

Journey Through the Bible (46)

The Judges (7) Trouble and Hope

Judges 17-21, Ruth

Opening thoughts

- We are examining the 8th of 17 time periods of Bible history – the period of the judges.
- The book of judges is about a period of time where Israel was delivered by “judges” (13 of the 17 judges of Israel are recorded therein)
- The period is recorded in **Judges, Ruth & 1 Samuel 1-8**. It ends with Samuel.
- Judges were not judicial advocates, but deliverers from oppressors. They helped God “judge” these oppressors.

Opening thoughts

- The judges of Israel were
 - 1) Othniel – a brother of Caleb **3:7-11**
 - 2-3) Ehud & Shamgar **3:12-31**
 - 4) Deborah & Barak – **4 & 5**
 - 5) Gideon – **6-8** – who with 300 delivered Israel from the Midianites
 - 6) Abimelech (?) – **9**
 - 7-8) Tola, Jair – **10:1-5**
 - 9) Jephthah – **11-12**
 - 10-12) Ibzan, Elon and Abdon – **12:8-15**
 - 13) Samson – **13-16**
 - 14) Eli – **1 Samuel 1-4**
 - 15) Samuel – **1 Samuel 1-7**
 - 16-17) Joel & Abijah – **sons of Samuel – 8:2-5**

Trouble in Israel – **Judges 17-21**

- The latter part of Judges (& Ruth) are an appendix to the time of the judges.
- 2 events are tragic and show the depth of depravity that Israel sunk to. The book of Ruth gives us hope.
- The overall timing of this period was between 350 & 450 years.
- Notice – **Judges 17:6, also 18:1, 19:1 & 21:25.** This describes the trouble here recorded – an unwillingness to follow YHWH.

Trouble in Israel – **Judges 17-21**

- Micah's Idolatry – **Judges 17-18**
- **17:1-5** – Micah, of Ephraim, had taken money from his mother. When he returned it, she took the money and created an idol. He also made his son a priest.
- **17:6** – everyone did what was right in their own eyes.
- **17:7-13** – A Levite from Bethlehem comes to his home and is hired to be a priest in place of his son. Note **vs. 13**.

Trouble in Israel – **Judges 17-21**

- Micah's Idolatry – **Judges 17-18**
- **18:1-26** – the tribe of Dan is seeking an inheritance for itself (more land, **cf. Joshua 19:47**). They go to an upper isolated region to find a defenseless town. On their way, 5 men recognize the young Levite and ask him to bless them. He does. After returning from spying the land, they amass their small army of 600. On the way, they stop at the house of Micah and steal his idols. They also take the Levite with them, offering him to be their priest. When Micah confronts them, they threatened him and he leaves without his possessions.

Trouble in Israel – **Judges 17-21**

- Micah's Idolatry – **Judges 17-18**
- **18:27-31** – the Danites strike the city of Laish and take its lands. They rename the city Dan and set up Micah's carved image and made the Levite their priest.

NOTE: Could this why later, Jeroboam will choose Dan for one of his golden calves?
(**1 Kings 12:29-30**)

Trouble in Israel – **Judges 17-21**

- Benjamin's sinful conduct – **Judges 19-21**
- **19:1-21** – a Levite from Ephraim took a concubine to be his wife. She played the harlot and returned to her home. After 4 months, the Levite goes to retrieve his wife. His father-in-law encourages him to stay a few days.
- **19:22-30** – 5 days later, heading home, the Levite by passes Jebus because of foreigners and goes to Gibeah. An older man invites him into his home. Perverse men of the city demand to see the Levite to violate him. The man's virgin daughter and the concubine are given to the men instead. They take the concubine and abuse her. The next day she dies at the door of the home.

Trouble in Israel – **Judges 17-21**

- Benjamin's sinful conduct – **Judges 19-21**
- **19:29-30** – the Levite returns home and cuts up his concubine and sends 12 pieces throughout the land. This causes the whole army of Israel to gather to deal with Gibeah.
- **20:1-28** – the men (400,000) determine to go to war unless Gibeah repents. Gibeah refuses. Israel inquires of God, but twice they are defeated losing 40,000 soldiers in 2 days. Finally, with repentance and sacrifices they appeal to YHWH. He tells them to go and that they will be victorious.

