

Old Testament Survey Lesson Eleven

Introduction

Our focus has shifted from the Pentateuch (5 scrolls) to the Historical Books

Summary of Joshua

- Began with the conquest of Canaan and instructions to “destroy completely” the surrounding nations.
- Complete destruction was necessary to protect the spiritual lives and devotion to Yahweh.
- Failure to drive out nations and obey God’s instructions would eventually create a culture of idolatry and spiritual adultery.

***And you shall make no covenant with the inhabitants of this land; you shall tear down their altars.' But you have not obeyed My voice. Why have you done this? 3 Therefore I also said, 'I will not drive them out before you; but they shall be thorns in your side, and their gods shall be a snare to you.'"* Judges 2:2-3 NKJV**

Today—Sin cycle of Israel, God’s ongoing acts of grace, and the seed preserved through a story of redemption.

I. Judges

A. Overview of Judges

1. Summarizes the episodic appearances of Charismatic judges in the midst of Israel’s spiritual unrest and uneasiness.

READ: Judges 2:11-23

2. Unlike Joshua where one individual is dominant enough to cast a shadow over the book, Judges highlights the absence of a strong spiritual leader.

NOTE: The people served God throughout Joshua’s lifetime, but sin masked in idolatry is the story Judges.

When all that generation had been gathered to their fathers, another generation arose after them who did not know the Lord nor the work which He had done for Israel. Judges 2:10 NKJV

- a. New generation did not know (intimately) God, nor were they aware of God's miraculous works.
- b. Failure of Joshua to equip the next generational leader?
- c. Failure of family to invest in their children? (Deuteronomy 6)
- d. Became so consumed by polytheistic nations and severe idol worship characterized by their enemies?

APPLICATION: To ensure spiritual strength of future generations, we must make equipping and investing in the next generation a priority.

B. About Judges

1. Title: Sopedim in Hebrew
 - a. "Sopedim" is the title often used of Yahweh
 - b. Various roles and functions—hearing of disputes, restore justice, lead military campaigns.
2. Authorship: Tradition Samuel, no internal evidence
3. Highlights the spiritual condition of God's people between Joshua and Saul

In those days there was no king in Israel; everyone did what was right in his own eyes. Judges 21:25 NKJV

- a. Idolatry and disobedience
 - b. Periods of rest and unrest
 - c. Political and spiritual turmoil
 - d. People left to their own devices
4. Its structure
 - a. Divided into three uneven sections: Conditions of Israel, Judges, and spiritual confusion
 - b. 12 judges in all—6 major and 6 minor
 5. Its purpose
 - a. Record history of Israel between Joshua and Samuel
 - b. Reveals the spiritual cycle of Israel in Canaan
 - c. Notes the danger of disobedience and cohabitating with those of other religious tendencies

C. Context of Judges

1. Physical and spiritual conditions of Israel (1:1-3:6)

a. Two introductions: 1:1-2:5 and 2:6-3:6

“After the death of Joshua...” (1:1)

“After Joshua sent the people away...” (2:6)

- Not unlike the two creation accounts of Genesis—Heaven and Earth to creation of man
- First introduction deals with the conquering of physical land and the inability to drive out nations

And Judah went with his brother Simeon, and they attacked the Canaanites who inhabited Zephath, and utterly destroyed it. So the name of the city was called Hormah. 18 Also Judah took Gaza with its territory, Ashkelon with its territory, and Ekron with its territory. Judges 1:17-18 NKJV

But the children of Benjamin did not drive out the Jebusites who inhabited Jerusalem; so the Jebusites dwell with the children of Benjamin in Jerusalem to this day. Judges 1:21 NKJV

- Second introduction deals more specifically with the spiritual condition and failure of Israel

When all that generation had been gathered to their fathers, another generation arose after them who did not know the Lord nor the work which He had done for Israel. Judges 2:10 NKJV

