

## The Story: Chapter 8 The Judges

**First two movements:**

### **Movement 1:**

In the Upper Story, God creates the Lower Story. His vision is to come down and be with us in a beautiful garden. The first two people reject God's vision and are escorted from Paradise. Their decision introduces sin into the human race and keeps us from community with God. At this moment God gives a promise and launches a plan to get us back. The rest of the Bible is God's story of how he kept that promise and made it possible for us to enter a loving relationship with him.

### **Movement 2:**

God builds a brand-new nation called Israel. Through this nation, he will reveal His presence, power, and plan to get us back. Every story of Israel will point to the first coming of Jesus-the One who will provide the way back to God.

**Here is where we stand today:**

- Joshua had led them into the Promised Land and had defeated the enemy.
- **“The pilgrimage was over”.**
  
- However, it was up to each individual tribe to go in and take their specific land on their own.

Now watch this:

### **Joshua 2:6-13**

<sup>6</sup> After Joshua had dismissed the Israelites, they went to take possession of the land, each to his own inheritance. <sup>7</sup> The people served the Lord throughout the lifetime of Joshua and of the elders who outlived him and who had seen all the great things the Lord had done for Israel.

<sup>8</sup> Joshua son of Nun, the servant of the Lord, died at the age of a hundred and ten. <sup>9</sup> And they buried him in the land of his inheritance, at Timnath Heres in the hill country of Ephraim, north of Mount Gaash.

<sup>10</sup> After that whole generation had been gathered to their fathers, another generation grew up, who knew neither the Lord nor what he had done for

Israel. <sup>11</sup> Then the Israelites did evil in the eyes of the Lord and served the Baals. <sup>12</sup> They forsook the Lord, the God of their fathers, who had brought them out of Egypt. They followed and worshiped various gods of the peoples around them. They provoked the Lord to anger <sup>13</sup> because they forsook him and served Baal and the Ashtoreths.

## **How did we get here so quickly?**

It starts right here...

### **Judges 1:19**

<sup>19</sup> The Lord was with the men of Judah. They took possession of the hill country, but they were unable to drive the people from the plains, because they had iron chariots.

This story is not about God and how He couldn't help them defeat the enemy.

- God has already proven that He can defeat, or drown, as many chariots as needed.

### **This is about Judah and a lack of faith in God.**

- Judah had the same problem that we deal with.
- We believe some of the things God says. Just not ALL of the things God says.
- And he decided that they couldn't defeat this enemy because of the equipment the enemy had.

**EX:** Heard this story before: Looking into the Promised Land and thinking the enemy is too big?

- And, if you're looking to judge them, most of us do this daily!

Then the other tribes continued the trend...

### **Judges 1:28-29**

<sup>28</sup> When Israel became strong, they pressed the Canaanites into forced labor but never drove them out completely. <sup>29</sup> Nor did Ephraim drive out the Canaanites living in Gezer, but the Canaanites continued to live there among them.

- and it continues through the end of the chapter with other people that didn't completely drive out the enemy in their land.

## Judges 2

Look at **2:10-11** again

<sup>10</sup> After that whole generation had been gathered to their fathers, another generation grew up, who knew neither the Lord nor what he had done for Israel. <sup>11</sup> Then the Israelites did evil in the eyes of the Lord and served the Baals.

As soon as they had **forgotten Joshua** and his Elders they attached themselves to the gods of the Canaanites.

- Their only job was to occupy the land and remove the paganism that held the land before they arrived.
- Instead, they fell into it.

**WHY? Because they never truly removed it from their new land!**

**What they allowed to stay in the land eventually took them down again.**

Here's what happens...

### **Judges 2:1-3**      **ANGEL OF THE LORD COMES TO SEE THEM**

...I said, 'I will never break my covenant with you, <sup>2</sup> and you shall not make a covenant with the people of this land, but you shall break down their altars.' Yet you have disobeyed me. Why have you done this? <sup>3</sup> Now therefore I tell you that I will not drive them out before you; they will be thorns in your sides and their gods will be a snare to you.'

God lets them know that, now that they have disobeyed Him, He will no longer drive these people out of the land.

He leaves those people there to test the faith of the Israelites and see if they will truly follow the God of their forefathers.

**EX:** Remember the story of Paul in the New Testament when he asks the Lord to remove the "thorn from His flesh" and God says "No"?

### **Judges 2:14-15**

<sup>14</sup> In his anger against Israel the Lord handed them over to raiders who plundered them. He sold them to their enemies all around, whom they were no longer able to resist. <sup>15</sup> Whenever Israel went out to fight, the hand of the Lord was against them to defeat them, just as he had sworn to them. They were in great distress.