Trouble in Israel – Judges 17-21

- Benjamin's sinful conduct – **Judges 19-21**
- **20:29-48** – describes Gibeah's defeat. It was similar to Ai. The men of the city were drawn out and then Gibeah was ambushed and burned to the ground. 26,000 Benjamites were killed in battle. Israel then destroyed all their cities.
- **21:1-24** – Israel makes a rash oath vowing that none of their sons would marry daughters from Benjamin. Realizing they were about to lose a tribe, the concocted schemes to provide wives. Benjamin, though smaller, was spared.
- **21:25**, *in those days there was no king...*

Hope in Israel – **Ruth**

- **Ruth 1:1-5** – because of Famine Elimelech moves his wife and two sons, Mahlon and Chilion to Moab. Both sons marry, one Orpah and the other Ruth. All 3 men die.
- **1:6-13** – Naomi frees the daughters to return to their homeland and find a husband.
- **1:14-22** - Orpah does go, but Ruth promises to stay with Naomi. See **1:16-17**. Together they return to Judah. The people are excited to see Naomi again, but she asks them to call her Mara (bitter).

Hope in Israel – **Ruth**

- **Ruth 2:1-18** – we are introduced to Boaz.
- Ruth offers to go glean food for them. She comes to the field of Boaz. He meets her and shows her great kindness and instructs her to only glean in his field. Boaz is a relative of Elimelech. He instructs the young men to keep away from her and make sure she had plenty. When Ruth asks why he showed her such kindness, note **2:11-12**

Hope in Israel – **Ruth**

- **Ruth 2:19-23** – Ruth tells Naomi where she has gleaned and notes he is a relative. Ruth remains in that field for both the barley and wheat seasons.
- **3:1-11** – Naomi seeks security for Ruth. She instructs her to uncover and lie at the feet of Boaz that night. She does and he is startled around midnight. She request that he take her as a close relative (the Levirate law). Boaz agrees and again praises her. See vs. **10-11**.

Hope in Israel – **Ruth**

- **Ruth 3:12-18** – before Boaz can redeem her, there was a closer relative who had first opportunity
- **4:1-12** – Boaz, at the gate of the city, asks the closer relative to redeem the land. He agrees until he hears the need to take Ruth also. He cannot because of his own inheritance. So, he grants Boaz the right to redeem her.
- **4:13-22** – Boaz marries Ruth. She conceives and has a son named Obed. He is the father of Jesses, the father of David.
- Here is a glimmer of hope during dark times.

Lessons to consider

- “Everyone did what was right in his own eyes” - there is great danger when man chooses his own ways over God’s ways.
Luke 6:46.
- The lawlessness of idolatry – We see where idolatry can lead. Even professing to follow YHWH, it is man made religion and rejecting God – **Matthew 15:8-9**

Lessons to consider

- Even when images were created in the name of YHWH they were STILL an abomination. Such violated the 2nd commandment - **Cf. Exodus 20:4-5**
- When someone is willing to compromise God's word, how far will it go? The Levite went with those who offered him the most. A willingness to compromise reveals one's character.

Lessons to consider

- The consequences of moral decline within a society – Consider how quickly Benjamin degraded to homosexuality, sexual abuse, rebellion against God, etc. When we loosen moral values, the next generation WILL take it farther.
- Repentance leads one back to God – In the crisis against Benjamin, Israel finally (on third try) repented and turned to God. When we wander away, we too must repent.
Acts 8:22, Luke 13:3

Lessons to consider

- Be careful when you make vows – Israel made a rash vow against Benjamin. It almost resulted in the loss of an entire tribe. Vows are important – marriage, obeying the gospel, etc.
- Ruth, a lesson in God's providence – like other accounts, we can see the providence of God at work, even without any direct intervention by Him.

Lessons to consider

- Loyalty during difficult times – during her darkest hours, Ruth was loyal to Naomi.
Proverbs 17:17, *A friend loves at all times,
And a brother is born for adversity.*
- We all face choices as we go through life – Ruth did and chose wisely.
- Integrity is often noticed. Boaz showed kindness to Ruth because of her integrity.

Lessons to consider

- Ruth is one of the few women mentioned in the lineage of Jesus – **Matthew 1:5**. A foreigner mentioned as part of His lineage.

Does your life reflect trouble or
hope?



Let us pray!