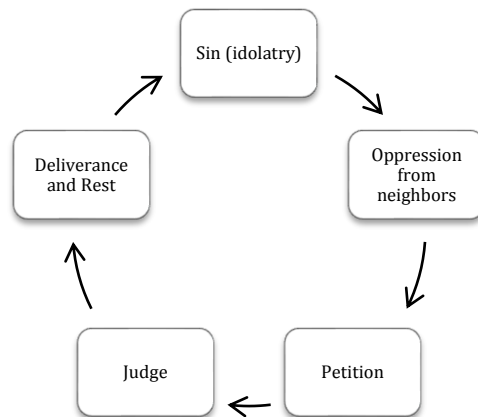
Then the anger of the Lord was hot against Israel; and He said, "Because this nation has transgressed My covenant which I commanded their fathers, and has not heeded My voice, 21 I also will no longer drive out before them any of the nations which Joshua left when he died. Judges 2:20-21 NKJV

b. Tribes mentioned from south to north

NOTE: the movement in 3:7-16:31 is linear and in downward direction.

c. Nations remaining in Canaan paved the way for their sin cycle and need for deliverers.

Sin Cycle in Judges



2. Judges in Israel (3:7-16:31)

a. Othniel (3:7-11)

- From the tribe of Judah
- Son of Caleb's younger brother Kenaz
- Fought against and won victory over kings of Aram
- Spirit of the Lord came upon him
- 8 years of bondage—40 years of peace

NOTE: Faithful leader amongst an unfaithful generation

b. Ehud (3:12-30)

- Israel in bondage to Eglon of Moab 18 years
- Only left-handed judge
- From the tribe of Benjamin= “son of the right-hander”
- Hebrews text says he was hindered, impeded, or handicapped in his right hand
- Moabites play a key role in the Ruth narrative
- Eglon—“very fat man” and Ehud

READ: Judges 3:20-25

- Victory is given by the LORD (v. 28)
- 80 years of peace

- c. Shamgar (3:31): Philistines
- d. Deborah and Barak (4:1-5:31)

- Story of Deborah is told and sung (mirrors narration and poetry of Exodus).
- Comes on the heels of Ehud's death and Israel's return to evil.

***When Ehud was dead, the children of Israel again did evil in the sight of the Lord.
Judges 4:1 NKJV***

- No mention (like Ehud) of Spirit of Yahweh coming upon, but still and exemplary judge
- Prophetess (4:5)—has word of God
- She is God's mouthpiece (Barak will lead)
- No mention of her death unlike the others
- Oppressing nation Canaanites (inside of Israel) Hazor-based king, Jabin and commander Sisera
- Deborah only woman judge
- Barak does not want to go against the Canaanites without Deborah's presence

And Barak said to her, "If you will go with me, then I will go; but if you will not go with me, I will not go!" Judges 4:8 NKJV

- Battle scene 4:10-16 (10,000 Israelite infantry against 900 chariots of iron)
- Sisera flees but is murdered by Jael (tent peg into the temple)

NOTE: The only expressions of praise and gratitude for divine intervention between settlement in Canaan and kingship is the song of Deborah and Hannah.

- Land has rest for 40 years (5:31)

e. Gideon (6:1-8:35)

- From the tribe of Manasseh
- Name means destroyer/chopper (cuts down Asherah pole)

1) Specific conditions of Israel's oppression by Midian

READ: Judges 6:1-6

- 2) Prophet sent first
- 3) Gideon's call (6:11-18)

- Question, excuse, sign, altar

NOTE: Parallels the call of Moses

— Instructed to tear down altar of Baal and Asherah pole and built altar to the Lord

- 4) Gideon asks for a sign (fleece)
- 5) Forming of an army (32,000 to 300)

And the Lord said to Gideon, "The people who are with you are too many for Me to give the Midianites into their hands, lest Israel claim glory for itself against Me, saying, 'My own hand has saved me.' Judges 7:2 NKJV

- 6) Victory of Midian (Ram's horns and clay jar)
- 7) Israel desires to establish Gideon as King—rejects offer

