

## **Judges 1-5**

### **“Compromise and Conquerors”**

#### **Introduction:**

- I love these nights.
  - Tonight we begin a new book of the Bible and it is one of my favorite Old Testament books because the stories are good and gruesome.
- Headlines such as “Family Feud leaves over 60 brothers dead”, “Powerful Government leader caught in love nest”, “girls at a party kidnapped and forced to marry strangers” – these are not from the USA today – they are taken from the book of judges.

#### **Wait you say – you like this book??**

- Yes, not because people get dismembered or are forced to marry strangers.
  - But because the book has very few dull moments.
  - And the stories are rich and provide much for us to think about and consider.

#### **Some background before we get into this book.**

- The title is Judges - it reflects the type of leadership that was in place from the time the elders who out lived Joshua died, to the time of the Monarchy beginning under King Saul.
  - Between those two events Judges ruled the nation of Israel.
- But we need to get out of our minds a picture of those people who wear black robes and sit behind wooden benches – we are not talking about those types of judges.
  - We are talking about deliverers that God raised up when Israel was under the bondage of pagan nations.
- And then in times of peace they would be civil leaders.

#### **Up to this point in trekking through the Old Testament it has been pretty clear as to who authored the books, but not so as to who wrote this book.**

- The evidence that Moses wrote the first five books of the Bible is overwhelming to me.
  - Poor kids in my Bible college class just had to hear a two-hour lecture on it; you want to go there tonight – no way.
- The evidence that Joshua wrote Joshua is equally impressive.
  - However with Judges there is no real internal evidence and the book never says this was written by anyone in particular.

#### **The Babylon Talmud, which is the original commentary on the Old Testament and the first guys to give their thoughts along with those who lived closest to the time in which these books were written, agree on the following.**

- They say Samuel, the prophet and final judge of Israel before King Saul, who we will meet in I Samuel, wrote Judges and there is really no reason to believe any different.

#### **The Time frame of writings has to be between two significant events in Israel’s history.**

- It was written after they had a King, because many times in this book it says of the time period Judges covered, “In those days there was no King in Israel” meaning it was written once they did have one.
  - So it had to be written after King Saul was appointed.
- But it also had to be written before David had victory over the city of Jerusalem because the book of Judges says Jerusalem is under Jebusite control until that day.

#### **So that means this book was written in the days of King Saul and before the early years of King David.**

- Which is prime Samuel time.
  - That was when he was alive and ministering, so a Samuel authorship makes real sense.

#### **So now we have down whom we think wrote the book and what the title means, “judges”, not men in black robes, but deliverers of the nation of Israel.**

- We know need to understand why they needed judges and why they needed deliverers, because it is a huge theme in this book.

**Remember that this book covers the time from the death of the elders who outlived Joshua to the early years of Samuel the prophet and final judge of Israel.**

- 14 times in that 350-year time period the nation when through a cycle of sin.
  - The first two chapters describe it wonderfully, usually I skip over the last couple of chapters when we are moving through the Old Testament, but I am going to leave those for you to read on your own.

**But I do want to go over what they cover.**

**The Cycle of Sin in the Life of Israel.**

**#1 – They started out doing well.**

- But as so often happens in our lives, the minute we start to get out of a trial we lower our defenses, we don't see the need to stay in the Word and stay in fellowship, I mean everything is going great.
  - But when we lower our defenses, this is the moment the enemy has been waiting for and he will strike.

**#2 – Compromise.**

- The children of Israel start to worship the false gods of the land – because we will worship something.

**#3 – Enslaved to Sin.**

- Sin always has consequences; it is why God tells us to run from it in the first place.
  - And usually that sin leaves us in bondage and that was literally true for the Jewish people.
  - They would start worshipping other gods and as a result a nation would come in and enslave them.

**#4 – Cry out for help.**

- After a time of being in bondage, sadly usually years of time, the children of Israel would eventually cry out.
  - Lord save us – we need you.
  - And I love it – 14 times in this book, God says, I have been waiting for you to repent, to want to come back to me – I am here to help.
  - I would get tired of that after three times, three strikes your out – but not God.
- He would raise up a deliverer, a judge to bring victory and set them free.
  - There would be a time of peace, and unfortunately the cycle would start all over again.

**Now this cycle would be an interesting historical study if it didn't remind us of some of our own lives.**

- We start out walking with God and it is great, sure they're are battles to fight and things to trust Him for, but His blessing is there and its great.
  - And then we let our guard down.
  - Oh I don't need to be as vigilant and read my Bible and pray every single day – the Lord loves me – He does, you fool!
- It doesn't matter what I watch on TV anymore, I'm mature and saved by Grace – sure are dummy.

