

The Judges

Lesson 17

INTRO:

- A. The Hebrew word for “judges’ does not mean judge in the sense of a modern judicial person with black robes and a courtroom.
- B. It means one who decides, who vindicates, who delivers, or one who leads or governs.
- C. There is a repeated pattern in the book of Judges:
 - 1. *“the children of Israel did evil in the sight of the LORD”* (2:11;3:7,12;4:1;6:1; 13:1)
 - 2. *“He sold them into the hands of their enemies round about,”* (Judges 2:14; 3:8; 4:2; and 10:7.)
 - 3. *“And when the children of Israel cried unto the LORD,...”* (Judges 3:9,15; 4:2; 6:6,7; and 10:10.)
 - 4. *“Nevertheless the LORD raised up judges, which delivered them out of the hand of those that spoiled them.”* (Judges 2:16,18; 3:9,15; Judges 2:16; 3:9,15,31; 6:15,36,37; 7:7; and 10:12)

II. EHUD (JUDGES 3:12-30)

- A. Again, the Israelites were practicing evil before the Lord.
- B. This resulted in Eglon, the Moabite king, enslaving the Israelites for 18 years.
- C. The people repented and cried out to the Lord who sent Ehud to judge and rescue the people.
 - 1. Ehud was of the tribe of Benjamin and son of Gera.
- D. Ehud was left-handed and was able to go into the king’s presence with a dagger fastened under his clothes to his inner right thigh.
- E. Finding a time alone with the king, Ehud used his left hand to get the gagger and bury it deep into the king’s belly.
- F. Following this, Ehud led the Israelites into battle killing about 10,000 men of war.
- G. Again the land had peace and this time it was for 80 years.

H. LESSONS:

- 1. Let us avoid the ‘sin, repent, and sin again’ cycle.
 - a. We must overcome sin in order to be in and remain in fellowship with the Lord. **(1 John 1:5-7)**
 - b. If we do sin, then we must confess our sin to the Lord and repent. **(1 John 1:9)**
- 2. We need to be ready to deliver others from their enslavement to sin.
 - a. The Lord raised up Ehud to deliver the Israelites from their enslavement to the Moabites. Ehud was successful. (Judges 3:15)
 - b. What greater enslavement is there than enslavement to sin? **(Romans 6:16)**
 - c. Do we know someone who is enslaved to sin?
 - 1) If they are not a Christian, then we should be the person to make every effort to bring that lost soul to Christ. **(Mark 16:15-16; Acts 2:38)**
 - 2) If they are an erring Christian, we need to be the person to make every effort possible to try and restore them. **(Galatians 6:1-2; James 5:19-20; Galatians 2:11-14)**
- 3. Christians should always carry their ‘weapon’.
 - a. Ehud hid the dagger on his person, waiting for the right opportunity to use it. (Judges 3:16, 21-22)

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- b. We must always carry the “*sword of the Spirit*” with us. (**Ephesians 6:10,11,17**)
- 4. Christians are to always be watchful for every opportunity to defeat the enemy.
 - a. Ehud used the opportunity of the presenting of the tribute to king Eglon. (Judges 3:15,17-23)
 - b. The “*sword of the Spirit*” will do us no good if we do not use it or don’t know how to use it.
 - 1) Opportunities to overcome or avoid the devil. (**1 Peter 5:6-9; James 4:7-10**)
 - 2) Opportunities to bring sin to light and convert the sinner. (**Ephesians 5:8-14**)

III. SHAMGAR (JUDGES 3:31)

- A. There is only one verse mentioning Shamgar.
 - 1. He was the son of Anath.
 - 2. He fought against the Philistines with an ox goad killing 600 men to deliver Israel.

