

THE FLORAL HEIGHTS INFORMER

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The Book of Judges

Introduction

God had promised the land of Canaan to Abraham's descendants (Gen. 12:1ff). Though the land was a gift from God (Deut. 3:18) Israel was commanded to "*take possession of Canaan*" (see Deut. 1:8, 21). Taking possession of Canaan meant bloody warfare that is described in some of the most gruesome language in the OT (see Ex. 34:10-17; Deut. 20:16-18). The book of Joshua covered the Period known as the Conquest in which Israel slaughtered all that breathed among the Canaanites (see Josh. 6:21). Joshua, like Moses before him (see Deut. 2:34; 3:6), faithfully waged war against the Canaanites (Josh. 10:43). The book of Joshua states that he "*left nothing undone*" regarding the mashing of all that breathed (see Josh. 11:10-15). God had promised that as long as Israel would remain faithful to Him He would fight for them and no one would be able to stand in their way (Deut. 1:29-30). Israel, however, had failed the Lord on occasions. When the Gibeonites were saved God's plan to exterminate the Canaanites was frustrated (Josh. 9:3ff). Furthermore, not only did the two and one half tribes east of the Jordan (i.e., Gad, Reuben and Manasseh) not comply with God's will on this matter (Josh. 13:13) but also Judah (see Josh. 15:63), Ephraim (Josh. 16:10), and the western half of Manasseh (Josh. 17:12) could not drive out the Canaanites either.

Joshua's conviction and the lack of conviction on the part of the seven tribes of Israel named above is depicted at Josh. 18:3 where the man of God said, "*How long are ye slack to go in to possess the land, which Jehovah, the God of your fathers, hath given you?*" (Josh. 18:3). To be "*slack*" is to "not be lively or moving, sluggish, not busy, lacking in diligence; negligent... a period of little activity; lull" (AHD 1148). Israel had become complacent and negligent in regards to God's commands to exterminate the Canaanites. The book of Joshua ends with Joshua going down in history as a man full of faith and well pleasing to God. After Joshua's death there would need to be a succor, like he was to Moses, to take the reigns of God's command to exterminate the Canaanites.

The book of Judges begins with God assigning the duty of exterminating the Canaanites to Judah (see Judges 1:1). After unsatisfactory half hearted attempts to exterminate the Canaanites Jehovah's angel appears before the people and pronounces his verdict: the Lord would no longer be with Israel in their battles (see Judges 2:1-5). Shortly after this statement we read, "*there arose another generation after them that knew not Jehovah, nor yet the work which he had wrought for Israel*" (Judges 2:10). Again, we read, "*And the children of Israel did that which was evil in the sight of Jehovah, and forgot Jehovah their God, and served the Baalim and the Asheroth*" (Judges 3:7). God then gave Israel over to the king of Mesopotamia to be their servants and so they served this

Local News:

Welcome to all our visitors:

We pray that you will be edified by our service and that you will ask questions if things are not as you are accustomed to seeing. Please do come back at your every opportunity!

Baptism!

Shane Robertson was baptized into Christ this past Wednesday evening. We pray for his spiritual growth and that he would labor diligently in the kingdom of God for years to come.

Please keep the following members in your prayers:

Stella Davidson said that her and her husband just keep getting more and more feeble. Darlene tells me that Calvin continues with his dementia. Keep Pam and Nina in your daily prayers.

Women's Bible Study:

The women's Bible study was cancelled this past Friday due to illness in the Robertson family. The next Bible class will be Friday May 8th at 12:00 Noon (note the change from 12:30 to 12:00). The class meets at the church building with Kasey Robertson doing the teaching.

Website Update:

We now have the class notes for Job on the church web site (Judges will be posted this week).

Continue to pray for our shut-ins:

Stella Davidson
696-1030 (Home)

Calvin York
692-0489 (Home).

foreign kingdom for eight years (Judges 3:8). At the end of these eight years Israel cried out to God for help and the Lord sent a judge or deliverer by the name of Othniel to save them. Such cycles of sin, servitude, sorrow, and deliverance happened several times over the next many years (see chart below).

Date of Judges

The book of Judges falls under the seventh heading of OT History called "The Period of Judges." The previous six periods are known as antediluvian, postdiluvian, patriarchal, bondage, period of wandering, and period of conquest. Dating Judges is not that difficult. If we add up all the years that Israel spent in servitude and had rest from their enemies we come up with 410 years (see chart on next page). The apostle Paul tells us that the years of Israel's judges was 450 (Acts 13:19-20). If we add the forty years of Eli's judgeship over Israel then we come to the 450 that Paul mentions (see I Sam. 4:18). If the dates of Judges are correct (i.e., 1406 to 1400 BC – see notes over that section) then the dates of the book of Judges would be 1400 to 990 BC. God's people were getting ever closer to the coming of the Christ and the forgiveness of man's sins.

Lessons Learned from a study of Judges

There are six primary lessons to learn from a study of the book of Judges. First, we learn that with each generation comes the dire need to establish a proper attitude and approach to the word of God. The book of Judges brings out the fact that God's people came to be complacent, forgetful, and downright disobedient through the process of time. No man will ride the coattail of his father or Grandfather into heaven (Rev. 20:13). While Moses was a very convicted and great man of God his grandson was not anything like him (see Judges 18:30). Each parent, and especially the father (see Eph. 6:1ff), is responsible for rearing their children in the nurture and admonition of the Lord.

