

Destin Church of Christ

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Lesson 8: Judges – “A Few Good Men and Women” Timeless Truth: The Call vs. The Culture—An Eternal Problem Judges 2 – 4; 6 – 8; 13 – 16

Albert Einstein once said that insanity is “doing the same thing over and over again and expecting different results.”

If we use this definition, then the people of Israel look pretty crazy in this chapter of *The Story*. In the time of the Judges the people of God went through the same cycle over and over again. Each time they rebelled and turned away from God they would face the same results: a foreign army would invade and they would end up an oppressed, occupied, and broken nation.

Lesson Breakdown:

- Sin Cycle (Judges 2-3)
- Deborah and Barak (Judges 4)
- God’s Prophet (Judges 6)
- Gideon (Judges 6-8)
- Samson and the Philistines (Judges 13-16)

Plot Points:

- Israel’s failure to fully drive out the Canaanites led them into compromise and gross idolatry.
- God’s people are constantly caught up in a four-stage cycle: (1) sin, (2) oppression, (3) repentance, (4) deliverance.
- The Lord was willing to use flawed people to bring about His people’s deliverance.

As you watch the video for Session 8 of The Story, notice some of the main points.

- ✓ “The is with you, mighty warrior.”
- ✓ “This song will testify against them.”
- ✓ Once delivered, the cycle will start all over again.
- ✓ God often chooses the most unlikely candidate to accomplish his Upper Story plan.
- ✓ We think in the Lower Story God has abandoned us, but his arms are wide open in the Upper Story.

UNDERSTAND THE STORY:

Judges 2:

- The people served the Lord all the days of the elders who outlived Joshua and had seen all the great works the Lord had done for Israel. [Judges 2:7]
 - Joshua died at the age of 110 and was buried in the hill country of Ephraim. (pg. 103) [Judges 2:8-9]
 - Another generation rose up after them who did not know the Lord nor the work He had done for Israel. They abandoned the Lord and followed and bowed down to other gods. (pg. 103) [Judges 2:10-13]
 - The Lord raised up judges who saved the people of Israel from the power of those who were stealing their possessions, but when the judge died, the people of Israel would turn away and do things that were even more corrupt than their fathers had done. (pg. 104) [Judges 2:16-19]
1. Why would the Lord not drive out from Israel any of the nations that Joshua left when he died? (pg. 104) [Judges 2:21-22]
- Whenever Israel went out to fight, the hand of the Lord was against them to defeat them, just as he had sworn to them. (pg. 100) [Joshua 23:16]

Judges 3:

- The Lord raised up Othniel as the first judge to come to the help of the people of Israel.
2. What qualified him to be the first judge? (pg. 104-105) [Judges 3:9]
- The land had peace for forty years, until Othniel died.
 - The people of Israel turned away from God again. Ehud, the second judge, was raised up to deliver Israel from the servitude of Eglon, king of Moab. He strapped his sword (dagger) under his clothing on his right thigh, which enabled him to gain the presence of the king, whom he later killed. (pg. 105) [Judges 3:15-16]
3. Why would strapping his sword (dagger) on his right thigh been an advantage for him?

- The Israelites had peace for 80 years.
- Shamgar, the third judge, was an expert with an ox goad and used it as an instrument of war. He killed six hundred Philistines and saved Israel. (NIB) [Judges 3:31]

Judges 4:

- Deborah, the fourth judge, summoned Barak and told him to take ten thousand men and march to Mount Tabor, where God will hand Sisera over to him. (pg. 105) [Judges 4:6-7]
4. What was Barak's response? (pg. 105) [Judges 4:8]
 5. How did Deborah's respond to that? (pg. 105) [Judges 4:9]
 6. Who actually killed Sisera and how was it done? (pg. 106) [Judges 4:17]
- The land was at rest for forty years. (pg. 107) [Judges 5:31]

Judges 6:

- The Israelites turned away from God, returning to their evil ways in the sight of the Lord. God delivered them into the hands of the Midianites for seven years. The Israelites did what they would normally do when oppressed; they went crying to God for help. (pg. 107) [Judges 6:1-6]
- The Lord sends them a prophet, a farmer from the weakest clan in his tribe. Like most new leaders, Gideon, the fifth judge, was uncertain if he could measure up. But God was looking for a faithful follower, not a decorated soldier. (pgs. 108-112) [Judges 6-8]
- The Lord told him to go and save Israel from the Midianites, but Gideon wanted a sign that he was communing with God. The Lord sent an angel who started a fire, jumped into the fire, and then departed. Gideon realized he was in the presence of the Lord's angel, and God directed him on what to do next.
- Gideon placed a wool fleece on the threshing floor. The next morning, there was dew only on the fleece and all the ground was dry. The following morning, the fleece was dry and the ground was covered with dew. (pgs. 109) [Judges 6:36-38]

Judges 7:

- Gideon's name is changed to Jerubbaal (pg. 109) [Judges 7:1]
 - Gideon prepares to attack the Midianites with his army, but God let's him know he has too many men in his army.
7. Why did God say that was too many men? (pg. 110) [Judges 7:2] .
 8. How many did he start with? (pg. 110) [Judges 7:3]
 - Gideon was left with ten thousand, which God still thought was too much.
 - The Lord wanted to make the number of soldiers smaller and told Gideon to take the people down to the water and separate everyone who lapped up the water as a dog laps. (pg. 110) [Judges 7:5-7]
 9. Why choose those who knelt to drink verses those who lapped like a dog?
 - Gideon kept three hundred soldiers and sent the rest home. (pg. 110) [Judges 7:6]
 - The Israelites defeated the Midianites and the land was undisturbed for forty years. (pg. 111) [Judges 7:28]

