who lived between Ramah and Bethel in the hill country of Ephraim. She summoned Barak who was from the tribe of Naphtali and told him, *“Behold, Yahweh, the God of Israel, has commanded, ‘Go and march to Mount Tabor, and take with you ten thousand men from the sons of Naphtali and from the sons of Zebulun. ‘And I will draw out to you Sisera, the commander of Jabin’s army, with his chariots and his many [troops] to the river Kishon; and I will give him into your hand”* (vs. 4-7).

However, Barak refused to do it unless Deborah went with him. Deborah agreed to go but also told Barak that because of this he would not receive the honor for the victory, for Yahweh would give Sisera, the commander of the Canaanite army, into the hands of a woman. They then gathered an army at Mount

Tabor at the northern end of the Valley of Jezreel. Sisera gathered his army including his nine hundred chariots in the valley below Mt. Tabor, but Yahweh routed him and they fell by the edge of the sword so that none were left, except Sisera who had fled on foot (vs. 8-16). With his army destroyed, Jabin the king of the Canaanites could not withstand Israel and so was also destroyed. Meanwhile, Sisera was killed by Jael, the wife of Heber the Kenite. The honor then was given to her in the victory song of Deborah & Barak (Judges 5). The lands remained undisturbed for 40 years.

Central Campaign (Judges 6:1-10:5)

Gideon (Judges 6-8:32)

The sons of Israel turned once again from Yahweh and did what was evil in His sight. This time Yahweh gave them into the hands of Midian for seven years. They would come up from the south yearly and raid Israel to destroy and take what had been harvested. It was so bad the Israelites resorted to living in caves and dens in the mountains. They finally cried out to Yahweh and He sent a prophet to tell them they had not obeyed Him by fearing the gods of the Amorites (6:1-10).

Yahweh also sent an angel to Gideon who was from the tribe of Manasseh on the west side of the Jordan. The angel revealed to Gideon that God had chosen him to be the one that would deliver Israel from the Midianites. To be brief, Gideon was not a man of great confidence and God used a series of miracles and events to encourage him to rise up and do what God commanded him.

First, the angel that gave him the message placed the meal Gideon had offered him on a rock which he then touched with the end of his staff and fire sprang from the rock and consumed the food and then the angel also vanished. This gave Gideon enough encouragement to pull down the altar of Baal and cut down the Asherah and then withstand those who were upset by it afterward (6:25-32).

Next, the Midianites came up and camped in the valley of Jezreel. Gideon sent messengers throughout Asher, Zebulun and Naphtali to gather to him. Gideon wanted confidence that what he was doing was from Yahweh so he prayed that God would make a fleece he left on the threshing floor wet with dew while all the ground around it was dry, and Yahweh did so. Then he prayed the next day that Yahweh would do the opposite, and Yahweh did so (6:36-40).

After an army of 32,000 had gathered to him at the spring of Harod, Yahweh told Gideon that it was too many and anyone that was afraid was to be sent home. Yahweh then said the 10,000 that were left were still too many. He then reduced that number to 300 by the way they drank water (7:1-8). They were facing the combined armies of Amalek & Midian which were described as "*numerous as locusts*" and as "*the sand on the seashore*" (vs. 12). Yahweh would make it clear that He alone was responsible for the victory.

Yahweh had Gideon send a spy into their camp who then overheard one man telling another his dream which the other one interpreted as the "*sword of Gideon*" concluding that "*God has given Midian and all the camp into his hands*" (vs. 9-14). When Gideon heard the report, he bowed in worship of Yahweh and then called on his band of 300 to arise for Yahweh has given their enemy into their hands.

He divided the 300 into three companies and each man was given a trumpet and a pitcher with a torch inside. They then spread around the outskirts of the enemy camp. Just as the middle watch began (about 10 p.m.), Gideon had each man break the pot revealing the lit torch inside and blow their trumpets and then shout, "*A sword for Yahweh and for Gideon.*" The result was pandemonium in the enemy camp so that those in the camp fought each other and then fled southeast across the Jordan river (7:15-23). Gideon sent messengers alerting the men of Ephraim as well as rest of the men from Naphtali, Asher and Manasseh.