**Without some consistency in the Word to keep us on track we find ourselves succumbing to where those things drag us to and we find ourselves back in bondage again.**

- I do want to read you one section out of the first two chapters; hopefully you have or will read all of them.
- But check out [Judges 1:22-26](#).

**The children of Ephraim want to take down the city of Luz, right in their territory, because that was the plan, remember.**

- Joshua led them to fight the major battles for seven years, but there were still pockets of resistance and it was up to the tribes to go clean out their territory.
  - So the tribe of Ephraim came to the city of Luz, right in the middle of their territory.
  - It was a difficult city to conquer.
- But then a man comes out with his family, strikes a deal with the tribe of Ephraim. If I show you the way into the city, will you let me live? – that compromise sounds good to them, so they let the man live.
  - Now they conquer the city of Luz, but what did this man and his family do?
  - They built another city by the name of Luz.

**So think that through, what did the tribe of Ephraim really accomplish?**

- They defeated Luz, but by not fully doing what God called them to do, they felt pretty good about themselves, but then were right back to where they started, with an enemy city called Luz, which was still around 350 year later.

**That is what happens to us.**

- God gives us victory, we let down our guard, we think we can allow some compromises and then we end up in the same bondage we were in in the first place.
  - Friend, God wants to break that cycle of sin!

**One of the great purposes of the book of Judges is not just to reveal their history during this time period.**

- But is it to give those of us who have not been in this cycle of sin in our lives a chance to learn from others.
  - We don't have to make our own mistakes if we are smart enough to learn from others.
- But the other thing it does is it gives us a way to break the cycle of sin in our lives because most of us know what the cycle of sin is like.
  - And that is what I want us to focus on tonight.
- With the rest of our time are going to focus on the first four judges of Israel and each of them gives us an insight into how to break the cycle of sin in our lives.

**Breaking the Cycle of Sin.**

**#1 – Othniel – Victory by the Spirit of God – Judges 3:1-11**

- The first judge God raises up was Othniel.
  - And Othniel had a huge task before Him.

**Where as most of the judges we will read about had to deal with local tribes and people surrounding the nations – Othniel had to deal with those from Mesopotamia which was part of the Syrian Empire at the time, a huge fighting force from quite a distance – King's name was “double darkness” – crazy! – He lived during the days of King Tut of Egypt.**

- He was also the first judge so in other words this delivering Israel was something that had never been done before.
  - It wasn't like Othniel could say like Samson before me; I will drive out Israel's enemies.
  - He couldn't say that – because he was the first.
- And this was a mighty force he was up against.

**So what was it about him???**

- Well for one thing he certainly had a godly heritage.
  - He was related to Caleb who said, give me the land with the giants – I want the heavy task, I want the difficulties if it is going to draw me closer to the Lord – give me Hebron.
  - And you don't think your walk has an effect on your family.
- We have already seen the negative a poor walk can have.

- But don't forget the flip side of that coin – your walk can challenge those in your family, those in your sphere of influence to march further on with the Lord.
- Othniel had a godly heritage, but that wasn't it.

**We are told in the text, verse 10, the Spirit of the Lord came upon Him.**

- For Othniel it wasn't about being from the right tribe, or having a godly heritage so much as it was being a man filled with the Holy Spirit.

**Zechariah 4:6 is such an important verse when we think about being used of the Lord and facing difficult things in your family, in your own flesh, and breaking that cycle of sin.**

- When facing huge obstacles during the time of Zechariah, God spoke to them through the prophet about facing those things.
- “Not by might nor by power, but by My Spirit, Says the LORD of hosts.” - By My Spirit?

**God was speaking to Zerubbabel – you are not going to accomplish anything in your flesh, you are not going to do it by your power but by my Spirit.**

- And the same was true of Othniel before him.
  - You can't do this in your strength, but the Spirit of the Lord will come upon you.

**But to you and me what does that mean, “by the Spirit.”**

- Well we could spend the rest of our time discussing our relationship with the Holy Spirit and the three-fold nature it has.
  - But that is a study for another time.
- But so we can understand – we know what it means do things “in the flesh.”
  - It's when you come up with the plan.
  - It's when you are the counselor.
  - It's when are the source of strength.
- And so you consider doing the opposite things by the Spirit, the third part of the trinity.
  - You yield your heart to the Lord.
  - You wait on Him to receive His direction.
  - And you rely on Him for His strength.

