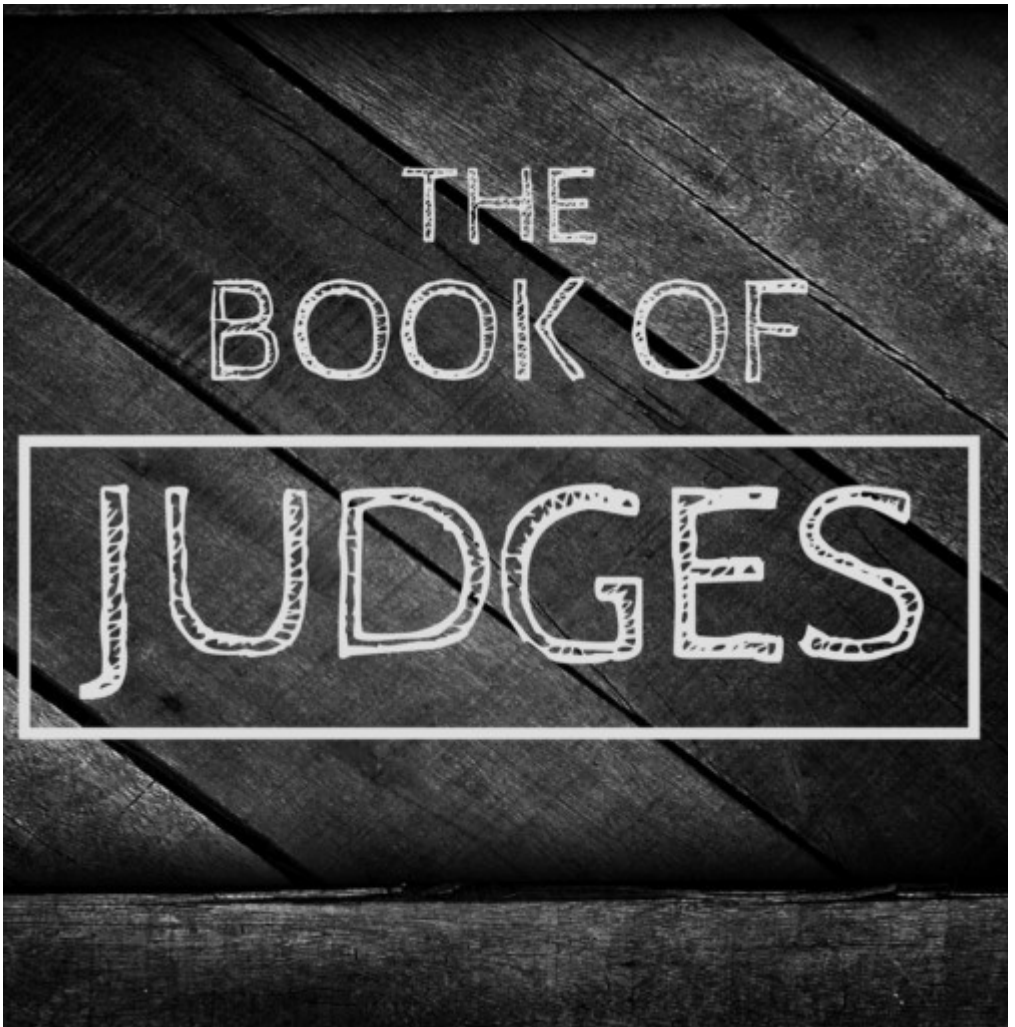


Let's Worship God

4th-9th April 2022
Judges



JUDGES

Monday - Judges 10:6-9 - A Lower Descent

We have noted before that the history of this period between the time of Joshua and the rise of kings in Israel as found in the Book of Judges is characterized by a repeated cycle of events: The people forget the LORD and feel His disciplining hand, usually in the form of oppression by enemy nations; they cry out to God for deliverance; He sends a judge to deliver them; they are faithful to the LORD for the lifetime of the judge; after the judge passes away, they forget God, and the pattern begins again. Judges 2:19 tells us that each time this happened the new generation was more corrupt than previous unfaithful generations.

