

JUDGES

1) Introduction

- a) Review the prophecies
 - i) **Gen 3:15** – Enmity between woman’s seed and serpent’s seed – mortal wound vs. temporary wound
 - ii) **Gen 12:1-3** – Land, nation, seed promise. Repeated to Isaac (Gen 26:3-5) & Jacob (Gen 28:13-15)
 - iii) Both the “nation” and “land” promise have now been fulfilled. The “seed” promise remains
- b) “Everyone did what was right in his own eyes”
 - i) The next generation disobeyed God by not driving out all of Canaan’s inhabitants (Judg 1, 2:1-2)
 - ii) God therefore allowed the nations to become thorns in Israel’s side to test their faith (Judg 2:3)
 - iii) Israel failed the test by forsaking God and serving the foreign nations’ idols (Judg 2:11-12)
 - iv) God allowed the foreign nations to enslave Israel until they cried out to God for help (Judg 2:14-15)
 - v) God raised up judges to deliver Israel followed by a period of peace (Judg 2:16-23)
 - vi) This became a repetitive cycle for Israel over the course of hundreds of years (see chart)

2) Ehud (Judg 3:12-30)

- a) Eglon, king of Moab, enslaves Israel for 18 years, forcing them to pay tribute (Judg 3:12-15)
 - i) When Israel cries out to God, He raises up a left-handed man, Ehud, to deliver Israel (Judg 3:15)
 - ii) This gives Ehud a covert advantage while bringing tribute to Eglon (Judg 3:16-20)
 - iii) When alone with Eglon, Ehud kills Eglon with a knife hidden on his right thigh (Judg 3:21-23)
 - iv) Ehud rallies Israel to defeat Moab, granting Israel rest for 80 years (Judg 3:26-30)
- b) Practical Application
 - i) Being left-handed was rare in those days; those so inclined were looked at suspiciously
 - ii) “Left-handed” comes from the same root word for “sinister”
 - iii) God proves He can use people with strange traits and abilities to accomplish His purposes

3) Shamgar (Judg 3:31)

- a) Shamgar strikes down 600 Philistines with an oxgoad
 - i) An oxgoad looks like a broomstick handle with a point on the end, used to prod oxen into moving
 - ii) That Shamgar used this simple device to strike down 600 Philistines is a remarkable feat
- b) Practical Application
 - i) God can also use men with strange things to accomplish His will (Ex 4:1-2)
 - ii) Are we willing to let God use us to His glory with merely what we have?

4) Deborah (Judg 4 – 5)

- a) Sisera, commander of the Canaanites, afflicts Israel for 20 years (Judg 4:1-3)
 - i) Deborah enlists Barak to lead Israel in battle but he refuses to go without her (Judg 4:4-8)
 - ii) Deborah agrees to go, but warns him that the honor of victory will go to a woman (Judg 4:9)
 - iii) Israel defeats Canaan and Sisera flees to the house of a woman named Jael (Judg 4:10-20)
 - iv) Jael waits until Sisera falls asleep and then kills him, gaining the honor of victory (Judg 4:21-24; 5)
- b) Practical Application
 - i) At this point in history, it appears there isn’t a man around with the gumption to be a true leader
 - ii) God proves that if men will not rise up, He is able to use women to accomplish great things

5) Gideon (Judg 6 & 7)

- a) The Midianites are oppressing Israel, causing them to hide in caves and mountain dens (Judg 6:1-6)
 - i) God raises up Gideon, a man with several short-comings
 - (1) Requires proof that God will help him (Judg 6:11-24)
 - (2) Was so scared to tear down his father's idol, he did so at night (Judg 6:25-27)
 - ii) Gideon assembles 32,000 men to fight, but God wants to do the delivering (Judg 7:1-2)
 - (1) God allows 22,000 men depart who are fearful (Judg 7:3)
 - (2) God allows another 9700 to depart who kneeled to drink water verse lapping it (Judg 7:4-8)
 - iii) With only 300 men, God grants Gideon a great victory against Midian (Judg 7:9-25)
- b) Practical Application
 - i) God can accomplish great things with small numbers if the courage is there

6) Jephthah (Judg 11)

- a) The Ammonites afflict Israel for 18 years (Judg 10:8)
 - i) Jephthah was a valiant warrior, but his mother was a harlot (Judg 11:1)
 - ii) Jephthah's brothers drove him away, not allowing him an inheritance (Judg 11:2)
 - iii) Without a family, Jephthah aligns himself with worthless fellows (Judg 11:3)
 - iv) When Ammon afflicts Israel, his family asks him to lead them in battle (Judg 11:4-11)
 - v) Jephthah leads Israel into a great victory against Ammon (Judg 11:12, 32-33)
- b) Practical Application
 - i) Some people come from difficult homes that leave scars, bitterness, resentment, and self-pity
 - ii) If God can use Jephthah to rescue Israel, he can use others who have had hard lives

7) Samuel (1 Sam 1 – 7)

- a) A woman named Hannah is barren and prays to the Lord for a child (1 Sam 1:1-10)
 - i) Hannah promises God that if He gives her a child, he will be given back to the Him (1 Sam 1:11)
 - ii) Samuel is born, weaned, and given to Eli, the high priest, to serve the Lord (1 Sam 1:19-28)
- b) Eli is rebuked for allowing his sons to do evil (1 Sam 2:27-36)
 - i) God visits Samuel in a dream, explaining his intentions to punish Eli's house (1 Sam 3)
 - ii) Israel is defeated by Philistia, who kill Eli's sons and steal the Ark of the Covenant (1 Sam 4:1-17)
 - iii) Upon hearing the news about the Ark, Eli falls backwards from his chair and dies (1 Sam 4:18)
 - iv) The Philistines find the Ark a lot easier to take than to keep (1 Sam 5 – 6)
- c) Samuel takes the reigns of leadership (1 Sam 7)
 - i) He rebukes Israel for their sin and leads them to a great victory against the Philistines (1 Sam 7:3-14)
 - ii) Samuel judges Israel all the days of his life, loved and respected by all (1 Sam 7:15-17)

