

"God's Love Story Sermon Outlines"

by Doug Hamilton

Section 10: God's Love Story of Rescue (The Book of Judges)

The Book of Judges covers the 300 year history (1350-1050 BC) of Israel between the deaths of Joshua and Samson (Judges 1-16). The last five chapters of Judges, 17-21, occurred nearly 200 years prior to Samson and were simply inserted at the end to supplement the unbroken chronology of Judges. This is indicated by the following facts:

- A. Moses' grandson Jonathon was still alive (18:30).
- B. Hosea's mentioning of the Sin of Gibeah as the first sin of the land (Hosea 10:9).
- C. The replenishment of the tribe of Benjamin from six-hundred (Judges 20:47) to thousands (1Chronicles 12:29).
- D. Moses' grandson Phineas was still the priest (Judges 20:28).

This historical document condemns evil deeds with the power of a prophet. Many, including the Jewish Talmudic writings, claim the Prophet Samuel wrote it. This would line up with the internal historical perspective that it was written before David capturing Jerusalem (Judges 1:21) and after Saul had become king (Judges 21:25).

The Term "Judges"

Judges does not refer to courtroom leadership, but military leaders that God sent to the Israelites to deliver them from their enemies. They were leaders among the people of God in a trying time of the nation's history. Israel stayed faithful to the covenant of God during the life of Joshua. *Judges 2:10 "...there arose another generation after them who did not know the LORD, nor yet the work which He had done for Israel."* During the period there were seven enemy oppressions and thirteen judges to deliver the people (Judges 3:7-16:31).

The Seven Oppressors

- 1) Mesopotamia
- 2) Moab
- 3) Philistines (round 1)
- 4) Canaan
- 5) Midian

- 6) Ammon

- 7) Philistines (round 2)

The Thirteen Corresponding Judges

- 1) Othniel (3:8-11)
- 2) Ehud (3:12-20)
- 3) Shamgar (3:31)
- 4) Deborah (4-5)
- 5) Gideon (6-8)
- 6) Abimelech (9)
- 7) Tola (10:2)
- 8) Jair (10:1-5)
- 9) Jephthah (10:6-12:7)
- 10) Ibzan (12:8-10)
- 11) Elon (12:11-12)
- 12) Abdon (12:13-15)
- 13) Samson (13-16)

"God's Love Story Sermon Outlines"

by Doug Hamilton

Some of these judges overlapped each other and were from different regions of the country. Many of them dealt with a common enemy over a longer period of time. Most were decent judges, but a few were not so faithful. God is awesome and is able to use all kinds of people to carry out his deliverance of His people.

The Devilish Mechanism To Bring It About: Unapproved Marital Unions

- Judges 3:5-6 The sons of Israel lived among the Canaanites, the Hittites, the Amorites, the Perizzites, the Hivites, and the Jebusites; ⁶ and they took their daughters for themselves as wives, and gave their own daughters to their sons, and served their gods.
- This was expressly forbidden by God before they came into the land (Dt. 7:3-4). It was also the same process that led the world into prevailing wickedness prior to the flood (Genesis 6:4). What will be the state of our own nation if we fail to value the seriousness of marriage in the eyes of God? Have we reached this yet in our own nation?

The Cycle of the Judges

It occurred in four steps 1) REBELLION, 2) REPRESSION, 3) REPENTENCE and 4) RESCUE. Israel would be entangled in idolatry, subjected to enslavement by enemies, fervent in the prayers for deliverance and joyful of salvation through a judge that God raised up to assist. This was spelled out early in the text of 2:13-16.

- 2:13 "So they forsook the LORD and served Baal and the Ashtaroth."
- 2:14 "...He gave them into the hands of plunderers who plundered them..."
- 2:15 "...they were severely distressed."
- 2:16 "...the LORD raised up judges who delivered them..."

It is in the final stage of the cycle of the Judges that we find the title of the lesson "*God's Love Story of Rescue*". The brief look at just six of the judges demonstrates that God is more than willing and able to RESCUE.