— Gideon's failure (ephod-idolatry)
— Return to sin

So it was, as soon as Gideon was dead, that the children of Israel again played the harlot with the Baals, and made Baal-Berith their god. 34 Thus the children of Israel did not remember the Lord their God, who had delivered them from the hands of all their enemies on every side; 35 nor did they show kindness to the house of Jerubbaal (Gideon) in accordance with the good he had done for Israel. Judges 8:33-35 NKJV

f. Abimelech (9:1-57)

— Son of Gideon—"my father is king"
— From Shechem (place where Joshua renewed covenant)
— Seeks power and authority
— Kills 70 half-brothers
— No mention of Yahweh

Thus God repaid the wickedness of Abimelech, which he had done to his father by killing his seventy brothers. Judges 9:56-57 NKJV

- g. Tola (10:1-2): Issachar/23 years
- h. Jair (10:3-5): Gilead/22 years
- i. Jephthah (10:6-12:7)

— Oppressed by Ammonites, Israel selects Jephthah as military leader
— Diplomacy fails
— Vow—offer whoever comes out as an offering (daughter)

And Jephthah made a vow to the Lord, and said, "If You will indeed deliver the people of Ammon into my hands, 31 then it will be that whatever comes out of the doors of my house to meet me, when I return in peace from the people of Ammon, shall surely be the Lord's, and I will offer it up as a burnt offering." Judges 11:30-31 NKJV

- j. Izban (12:8-10): Bethlehem/7 years
- k. Elon (12:11-12): Zebulun/10 years
- l. Abdon (12:13-15): Ephraim/8 years
- m. Samson (13:1-16:31)

- Oppressed by Philistines
- Nazarite: set apart for God

For behold, you shall conceive and bear a son. And no razor shall come upon his head, for the child shall be a Nazirite to God from the womb; and he shall begin to deliver Israel out of the hand of the Philistines." Judges 13:5 NKJV

- Marries Philistine woman
- Lion—spirit of the Lord/bare hands
- Riddle: woman deceived Samson

NOTE: Samson had a problem with women

- 300 foxes burned crops of Philistines
- Kills 1000 Philistines with a donkey jawbone
- Delilah: deception
- Final moments

3. Spiritual confusion and unrest (17:1-21:25)

- Levite, Micah, and Dan (17-18)
- Levite, concubine, Benjamin, and civil war (19-21)

Emphasis of Judges 17-21

*Highlights to even greater degree the lack of a spiritual leader and the consequence of a people left to their own desires.

In those days there was no king in Israel; everyone did what was right in his own eyes. Judges 17:6 NKJV

In those days there was no king in Israel. Judges 18:1a NKJV

And it came to pass in those days, when there was no king in Israel. Judges 19:1a NKJV

In those days there was no king in Israel; everyone did what was right in his own eyes. Judges 21:25 NKJV

*No longer is the concern with enemies of other nations, but now the people of Israel has turned on themselves—civil war

“Israel needs a king who will function as a guardian of the covenant, the very thing which the premonarchic order ultimately put at risk. Fundamental to safeguarding Israel’s covenant fidelity is confronting the enemy which took more Hebrew lives than any foreign oppressor. A king is needed who will save Israel from its greatest threat: itself” (Stone 1988:477)

*It was in this period of spiritual unrest, chaos, and turmoil that a story of redemption will emerge and a new leader will eventually bring an end to this unrest.

II. Ruth

Summary of Ruth

Ruth is a story of God’s redemptive grace and mercy in the midst of political and spiritual turmoil.

- The message of redemption is extended to EVERY nation.
- The protection of the Seed is found in the midst of this narrative (Ruth 4)

A. About Ruth

1. Context of the narrative: “In the days when the judges ruled Israel”
2. Authorship: Tradition—Samuel
3. Canonization of Ruth
 - a. Septuagint and Christian Canon—Between Judges and Samuel
 - b. Jewish Canon—Third section= writings
 - c. Between Judges and Samuel highlights the kingship of David

In those days there was no king in Israel; everyone did what was right in his own eyes. Judges 21:25 NKJV

Obed begot Jesse, and Jesse begot David. Ruth 4:22 NKJV

- Only book whose last word is a name

1 Samuel 31:1-3

4. Moabite/Israelite disconnect
 - a. Moab’s origin: incestuous relationship between drunken father and firstborn daughter (Genesis 19:30-37)
 - b. Moabites were excluded from assembling with Israel

