

Judges - cont.

tionships in their marriages (Judg. 3:1-6). They married foreigners who took them away from God. They did not follow God's instructions concerning marriage (Deuteronomy 7:2-3; Joshua 23:12). They will have this same problem later (Nehemiah 13:23-27).

Today, Christians can be taken away from God through a marriage to a non-Christian. Marriage is a close, intimate, and powerfully influential relationship for good, or evil. Ungodly marriage unions are dangerous (1 Kings 11:1-11; 16:31-33). While it is true that marrying a non-Christian is not sinful (1 Corinthians 7:12-14), it is also true that it may be very unwise (1 Corinthians 15:33).

Jehovah Raised Up Judges

The same reasons for unfaithfulness found in the Israelites that caused Jehovah to raise up judges, are found among God's people today: incomplete obedience, ignorance, idolatry, and inter-marriage. Knowing this, let us wholly follow the Lord. Let us be wise. Let us serve the one, true God. Let us develop pure relationships with others. Only in this way can we be right with God and be saved.

- Chris Reeves -

Sentence Sermons

- God knows his will, but do you?
- To be what you ought to be, you need to do what you ought to do.
- The person who is rowing the boat usually does not have time to rock it.
- Begin life where you are, but don't stay where you are.
- If you want to go to heaven, you have to start in that direction.

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For though we walk in the flesh, we do not war according to the flesh, for the weapons of our warfare are not of the flesh, but divinely powerful for the destruction of fortresses.
- 2 Corinthians 10:3-4 -

Jehovah Raised Up Judges

And Jehovah raised up judges, who saved them out of the hand of those that despoiled them - Judges 2:16 -

Why the Judges?

The book of Joshua ends on a positive note concerning Israel: the land is conquered! There is great success with the nation of Israel at the end of the book of Joshua. However, when you come to the beginning of the next book, Judges, Israel is now weeping and distressed (2:4-5,15). Why is this?

Why is Israel now in need of Judges — men (and one woman, Deborah) who will be raised up by Jehovah to save Israel (2:16-18)? Why is Israel now repeating the same sins of their past (2:19)? Why is Jehovah's anger kindled against Israel (2:20)? Why did Jehovah leave the Canaanite nations in the land to test Israel (2:21-23)?

When we answer the question of why Israel needed judges and why Jehovah raised them up to help, then we will understand more about the spiritual condition of Israel at that time and more about our own condition. Let's consider now what I will call the "Four I's" of Judges 1-3.

Four Reasons for the Judges

First: Incomplete Obedience

Israel did not completely drive out the Canaanites from the land like they were supposed to (Judges 1:21,28,30,33; Deuteronomy 7:1-5). They lacked aim and courage to finish the job. They were spiritually weak. They had a disposition of compromise instead of conviction. They did not pass the test of strength (Judges 2:21-23).

Today, Christians can suffer from the same condition of incomplete obedience. Are we failing to completely obey? Do we know the Lord's will, but fail to do it (Luke 12:35-48; James 4:17)? Are we allowing the enemy (the Devil) to remain among us? Do we give him a place in our life (Ephesians 4:27) and do we refuse to resist him (James 4:8)?

Second: Ignorance

Israel failed to develop new leadership like Joshua through teaching and training (Judges 2:6-9; Joshua 23-24). They also failed to teach the one true God to the next generation (Judges 2:10). They did not follow the words of Deuteronomy 4:9 or 6:4-6. Without godly leaders and followers, Israel simply became ungodly.

Today, Christians can still have a problem of ignorance. Are we ignorant of God's will because we don't read our Bible regularly (Ephesians 5:17)? Are we passing God's word on to the next generation, at home and in the local church (2 Timothy 1:13; 2:2)? Are we teaching our children God's way and word (2 Timothy 3:15)? Or, are we ignorantly mishandling the word of God (2 Peter 3:16)?

Third: Idolatry

Israel was ungodly and they served idols (false gods) after their ancestors promised not to (Judges 2:11-15). They forsook the Lord and worshipped false gods and did the evil associated with those false gods.

Today, Christians can still serve idols if they are not careful. Are we covetousness? This is idolatry (Colossians 3:5). Are we going to be lost because of idols (Revelations 21:8; 22:15). Are we guarding against idols (1 Corinthians 10:14; 1 John 5:21). Are we forsaking the Lord by forsaking the assembling (Hebrews 10:25)?

Fourth: Inter-Marriage

Israel failed to maintain pure rela-