

HALF-HEARTED: Judges 1:1–2:5

By Brett Baggett on Sunday, January 12th, 2020

1. **HISTORICAL SETTING: Abraham** (Promises made), Isaac, Jacob, Joseph (Promises retold, yet slavery promised), Slavery in Egypt over 400 years, Moses (Exodus, Sinai, Wilderness) Joshua (taking the Promised Land), Judges (No King, and the people did what was right on their own eyes).
2. **TIME COVERED: The book of Judges Covers about 350 years. Q.** Can you think back to the year 1670 in this land? America wasn't even a nation yet.
3. **WHO'S IN IT: 12 judges in all**, each representing one of the tribes in Israel with the exception of the tribe of Levi, which is highlighted in the last five chapters of this book.
4. **WHY IT WAS WRITTEN #1: This helps us understand why some of the Judges get only a few verses dedicated to them**—every tribe has a judge. The LORD accomplished His purposes through them despite their utter failures.
5. **WHY IT WAS WRITTEN #2: It is historical, but it is not rigorously chronological.** Therefore it is more anthropological and theological. Our hearts are supposed to learn from this book rather than our minds simply given historical information.
6. **The book of Joshua** shows time and time again that the LORD is a promise-keeper. He promised the Land as their inheritance and he gave it to them. **The book of Judges** now asks and answers this question: are the LORD's people a promise keeping people?

I. HALF HEARTED DISCIPLESHIP IS NO DISCIPLESHIP AT ALL

(distrusting the LORD's promises and therefore disobeying the LORD's commands)

1. Look at Manasseh, Ephraim, Asher, Naphtali, Dan, Joseph in verses 24-36.

- **As one commentator wrote**, "The Israelites now live amongst idol-worshipping Canaanites. Like buried mines, these idols lie dormant in Judges chapter 1, ready to explode in the spiritual lives of God's people." - Keller
- Let us learn this clear lesson, beloved: **We can never make peace with idols in our lives—they will always grip our hearts and then break us.** As the Apostle John says in his very last words in 1 John: "Little Children, keep yourselves from idols."

2. Now look at Judah in verses 2-3, 19.

- **cf. Joshua 17:18** "For you shall drive out the Canaanites, though they have chariots of iron, and though they are strong."
- **cf. Judges 4:3** "Then the people of Israel cried out to the Lord for help, for he had 900 chariots of iron and he oppressed the people of Israel cruelly for twenty years." (and the LORD defeated them through Deborah and Barak)
- **It is not our lack of strength that leads to half-hearted discipleship;** it is our lack of faith in God's promises—in God's strength to accomplish what He has promised.
- **When we doubt God's promises we begin to do what is right in our own eyes** rather than by simple faith obeying Jesus' commands in His word.

3. And then there's Caleb and his family in verses 12-15.

- **As the old hymn says**, "Trust and obey, for there's no other way to be happy in Jesus but to trust and obey."

II. HALF WAY REPENTANCE IS NO REPENTANCE AT ALL

(how they respond to the Angel of the Lord)

- **Look how the people respond to the cutting words of the Angel of the LORD in verses 4-5 of chapter 2.**
- **This is what the Apostle Paul says is the difference between worldly grief that leads to death and godly grief that leads to repentance and salvation.**
- **2 Corinthians 7:9-10** "As it is, I rejoice, not because you were grieved, but because you were grieved into repenting. For you felt a godly grief, so that you suffered no loss through us. For godly grief produces a repentance that leads to salvation without regret, whereas worldly grief produces death."

III. THE LORD DISCIPLINES THOSE HE LOVES

(the Angel of the LORD's words)

- **Contrast the discipline of the LORD** toward his people with the judgment of the LORD carried out on Adoni-Bezek.
- **As George Whitefield used to say**, "The LORD puts thorns in our bed."
- **Rather than letting us drift into a sleep of half-hearted discipleship**—*half-hearted obedience*—the LORD disciplines us to wake us up and make us holy—to share his holiness.
- **Hebrews 12:5-11** "And have you forgotten the exhortation that addresses you as sons? "My son, do not regard lightly the discipline of the Lord, nor be weary when reproved by him. For the Lord disciplines the one he loves, and chastises every son whom he receives." It is for discipline that you have to endure. God is treating you as sons. For what son is there whom his father does not discipline? If you are left without discipline, in which all have participated, then you are illegitimate children and not sons. Besides this, we have had earthly fathers who disciplined us and we respected them. Shall we not much more be subject to the Father of spirits and live? For they disciplined us for a short time as it seemed best to them, but he disciplines us for our good, that we may share his holiness. For the moment all discipline seems painful rather than pleasant, but later it yields the peaceful fruit of righteousness to those who have been trained by it."
- **Proverbs says**, "Faithful are the wounds of a friend; may are the kisses of an enemy." And there's no greater friend than Jesus!

ENDING: WHAT WE REALLY NEED

- **The book of Joshua** shows time and time again that the LORD is a promise-keeper. He promised the Land as their inheritance and he gave it to them.
- **The book of Judges** now asks and answers this question: are the LORD's people a promise keeping people? The answer is a resounding "no."
- **What we really need is to be able to uphold our end of the covenant.** The bad news is that no one ever has and no one ever will, save one. The good news is that He did it for us, as our substitute!
- **His name is Jesus, and he is who this passage—and our daily lives**—should drive us to behold and trust!
- **Not for one second was He or will he ever be half-hearted in His devotion to God.**
- **On the cross, Jesus paid perfectly for our lack of holding up our end of the covenant.**
- **On the cross, He took the ultimate thorns our sin deserves;** He threw himself into the ultimate snare and was slaughtered so that we could have a new covenant with God.
- **In His life without sin and in His resurrection to eternal life to be our faithful representative,** Jesus perfectly upholds our end of the bargain forever.
- **We have a perfect covenant with God that will never falter and never fail because JESUS UPHOLDS OUR END OF THE COVENANT BETWEEN US AND GOD.**
Praise the LORD! Look to Him and live, today and everyday! All who trust in Him will never be put to shame!
- **And if you look to Jesus you will find the strength in Him to be wholehearted in your discipleship,** by the power of the Holy Spirit.
- **If you look to Jesus and what he has done for you on the cross, you will be broken over your sin,** grieve in a godly way, and repent of your sin which leads to salvation without regret.
- **If you look to Jesus and what he's done on the cross, you will learn to love the discipline of the LORD—those thorns in your bed**—which the God who loves you as his child uses to wake you up and make you holy and happy.