Here in Judges 10 we see a clear example of this. Before the judgeship of Gideon, the people had taken to worshipping the various versions of the god Baal and the goddess Asherah/Ashtoreth (plural Ashtaroth), the false gods of the peoples of the land of Canaan. Now, the Israelites return to this false religion and descend even lower into idolatry, adding the worship of the gods of neighboring lands as well - the gods of Syria, Sidon, Moab, Ammon, and Philistia. They forsake the LORD altogether, and do not worship Him. So the LORD gives them into the hand of two of the nations whose gods they have adopted - the Philistines and the Ammonites. The Ammonites gain total power over the Israelites who live east of the Jordan River and even raid over the river into the lands of Judah, Benjamin, and Ephraim.

This is God's disciplining hand. He has a plan for Israel to be the people through whom He will bring the Savior Jesus Christ into the world. This oppression, therefore, is not meant to destroy the Israelites, but to correct them. Similarly, He uses hardships in our lives, among other things, to correct us and teach us to depend on Him.

Questions

1. How was the idolatry of this generation worse than earlier generations?
2. Whom does God use to discipline Israel this time?
3. Does God intend to destroy Israel?

Prayer Points

1. Thank God that He corrects us when we stray from Him.
2. Use prayer points from your congregation.
3. Pray for family matters.

Memory Verse

"So Jephthah went with the elders of Gilead, and the people made him head and leader over them. And Jephthah spoke all his words before the Lord at Mizpah."
Judges 11:11

Praise: Psalm 61 - See www.rpglobalalliance.org for Psalm tune helps.

JUDGES

Tuesday - Judges 10:10-16 - Repentance

The pattern of events found in the Book of Judges may sometimes make it appear that the people cynically call upon God only when things go bad for them. The swiftness with which they forget the LORD once things go well for them makes us question whether they were ever truly repentant at all. (We must remember, however, that the people who forget the LORD are usually a new generation, not the generation who had cried out for deliverance). A simplistic reading of Judges could make us think of God as a tool to use when things are going poorly - a mere means to gain peace and prosperity. Do the people of Israel think, "When things go bad, simply cry out to the LORD and then things will go well. No need to worship Him in truth. Just go through the motions of calling upon Him when in need."?

In today's reading we find that is not the case. When the people cry out to God for deliverance, He answers them, not with the deliverance for which they appealed to Him, but with a scathing accusation. Had He not delivered them time and again from the nations whose gods they now worship? If the Israelites preferred these gods so much, let these gods save Israel. Israel's response was not a cynical or half-hearted turning toward the LORD with lip-service only. Rather, they put away the foreign gods. More than that, they "served the LORD." As they received His correction and turned back to Him, He became impatient at the way in which the Philistines and Ammonites were treating His people.

Here we see that true repentance is never mere lip-service. When we repent, we must certainly confess our sins before the LORD, but that is never all there is to repentance. True repentance involves forsaking our sins and turning to God in true worship. Israel's repentance came not when they cried out to God, but when they gave up idolatry and returned to worshipping Him and Him alone.

Questions

1. What was God's answer when the people called upon Him for deliverance?
2. How did the Israelites respond?
3. What is involved in true repentance?

Prayer Points

1. Pray God will make us truly repentant of our sins.
2. Use prayer points from your congregation.
3. Pray for family matters.

Memory Verse

"So Jephthah went with the elders of Gilead, and the people made him head and leader over them. And Jephthah spoke all his words before the Lord at Mizpah."
Judges 11:11

Praise: Psalm 62 - See www.rpglobalalliance.org for Psalm tune helps.

JUDGES

Wednesday -Judges 10:17-18 - Oppression in the East

So far in the Book of Judges, the action has been in the south (as in the accounts of Othniel and Ehud) and the north (in the history of Deborah and Gideon). Now the center of action shifts to the east, across the Jordan River. This is the land occupied by the tribes of Reuben, Gad, and Manasseh. Sometimes the term "Gilead" is used to describe this entire region (as in Joshua 22:9) or parts of it (as in Numbers 32:29 and Joshua 17:5). "Gilead" may also refer to the grandson of Manasseh whose descendants settled in this region. Thus, "Gilead" becomes a name for the half of the tribe of Manasseh living east of the Jordan. Here, "Gilead" is used most likely to describe the entire region inhabited by Israel east of the Jordan.

