HERE COME THE JUDGES

JUDGES 3

Lesson #30

BIBLE REFERENCE: (The book of Judges)

BOOK OF STUDY: Judges

Season of Study: Season of Bringing the Savior into the world

HISTORY

The book of Judges belongs to the history section of the Old Testament. Judges is a period in the Season of Bringing the Messiah into the world. The book is believed to be authored by Samuel, the last Judge and the first prophet in Israel.
The book covers a period of approximately 430 years in the history of Israel as a people.

There was no national leader during the time of the Judges, such as Moses and Joshua. Leadership was local from each tribe as needed, with God raising up leadership to address problems arising among individual tribes. Without a national leader, the Children of Israel were required to depend solely upon the Almighty.

During the period of the Judges, we witness the worse in men, but also the (Amazing) grace and love of God for His people. The period of the Judges not only allows us to witness the failure among the people of God, but also the faithfulness of the God who chose them to bring the Savior, or Messiah, into the world.

**INTRODUCTION**

In the mid-60s, Dewey ‘Pigmeat’ Markham coined the phrase “Here comes the judge.” This statement was later popularized by the comedian Flip Wilson.

In the study of the book of Judges, the children of Israel, because of their evil behavior, were continually faced with the coming of the judges to deliver them from the situations their sin placed them in.

The pattern of behavior necessitating the need for a judge was always the same! Israel would do “evil” in the sight of the Lord, then cry unto the Lord for deliverance, and God would send them a deliverer, or judge.

In chapter 3 of Judges we study three of the first judges sent by God to deliver the Children of Israel from the bondage God allowed to be placed upon them by their pagan neighbors.

**Othniel** delivered Israel from Mesopotamia; **Ehud** delivered Israel from Moab; and **Shamgar** delivered Israel from Philistia.

**THE PRINTED TEXT** – (Judges 3: 8 – 31)

Therefore, the anger of the LORD was hot against Israel, and he sold them into the hand of Chushanrishathaim king of Mesopotamia: and the children of Israel served Chushanrishathaim eight years.

9 And when the children of Israel cried unto the LORD, the LORD raised up a deliverer to the children of Israel, who delivered them, even **Othniel** the son of Kenaz, Caleb's younger brother.
And the Spirit of the LORD came upon him, and he judged Israel, and went out to war: and the LORD delivered Chushanrishathaim king of Mesopotamia into his hand; and his hand prevailed against Chushanrishathaim.

And the land had rest forty years. And Othniel the son of Kenaz died.

And the children of Israel did evil again in the sight of the LORD: and the LORD strengthened Eglon the king of Moab against Israel, because they had done evil in the sight of the LORD.

And he gathered unto him the children of Ammon and Amalek, and went and smote Israel, and possessed the city of palm trees.

So the children of Israel served Eglon the king of Moab eighteen years.

But when the children of Israel cried unto the LORD, the LORD raised them up a deliverer, Ehud the son of Gera, a Benjamite, a man lefthanded: and by him the children of Israel sent a present unto Eglon the king of Moab.

But Ehud made him a dagger which had two edges, of a cubit length; and he did gird it under his raiment upon his right thigh.

And he brought the present unto Eglon king of Moab: and Eglon was a very fat man.

And when he had made an end to offer the present, he sent away the people that bare the present.

But he himself turned again from the quarries that were by Gilgal, and said, I have a secret errand unto thee, O king: who said, Keep silence. And all that stood by him went out from him.

And Ehud came unto him; and he was sitting in a summer parlour, which he had for himself alone. And Ehud said, I have a message from God unto thee. And he arose out of his seat.

And Ehud put forth his left hand, and took the dagger from his right thigh, and thrust it into his belly:

And the haft also went in after the blade; and the fat closed upon the blade, so that he could not draw the dagger out of his belly; and the dirt came out.
23 Then Ehud went forth through the porch, and shut the doors of the parlour upon him, and locked them.

24 When he was gone out, his servants came; and when they saw that, behold, the doors of the parlour were locked, they said, Surely, he covereth his feet in his summer chamber.

25 And they tarried till they were ashamed: and, behold, he opened not the doors of the parlour; therefore, they took a key, and opened them: and, behold, their lord was fallen down dead on the earth.

26 And Ehud escaped while they tarried, and passed beyond the quarries, and escaped unto Seirath.

27 And it came to pass, when he was come, that he blew a trumpet in the mountain of Ephraim, and the children of Israel went down with him from the mount, and he before them.