## **We have to stop here and learn a valuable lesson for all of us!**

Why were they in so much trouble at this point? Because they did not obey God and fully remove the enemy from their land.

- People question why God says to destroy everyone and everything in the land... This is why.
- They had to completely remove the evil from the land or it would continue to lurk around them as a temptation to follow other gods
- AND that is exactly what they did.

## **What is the lesson you and I must learn today?**

[“You cannot partially deal with the sin in your life and expect to have full victory over that sin.”](#)

Listen: God is calling us to lives of complete purity. Not lives of almost pure.

**EX** from Spurgeon:

[“An unconverted person is here who has been thinking of coming to Christ, but he says: ‘I cannot give up all my sins. One of them I must retain: all the rest I can leave, but that one is invincible, for it has chariots of iron. I cannot drive it out,’ That sin must die, or you will perish by it. Depend upon it, that sin which you would save from slaughter will slaughter you.”](#)

**EX:** For me: You can't get rid of most of the honey buns and be ok. You must remove them all!!!!

We have to deal with the real issues if we want to live in the freedom that we gain through Christ.

Now, back to them...

Judges 2:14

He had allowed them to be overtaken by their enemies.

- He pulled back His protection because they had broken covenant with Him.

## **[Judges 2:16-17](#)**

[<sup>16</sup> Then the Lord raised up judges, who saved them out of the hands of these raiders. <sup>17</sup> Yet they would not listen to their judges but prostituted themselves](#)

to other gods and worshiped them. Unlike their fathers, they quickly turned from the way in which their fathers had walked, the way of obedience to the Lord's commands.

Judge didn't mean "sit on a throne and make decisions"

- It meant "heroic leader". Meant "to make right"

Period of Judges lasted about 340 years.

- No real leader for God's people during this time.

- So, every so often He would appoint a Judge to come in and save the people from their mistakes and then the Judge would fade away again.

- God would allow them, because of their own choices, to be oppressed by different groups during this time.

During that oppression the people would eventually call on God.

He would raise up a Judge to save them and set them free.

- Othniel was the first, then Ehud, then a guy named Shamgar

- Shamgar: famous for killing 600 Philistines with an oxgoad! A stick with a hook on the end.

In chapter 6 we see **Gideon**.

- Gideon was raised up to free them from the Midianites.

- They had been in oppression for 7 years and feared for their lives because of these people.

- Crazy part of this story: Gideon had over 30,000 soldiers ready to go fight and God cut that all the way down to 300 so that only HE could get the glory for the win!

In chapter 13 we meet Samson.

- He married a Philistine woman which did not please his parents.

But...

**Judges 14:4**

<sup>4</sup>(His parents did not know that this was from the Lord, who was seeking an occasion to confront the Philistines; for at that time they were ruling over Israel.)

- Samson starts out with amazing strength.
- Defeats a lot of Philistines in battle.
- But, then, gives in to the temptations of the bride that he chose and ends up in prison, with his eyes gauged out of his head.

In the end, chapter 16, he's the one that is placed in the Temple courtyard while the Philistines hold a major party as they make sacrifices to their god.

- As they party, Samson gets in between the two main columns holding the whole place up and pushes them apart, bringing the whole place down on himself and the Philistines.
- Scripture says, "Thus, he killed many more when he died than while he lived."

### **Upper story and Lower story!!!**

However, we still have one lesson we're learning from all of these Judges:

- the people would continually turn their back on God.
- God would provide another leader to come and save them and get them back on track.

But, as soon as that leader died, they would turn from God again and worship other gods.

**Listen:** Obedience limited to a small amount of time is not real obedience. And, Limited Freedom is not real Freedom.

Is your life going up and down just like the Israelites with the judges?

- Do you commit to something one day and forget that commitment the next?

**EX:** My best example from me. I'm an extremes guy. And, I've been on every diet known to man at some point.

- I can always lose a good bit of weight up front but eventually that plan gets old and I go right back to my old habits.
- This is exactly what they were doing with God.

AND, here's the deal. I don't need another diet plan. I need real freedom from a love of bad food.

- And, when there is real freedom, it's freedom that lasts!!!

But, [Real freedom comes from completely dealing with the real problem!](#)

Do you want real freedom from the bitterness building up in you because you can't forgive that person for what they did to you?

Do you want real, long-lasting freedom from the greed that drives you to work every day?

**Here's the thing for today:** This book actually gives us a great picture of God's grace and how He lovingly cares for His people.

What we learn in Judges:

Morgan states, [“On the human side, it is a story of disobedience and disaster; and on the Divine side, it's a story of continued direction and deliverance.”](#)