**To me, walking in the Spirit as Galatians 5:16 tells us is the first step to breaking the Cycle of sin.**

- You walk in the Spirit and you will not fulfill the lusts of your flesh.
  - You walk in the Spirit by setting your mind on the things of the Spirit.
  - And that brings us to judge number two and key number two to breaking the cycle of sin.

**Breaking the Cycle of Sin.**

**#1 – Othniel – Victory by the Spirit of God – Judges 3:1-11**

**#2 – Ehud – Victory by the Sword of God – Judges 3:12-30**

- Great story - Othniel was from the tribe of Judah and he had to overcome those from Mesopotamia.
  - Ehud came against the Moabites and was from the tribe of Benjamin.

**“Benjamin” means – “son of my right hand.”**

- And the reason I give you this information is the text is clear that Ehud was left handed – and he seemed to be handicapped in his right hand.

**Which during this time in this culture was looked down upon – I remember when Danny was ministering in India he came back with glorious reports, one problem – no toilet paper – what did you do? – A bucket of water and your left hand, oh sick – of course he told me this after I shook his left hand – bummer – literally, sorry.**

- This is common today in Eastern cultures and it was common back then.
  - So this man who was left handed was look down upon.

**But he was the one God called upon to save Israel from Moab – this King Eglon would have first taken over the tribes on the East side of the Jordan, problems are starting from them already – the ruler of the Moabites – King Eglon.**

- King Eglon is the only one the Bible calls a very fat man, he wasn't just fat, he was planetary – **Jabba the Hutt picture** and he had been oppressing Israel for 18 years.
  - Ehud comes up with a plan, makes a knife, attaches it to his right leg, and brings the King a present after he tells him he has a message from God.
- And this is amazing – most scholars believe the way he got through security is because security would normally check the left leg because almost everyone was right handed.
  - And I wonder when he went through that security if he thought this is why I'm left handed.
  - Here I thought God was unfair, I thought God didn't love me – But I am designed by Him for His work.

**Not just true for Ehud, true for you too!**

- You are designed just the way you are for a purpose, for the work of God.

**Designed with a purpose with all this attention today on changing who you are.**

- Being so self focused – can I encourage you to realize you are made by God – and get your eyes off you, and onto the Lord.
  - You will see what Ehud did - It's all part of the plan.

**He gets past security and then shoves the blade into Eglon**

- And I love it, this man was so large, the fat swallowed the blade, and this blade was a cubit long – that is 18 inches of fat in the front at least, just swallowed the blade.
  - And then all of entails flowed out.

**Ehud escaped because when the servants came the door it was locked and they thought he was going to the bathroom.**

- But when it took a very long time, they busted opened the doors and found their King dead.
  - By this time Ehud had rallied the Israeli troops and they conquered the Moabites and kicked them out of the land for the next 80 years!

**But now in sticking with our theme – breaking the cycle of sin.**

- With Othniel I see the need to be filled with the Spirit.
  - So I won't walk in the flesh.
  - How am I filled with the Spirit – Romans 8:5 says I set my mind on the things of the Spirit.

**This is idea of setting my mind on the things of the Spirit is pictured so well in the defeat of Eglon, by the sword of God.**

- In the KJV it says of verse 22...

**“The sword went in and the dirt came out.” – Judges 3:22 KJV**

**I love that picture – the sword of the Lord goes in and the dirt of the world comes out.**

- What a picture of the Word of God, which we are told is like a sword in Ephesians chapter six, when the sword, the Word of the Lord gets in my heart, when I set my mind on the things of the Word, I am going to walk in the Spirit because the dirt of the world is going to be washed away.

**We face oppressing things like Israel did.**

- Maybe it has been 18 years of bondage.
  - What do you do? - You don't focus on you.
- You focus on the Word of God.
  - You let it become part of you.
  - And as you do, the sword goes in and dirt comes out.
- David said, “How can a young man cleanse his way by taking Heed according to your word.”
  - The sword goes in and the dirt comes out.
  - More and more in our world today in the church, we move away from the Bible – you really don't need to read it.
  - It doesn't make God love you anymore – true.



- It doesn't make you any more saved – true.
- But as Ephesians 5 tells me – the Word washes me.
  - The dirt of the world gets in and if I am not vigilant to wash in the Water of the Word – I will start to succumb to sin and it will put me in bondage again.
- But if I understand these principals of victory – Walk in the Spirit and I will not fulfill the lusts of the flesh, how do I do that? – Set your mind on the things of the Spirit – get in the Word.
  - And as the Word goes in the dirt is going to come out – a great lesson in breaking the Cycle of sin.