"An Ammonite or Moabite shall not enter the assembly of the Lord; even to the tenth generation none of his descendants shall enter the assembly of the Lord forever, 4 because they did not meet you with bread and water on the road when you came out of Egypt, and because they hired against you Balaam the son of Beor from Pethor of Mesopotamia, to curse you. 5 Nevertheless the Lord your God would not listen to Balaam, but the Lord your God turned the curse into a blessing for you, because the Lord your God loves you. 6 You shall not seek their peace nor their prosperity all your days forever. Deuteronomy 23:3-6 NKJV

— Numbers 25—Israel participates with women of Moab in sinful act

B. Structure of Ruth

1. Geographical Structure

- a. Bethlehem—Moab—Bethlehem (Chapter 1)
- b. Field of Boaz (Chapter 2)
- c. Threshing floor with Boaz (Chapter 3)
- d. City gate of Bethlehem (Chapter 4)

2. Thematic Structure

- a. Famine, Barrenness, Isolation
- b. Plenty, Fruitfulness, Community

C. Content of Ruth

1. Chapter One

- a. Famine in Bethlehem (House of Bread)
- b. Journey to Moab
- c. Death: Elimelech, Mahlon, Kilion
- d. Ruth and Orpah
- e. Ruth commits to stay with Naomi—Moabite returns to Bethlehem

But Ruth said: "Entreat me not to leave you, Or to turn back from following after you; For wherever you go, I will go; And wherever you lodge, I will lodge; Your people shall be my people, And your God, my God. 17 Where you die, I will die, And there will I be buried. The Lord do so to me, and more also, If anything but death parts you and me." 18 When she saw that she was determined to go with her, she stopped speaking to her. Ruth 1:16-18 NKJV

2. Chapter Two

- a. Ruth gleanes in the field of Boaz (falls to ground)

'When you reap the harvest of your land, you shall not wholly reap the corners of your field, nor shall you gather the gleanings of your harvest. 10 And you shall not glean your vineyard, nor shall you gather every grape of your vineyard; you shall leave them for the poor and the stranger: I am the Lord your God. Leviticus 19:9-10 NKJV

- b. “As it happened” (2:3)—in the field of Boaz a relative of Elimelech

“Hidden, yet providential, hand of God that directs the movement of the Moabite widow” (Hamilton)

- c. Boaz encourages Ruth to remain
- d. Boaz is aware of Ruth’s faithfulness to Naomi
- e. Naomi references Boaz as “one of our nearest kin”

3. Chapter Three

- a. Naomi’s plan—send Ruth to Boaz
- b. Ruth and Boaz at the threshing floor
- c. Ruth returns to Naomi with the understanding that Boaz will take care of everything

4. Chapter Four

- a. Boaz at the city gate
- b. Closer redeemer refuses—may not want to sacrifice own inheritance by taking Ruth (Levirate Laws)
- c. Boaz marries Ruth
- d. Genealogy: David
- e. Obed picture of Christ: Special birth circumstances, blessing: restore life, elevation of mother, name: Obed=servant anticipates David—anointed servant of Yahweh and Isaianic service

Why is she included in the genealogy of Jesus?

“All people, Jew and non-Jew alike, are welcomed in Messiah’s kingdom, a kingdom over which Jesus alone is King.” (Hamilton)

*Shapes our understanding of immigration in the 21st Century

*Universality of the gospel message

*Mystery of the gospel story

Conclusion:

1. In the midst of political and spiritual chaos, God is often—in His providence—working to establish His plan of redemption and restoration.
2. The process of spiritual maturity is just that—a process—that requires a complete surrender and obedience to God.
3. Even in our sinfulness, God raised up a Savior—His Son—to free us from the bondage of sin.
4. Even in the sin cycle of Judges, God protected His promise of a Seed, which has its roots in a Moabite woman.
5. Failure to remember the faithfulness and goodness of God and His wonderful deeds can create an ignorant and disobedient generation.