Othniel (3:7-11)

- The sons of Israel did what was evil in the sight of the LORD, and forgot the LORD their God and served the Baals and the Asheroth. The anger of God was kindled and He sent Mesopotamia to punish them. For eight years they made their lives miserable.
- Verse 9 states "*...the sons of Israel cried to the LORD...*" and he raised up a judge named Othniel. The Spirit of the Lord came upon him, he went to war with the Mesopotamians and was completely victorious. When the Spirit of the LORD comes upon an individual, get out of the way, for the power of God will be mighty and impossible to defeat!
 - The Spirit of the LORD came upon Gideon (6:34) and the Midianites did not have a chance.

"God's Love Story Sermon Outlines"

by Doug Hamilton

- The Spirit of the LORD came upon Jephthah (11:29) and the Ammonites were miserably defeated.
- The Spirit of the LORD came upon Samson (14:6, 15:40) and the Philistines paid with their lives.
- We don't really know many other details of Othniel's battle, but the Israelites were rescued and had peace for forty years. This makes it God's Love Story of Rescue.

Ehud (3:12-30)

- A new generation that did not remember the last oppression did the same thing again. God would once again bring forth an enemy from the land of Moab through a king named Eglon (12). He ravished the land, even taking the city of Jericho. For the next eighteen years they would be Israel's nemesis.
- Verse 15 states "*...the sons of Israel cried to the LORD...*" and the Lord raised another judge to rescue them. His name was Ehud and he was a Benjamite. He tricked his way into the palace of Eglon under the guise of bringing secret information. This ended in death for the King of Moab. In the ensuing battle more than ten thousand Moabite soldiers fell and there was once again peace in the land. God demonstrated a love story of rescue for the nation.

Shamgar (3:31)

- The verse states "*After him came Shamgar the son of Anath, who struck down six hundred Philistines with an oxgoad; and he also saved Israel.*" Not much is known about him.
- He fought against an early emergence of the Philistines, killing six hundred of them. His conquest likely occurred during the eighty years of peace from the Moabites. His father was named *Anath*, which is the name of an immoral Canaanite goddess. This indicates that idolatry had permeated his family early on, which would feed into the cycle of the Judges. In the song of Deborah (5:6) it refers to the idolatry during the time of Shamgar, which also confirms this.
- In the end, Israel once again experience God's Love Story of Rescue in their time of need.

Deborah (Chapters 4 and 5)

- Judges 4:1 states "*Then the sons of Israel again did evil in the sight of the LORD...*" and once again were enslaved. In the past it was the foreign nations that invaded and overtook the Israelites, but this time it was the local Canaanites to do the bidding of the LORD. They had nine hundred chariots and were more than willing to use them if needed (2).
- For twenty years they ruled the land, but *the sons of Israel cried to the LORD* (3). God heard their prayers and sent them a Judge and prophetess named Deborah. She called a well-known warrior named Barak to be her general. He would be the man that would go against Sisera, the Canaanite general. Deborah also prophetically predicted to him that

"God's Love Story Sermon Outlines"

by Doug Hamilton

Sisera would fall not from the hand of Barak, but a woman (4:9). Barak likely perceived this to be Deborah herself, but that was not the case.

- Barak assembled 10,000 soldiers on Mount Tabor and awaited word from Deborah. As the enemy chariots gathered in the valley by the river Kishon, God gave Deborah the word and she gave the order to attack. Judges 5:21 indicates that the river was flooded out of its banks, likely causing muddy conditions for the chariots. The Israelites came down the mountain and destroyed the Canaanite army. Sisera fled on foot for many miles and sought refuge in an Israelite woman's home, whose name was Jael. While he rested on the floor from exhaustion, Jael hammered a tent peg through his temple, nailing his head to the ground. Jabin, the king of the Canaanites, fell a short time later and the Israelites were rescued, experiencing peace in the land. Chapter five is basically a song to celebrate God's Love Story of Rescue.