### **Breaking the Cycle of Sin**

**#1 – Othniel – Victory by the Spirit of God – Judges 3:1-11**

**#2 – Ehud – Victory by the Sword of God – Judges 3:12-30**

**#3 – Shamgar – Victory by being available to God - Judges 3:31**

- We don't know much about him.
  - Accept that he was a farmer.
  - We know that because he had an ox goad – **Picture of an Ox goad** straight pole, with a point on one end for prodding oxen, and a spade on the other, for getting dirt off the plow.

### **With Shamgar we see the importance of simply using what you have for the Lord.**

- The Philistines were oppressing Israel.
  - He wasn't a military leader – he wasn't a general.
  - He was just a farmer.
- And I wonder how the conversion went with the Lord.
  - Lord I see this problem, I see this need, but what do I have to offer?
  - What's in your hand Shamgar? – Just this ox goad.
- You have no idea what I can do with just an ox goad.

### **Here this, listen precious people.**

- We see the need in our nation to serve the Lord.
  - And maybe you have said to the Lord, what can I do???
  - And I think the word of God for you tonight is what is in your hand???
  - What can you do???

### **We have talked about this before, about being available right where you are to serve the Lord, right in your sphere of influence.**

- You get praying, right where God has you, you keep looking for opportunities to be used of the Lord.
  - That will never work.
  - Are you sure?

### **I think about the conversion of Saul of Tarshish, better known as Paul the Apostle.**

- In Acts chapter 9 – turn there with me if you would – [Acts chapter 9:1-5](#)
  - Saul was being goaded – he watched Stephen being martyred – he listened possibly to the witness of Jesus.
  - Every time, just someone living for God in his sphere of influence – Paul was being goaded.

### **And one day it all comes to fruition and the greatest evangelist and church planter of all time was saved.**

- Because people, not being pushy, not being unloving, but just living life for Jesus in their sphere of influence.
  - Paul was being goaded.

### **I wonder what the body of Christ would be like if everyone simply used whatever was in their hand for the kingdom.**

- This is key, not just for the health of church and community spiritually, but it is key for you to break the cycle of sin.

- You see being filled with the spirit – key, check.
- Being in the Word – sword goes in and the dirt come out – key, check.
- Being about the Father’s business – so important.
- When I am tempted to start to take it easy, to start to compromise, it is always when I think, nothing going on, nothing to get read for – I’ll take it easy.
  - Or friend, until the Lord comes back, there is always something to do, something to pray for, someone to share with.
  - Use what you have in your hand.
  - We don’t have time to compromise and get into a cycle of sin – the Lord is coming soon!

**Breaking the Cycle of Sin.**

**#1 – Othniel – Victory by the Spirit of God – Judges 3:1-11**

**#2 – Ehud – Victory by the Sword of God – Judges 3:12-30**

**#3 – Shamgar – Victory by being available to God - Judges 3:31**

**#4 – Deborah – Victory by a woman of God – Judges 4-5**

- Read chapter 4.

**After 80 years of peace by the victories from Ehud and Shamgar, Israel once again lapses back in this cycle of sin.**

- And God lets them fall into bondage of Jabin who ruled from Hazor.
  - Now Jabin was not his proper name but the name given to the Canaanite ruler of Hazor, for in Joshua 11 when Joshua defeats Hazor, they kill a King Jabin.
- Now this is much later in history, the Canaanites have taken control of the city of Hazor again, raised up an army and their leader is once again called Jabin.

**He has a ruthless general named Sisera who has 900 chariots.**

- This is not an unreasonable number at all for we have discovered writings from the King of Egypt Thutmose III which was probably the King who exiled Moses, he fought a battle up in this same region of Hazor and took 929 chariots from them again 200 plus years before this.
  - So these cities could support large armies.
  - And they used this large army to oppress the children of Israel.

**The judge at this time was a woman by the name of Deborah.**

- The children start to cry out to God because of the oppression and God speaks to her to do something about it.
  - So she calls the general of the armies of the north of Israel and man by the name of Barak.

**Now I did pronounce that correct B – A – R – A – K is pronounced Baric in Hebrew.**

- It is pronounced Barak in, how can I say this without getting 100 emails, um; it’s pronounced Barak in Muslim countries.
  - Now I’m not saying, what you think I’m saying, I’m not even talking about the man you think I’m talking about.
  - I’m just saying from the perspective of the study of languages that it is pronounced Baric in Hebrew, and Barak in Muslim dialects, that is all I am saying – do with it what you will.