Judges 8:

- Gideon requests bread from the towns of Succoth and Penuel, but the townspeople send him away. He kills the kings of Midian and takes revenge on the people of Succoth and Penuel by destroying their two towns.
- The men of Israel requested Gideon to become their ruler, but he refused. He responded that God the Lord would rule over them. All Gideon wanted was the golden earrings the Ishmaelites wore. Gideon made an ephod out of the earrings. Israel prostituted themselves by worshiping it. (pg. 112) [Judges 8:23, 27]
- Israel had peace for 40 years while Gideon was alive.
- Gideon died a good old age and Israel went back to forsaking the God who just delivered them through the hands of Gideon. They didn't even show kindness to the house of Jerubbaal (Gideon) for all he did for Israel. (pg. 112) [Judges 8:33]

- Judges 10: #6 - Tola and #7 - Jair
- Judges 11: #8 - Jephthah
- Judges 12: #9 - Ibzan, #10 - Elon, and #11 - Abdon
- The children of Israel had strayed away from God and as a result, they were in forced servitude to the Philistines for forty years.
- The miraculous birth, exploits, failings, and redemptive death of the twelfth judge, Samson, is covered in the book of Judges from chapters 13 to 16.

Judges 13:

- His story begins with a man named Manoah and his wife who couldn't have a child. An angel appeared to the wife and told her she would have a son, and instructed her not to drink wine or strong drink, not to eat foods on the unclean list (Leviticus 11), and never put a razor to the child's head. He would be a Nazarite to God from the womb, and he was chosen to deliver Israel from the Philistines oppression. (pg. 112) [Judges 13:2-5]

Judges 14:

- Samson is engaged to marry a Philistine girl. (pg. 112) [Judges 14:1]
- He killed a lion and bees made honey in the carcass. (pg. 113) [Judges 14:5-9]
- During his wedding celebration he offers his guests a valuable prize if they answer a riddle. Stumped, the guests resort to having his new wife ply the answer from him. (pg. 113-114) [Judges 14:10-17]

10. For how long did Samson's wife cry in order to get the answer to the riddle?
[Judges 14:17]

- Samson, enraged after discovering he had been tricked into divulging the riddle's answer, kills thirty Philistines in order to provide the promised prize. (pg. 114) [Judges 14:18-19]
- The chapter ends with Samson's wife leaving him for his friend. Actually, she was taken back by her father because they thought by her devious doing, he would hate and kill her.

Judges 15:

- Samson burns the Philistine fields when he is not allowed to see his wife. (pg. 115) [Judges 15:4-6]
- In retaliation by the Philistines, they burned his ex-wife and her father's household to death. (pg. 115) [Judges 15:6]
- Samson is handed over to the Philistines, but later kills 1,000 of them with a jawbone of a donkey. (pg. 115) [Judges 15:9-15]

Judges 16:

- Samson went to Gaza and had relations with a prostitute there. (pg. 116) [Judges 16:1]
- Some Philistines spot him and lay wait for him to kill him. (pg. 116) [Judges 16:2]
- He met a Philistine woman he loved named Delilah. (pg. 116) [Judges 16:4]
- The Philistines were already on her to entice him and find out his secret to his strength. They were going to pay her 1,100 pieces of silver. (pg. 116) [Judges 16:5]
- Delilah was all about the money and went to work pressing Samson for his secret to his strength. (pg. 116) [Judges 16:6]
- He gave phony answers at first. (pg. 116-117) [Judges 16:7-16]
- After much pressing, Samson tells Delilah that the source of his power is his dedicated service to God symbolized by his unshaved head. (pg. 117) [Judges 16:17]

11. Why did Samson finally tell Delilah the answer to his riddle? [Judges 16:16]

- As he sleeps, Delilah has his hair shaved off which caused him to break his Nazarite vow and lose his superhuman strength. The brutal Philistines take him prisoner, gouge out his eyes, bind him and force him to grind grain in prison. (pg. 118) [Judges 16:18-21]

12. The chapter ends with a bit of self-sacrifice redemption. The last act of Samson is to call upon God to strengthen him, one last time, so he could have revenge in one blow on the Philistines for taking his two eyes. With the help of a boy who held his hand, Samson stood with outstretched arms against the main supporting pillars of a pagan temple dedicated to Dagon, he pushes with all his might and causes the entire building to collapse! Not only does he kill himself, but also at least 3,000 Philistines and their leaders, more than those he killed during his life. (pg. 118-119) [Judges 16:26-30]
- His brothers came and buried him. Samson had led Israel 20 years. (pg. 119) [Judges 16:31]
 - Even as Solomon was blessed to be immensely wealthy unlike any other, Samson was endowed during his life with miraculous physical strength unlike any before or since. In spite of his failings, the apostle Paul lists him as a person whose faith in God was noteworthy [Hebrews 11:32 – 33].
 - The Book of Judges ends in chapter 21:25: “²⁵ *In those days there was no king in Israel; everyone did what was right in his own eyes.*” NASB

You would think that after living through this cycle two or three times the children of Israel would have caught on. But this chapter of *The Story* makes clear that they did not learn from past experience.

As we read these Bible accounts, it would be easy to wag a finger at our ancestors of the faith. But when we look into a mirror and examine our own lives, we just might see ourselves acting a lot like the people of Israel.

Homework: Take time before your next class to read chapter 9. *The Story* of Ruth, a young Moabite woman, who was loyal, determined, lovely and clever.

Ruth 1 – 4