Secondly, we learn the value of conviction in relation to the salvation of men's souls. The book of Judges reveals that there were, within each generation, men and women who were willing to stand up for what is right. Deborah displayed her conviction in her song at Judges 5. She praised the righteous and cursed the wicked and cowards (Judges 5:15, 23-27). Gideon tore down the altars of Baal and Asherah that Israel had constructed (Judges 6:25-28). Gideon, by faith in the strong arm of Jehovah, defeated the Midianites who numbered as the sand upon the sea shore with only three hundred men (Judges 7:7,12, 19ff). Samson, the strong man of God, single-handedly killed many of the idolatrous Philistines and gave Israel peace for twenty years (Judges 16:31). These men and women were obedient to God's laws because of their great faith (Heb. 11:32ff). When we read of their convicted acts of faith in difficult days we gain confidence in our ability, by the help of the Lord, to stand firm against the arm of Satan that assaults us (Eph. 6:10ff; Rom. 15:4; I Cor. 10:11).

Thirdly, we learn that God was proving Israel by the Canaanites just as He proves us today (Judges 3:1-4). God proved Israel by physical blessings (Deut. 8:2-4), physical hardships (8:15-17), false prophets (see Deut. 13:1-4), and the ungodly influence of the Canaanites (Judges 3:1-4). The Lord continues to prove His people today with the same things (see I Cor. 15:33; Eph. 5:1-8; I Pet. 1:6ff; I Jn. 4:1ff). Will we, with a spirit of conviction, hold true to God's commandments all the days of our life?

Fourthly, we learn that God does not tolerate sin in His people. We find the statement, "*In those days there was no king in Israel: every man did that which was right in his own eyes,*" at Judges 17:6; 18:1; 19:1 and 21:25. God was to be

king (see I Sam. 8:4ff) over a kingdom of priests (Ex. 19:6). The laws that were to govern this kingdom were from God alone (Ex. 20:1ff). To do that which is right in one's own eyes is to reject the authoritative word of God (Jude 1:5ff), to set oneself up as a god (II Thess. 2:1ff), to place the value of your opinions (Matt. 15:8-9; I Cor. 2:9; II Cor. 1:12; Gal. 1:11-12) and conscience (Rom. 2:14-15; James 4:15-17) above revelation, and to permit your personal conviction to overshadow truth (Rom. 14 all). Solomon revealed the folly of man's erroneous self perspective apart from truth (see Prov. 3:7; 12:15; 16:2; 21:2; 30:12). Jeremiah condemned God's people for their self delusion of perceived righteousness (see Jer. 4:22; 7:24; 8:6-8). Every Christian is commanded to guard truth's purity as the one true standard separate from man's opinions and religious ideas (II Tim. 1:12-13). God's word is the standard that all man are to respect and give heed to (Dan. 5:27; Hos. 5:10-11; Amos 7:7-8; Matt. 7:21-24; Eph. 2:20; 4:1 etc.). My personal opinions (Matt. 15:8-9; I Cor. 2:9; II Cor. 1:12; Gal. 1:11-12), conscience (James 4:14-15), and convictions (Rom. 14 all) are not the standards that measure my soul's state before Jehovah God.

Fifthly, we are forced to deal with the question of why man sins. God had posed the question to Israel saying, "*But ye have not hearkened unto my voice: why have ye done this?*" (Judges 2:2). Israel also posed the question in relation to their sinful brethren the Benjaminites saying, "*O Jehovah, the God of Israel, why is this come to pass in Israel, that there should be today one tribe lacking in Israel?*" (Judges 21:3) The word of God explains to man why it is that he chooses sin over righteousness. Men often sin because they **lack fear and knowledge** of God's word (see Job 28:28). People sometimes have **preconceived ideas** as to what godliness and religious service is. Israel was told that Canaan was God's gift to them; however, when they learned that they had a part in gaining His gift they erroneously concluded that God hated them (Deut. 1:27). Sometimes people do not comply with God's will because they **forget** His commandments (see Deut. 4:9, 23; Jer. 3:21). People often do not comply with God's will because they are **drawn away from truth unto another doctrine** (see Deut. 4:19; Rom. 16:17; Gal. 1:6ff; 3:1). People sin because they have **no sense of shame** (Jer. 6:15; Joel 2:12-14; II Cor. 7:10). Many sin because they are **drawn away from righteousness by their worldly lusts** (Jn. 12:43; James 1:13ff; I Jn. 2:15). People sin because they **do not share God's hatred for sin** (see Deut. 7:26; Rom. 12:9). People sin because they **value friends, family, or even the things of this world above the law of God** (Matt. 10:36-38). The Christian ought to flee from sin and draw near to God (James 4:7-8).

Israel's Cycles of Sin, Servitude, Sorrow, and Crying out for God's Help				
Israel's Sin	Oppressing Nation	Years in servitude	God's Judge	Years of rest from Enemies
Served other gods (Judges 3:7)	Mesopotamia	8	Othniel	40
Did that which is evil (Judges 3:12)	Eglon, King of Moab	18 years	Ehud	80
	Philistines		Shamgar	
Did that which is evil (Judges 4:1)	Jabin, King of Canaan	20 years	Deborah	40 years
Did that which is evil (Judges 6:1)	Midianites	7 years	Gideon	40 years
		3 years (Judges 9:22)	Abimelech	
			Tola	23 years
			Jair	22 years
Served other gods (Judges 10:6).	Philistines and Ammon	18 years	Jephthah	6 years
			Ibzan	7 years
			Elon	10 years
			Abdon	8 years
Did that which is evil (Judges 13:1)	Philistines	40 years	Samson	20 years