28 And he said unto them, Follow after me: for the LORD hath delivered your enemies the Moabites into your hand. And they went down after him, and took the fords of Jordan toward Moab, and suffered not a man to pass over.

29 And they slew of Moab at that time about ten thousand men, all lusty, and all men of valour; and there escaped not a man.

30 So Moab was subdued that day under the hand of Israel. And the land had rest fourscore years.

31 And after him was Shamgar the son of Anath, which slew of the Philistines six hundred men with an ox goad: and he also delivered Israel.

**EXPLORING THE PRINTED TEXT**

I. **The Evil in the Land** – (Judges 3: 8)

Taking possession of the land God promised the Children of Israel in order to bring the Messiah into the world, proved more problematic to Israel than any other aspect of their divine assignment. The problem was not God, rather it was the Children of Israel being disobedient to God.

God gave to Israel, the children of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, a land flowing with milk and honey, but also possessed with pagan and heathen people who were idolaters, and who knew not Jehovah God. However,
Jehovah God clearly instructed Israel, “But if you do not drive out the inhabitants of the land, those you allow to remain will become barbs in your eyes and thorns in your sides. They will give you trouble in the land where you will live.” And then I will do to you what I plan to do to them” (Numbers 33:55). Israel would come to experience all the Almighty claimed in this statement.

This land, while fruitful biologically and agriculturally in every way, was possessed of evil inhabitants (men and women).

Evil is a strong influence, sourced or originating in Satan! Evil is anti-God! Evil is a conscious effort to do wrong! Evil pervades the beliefs and thinking of people and is easily sown and incorporated into the belief systems and thinking of others.

Throughout the book of Judges, we read, “And the children of Israel did evil again in the sight of the Lord.”

Israel consciously made decisions they knew were sinful and were against the laws of the Almighty God. In their refusal, or weakness, to drive out the inhabitants of the land of Canaan, the evils of the pagan and heathen nations corrupted their beliefs and they found themselves growing further and further from the Almighty.

Their evil resulted in, “The anger of the Lord … against Israel, and he sold them into the hand” … of their oppressors.

Preceding each divinely appointed Judge, and after years of suffering at the hands of their oppressors, the scripture reads, “the children of Israel cried unto the Lord, the Lord raised up a deliverer to the children of Israel, who delivered them.”

This pattern of being influenced by the evil nations Israel refused to drive out as commanded by God, recurred throughout the land, until the children of Israel were driven to appoint themselves a king!

II. The Elect of the Lord – (Judges 3: 9 – 11)

Israel, in her evils against the Almighty God, was ‘allowed’ to be oppressed by the nations coexisting with her. When driven back to the Lord and compelled to cry out for His help, God raised up a “deliverer,”
one “elected of God” who, at the period or time, would be given the power and ability needed to give Israel victory over their enemy.

Through these periods we read, “And the Spirit of the Lord came upon him/her, and he/she judged Israel, and went out to war.”

The writer of Judges does not allow the reader to forget that it was God the Almighty who was controlling the events in the life of Israel when they were in the depth of their evils. Their evil would not deter the Almighty in carrying out His promise to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob to bless all nations of men through their “Seed.” Against all odds, the Messiah would be born into the world. Therefore, Jehovah God provided continued “leadership, giving them power to fight for complete possession of the land, and steered them back to the laws they so often forgot and abandon.”

In chapter 3 of Judges, God elected or raised up Othniel, Ehud, and Shamgar to deliver Israel from the grip of their oppressors. After Othniel judged Israel, the land had rest for 40 year. After Ehud judged Israel, the land rested for 80 years. The number years of rest after Shamgar is not recorded however, Shamgar was a great warrior, slaying 600 Philistines with an Ox-goad.

III. The Eternal Love – (Judges 3:9, 15, 31)

The one certain and constant thing in this world is the “Love of God.” The one lesson we learn from the book of Judges is that God loves us even in our sins.

The book of Judges shows the reader the “worse” in the chosen people of God, but at the same time, it reveals the undaunted love of the Almighty for mankind. God did so loved, that He gave! Paul the apostle was right when he penned the words, “But God commendeth his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us” (Romans 5:8).

In every instant of Israel sinning and being oppressed, when in repentance, they cried unto the Lord, and God would hear and send them a deliverer. Then we read, “when the children of Israel cried unto the Lord, the Lord raised them up a deliverer.”
Truly, "Here Comes the Judges!"

