

APRIL 24

Judges 2:10-3:31

Judges 2:10-23

There is a lot of great stuff to observe in this chapter. Have fun. I have a few things.

V. 10 It isn't that their children, the next generation, didn't know about the Lord, but they didn't acknowledge Him as their God. They became like the people around them, "recognizing" many gods and traditions. It could have been that the parents didn't teach the children, but I doubt that. Part of the reason might be that parents talked about the Lord, but were very busy and consumed getting their lives together in the land. Maybe the children watched the parents and saw that living closely with the Lord was not a vital part of their parents' lives. The parents' personal relationship with the Lord and their love for Him should have been more important than building their houses. On the other hand, the generation that doesn't have to fight for something doesn't appreciate what it has. Each generation, regardless of their parents, needs to seek the Lord.

Vs. 11-15 For the people to have worshipped any God but Yahweh was bad enough. Baal and Ashtaroath were very sexually focused fertility religions where both men and women gave themselves over to sexual intercourse and perversion in worship. In 1 Kings 19:18 where God says He will keep 7000 men for Himself who have not bowed the knee to Baal or kissed him, this is referring to becoming sexually defiled in that worship.

Vs. 16-23 These verses describe the cycle that will go through the book. Each time, however, the cycle goes deeper and the people become more degraded, ignorant and distant from God until we end up with the final two events in this book. This will continue for over 300 years of Israel's history. It makes you feel bad for God.

V. 17 They both literally and figuratively whored after these gods.

Vs. 22-23 This will recur in today's reading. God broke the back of the military powers under Joshua, but He purposefully left nations there to test Israel's obedience. Through following God, this generation would have had its own experiences of faith in seeing the miraculous ways that God saved them.

Judges 3

Vs. 1-6 These verses begin to explain the reason for what happens over the next 300 years. Notice the references to testing. Notice too in v. 2, that the nations were left to teach Israel war. The new generation was just handed the land and didn't appreciate it. They didn't fight for it or have to earn it. God makes sure in every generation that there is opposition that makes us uncomfortable, so that we have to live on our knees and contend for our faith. I think God is doing this today regarding His people and the harvest.

Vs. 7-11 This illustrates what has been said about the cycle of the judges. Othniel was a transitional figure from the time of Joshua. He was not one of the elders who administered with Joshua, but He was a part of that generation that entered the land. As Joshua mentioned in his final address, the people were already drifting. Within Othniel's lifetime the people had given themselves sexually to Baal and were being punished by God. Othniel may have been the godliest of all the judges in Judges.

V. 8 Notice who gave Cushan-rishathaim power over Israel.

Vs. 12-30 Notice who does the strengthening in v. 12. Eglon ruled in the land of Reuben, but his power extended over the Jordan. The city of palms is Jericho. It wasn't rebuilt, but Israel apparently lived there.

Ehud was a messenger bringing tribute to this king of Moab. Many of the tribe of Benjamin were left-handed. The word for left-handed means there was something wrong with their right hand. But in Benjamin, it made them very unique warriors; in fact, many of them were lethal with both hands. Notice where Paul (also a Benjaminite) says in 2 Corinthians 6:7, *by truthful speech, and the power of God; with the weapons of righteousness for the right hand and for the left*. This unconventional warfare was what Paul was referring to. No one expected weapons used by a left-hander. So if Ehud was patted down, it was for a right-hander; that's why he hid the blade on his right thigh. I guess a right-handed person would have put it on the left.

Notice where Ehud turns back, at Gilgal. That is where the nation came across the Jordan, where the stones of memorial were and where, very possibly, the 2.5 tribes built the altar. That these were referred to as idols probably means that the people made this a holy place, burning incense and offering sacrifices, which, even if sincere, were a violation of God's commands. Most likely, Gilgal had been converted into a place of idolatry. Yet, even here, the remembrance of the grace and faithfulness of God might have been the thing that gave Ehud the resolve to turn back and carry out this plan.

Vs. 20-25 You've got to admit. It was a good plan. Just so it's clear, they were waiting on Eglon, because they didn't want to disturb him going to the bathroom.