IV. DEBORAH and BARAK (JUDGES 4:1-5:21)

- A. After the death of Ehud, the people returned to their evil deeds before the Lord.
- B. Punishment came in the form of a king of Canaan named Jabin who was reigning in Hazor.
 - 1. Jabin was seemingly impossible for the Israelites to handle because he had 900 chariots of iron!
 - 2. His oppression had lasted twenty years when the Lord began to deliver the people through the hands of the prophetess Deborah and her chosen military leader Barak.
- C. Barak and Deborah saw victory over the chariots in the battlefield, but the opposing general fled.
 - 1. The general fell victim to a housewife who drove a tent peg through his head while he was hiding under the covers.
- D. After this great victory, Deborah and Barak sang a victory song recounting the victory of the LORD and the defeat of the opposing general at the hands of “*Jael, the wife of Heber the Kenite, of tent-dwelling women most blessed.*”
- E. Peace came for forty more years, but it did not last.
- F. **LESSONS:**
 - 1. Trust in God’s Word.
 - a. Deborah trusted in the word of God. She understood God alone was able to do what He says He will do.
 - b. So when God said that Barak and Israel would defeat the Canaanite army, Deborah believed God.
 - c. So when Barak wavered and said that she had to go with him or he would not go, she did not falter or begin to doubt God’s ability to fulfill His word.

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- 1) But Deborah confronted Barak with his lack of faith and told him he was not trusting God as he should.
- d. Young women today must also know the Word of God and be assured of it.
 - 1) There are major cultural and relationship pressures placed on young women today.
 - A) Culturally, sex is assumed to be an important part of dating relationships.
 - B) Marriage is often seen as merely one option among several, so decisions about college and career don't focus on how these choices will impact a marriage. (This problem is not exclusive to women—young men are also impacted by these same cultural pressures.)
 - C) Decision making becomes a group effort, opinions are considered from a number of sources, and the final decision is, more times than not, based on "conventional wisdom."
 - D) However, rarely are those decisions having to do with relationships based on a solid conviction and concern for God's Word. **THIS NEEDS TO CHANGE!**
- e. Our battle is not with an army of threatening Canaanites but we do have an enemy which is very dangerous and can be defeated only by the power of God and His Word.
 - 1) The greatest gift we can give to our daughters is the skill and confidence to use God's Word to address the issues of life they will face each day.
 - A) Not just knowledge of the Scriptures but how to apply that knowledge in situations and in making decisions.
2. Respecting The Order Of God and The Role Of Men.
 - a. Deborah did not lose sight of the rightful place of men to lead.
 - 1) Deborah said in **Judges 4:9**.
 - 2) Deborah reminds Barak his path is not a good one.
 - 3) Barak was looking to Deborah for strength instead of God.
 - 4) Deborah points him back to God as she confronts him with his lack of faith.
 - b. As a sister in Christ, a young woman must also respectfully challenge men to put God first when they seek her approval for an action rather than relying on God's Word.
 - 1) For example, in determining what is appropriate behavior in a relationship, a young man should not seek first to find out what a young woman will allow.
 - 2) Whether the behavior has to do with what movie to see or what places to go, setting the proper boundaries for physical contact, or determining the direction of the relationship, the Word of God needs to be the determining factor with the man taking leadership.

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- 3) I am not talking about issues of personal preference, but issues that have to do with honoring God in relationships.
 - c. In this context, it is appropriate for women to ask their boyfriend or husband how God is being honored in the choices that are being made.
 - 1) There is nothing wrong with a woman challenging a man, or anyone else for that matter, to put God first.
 - 2) And a man who is truly interested in putting God first will welcome and respect such a challenge.
 - 3) If he doesn't, then a valuable lesson will have been learned about his commitment, or lack of commitment, to Christ.
 - d. Deborah also continued to be respectful of God's order after the battle was won.
 - 1) The Scriptures tells us she composed the song of victory with Barak, rather than looking down on him and shutting him out.
- 3. Courage!
 - a. Deborah showed great courage:
 - 1) The men around her were not responding with courage.
 - 2) If her prophetic words had not come true, she could have been killed by God's people.
 - 3) The armies of Sisera were powerful.
 - 4) The nation was being oppressed and intimidated.
 - b. Yet Deborah had the courage to believe what God said, even if the circumstances around her were not very encouraging.
 - c. Both women and men need courage today to stand against the cultural assault on what is right and what is wrong.
 - d. May Deborah encourage our daughters to put God first and to pray for male leadership that will embrace and follow the ways of God.