LIFE APPLICATION

Once there was an emperor in the Far East who was growing old and knew it was coming time to choose his successor. Instead of choosing one of his assistants or one of his own children, he decided to do something different. He called all the young people in the kingdom together one day. He said, “It has come time for me to step down and to choose the next emperor. I have decided to choose one of you.” The kids were shocked! But the emperor continued. “I am going to give each one of you a seed today. One seed. It is a very special seed. I want you to go home, plant the seed, water it and come back here one year from today with what you have grown from this one seed. I will then judge the plants that you bring to me, and the one I choose will be the next emperor of the kingdom!”

There was one boy named Ling who was there that day and he, like the others, received a seed. He went home and excitedly told his mother the whole story. She helped him get a pot and some planting soil, and he planted the seed and watered it carefully. Every day he would water it and watch to see if it had grown.

After about three weeks, some of the other youths began to talk about their seeds and the plants that were beginning to grow. Ling kept going home and checking his seed, but nothing ever grew. Three weeks, four weeks, five weeks went by. Still nothing.

By now others were talking about their plants but Ling didn’t have a plant, and he felt like a failure. Six months went by, still nothing in Ling’s pot. He just knew he had killed his seed. Everyone else had trees and tall plants, but he had nothing. Ling didn’t say anything to his friends, however. He just kept waiting for his seed to grow.

A year finally went by and all the youths of the kingdom brought their plants to the emperor for inspection. Ling told his mother that he wasn’t going to take an empty pot. But she encouraged him to go, and to take his pot, and to be honest about what happened. Ling felt sick to his stomach, but he knew his mother was right. He took his empty pot to the palace.

When Ling arrived, he was amazed at the variety of plants grown by all the other youths. They were beautiful, in all shapes and sizes. Ling put his empty pot on the floor and many of the other kinds laughed at him. A few felt sorry for him and just said, “Hey nice try.”

When the emperor arrived, he surveyed the room and greeted the young people. Ling just tried to hide in the back. “My, what great plants, trees and flowers you have grown,” said the emperor. “Today, one of you will be appointed the next emperor!”
All of a sudden, the emperor spotted Ling at the back of the room with his empty pot. He ordered his guards to bring him to the front. Ling was terrified. “The emperor knows I’m a failure! Maybe he will have me killed!”

When Ling got to the front, the Emperor asked his name. “My name is Ling,” he replied. All the kids were laughing and making fun of him. The emperor asked everyone to quiet down. He looked at Ling, and then announced to the crowd, “Behold your new emperor! His name is Ling!” Ling couldn’t believe it. Ling couldn’t even grow his seed. How could he be the new emperor?

Then the emperor said, “One year ago today, I gave everyone here a seed. I told you to take the seed, plant it, water it, and bring it back to me today. But I gave you all boiled seeds which would not grow. All of you, except Ling, have brought me trees and plants and flowers. When you found that the seed would not grown, you substituted another seed for the one I gave you. Ling was the only one with the courage and honesty to bring me a pot with my seed in it. Therefore, he is the one who will be the new emperor!”

Source: reported in More Hot Illustrations for Youth Talks (Zondervan, 1995)

WHAT WE KNOW ALREADY:

PREMISE OF THE CHRISTIAN FAITH:

1. God Is
2. God Speaks
3. God Speaks Through That Which Has Already Been Spoken - We believe the Bible to be the inerrant Word of God.

WORKING DEFINITION OF GOD:

God is the Personal Spirit, who in Holy Love, Creates. Orders, and Sustains all.

SEASONS TO SPIRITUAL PERFECTION

God created the physical universe in six (6) days.

God creates the perfect universe in six (6) seasons.

“And I saw a new heaven and a new earth: for the first heaven and the first earth were passed away; and there was no more sea. And I John saw the holy city, new
Jerusalem, coming down from God out of the heaven, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband” (Revelation 21:1 - 2).

1. Season of Beginnings - Genesis 1 - 3
2. Season of Boundaries and Borders - Genesis 4 - 11
3. Season of Bringing Christ or the Messiah into the World - Genesis 12 – thru the Gospel of John.
4. Season of Broadcasting Christ to the World - Acts - Revelation
5. Season of Burdens and Tribulations - Revelation
6. Season of Birthing a New Creation - Revelation