

Dark Times. Broken People. FAITHFUL KING.

Judges - Introduction

I. Biblical Timeline - 14 Eras

Creation/Fall----Patriarchs----Exodus----Conquest----Judges----Kingdom

---Divided Kingdom---Captivity---Return---Silent Years---The Gospel---

The Church---Missions---The End Times

II. Review of Joshua

III. God's Wrath Against Sin – Review Workbook and Introduction

Rahab's confession – Joshua 2

From *The Good and Beautiful God* (James Bryan Smith) –

“In the same way that God’s love is not a silly, sappy, feeling but rather a consistent desire for the good of His people, so also the wrath of God is not a crazed rage but rather a consistent opposition to sin and evil... God is not indecisive when it comes to evil. God is fiercely and forcefully opposed to the things that destroy his precious people, which I am grateful for. It is a sign of God’s love: God’s wrath must be understood in relation to His love. Wrath is not a permanent attribute of God. Whereas love and holiness are part of His essential nature, wrath is contingent upon human sin; if there were no sin there would be no wrath... While it is correct to say God is holy, it is not correct to say God is wrathful. Wrath is the just act of a holy God toward sin ” (p. 120-121).

“Holiness is essentially wholeness – a life that works. Sin is dysfunction or sickness” (p. 130).

God is against my sin, because sin causes destruction. God’s laws are for our well-being and human flourishing. He fights “for” us!

IV. Trace the Faithfulness of God

God gave the Ten Commandments to Moses on Mt. Sinai. Commandments for the flourishing and well-being of His chosen people - the ones through whom the Promised One would come. Because of unbelief, the people will flounder until the coming of Christ.

We are not so different, nor have we learned from their rebellion. But we can! God has given us His Word to reveal Himself and His will for all who follow Him through Christ.

In the book of Judges, we view the consequences experienced by Israel because they did not obey the Lord to rid the land of pagan nations. These nations became a thorn in their side. As we read the book of Judges, we will mark in our Bibles, the seven sin cycles of God's people.

V. The Sin Cycle – Judges 2:11-19 (diagram on page 32)

At the end of the period of the Judges, the people cry out for a King like all the nations around them. God tells Samuel, the last of the Judges and the first of the prophets, that the people have not rejected him but the Lord Himself. So God gives them what they wanted and they still rebel! There would be periods of peace in the southern kingdom when a righteous king would lead them, but those periods were short-lived. Ultimately, their sin-hardened hearts refused to listen to the prophets of God and instead suffered the judgment of God.

After their deportation to Babylon, God was still faithful. He gave them prophets like Jeremiah, Daniel and Ezekiel, who warned them about the idols in their hearts – Ezekiel 14:1-11.

The command the Lord had given Israel under Moses in Deuteronomy 6:4-9 still stood. "The grass withers and the flower fades, but the Word of God stands forever" (Isaiah 40:8).

But the very sad commentary of the period of the Judges was caused by a failure to train the next generation – Judges 2:10

Oh precious follower of Christ – His Word stands today! The only thing that can rid your heart of idols (errant affections) is a greater affection for Christ!

Thomas Chalmers in his book, *A New Obsession* stated, "The best way of casting out an impure affection is to let in a pure one: and by the love of what is good, to expel the love of what is evil" (Loc. 289).

God's Greatest Command is for our greatest good!

What are we seeing happen around the world? Man is elevating his own reasoning above the Word of God. We are rejecting God and seeing Romans 1 played out on the world stage before us. In America, we see it up close and personal.

How has this happened in a nation that was founded on Judeo-Christian principles? Simply stated; we have forgotten God. We are seeking to find our identity in other things, or other people instead of in Christ. As Pascal said, "There is a God-shaped vacuum in the heart of each man which cannot be satisfied by any created thing but only by God the Creator, made known through Jesus Christ."

When we go our own way, we find ourselves on the broad path that leads to destruction. Just look at the skyrocketing percentages of people struggling with fear, anxiety, depression and thoughts of suicide. In fact, suicide is the second-leading cause of death among people ages 10-34 (apa.org). There are 123 suicides per day, which is one every 12 minutes. Yet, we live in the most prosperous country in the world? What is wrong with us? Could it be that we have forgotten God?

Alexander Solzhenitsyn – survivor of the Communist holocaust said:

"As a survivor of the Communist Holocaust I am horrified to witness how my beloved America, my adopted country, is gradually being transformed into a secularist and atheistic utopia, where communist ideals are glorified and promoted, while Judeo-Christian values and morality are ridiculed and increasingly eradicated from the public and social consciousness of our nation. Under the decades-long assault and militant radicalism of many so-called "liberal" and "progressive" elites, God has been progressively erased from our public and educational institutions, to be replaced with all manner of delusion, perversion, corruption, violence, decadence, and insanity...Those of us who have experienced and witnessed first-hand the atrocities and terror of communism understood fully why such evil takes root, how it grows and deceives, and the kind of hell it will ultimately unleash on the innocent and the faithful. Godlessness is always the first step towards tyranny and oppression!" (Alexander Solzhenitsyn – "Men Have Forgotten God" orthochristian.com)

Alexander Solzhenitsyn in his Templeton Address said, "All attempts to find a way out of the plight of today's world are fruitless unless we redirect our consciousness, in repentance, to the Creator of all: without this, no exit will be illumined, and we shall seek it in vain."

Jesus said. "He who has ears to hear let him hear what the Spirit is saying" (Matthew 11:15).

Once again, hear the voice of the Lord, "The grass withers and the flower fades but the Word of God stands forever" (Isaiah 40:8).

I am so excited about our study of the book of Judges and it's application to our lives today. We don't despair because our King has come! We have His Word and His Spirit to fill us, satisfy us and guide us. The Word has become flesh and dwelt among us! We have beheld His glory....

Complete corruption – which is the state of human beings after the Fall – can only be reversed by the sacrifice of complete incorruption. Jesus was sinless. Jesus reverses the original Fall by doing for us what we could not do for ourselves! By the sacrifice of His own body Jesus did two things: He put an end to the law of death which barred our way, and He made a new beginning of life for us, by giving us the hope of resurrection. Jesus, you see, destroyed death"
(The Good and Beautiful God, p. 137).