Ephraim captured and killed Oreb and Zeeb, the two leaders of Midian while Gideon and his 300 continued the pursuit of Zebah and Zalmunna the kings of Midian. During the pursuit the men of both Succoth and Peniel refused to help Gideon by even giving him and his men some food, for they lived in fear of the Midianites instead of the fear of Yahweh. Gideon and his men continued the pursuit anyway

and finally caught up and destroyed the remaining 15,000 of an army that only a short time before had numbered 135,000 (8:1-21).

After this the Israelites wanted Gideon to rule over them, but he refused that either he or his son would do so for Yahweh was to rule over them (8:22-23). The land was undisturbed for forty years.

Abimelech (Judges 8:33-9:57)

As soon as Gideon was dead the sons of Israel again played the harlot with the Baals. The evil was made worse by Abimelech, one of Gideon's seventy-one sons, who conspired to make himself the ruler. He murdered the rest of his brothers except for the youngest son, Jotham, who had hid himself. The end result of them doing what was right in their own eyes was turmoil and civil war within Ephraim until Abimelech and those in Shechem were killed.

Tola (Judges 10:1,2)

After Abimelech was dead, Tola, a man from the tribe of Issachar was used by Yahweh so save Israel. He lived in the hill country of Ephraim and judged Israel for twenty-three years.

Jair (Judges 10:3-5)

Jair followed next. He was from the region of Gilead where the tribe of Gad had settled. He judged Israel for twenty-two years.

D. Eastern Campaign (Jephthah) (Judges 10:6-12:7)

Jephthah.

After Jair died Israel again did evil in the sight of Yahweh by going after the gods of the heathen people among and around them. Yahweh gave them in to the hands of the Philistines and the Ammonites. Those on the east side of the Jordan were crushed by the Ammonites for eighteen years. They even crossed the Jordan to attack Judah, Benjamin and Ephraim. Finally the people cried out to Yahweh, and after being rebuked by Him, they repented (10:6-16).

This time Yahweh allowed them to pick their own leader, and they picked Jephthah, an illegitimate son of a man from Gilead and a harlot. He had been driven out from among his relatives. He was a rash man and had worthless fellows gathered around him (10:17-11:10). Yet, despite his shortcomings, Jephthah was willing to fight and he knew Israel's history and their God given right to the land (11:12-28). Jephthah defeated Ammon and subdued them. This should have been a cause of rejoicing for all, but Ephraim was jealous and contended with him that he had not included them in the battle with Ammon (perhaps they wanted a share in the spoils?). The result was a war between them and the defeat of Ephraim with 42,000 of them being killed in the war. Jephthah then judged Israel for six years (12:1-15).

Central Campaign II (Judges 12:8-15)

Ibzan (Judges 12:8-10)

He was from Bethlehem followed Jephthah. He judged Israel for seven years before his death.

Elon (Judges 12:11-12)

Elon was next and he was a Zebulunite. He judged Israel for ten years before he died.

Abdon (Judges 12:13-15)

He was next and he was from the land of Ephraim. He judged Israel for eight years.

Western Campaign (Samson) (Judges 13-16).

Samson (Judges 13-16)

The sons of Israel once again did evil in the sight of Yahweh resulting in Him giving them into the hands of the Philistines for forty years. Manoah & his wife were from Zorah in northern Judah and God promised them a son. He was to be set aside from birth to be dedicated to Yahweh as a Nazirite (13:1-

25), but Samson turned out to be a man who did what was right in his own eyes instead of following Yahweh. Yet, Yahweh used Samson anyway. Samson sought a wife from the Philistines which was in direct violation of God's commands, but God used it to create an escalating conflict between Samson and the Philistines before he could ever actually take his wife. Among Samson's deeds were killing thirty men of Ashkelon to get their clothes in order to fulfill a bet (14:1-19). He set the fields of the Philistines on fire because his wife had been given to another (14:20-15:5). He slaughtered many of them and then killed another thousand with the jawbone of a donkey when they tried to take him captive (15:6-16). He carried the city gates of Gaza all the way to Hebron. He judged Israel for 20 years.