V. 30 This was the longest time of peace brought by any one judge during the period of the judges.

V. 31 This guy was probably a contemporary with Ehud. That is assumed because it doesn't give the length of time he delivered Israel. The period of time is marked by Ehud's judgeship. Later, Samson and Samuel were also protecting Israel at the same time too.

Also, this might not seem like much from Shamgar, but Samson was the same kind of guy. His strength, and a couple of good days of action, subdued the Philistines for years. It was probably the fear of Shamgar (or the sound of his name) that kept the Philistines in control. Imagine a guy who was so powerful, fast, and agile that he outnumbered 600 men. Later Samson will lay to rest 1000 Philistine soldiers with the jawbone of a donkey.

For us as disciples, I don't think there are too many lessons to be gained from left-handed assassins. There is a huge lesson for us regarding the obstacles God leaves in our way to prove our gratefulness for Christ's love and our willingness to bear our cross and follow Him into the harvest, reaching the lost and making disciples, who make disciples.

Luke 22:14-34

Vs. 14-22 It is clear from Luke's account that Judas was there for the inauguration of the Lord's Supper. Notice that this is a summary of the entire Lord's Supper. Verse 20 shows that part of the Lord's Supper actually happened after dinner, or as Paul says in 1 Corinthians 11:25, *after supper*. At the beginning of their time Jesus took a cup, blessed it and passed it around. From this cup they all poured a little wine into empty cups they each had. During the supper Jesus broke the bread to symbolize His body. As they were still eating and at the end of the supper, Jesus dipped a piece of bread and gave it to Judas (John 13:27). Satan immediately entered Judas and Judas immediately went out. Then, after Judas left and the supper was finished, Jesus took the cup of the new covenant. So actually, Judas was there for the bread, but not for the actual consecration of the new covenant in the blood of Christ.

Vs. 23-27 The dispute mentioned in v. 24 is where Jesus would have washed their feet in John 13. Judas would have left after Jesus had washed their feet and explained what He had done for them.

Vs. 28-30 Jesus has already mentioned that they will sit on 12 thrones judging (ruling) the 12 tribes. This would be a good promise for them to keep in mind as this night, and the next day, unfolded.

Vs. 31-34 Luke is the only one who mentions Satan's demand to sift or test the disciples here. Jesus' prayer was for Peter personally, that his faith wouldn't fail. Either it was because Peter was their leader or because, as Jesus will explain, Peter's testing would be the most severe of all. The good news here is that even before Peter denies Jesus, Jesus tells Peter that he'll be restored and will be called to serve his fellow disciples.

Psalms 92-93

These are great, joyous, celebratory psalms.

Psalm 92

Vs. 1-4 It says that this was written for the Sabbath. Verses 1 and 2 give me the idea that it might have been written by David, as he was focusing all of Israel on worshiping the Lord in unity in Jerusalem. Notice the references to giving thanks to the Lord and declaring His *steadfast love* and *faithfulness*. These are David's hallmarks.

Vs. 5-9 Realizing that if this were written by David, you can understand that the Sabbath probably had not been held regularly in Israel for over 300 years. It could be that the wicked are those who disregard the Sabbath as a day to consider God's work and give Him thanks.

Vs. 10-11 This is the victory that God has given David. God gave David power. He exalted David and God let David see his victory over his enemies.

Vs. 12-15 This is what David learned. If a person follows God, God will bless him.

Psalm 93

Vs. 1-2 God's strength and majesty are seen in Him establishing the world, but superior to the world is the throne of God. It is everlasting and totally unmovable.

Vs. 3-4 The sea and forces of nature are seen as being powerful and chaotic, but God is mightier than His creation. Jesus showed He could tame the wind and waves.

V. 5 I guess if God is this great and has control over all things, we should trust His Word, and in faith, dwell in His house and attend His days of celebration.

Proverbs 14:1-2

Being wise and upright in fearing the Lord makes whatever you build in life good. But those who live by their own deviousness eventually end up destroying their own work and lives.