

God's Providence in God's People

Contra Costa Gospel Church
Adult Sunday School

THE JUDGES (Part 2)

We established last time that the author of the Book of Judges arranged the material of his book in such a way to highlight only a few of the 12 judges during this period. How did he do so? Simply by writing more about some, and much less about others. For example, there are about 90 verses written where the main character is the judge, Gideon (from 6:11-8:35). On the flipside, poor ol' Shamgar gets all of one verse (3:31), and Elon doesn't get much more text with his two verses (12:11-12).

What are we supposed to notice about the judges that get more print? What is the author trying to tell us? A clue to his message is found in the recurring refrain of the book, "There was no king in Israel" (17:6; 18:1; 19:1; 21:25). This was certainly a dark time in Israel's history, filled with acts of disobedience to the Lord, attacks from foreign invaders, and the propensity to be led astray again and again by false gods. If we understand the tone of the book, then we understand that the period of the judges was not meant to be a permanent one. It was a stopgap between Joshua's conquest and the period of the monarchy. The judges were good in that they delivered Israel, but they were not good enough. By providing only military strength and not spiritual strength, the nation time and again strayed from the path of following the Lord with wholehearted obedience.

And so, with all of this in mind, we set out to answer the question, "What is wrong with each of these judges?" Some flaws are obvious and some are less so. But when we approach the stories with the right mindset, we will find some interesting perspectives.

Ehud

- 1) The story of Ehud begins at 3:12 and extends to the end of the chapter. If we had to choose the three most important and relevant details of this account regarding Ehud, what would they be?
 - a.
 - b.
 - c.
- 2) Culturally, the right hand is the hand of strength and power, and of prominence. We see this distinction when Jacob blesses the sons of Joseph in Genesis (see 48:1-22). Some other references to the right hand are found in these passages: Exodus 15:6; Psalm 17:6-7; 20:6; 60:5.
 - a. Where do you see the prominence of handedness in Ehud's account?
 - b. What do you think the response is from the readers of the book that Israel's deliverer is left handed?

- 3) There is one more very obvious and extremely important detail of Ehud's account that paints him in a poor light. What is this?

We see that while Ehud was effective in his deliverance of Israel from the Moabites that he was a flawed man. It was somewhat of an embarrassment in Israel's history that they were delivered by such a man. Hopefully the next few will be better... (they won't be.)