His downfall was his lust for a woman named Delilah. Though she continually lied to him and demonstrated her allegiance was to the Philistines, he kept going back to her until the secret of his strength was revealed and then compromised so that he was taken captive, blinded and made a slave to grind corn. During a great sacrifice for their god, Dagon, the Philistines had Samson brought in to make sport of him. This gave Samson the ability to carry out his final great act of strength when he pushed the supporting pillars over causing the building to collapse and kill those inside as well as the 3,000 that were on the roof. But even that last effort was for revenge of his eyes and not as judgment of the Philistines for their evil, though God used it that way. God is able to accomplish His purposes even by those that *"do what is right in their own eyes."*

Consequences of Disobedience (Judges 17-21)

The book of judges ends with two stories that serve as examples of the depths of depravity that come about when people do what is *"right in their own eyes."* Jesus said in Matthew 15:19, *"For out of the heart come evil thoughts, murders, adulteries, fornications, thefts, false witness, slanders."* Because all humans are by nature sinners, then it is not surprising that people will pursue evil to the boundaries of whatever restraint is placed upon them. Christians are restrained from evil by having a changed nature and the conviction of the Holy Spirit. Religious people are restrained by the fear of retribution from whatever god they serve and whatever governmental authority is over them. Governments that fulfill their god given purpose in giving praise to those that do good and bringing wrath on those that do evil place a restraint on all within that society (Romans 13). Governments that do not do this by either removing the restraints of law, or even worse, using law to encourage evil as our own nation is doing, can expect to see both an increase in wickedness in their society and God's judgment come upon it.

The book of Judges was written for the specific purpose of showing that the Jewish theocracy failed due to the people doing what was right in their own eyes so that a king was needed to restrain them. However, it also serves as warning to all nations of what can be expected when any society does the same thing, and that includes the United States. Don't be surprised at either the evil that has risen around us, the new depths of depravity that are being promoted, or God's chastening that has come upon the nation. Remember from Romans 1 that a primary way in which God displays His wrath is to take His hand of mercy away so that the full consequences of sin are felt, and sin begets more sin descending into increasing depravity in which there can even be a disconnect from reality. Tragically, that is a fitting description of a majority of leaders in society, politics, entertainment and big business.

The book of Judges serves as a warning to our own nation and all nations that reject God that we are under His judgment for sin is a reproach to any people. At the same time, the book of Judges shows the path of hope for a society that has gone astray, for our God is merciful and forgiving to those that will repent and turn back to Him. Our nation is in desperate need of revival, and revival always begins with God's people becoming serious about properly walking with Him. ■ If you want to see our nation changed, then it begins with each individual Christian pursuing a life of holiness and service to God.

Sermon Notes - July 31, 2022
The Failure of the Theocracy - Judges

Introduction

Social mores establish the _____ in which people get along with each other in a society

Judges covers the _____ between the initial conquest in 1406 B.C. and the death of Samson in 1055 B.C.

Judges shows the failure of the theocracy because people would not _____ Yahweh

Causes for the Period of the Judges (1:1-3:6)

_____ obedience is the first cause of the failure of the theocracy

Instead of utterly destroying them as commanded, several tribes put them to forced _____

They failed to _____ the succeeding generations their history or to love God (Deut. 6)

Not knowing Yahweh, what He had done, or His commands, they fell into _____

Yahweh would no longer drive out the pagan nations which would instead become a _____ of their faithfulness

_____ compounded the incomplete obedience and idolatry.

Cycles of Judges (3:7-16:31)

The cycle of judges went from disobedience to idolatry to _____ to repentance to deliverance.

