

We will begin our 9<sup>th</sup> lecture on “An Introduction to the Old Testament.” /During our last lecture, we studied the first of the Historical Books, Joshua. /The books of Joshua and Judges are mainly about the conquest of the land of Canaan.

/These books are not only about the conquest of land, but it is about the land promised to Abraham, who is Israel’s ancestor. /Why did God want to give the land of Canaan to the Israelites? The reason is he wanted them to be a holy kingdom of priests through which all nations are blessed.

/What does this mean? God didn’t just give them the land for them to be happy, but he did it to show that it is something given as a part of God’s plan of salvation.

/Please remember how I taught and interpreted things in our “Introduction to the Old Testament” lectures. /To complete his purpose of creation, God, despite man’s fall in Genesis 3:15, established his plan of salvation and made that promise.

/The Old Testament describes God’s work of salvation before the coming of Christ, and it teaches us why Christ had to come. /Now from God’s perspective of salvation we will study the problems of this land.

/When fulfilling the work of salvation, God fulfills it through his promises. /The work of salvation is fulfilled not because of man’s faithfulness and obedience but because of God’s promise and his faithfulness to the covenant.

/In Joshua, God gave the people the Promised Land of Canaan. /In order to bless all people of all nations, God kept his promise to Abraham by giving them the land.

/For the promise to be fulfilled, the Israelites must believe in God and obey his word. /Because the Israelites in the book of Joshua believed in God’s word and obeyed for the most part, they received a lot of land.

/However, when Joshua is nearing his death, there were portions of land that were not yet conquered.

/The book of Judges discusses the problem of the remaining unconquered land.

/Regarding the land, Joshua, early on, told them how to conquer the remainder of the land. /The way for them to do this is to believe in God, fight the war according to God’s methods, and obey the word.

/In Judges 1, the Israelites do not do this. /In Judges 1:1 – 3:6, the Israelites, rather than believing in God, make a covenant with the people of Canaan, marry with these people, and toss God aside.

/When the Israelites pushed God aside, when they made a covenant with the foreign people, God did not leave them be. /He makes them suffer because of the foreign people and their gods; God judges them.

/The people of Israel trusted these foreign people and married with them, serving their gods as well, but the foreign people trample on the Israelites. /Put into a difficult situation, the Israelites in their sadness cry to God to save them.

/The merciful God raises up judges to save the people. /After they are saved, the Israelites return to the foreign gods and foreign people.

/God delivered them again, but each time, the Israelites habitually return to the foreign nations. /The main message of the book of Judges talks about these details.

/Thus the time after Joshua's death but before the reign of the kings is called the period of the judges. During the time of the judges, God did not permit them to take the remaining land.

/Therefore the period of the judges includes the story of the Israelites' failure. /It is about how God pours out his grace and mercy to the Israelites who had failed.

/The main message of the book of Judges begins with Othniel and introduces 6 major judges. /Through the judge Othniel, we see the typical, formal flow of the book of Judges.

/The descendants of Israel, doing evil before God, were judged by God and were enduring hardship. As the Israelites cry out to God, God raises up the deliverer Othniel to save them.

/The next judge is Ehud, but Ehud was not a normal person. /God used the Moabites to torment the Israelites who had abandoned God to serve foreign gods. /When the people cry out in their misery, God uses the left-handed Ehud to deliver Israel.

/Most people are right-handed. We see God's special, sovereign work of salvation in the fact that God uses a left-handed person to deliver Israel. /God's sovereign work of salvation is evident in the story of Shamgar, which is recorded in 3:31.

/Shamgar was not a famous person, nor did he know how to wield the sword. /He took care of oxen, and with an ox goad, he killed six hundred Philistines. He was also a deliverer chosen by God.

/These things are happening as the judge Deborah is introduced in chapter 4. /The Israelites habitually did evil before the LORD. /God gives the people into the hands of King Jabin, who invades the Israelites.

/The Israelites habitually cry out to God again. /God at this time wants to save Israel through Deborah. /Deborah was a prophetess and a judge raised up by God.

/However, Deborah commands Barak the male soldier to go into war and save Israel. /Barak was not a faithful believer of God. /He said that he would serve to save the people only if she accompanied him.

/Because of this happening, Barak was not able to kill the Canaanite general Sisera. /General Sisera was killed by Jael, a foreign woman. /God sometimes uses women to save Israel.

/Ultimately, Israel's salvation is up to God. /The next judge is Gideon. /In Gideon's time, the people left God to serve foreign gods. /This time, God uses the Midianites to afflict the people.

/The Israelites out of habit cry out to God. /God does not immediately raise up a deliverer, but he sends a prophet to explain why they are being judged.

/Also, an angel of the LORD cries out to Gideon in the region of Ophrah as Gideon threshes wheat. /God called Gideon so that he may save the Israelites through him. /However, Gideon did not immediately follow.

/Gideon protests against God by asking him why they are in such a difficult place if God is with them. /He also requests for proof that it was God who is indeed calling to him.

/By burning with fire a sacrifice laid on a rock, God shows Gideon that it was he who had called him. /God gives orders to Gideon who discovers that it was God who had called him.

/Gideon destroys the altar of Baal at Ophrah that his father was worshiping. /He is given the name "Jerubbaal," which means, "Let Baal contend against him." /The Holy Spirit of God had come upon Gideon.