After eighteen years of oppression, the Israelites have put away their idols and returned to the worship of the LORD. Perhaps provoked by this, the Ammonites move an army into Gilead encamping at Mizpah. "Mizpah" means "watchtower." There are many places in the Bible which carry this name, but one Mizpah in this region refers to the heap of stones built by Jacob and Laban to mark the border between them in Genesis 31. (Laban called the heap "Galeed" meaning "heap of witness" and this could be the reason the region is called "Gilead"). The Ammonites have encamped their army right in the middle of the region at an important place in Israelite history. The Israelite response is outrage at this offense. They are fed up with the Ammonite oppression and offer leadership over the inhabitants of Gilead to the man who will lead them in battle against Ammon. All this is from the LORD. He has stirred up the Ammonites to bring their army into Gilead to bring about their downfall. He has stirred up outrage among the Israelites so they will take a stand against their oppressors. This sets the stage for the judgeship of Jephthah.

Questions

1. Why might the Israelites be offended that the Ammonites encamped at Mizpah?
2. What offer do the people of Gilead make concerning the man who will lead them against the Ammonites?

Prayer Points

1. Pray that God will stir us to action in a righteous cause.
2. Use prayer points from your congregation.
3. Pray for family matters.

Memory Verse

"So Jephthah went with the elders of Gilead, and the people made him head and leader over them. And Jephthah spoke all his words before the Lord at Mizpah."
Judges 11:11

Praise: Psalm 63 - See www.rpglobalalliance.org for Psalm tune helps.

JUDGES

Thursday - Judges 11:1-11 - Jephthah

The promise in Judges 10:18 that the man who leads the Israelites against the Ammonites will be head over the inhabitants of Gilead introduces the story of Jephthah. Jephthah is a Gileadite. In this case, "Gileadite" probably refers not to all the people of the region, but to the part of the tribe of Manasseh descended from Gilead son of Machir son of Manasseh. Jephthah's father, also named Gilead, had many sons by his wife. However, as we saw in the account of Gideon and his many wives and sons, in the dark times of rampant idolatry and sin in Israel, marriage was not honored. Jephthah's mother was not Gilead's wife, but another woman.

Because he is not the son of their mother, Jephthah's brothers have driven him away, and he has moved to the land of Tob in the northern part of the lands of Manasseh east of the Sea of Galilee. In Tob, Jephthah has gathered many desperate and "worthless" men around him. He not only is a mighty warrior, he has become known as a leader of men. Though he has been driven away, Jephthah is just the kind of man the people of Gilead need to lead them against the Ammonites. So, they send for him. They offer to make him their head if he leads them against the Ammonites. He says he will accept this headship if the LORD grants him victory. Bravely, Jephthah makes this agreement with the Gileadites at Mizpah, near where the Ammonites have been encamped. More importantly, he makes this agreement "before the LORD." This is not simply a contract between man and man, it is a covenant before the LORD.

God is pleased to take those whom others reject and do mighty things with them. In this sense, Jephthah foreshadows Christ Himself, who was despised and rejected, but who became the Savior of all who trust in Him.

Questions

1. Why was Jephthah living in the land of Tob?
2. Why did the Gileadites ask him to return?
3. How does Jephthah foreshadow Christ?

Prayer Points

1. Pray that God will send us the right leaders for our time.
2. Use prayer points from your congregation.
3. Pray for family matters.

Memory Verse

"So Jephthah went with the elders of Gilead, and the people made him head and leader over them. And Jephthah spoke all his words before the Lord at Mizpah."
Judges 11:11

Praise: Psalm 64 - See www.rpglobalalliance.org for Psalm tune helps.