Consequences of Disobeying Yahweh (17-21)

Othniel (Judges 3:7-11)

He was from Judah. He defeated the king of _____. He judged for 40 years

Ehud (Judges 3:12-30)

He was from Benjamin. He defeated Eglon king of _____. He judged for 8 years

Shamgar (Judges 3:31)

It is not known where he was from. He defeated the _____. He judged for an unknown time

Deborah & Barack (Judges 4)

Deborah was from Ephraim. Balak was from Naphtali. They defeated the _____.

Jael received the honor instead of Balak _____ There was peace for 40 years

Gideon (Judges 6-8:32)

He was from Manasseh. He defeated the _____.

Yahweh gave him confidence through miracles including the fleece and dew.

He defeated an army of 135,000 with just _____ men _____ There was peace for 40 years

Abimelech (Judges 8:33-9:57)

He was one of Gideons seventy sons. He was a usurper that murdered his brothers

He caused turmoil and _____ in Ephraim

Tola (Judges 10:1,2)

He was from Issachar. He judged for 23 years

Jair (Judges 10:3-5)

He was from Gilead (Gad). He judged for 22 years

Jephthah (Judges 10:6-12:7)

He was from Gilead (Gad). He defeated the _____ . He judged for 6 years

Ephraim was jealous and fought him and lost resulting in 42,000 needless deaths

Ibzan (Judges 12:8-10)

He was from Bethlehem. He judged for 7 years

Elon (Judges 12:11-12)

He was from Zebulun. He judged for 10 years

Abdon (Judges 12:13-15)

He was from Ephraim. He judged for 8 years

Samson (Judges 13-16)

He was from Zorah in northern Judah. He defeated the _____ . He judged for 20 years

Samson was dedicated to Yahweh as a Nazrite, but did what was right in his _____

Samson's downfall was his _____ for a woman named Delilah

God is able to accomplish His _____ even through people like Samson

Consequences of Disobedience (Judges 17-21)

The final two stories serve as _____ of what happens when people *do what is right in their own eyes*

Christians are _____ by the Holy Spirit, religious people by fear of God, government is to restrain evil

Judges is a warning to all _____ of the idolatry, immorality & anarchy that results from pursuing paths of sin

God is merciful and gracious to both forgive and bless those who _____ and follow Him

KIDS KORNER

Parents, you are responsible to apply God's Word to your children's lives. Here is some help.

Young Children - draw a picture about something you hear during the sermon. Explain your picture(s) to your parents at lunch. **Older Children** - Do one or more of the following: 1) Write down all the verses mentioned in the sermon and look them up later. 2) Count how many different judges are mentioned. Talk with your parents about what happens when people do what they want instead of what God wants

THINK ABOUT IT!

Questions to consider in discussing the sermon with others. What do you think would happen if everyone did what is right in their own eyes? What period of time does the book of Judges cover? What is the purpose of the book of Judges? What were the three main reasons for the period of the judges? Why didn't the sons of Israel utterly destroy the nations God commanded them to destroy? What led them to turn to the idols of the people they had conquered? What were the consequences of their intermarriage with the heathens? Explain briefly the cycle found in the book of Judges? Who was Othniel? Where was he from? Who did he defeat? How long did he judge? Who was Ehud? Where was he from? Who did he defeat? How long did he judge? How did he kill Eglon? Who was Deborah? Barak? ? Where were they from? Who did they defeat? How long did they judge? Why wouldn't Barak receive the honor? Who was Gideon? Where was he from? Who did he defeat? How long did he judge? How did God build up his confidence? Why did God reduce his army from 32,000 to 300? How many people did they defeat? Explain the evil of Abimelech and God's judgment on him? Who was Jephthah? Where was he from? Who did he defeat? How long did he judge? Why did the Ephraimites attack him? Who was Samson? Where was he from? Who did he defeat? How long did he judge? What were some of the feats of strength he performed? What caused his downfall? What can modern nations learn from the book of Judges? Why is America in such bad shape? Why is our form of government failing God's purposes for it? What is necessary for it to change? What should be your response?