

remained on the coast and stayed in his coves. The people of Zebulun risked their very lives; so did Naphtali on the heights of the field. ” (NIV-1984).

There was much searching of the heart for the failures of those who should have helped with the fight. Why did some choose to risk their lives while others chose to stay behind? Do you suppose any “searching of the heart” goes on today for those who do nothing more in the kingdom than warm a pew every now and then on Sunday?

Judges 5:23-27 —

“‘Curse Meroz,’ said the angel of the Lord. ‘Curse its people bitterly, because they did not come to help the Lord, to help the Lord against the mighty.’ Most blessed of women be Jael, the wife of Heber the Kenite, most blessed of tent-dwelling women. He asked for water, and she gave him milk; in a bowl fit for nobles she brought him curdled milk. Her hand reached for the tent peg, her right hand for the workman’s hammer. She struck Sisera, she crushed his head, she shattered and pierced his temple. At her feet he sank, he fell; there he lay. At her feet he sank, he fell; where he sank, there he fell — dead.” (NIV-1984)

Curse Meroz — a city that apparently had every opportunity to help with the battle — but chose not to! Remember in Judges 4:7, Barak had been told that Sisera would be delivered to *him*. Jael however, had to take care of killing Sisera. Guess Barak was willing to let Jael do the job for him.

Judges 6:7 —

“When the Israelites cried to the Lord because of Midian, he sent them a prophet, who said, ‘This is what the Lord, the God of Israel, says: I brought you up out of Egypt, out of the land of slavery. I snatched you from the power of Egypt and from the hand of all your oppressors. I drove them from before you and gave you their land. I said to you, ‘I am the Lord your God; do not worship the gods of the Amorites, in whose land you live.’ But you have not listened to me.’” (NIV-1984)

Are families and the Church listening to God today? Is His Word the guide that is exclusively used to determine His will for each and every Christian and also for His Church? If not — whatever sources are being used for a guide, may as well be from the gods of the Amorites.

Judges 17:6 —

“In those day there was no king in Israel; every man did what was right in his own eyes.” (NASB)

Is *this* going on in the lives of Christians as well as in the Church today?

“Diligence” is a privately funded publication of:
Dennis and Sherri Owens — Cincinnati, Ohio
diligence@gorfsystems.com — <http://diligence.gorfsystems.com>



DILIGENCE

“We want each of you to show this same diligence to the very end, in order to make your hope sure.” — Hebrews 6:11

A ministry of Dennis and Sherri Owens

Volume 11

August 15, 2012

Issue 14

Random Thoughts While Reading Through The Book of Judges

The book of Judges traces the history of Israel between the death of Joshua up to just a few generations before the rise of the monarchy in Israel. We could almost view the book as a dialogue about the relationship between God and Israel since it shows how they would go from one generation that was faithful to God to another generation that would constantly struggle with remaining faithful. It’s very sad to read how quickly Israel fell away from God after the death of Joshua.

“The people served the Lord all the days of Joshua, and all the days of the elders who survived Joshua,...⁸Then Joshua the son of Nun, the servant of the Lord, died at the age of one hundred and ten. ⁹And they buried him in the territory of his inheritance...¹⁰...and there arose another generation after them who did not know the Lord...” (Joshua 2:7-10 NASB)

These verses show what can happen when just one generation fails to educate the next. The Israelites started out strong, but because each generation passed on less to the generation that followed, the new generation would stray. Because of Israel’s lack of faithfulness, God would allow a neighboring country to rise up and oppress them — causing them to suffer greatly for a number of years. They would then eventually realize that they needed God and cry out to Him. God would then raise up a Judge to represent the people, defeat the enemy and rule over them for a period of time. As long as there was a Judge alive the Israelites would be faithful to God but as soon as a Judge died, they would turn back to false Gods — and that would lead them once again into oppression by a neighboring country and the cycle would start all over again.

Probably one of the most important lessons we can learn from the book of Judges is that we are always just one generation away from apostasy. We should take this lesson to heart because if we neglect to teach the next generation about God, they will end up like the new generation of people in the book of Judges.

While there are several cycles of oppression of Israel throughout the book of Judges, the first few chapters seem to especially relate to the lives of Christians today as well as the New Testament Church in general. So we decided to share a few random thoughts that came to mind while reading through that book. Let’s begin with —

Judges 2:12-15 —

“They forsook the Lord, the God of their fathers, who had brought them out of Egypt. They followed and worshiped various gods of the peoples around them. They provoked the Lord to anger because they forsook him and served

Baal and the Ashtoreths. In his anger against Israel the Lord handed them over to raiders who plundered them. He sold them to their enemies all around, whom they were no longer able to resist. Whenever Israel went out to fight, the hand of the Lord was against them to defeat them, just as he had sworn to them. They were in great distress.” (NIV-1984)

Have modern day Christians forsook the Lord and began serving “*gods of the peoples around them*”? Instead of Baal and Ashtaroth, have today’s gods become things such as recognition, sports, travel, television, fitness, etc.? Would God sell His people today “*to their enemies all around, whom they [are] no longer able to resist*”?