**But this military general Baric does not want to go to battle unless Deborah goes with him.**

- Really tuff guy huh?
  - Actually though I believe what he is saying is, “I don’t really hear that good from God, so I need you Deborah to come with me if this is going to work.”
  - Baric will be really brave in this story, he just doesn’t really walk with God.

**But that is really sad in a whole new way.**

- Sure he probably wasn’t a coward, but he also is not a great example to us either.

- If you have been saved for a few years, hopefully you have grown where you have learned to read God's Word, to talk things over with Him in prayer and live your life being led by Him.
- If you haven't, I need to say this because I love you – its time to grow up – its time to leave elementary things behind as the author of Hebrews says – and go onto maturity in your walk with God – Baric isn't the example.

**Deborah goes with Baric and God gives them a great victory.**

- We are not told in chapter 4 how that happens, but in chapter five, Deborah's song about all of this, she lets us know God sent rain and the river flooded and 900 chariots are no good in the rain.
  - So the Jews defeated their enemy, but Sisera, the general escapes.

**And he heads to the tent of Heber who was a Kennite.**

- Now what this means is Heber used to be under Sisera's control, he was part of his people, so Sisera thinks this is a great place to hide.
  - But one of two things is happening – either Heber is a real bandwagon kind of guy – you know who bandwagon people are – they root for whatever team is doing well.
- It's like all the new Seahawks fans, now I didn't know any Seahawks fans other than the Boshaws before the super bowl, now many have always loved them.
  - A non-bandwagon fan is one who still likes the Raiders – Ernie, is not a bandwagon fan because the Raiders are awful and he is still a fan.

**Heber may just be a bandwagon kind of guy – because in verse 12 he is helping Sisera out and in verse 22 now that Israel is winning, Sisera dies in his tent.**

- It could be that – or it could be a marital difference.
  - Heber is a fan of Sisera, and Jael, his wife is definitely not - Either way, what happens is pretty cool.

**Sisera comes to those he used to have authority over.**

- And starts barking orders – hide me, give me water.
  - And yet Jael – she gives him milk.

**And once Sisera has gone to sleep, she creeps in with a tent peg in her hand.**

- And she puts a spike right through his forehead and nails him to the ground.
  - The tent peg was the last thing to go through his mind – ha, ha.
- These Bedowin women are strong – it is their job to set up the huge tents while the men have a cup of coffee – I don't know how it got that way, but still today, you see the Bedowin women if you go to Israel and their biceps – oh man – “Bedowin women, stay away from me, Bedowin woman.”
  - This woman drives a steak into Sisera and I love that the Bible says in verse 21, so he died.

**Before we go our way, this is a great picture by the way of again how we break the cycle of sin.**

- Jael, this woman of God, like Deborah a woman of God, if no men will stand, women do your thing.
  - These women of God stand up.
  - Jael doesn't listen to her former ruler, she doesn't give into his demands – she gives him milk instead and then she nails the old man, the old ruler to the ground.

**The picture – pretty cool.**

- All of us have an old man, and old ruler – our flesh that used to dominate us.
  - And by the power of the cross we are not under his power anymore –the problem is though; he comes around and demands stuff from us, wanting us to get back into the cycle of sin.



- And when he does, like Jael we need to not give in, but give our flesh the pure milk of the Word – and don't cater to the old man – nail the old man with the power of cross and the Spirit and the Word.
  - Break the cycle of sin in your life.

**Now chapter 5, I will leave you to read on your own.**

- Deborah writes a song to help the children of Israel remember the great things God has done.
  - Why a song?
  - Because we remember songs.
  - Songs stick in my mind that I wish would go away – songs I haven't heard in 25 years.
  - “Alright stop, collaborate and listen, Ice is back with my brand-new invention.”

**Why are you clapping? – That is horrible that it's is still in my mind.**

- Because some of you can do that too, but quick, quote Philippians chapter one – go ahead start...
  - How about Ephesians 5 – go
  - What losers.

There is something about a song.

- So read through it, I don't know the tune but after the time of Deborah the land had rest for 40 years.
  - We will pick the story up 40 years later next week with Gideon, what a judge of Israel, one judge next week who we will focus on.
  - Let's stand and pray.
- Lord help us to break the cycle of sin.
  - By being filled with your Spirit.
  - By being consistent in your Word.
  - By using the opportunities right in front of us.
  - By nailing the old man no matter who we are, or where we come from – Lord do your work!