JUDGES

Friday - Judges 11:12-13 - Revisionist History

As Jephthah prepares to drive the Ammonites out of Israelite territory, he does not jump headlong into violent action. First, he tries to reason with the Ammonites and convince them that they are wrong to invade and oppress Israel. He sends messengers to the king of Ammon, asking him to state his reasons for his actions. The king of Ammon claims that when Israel had come up from Egypt in the time of Moses they had unjustly taken lands that belonged to him, between the Arnon and Jabbok rivers.

If we read the God-inspired accounts of this history in Numbers 21 and Deuteronomy 2 and 3, we find that the king of Ammon's claim is patently false. The lands the king of Ammon claims are his were not inhabited or ruled by the Ammonites, but by the Amorites under their king Sihon, whom Israel defeated in battle when he unjustly made war upon them. The king of the Ammonites is seeking personal gain by rewriting history.

Many people today try to revise history to make their own pursuit of power seem to be a just cause. From the feminists who rewrite history to make it seem that men always mistreat women, to the anti-Christians who blame the Church for all the world's ills, to the politicians who revise history to pander to voters or to make their opponents appear to be abjectly evil, we see the sin of the king of the Ammonites repeated time and time again.

We must remember that the LORD is the God of Truth, and there is no falsehood in Him. He hates a lying tongue (Proverbs 6:16-17). May we seek truth as we consider the past, and not simply believe what we find most convenient to our cause.

Questions

1. What did the king of Ammon claim about the land between the Arnon and Jabbok rivers?
2. How do we know this claim was false?
3. From whom did Israel take that territory?
4. Why must we be interested in truth in history?

Prayer Points

1. Pray that God would help us to understand the truth about the past.
2. Use prayer points from your congregation.
3. Pray for family matters.

Memory Verse

"So Jephthah went with the elders of Gilead, and the people made him head and leader over them. And Jephthah spoke all his words before the Lord at Mizpah." Judges 11:11

Praise: Psalm 65 - See www.rpglobalalliance.org for Psalm tune helps.

JUDGES

Saturday - Judges 11:14-28 - Jephthah Appeals to the Truth

Yesterday, we saw that the king of the Ammonites made a false claim about the history of Israel's dealings with his people. He claimed Israel had taken lands from the Ammonites that they had actually won in a war against Sihon, king of the Amorites. Today, we read Jephthah's answer to him, which appeals to the facts of history.

Edom and Moab had refused permission to Israel to pass through their lands. So, skirting the lands of Edom, Moab and Ammon, they came to the border of the lands of Sihon, king of the Amorites. Not only did Sihon refuse permission for Israel to pass through his lands, he came out to battle against Israel. When the Israelites defeated him, they took his lands.

If the king of Ammon wishes to make trouble for Israel now, he is no different than Balak, king of Moab, who had plotted against Israel as they waited to cross into the Promised Land. The LORD gave the Israelites the lands they live in. This land is the LORD's to give to whomever He wills. If Chemosh, the false god of the Ammonites, could give it to Ammon, would he not have done so earlier, rather than waiting 300 years to reclaim it?

Jephthah maintains the justice of the Israelite cause and calls upon the LORD to judge the case. The Ammonites, he says, are in the wrong. Israel did not take lands that rightfully belonged to the Ammonites. The Ammonites are the aggressors, unjustly making war on Israel in order to gain land that does not belong, and never has belonged, to them.

Like Jephthah, when others rewrite history to justify their unjust actions, we must appeal to truth. Better still, we must appeal to the LORD who is the just Judge of all.

Questions

1. How does Jephthah answer the Ammonite claims to Israelite land?
2. To whom does he appeal to judge the case?

Prayer Points

1. Pray for the preaching and hearing of God's Word tomorrow.
2. Use prayer points from your congregation.
3. Pray for family matters

Memory Verse

"So Jephthah went with the elders of Gilead, and the people made him head and leader over them. And Jephthah spoke all his words before the Lord at Mizpah."
Judges 11:11

Praise: Psalm 66 - See www.rpglobalalliance.org for Psalm tune helps.

The goal of Let's Worship God is to encourage and help you in your worship of God each day.

**God tells us that
Ezra read from
the book of the Law
day after day
and that
the people of God
were filled with joy!**

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