



### **Theme & Key Verses of Judges:**

Beginning where Joshua leaves off in the death of Joshua (Josh. 24:29). Covering almost 450 years, Judges tells the story of how *spiritual compromise* turned victory (blessing) into defeat (curse). “Another generation arose after them who did not know the LORD” (2:10).

Creating a world of such chaos where, “...everyone did what was right in his own eyes.” (Judges 21:25)

### **Objectives:**

By the power of the Holy Spirit working through God’s Word, we will:

- Learn about God’s everlasting covenant;
- Discover that God can and may withdraw His blessings when there is disobedience
- Learn that God offers forgiveness and restoration to His people

### **Setting the Stage:**

Approximately 700 years before the events recorded in the Book of Judges, God made a covenant with Abram (later Abraham). God said, “I will establish My covenant between Me and you and your offspring after you throughout their generations for an everlasting covenant, to be God to you and to your offspring after you” (Genesis 17:7). God added, “In your offspring shall all the nations of the earth be blessed” (Genesis 22:18). When God said these things to Abram, Abram trusted in God’s promise, which included the promise of his coming offspring, the Messiah. God’s covenant with Abram and his descendants was no haphazard agreement; it was an everlasting covenant in which God bound Himself to His people forever.

Before he died, Joshua (Moses’ successor), asked the Israelites to reaffirm their promise made to God, a promise to “drive out all the inhabitants of the land” of Canaan (Numbers 33:52), and to “fear the LORD and serve Him in sincerity and in faithfulness” (Joshua 24:14). Near the city of Shechem, the Israelites promised, “The LORD our God we will serve, and His voice we will obey” (Joshua 24:24).

Following Joshua’s death and the death of Eleazar, the high priest (Joshua 24:30-33), the Israelites wondered who would lead them. What would they do? Would they remain faithful to God and finish the conquest that had begun under Joshua, or would they break their promises to their covenant God? The first few chapters of Judges provide our answers.

### **Blessings & Curses: Read Judges 1:1-36**

*Was Israel initially faithful or unfaithful to God after Joshua died? What evidence supports this?*

*What was the result when the Israelites sought God’s guidance? (1:4, 8-9, 11-13, 17-19, 22-26)*

*One incident (1:21) seems out of place in the accounts of victory, then there is a turn in 1:27 of unsuccessful missions and of partial victories. Four words are continually repeated here. What are they? What is significant about these four words? What words are missing?*

*God commanded the Israelites to “drive out all the inhabitants of the land” of Canaan (Numbers 33:52). The Israelites promised to be faithful to God’s plan. What did the Israelites do to break the covenant?*

*Recall Deuteronomy 28. Especially:*

*vv.1-2 “And if you faithfully obey the voice of the Lord your God, being careful to do all his commandments that I command you today, the Lord your God will set you high above all the nations of the earth. And all these blessings shall come upon you and overtake you, if you obey the voice of the Lord your God.”*

*v. 15 “But if you will not obey the voice of the Lord your God or be careful to do all his commandments and his statutes that I command you today, then all these curses shall come upon you and overtake you.”*

*As well as twice in Deuteronomy (11:26 & 30:15,19) God states: “See, I am setting before you today a blessing and a curse”*

*How might the promise of blessings keep God’s people from running after false gods & disobeying? Why does God promise curses for disobedience?*

### **God Responds to Israel’s Disobedience: Read Judges 2:1-15**

*In a scene like that in the Garden of Eden (Genesis 3:9-11), God immediately confronts His people in their sin. What was Israel’s sin?*

*What was God’s response to their sin?*

### **God’s Mercy: Read Judges 2:16-3:6**

*Sin separates us from God. In His mercy, however, He does not leave us in our sin.*

*What mercy does God show to the people of Israel, even though they have broken the covenant and sinned against God?*

*Read James 1:12. Why does God want Christians to remain uncompromising in their faith? (Consider also 1 Corinthians 10:13)*

*Read Judges 2:1 & Matthew 28:20. God sums up His covenant by using these words: “I will never break My covenant with you.” How might God’s guarantee in Christ, seen in this passage from Matthew, strengthen you when tempted to compromise your faith?*