Gideon (Chapters 6-8)

- 6:1 says *"Then the sons of Israel did what was evil in the sight of the LORD; and the LORD gave them into the hands of Midian seven years."* These rebels would often destroy the crops of the Israelites in order to make life hard. 6:6 says *"So Israel was brought very low because of Midian, and the sons of Israel cried to the LORD."* God heard them and raised up a judge named Gideon.
- After boosting his confidence in the mission, God sent Gideon to crush the Midianites. He assembled 32,000 Israelites to go up against 135,000 Midianites. Through the process of elimination they ridiculously reduced the number down to 300 valiant warrior and waged night warfare. Before it was over the people once again experienced God's Love Story of Rescue from their sins and their enemies. The land had peace for the rest of that generation.

Samson (Chapters 13-16)

- 13:1 claims *"Now the sons of Israel again did evil in the sight of the LORD, so that the LORD gave them into the hands of the Philistines forty years."* Once again God sent a deliverer. His name was Samson and he was under a Nazarite vow. Though he had a failed married life (14:1-19), he was a mighty thorn in the flesh of the Philistines (15:1-20). He even had a song which went like this, *"With the jawbone of a donkey, Heaps upon heaps, With the jawbone of a donkey I have killed a thousand men"* (15:16). No matter what the Philistines did to stop him, it was with the power of God that he prevailed.
- He had a serious weakness with the ladies. One in particular was a loose woman named Delilah (chapter 16). She figured out the secret of his strength, which was the Nazarite Vow (Numbers 6), including never cutting his hair. She changed that through manipulation and a pair of scissors. 16:20-21 states *She said, "The Philistines are upon you, Samson!" And he awoke from his sleep and said, "I will go out as at other times and shake myself free."* But he did not know that the LORD had departed from him.²¹ Then the

"God's Love Story Sermon Outlines"

by Doug Hamilton

Philistines seized him and gouged out his eyes; and they brought him down to Gaza and bound him with bronze chains, and he was a grinder in the prison. Because Samson, God's judge to deliver the Israelites, was not faithful to God in his Nazarite vow, he was reduced down to a spectacle for the Philistines. God would rescue him in the near future.

- There was a gathering of all the leaders and nobles of the Philistines to honor their God Dagon. More than 3,000 of them assembled for a time of celebration and intoxication. In the midst of it they called for the "great and mighty" Samson to be brought out so as to make sport of him. While inside of the temple and being ridiculed, Samson reached out to God for rescue and was heard.
- *Judges 16:28-30 Then Samson called to the LORD and said, "O Lord GOD, please remember me and please strengthen me just this time, O God, that I may at once be avenged of the Philistines for my two eyes." ²⁹ Samson grasped the two middle pillars on which the house rested, and braced himself against them, the one with his right hand and the other with his left. ³⁰ And Samson said, "Let me die with the Philistines!" And he bent with all his might so that the house fell on the lords and all the people who were in it. So the dead whom he killed at his death were more than those whom he killed in his life.*
- The effects of wiping out the key officials of the Philistines would have been devastating to their nation. The result was that Israel had peace from the Philistines for the next two decades.

We have covered just six of the thirteen judges of Israel. We can clearly see the cycled pattern and that God has a very wonderful story of rescue for his people.

- Are you feeling like a loser? Don't forget God's Love Story is a story of Rescue! *Colossians 1:13-14 He rescued us from the domain of darkness, and transferred us to the kingdom of His beloved Son, ¹⁴ in whom we have redemption, the forgiveness of sins.*
- Are you not trusting that God will get you through that temptation? Remember God's Love Story of Rescue! *2 Peter 2:7-9 "...and if He rescued righteous Lot, oppressed by the sensual conduct of unprincipled men"... "then the Lord knows how to rescue the godly from temptation, and to keep the unrighteous under punishment for the day of judgment..."*
- Are you being persecuted? You best recall God's Love Story of Rescue! *2 Timothy 4:18 The Lord will rescue me from every evil deed, and will bring me safely to His heavenly kingdom; to Him be the glory forever and ever. Amen.*
- Are you alienated from the world? Bring to your mind the truth that our God has a Love Story about rescue! *Galatians 1:3-5 "...the Lord Jesus Christ, ⁴ who gave Himself for our sins so that He might rescue us from this present evil age, according to the will of our God and Father, ⁵ to whom be the glory forevermore. Amen.*

Stop worrying and start glorifying God for His great Love Story of Rescue, for that is the theme of the Book of Judges and of Christianity!