



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 that lives lived outside of God’s Word and faith, are conflicted and immoral;
- understand that moral decay began in the Garden of Eden;
- Rejoice that God has countered the hideous effects of sin with the healing balm of the Gospel.

Setting the Stage:

These last chapters give us a picture of anarchy and confusion. Israel (the people of God) had forsaken God in their own lives and families, and now we see the depths into which their society has sunk. Judges 17:6 says it all “In those days... everyone did what was right in his own eyes.”

There is a progression of the permeating effects of their apostasy into their society:

First — we find confusion in the religious life of the people of God and thus the nation. (17 & 18)

Second — we find confusion in the moral life of the people of God and thus the nation. (19)

Third — we find confusion in the political life. (21)

It gives us a picture of the internal condition of the chosen people. The story of the complacency and apostasy of individuals is followed by the apostasy and decay of the nation. Here we see further evidence of the decline of the spiritual life of Israel (apostasy). When we rely on ourselves and trust in other gods, God may remove His blessings, that His people may repent and turn again to Him.

The story of the judges does not end with this book, however. The cycle of sin, revolt, oppression, deliverance, and rest does not end with the death of Samson. It continues into 1 Samuel.

For the time being, however, we will look at the remaining three chapters of the Book of Judges. The last chapter proves that the children of Israel had lost the way to live rightly in God’s kingdom. They were more concerned with their temporal/earthly kingdom than they were with the eternal kingdom of God. Thus we find faithlessness, failure and forfeiture in these closing chapters of Judges. But God does love his own, and he will provide rescue and a Savior, as he has throughout Judges. But ultimately God is not as concerned with the temporal kingdom as his people. He is giving them a picture, a “type,” of what is to come. To prepare them for the eternal rescue and Savior in Christ Jesus.

Beginning with Judges 2, we have read an account of how God’s cherished people turned their back on His love and made concessions in their beliefs. Yet, because of His love, time after time, God sent judges into their lives to save them and lead them back to Him. These judges were sinners, and yet God in His grace used them for His purpose.

A “little compromise” that is actually a big deal because it is sin, is nothing new. *How does the compromise we have seen in Judges relate to Genesis 3:1?*

What thoughts come to mind when you read, “Everyone did what was right in his own eyes” (17:6)?

When God is absent, sin fills the void. Whatever we place our confidence and hope in becomes our god. Money, possessions, government/military might, pleasure/entertainment, even our own selves frequently become idols for us.

Consider for yourself: What are the things that easily become idols for you? Who/what has God sent to bring you back to Himself (call to repentance)? What is in place for comfort when led to repentance?

A Dysfunctional Family:

A man named Micah lived in Ephraim. Two stories grab our attention: that of 1) Micah, his mother, and his son (17:1-6); and 2) Micah and a Levite (17:7-13).

In the first story, what do we learn about Micah and his mother?

How do Micah and his mother sin against the First Table of the Law?

God called the Old Testament priests to serve His people (Leviticus 8-9). *What does Micah's appointment of his son as priest tell your bout his faith in God?*

How did Micah and his son show by their actions that they had no regard for the First Table of the Law?

The second story involves a Levite (a man legally bound to God's covenant and to making it known to God's people—a priest [Numbers 18:1-7]). *What did the Levite do that he should not have done?*

The Tribe of Dan Moves:

Judges 18. The tribe of Dan became unhappy with the land God had given them, so they moved.

How did the Danites go about finding another place to live?

During their search for land, Danite spies found the Levite priest that Micah had hired. The spies stole Micah's priest and household idols. *What did the spies steal them (note 18:31)?*

Death of a Levite's Concubine:

Judges 19. A Levite traveled to retrieve his concubine. On their return north, they stopped in Gibeah for the night. Men surrounded the place where they were staying and demanded to have sex with the man inside. The Levite forced his concubine outside where they "abused her all night" (25). The concubine died. The Levite carried her body home and sent parts of her throughout Israel, demanding revenge.

How do you think the actions of the Levite, a man of God, repulsed the people of Israel?

Compare Judges 20:1-17 with what was read in Judges 19:22-30. Why might the Levite fail to confess his role in sending his concubine outside to the men (19:25)?

How does the last sentence of this chapter—and of the book—summarize a life apart from God's grace in Christ?