Judges 2:20-22 —

“Therefore the Lord was very angry with Israel and said, ‘Because this nation has violated the covenant that I laid down for their forefathers and has not listened to me, I will no longer drive out before them any of the nations Joshua left when he died. I will use them to test Israel and see whether they will keep the way of the Lord and walk in it as their forefathers did.’” (NIV-1984)

Would God test this Nation’s Christians *today* by withdrawing His protection to “*see whether they will keep the way of the Lord and walk in it as their forefathers did*”?

Judges 3:1-4 —

“These are the nations the Lord left to test all those Israelites who had not experienced any of the wars in Canaan (he did this only to teach warfare to the descendants of the Israelites who had not had previous battle experience): the five rulers of the Philistines, all the Canaanites, the Sidonians, and the Hivites living in the Lebanon mountains from Mount Baal Hermon to Lebo Hamath. They were left to test the Israelites to see whether they would obey the Lord’s commands, which he had given their forefathers through Moses.” (NIV-1984)

If the New Testament Church becomes complacent in its comfort and contentment, would God allow persecution “*to see whether they would obey the Lord’s commands*”?

Judges 3:6 —

“The Israelites lived among the Canaanites, Hittites, Amorites, Perizzites, Hivites and Jebusites. They took their daughters in marriage and gave their own daughters to their sons, and served their gods.” (NIV-1984)

What is the view of marriage in the Church today? Is divorce/remarriage accepted for reasons *other* than what the *Scriptures* state? Have well-meaning Christians began serving the gods of non-believers by accepting their *secular* laws of incompatibility, mental anguish, etc.?

Judges 3:8 —

“The anger of the Lord burned against Israel so that he sold them into the hands of Cushan-Rishathaim king of Aram Naharaim, to whom the Israelites were subject for eight years.” (NIV-1984)

Is it possible that God’s anger is burning against His Church and its members today?

Judges 4:6-8 —

“She [Deborah] sent for Barak son of Abinoam from Kedesh in Naphtali and said to him, ‘The Lord, the God of Israel, commands you: Go, take with you ten thousand men of Naphtali and Zebulun and lead the way to Mount Tabor. I will lure Sisera, the commander of Jabin’s army, with his chariots and his troops to the Kishon River and give him into your hands.’ Barak said to her, ‘if you go with me, I will go; but if you don’t go with me, I won’t go.’” (NIV-1984)

When Deborah told Barak that God had commanded him to go to war, he lacked the courage and leadership ability to do the job that God was commanding him to do. In *modern* day terms, we might say he was a wimp. He didn’t want to go unless Deborah went *with* him. Are we seeing this same lack of leadership and courage in the Church *and* in the home today? Are Christian husbands and fathers failing to lead and take on the responsibilities that God has instructed them to do? Are they *willingly* shedding the burden of leading their families and becoming more than happy to abdicate these burdens to their wife? Are leadership responsibilities *also* being evaded in the same way within the Church?

Judges 5:2 —

“That the leaders led in Israel, That the people volunteered, Bless the Lord!” (NASB)

Leadership is important in the Church and in the home today just as it was important in Deborah and Barak’s day. God *expects* men to be leaders. The leaders led — finally — and the people were willing to *follow* them.

Judges 5:7-8 —

“Village life in Israel ceased, ceased until I, Deborah, arose, arose a mother in Israel. When they chose new gods, war came to the city gates, and not a shield or spear was seen among forty thousand in Israel...” (NIV-1984)

Apparently, *all* the men were like Barak. There were no males among them who were willing to lead, so God raised up Deborah. Until Deborah, a mother in Israel — arose, none of the men had the courage to defend the city against an enemy — not a shield or a spear was seen.

Judges 5:12-13 —

“...Arise, O Barak! Take captive your captives, O son of Abinoam. Then the men who were left came down to the nobles;...” (NIV-1984)

Arise Barak! Lead! Now that Deborah did the hard part *for* you, do what you were supposed to do in the first place — have the courage to be a leader!

Judges 5:15-18 —

“...In the districts of Reuben there was much searching of heart. Why did you stay among the campfires to hear the whistling for the flocks? In the districts of Reuben there was much searching of heart. Gilead stayed beyond the Jordan and Dan, why did he linger by the ships? Asher