

I. Intro

A. Last summer, we read through Exodus and Joshua

1. They cover the history of the Jewish people and their leaders (Moses/Joshua)
2. They reveal a ton about God's character and foreshadowed Jesus
3. They also show us parallels between Israel's sin and our sin
 - a) *Learning about Israel's disobedience and God's faithfulness, reveals a lot about our disobedience and God's faithfulness*

B. The story of Israel continues after Joshua, in the book of Judges

1. At the end of Joshua, Israel entered the promised land
2. They were given instructions to eliminate the enemy and inhabit the land
 - a) Side note: this is an issue with many unbelievers and some Christians
 - (1) How could a "good God" command His people to kill others?
 - (2) Isn't that breaking commandment 6?
 - (3) "Thou shalt not murder" is about *taking innocent life*
 - (a) The people that God told Israel to kill were not innocent
 - (b) They sacrificed children and raped women as worship to false gods
 - (c) Many of these tribes also indulged in incest and cannibalism
 - b) So, why did God command Israel to destroy these nations?
 - (1) They were God's instrument of judgment; they were God's sword
 - (2) Also, God did not want these sins to continue when Israel inherited the land
 - c) God commanded Israel to drive out the inhabitants, but they did not obey

C. This is one of the biggest reasons we are reading Judges

1. This book is a study in what happens when you refuse to deal with sin
 - a) Israel was convinced that partial obedience was "good enough"
 - b) But, Judges teaches us that partial obedience is disobedience
2. Like Israel, we have a daily choice to put sin to death and live for God
 - a) There are foreign enemies in your heart, and God wants you to put them to death through repentance
 - b) Maybe you defeated some of these enemies, but God wants everything gone

II. Text

A. Judges 1

1. 1:1-26

- a) Israel entered the Promised Land, divided the land by tribes, and built homes
- b) Once they settled in, they got lazy and stopped conquering the enemy

2. 1:27, 29, 30, 31, 33, 34

- a) Under the leadership of Joshua, Israel conquered a lot of land
- b) But, when Israel tasted the good life in this new land they stopped fighting
- c) They spent more time building their lives and less time being obedient to God

3. This is the first parallel for us

- a) Early in your Christian walk you were aware of sin and things God wanted dead
 - (1) You spent time in prayer and enjoyed the sweetness of repentance
 - (2) But, then you settled into school, work, kids, family drama, etc.
- b) Now, you look like a tribe from Judges
 - (1) You've stopped living out repentance
 - (2) You make excuses for your addictions
 - (3) Your heart isn't changing anymore

B. Judges 2

1. 2:1-4

- a) In the middle of Israel's disobedience, God sends a message to His people
 - (1) "Your disobedience will lead to unnecessary hardship, but I will use that hardship to make you cry out to Me and I will save you"
- b) As we read Judges, you'll notice a cycle of sin
 - (1) Israel sins → Nations overtake Israel → Israel cries to God → God raises up a Judge to defeat the enemy → Israel lives in peace → Israel sins
 - (2) Israel's disobedience invites turmoil from surrounding people, but God uses the turmoil to teach Israel about His love
- c) Can you see this pattern in your life?

- (1) We sin → We are overwhelmed with hardship → We repent to Jesus →
Our hearts are changed → We experience peace → We get lazy → We sin
- (2) God has a long history of using the consequences of our sin to teach us
about His love

2. 2:16-23

- a) God viewed His relationship with Israel like a marriage
 - (1) When Israel chased other gods, the best comparison was a prostitute
 - (2) Israel was a bride chasing other men
- b) It's important to understand how this comparison is also used in Ephesians
 - (1) Ephesians 5 says *marriage is a reflection of our relationship with Jesus*
 - (2) The church is the *Bride of Christ*, and when we chase sin instead of Jesus
the best comparison is an engaged fiancé having multiple affairs
 - (3) This is why God is so serious about sin and repentance
 - (a) The church is Jesus' bride! He wants her free from adultery
 - (b) In God's eyes, disobedience is unfaithfulness
- c) While Israel was unfaithful, God stayed faithful
 - (1) He stayed faithful by raising up Judges to set them free
 - (2) A Judge was a leader (*not king/queen*) that executed God's judgment on
Israel and surrounding nations
 - (3) Some of these Judges were pretty wild!

C. Judges 3

- 1. 3:12-30
 - a) Israel was enslaved to the Moabites for 18 years
 - b) God raise Ehud (*the "left-handed" bandit*) to free Israel
 - c) Ehud killed evil, fat King Eglon by driving a sword in his belly

D. Judges 4-5

1. 4:1-10

- a) A new cycle of sin began and Israel was a slave to Canaan
 - (1) God raised up a Judge, Deborah

(2) Deborah called Barak to lead an army against Canaan

(3) Deborah prophesied that God would use a woman to bring the victory

b) The battle began and Israel had great success in battle

(1) The Canaanite military leader, Sisera fled the battlefield

(2) He ended up at the tent of a young girl named Jael

2. 4:17-22

a) "And Barak turned to Jael and said, 'Nailed it!'"

b) This chapter shines a spotlight on God using women to accomplish His plans

(1) 3 main leadership roles in the Old Testament: Prophet, King, Priest

(2) While there are no women priests (*per God's design*) there are many prophetesses and queens

(3) And, not a single man in the Bible exists without a female mother

c) Israel was surrounded by cultures that abused women, like Canaan

(1) Sisera was widely known for his abuse of women

(2) It is fitting that God used women to bring about Sisera's end

d) This point is meant to remind us of God's work in our lives

(1) We must examine our memories from a historical and theological view

(a) We must learn to ask ourselves not just "what happened?" but "what is God doing?"

(b) God is using Deborah and Jael for His purpose and they are a very fitting judgment for Sisera

e) Deborah does this and that's how we got Judges 5

III. Conclusion

A. Judges 5 is a worship song that recounts all that God did for Israel

1. There are many patterns that we should not follow from Judges

2. But, this is a pattern we should follow

B. Start living more aware of what God is doing in your life, and respond in worship

1. Worship Jesus for pulling you out of a cycle of sin

2. Worship Jesus for being the greater Judge that freed you from bondage

3. Worship Jesus for inviting you into His plans and giving your life purpose
- C. As we continue our study in the coming weeks, you will see many parallels between Israel and our Christian walk
1. As God opens your eyes, run to Him
 2. Put ALL your sin to death through repentance