/Gideon gathered the tribes of Israel and asks them to go to war with him. /As a man of diplomatic means, Gideon gathers thirty-two thousand soldiers. /However, his army did not immediately go to war.

/Gideon asks a question to test God. /He tested God with fleece, asking God to keep the fleece wet with dew in the morning but to keep the ground dry. /Gideon's test did not end here, but he tests God again, asking God to keep the fleece dry and the ground wet with dew.

/This was already the third time Gideon had tested God. /Now, Gideon leads his thirty-two thousand men into enemy territory to fight the Midianites. /But God does not want an army of thirty-two thousand.

/Judges 7:2 shows us the reason. The reason is the people may boast by saying they themselves have brought salvation. /God chooses three hundred men who drink water by putting their hands to their mouth. /God sent back a lot of people and only chose three hundred men. It was a small number.

/The Israelites will only believe that God brought them victory if they win with such a small number. They will realize that they hadn't won the war. /Now the three hundred warriors must go to fight, but Gideon does not want to go. /He was afraid because he didn't believe they could win with three hundred people.

/God secretly sends Gideon, who is afraid, into the enemy's camp to hear the interpretation of a dream. /The Midianites interpreted the dream as saying Gideon will invade and kill them.

/Gideon, who experiences this work of God, leads the three hundred warriors to fight the enemy in their land. /However, rather than fighting, they simply blow the trumpet, smash jars, and shout.

/Hearing the trumpets and the smashing of jars, the enemy soldiers are confused and start to fight each other. /As the war reaches its end, Gideon does not end the war, but he crosses the Jordan River.

/If we look at the message following 8:4, we learn that Gideon had not yet captured the kings. /They were the kings Zebah and Zalmunna. /Gideon and his army were exhausted and hungry from war, but they continued their pursuit.

/Passing through Penuel, Gideon asks the people for help, but they do not give it to him. /The people of Succoth also do not help him. /Eventually, after Gideon catches Zebah and Zalmunna, he gets revenge on the people of Succoth and Penuel.

/Before Gideon kills Zebah and Zalmunna, he explains why he has to kill them. /Judges 8:19 tells us that Zebah and Zalmunna killed Gideon's brothers.

/Gideon's war that took place across the Jordan River was not God's war, but a war of vengeance. /Seeing Gideon's war of revenge, the Israelites shout out that Gideon had saved them.

/In Judges 8:22, the people ask Gideon to be king over them because he had saved them. /However, God is the one who saved Israel.

/The people are mistaken in thinking that they saved themselves. /God's concern became a reality. /On the outside, Gideon said that God is king, not him, and he rejected their request for him to be king.

/However, Gideon had many wives and over seventy sons. /He became a person used by God to save Israel. But he lifted himself up, believing that he had delivered Israel.

/This is where we see Israel's tragedy. /Gideon's son Abimilech kills Israelites. /A war breaks out where the people kill each other. /When people forget about God's salvation and believe they themselves are kings, this kind of tragedy happens.

/As we have seen, the message is that God shows his mercy and grace and saves Israel despite their evil acts.

/In Judges 10:6, we learn about the judge Jephthah. /Because the Israelites turned away from God, God sends the Ammonites to attack the people of Israel.

/Here the Israelites cry out to God. /They even apologize to God for serving idols. /Before God raises up a deliverer, they themselves raise up a deliverer. /They choose Jephthah whom they had driven out.

/Jephthah, the son of a concubine, was driven out of his hometown and lived as the head of numerous gangs. /The Israelites approach Jephthah and ask him to be their general, to fight the Ammonites.

/The elders of Gilead come to Jephthah to ask him to be their leader. Jephthah agrees and goes to war. /The Israelites were the ones who chose him, but the Holy Spirit came upon Jephthah.

/The Holy Spirit doesn't come without a purpose. The Holy Spirit came to use the man as a deliver who would save Israel. Jephthah made a vow before God.

/He vowed to offer whoever first comes to meet him if God gave him victory. /Vowing to offer the person who comes to meet him is not an appropriate vow.

/Regardless, God gives Jephthah the victory. /The one who comes to meet him after the war is his daughter, his only child. /Jephthah was taken aback, but he kills his daughter as he had vowed to do so.

/The men of Ephraim come to meet Jephthah. /If we look at chapter 12, we learn that Jephthah did not invite the people of Ephraim when he went to war, so the men of Ephraim ask him why he didn't call them. /But the truth is, Jephthah, before going to war, did ask them for help.

/Jephthah went ahead and killed the people of Ephraim who were complaining. /Because of Jephthah, who had a victim mentality, many people died, but God also saved the Israelites through him.

/The final judge we see is Samson. /Before Samson was born, the people of Israel did evil and lived apart from God. /God used the Philistines to judge the Israelites.

/In Judges 13, we find something strange. /The Israelites, persecuted by the Philistines, do not cry out to God. /Even still, God raises someone up to deliver Israel.

/God gave Manoah and his wife a child, a child who would be a Nazirite. 13:5. /By bringing into the world a child distinguished for God, a Nazirite, God will save the Israelites through him.

/God prepared to deliver Israel even before Samson was born. /In Judges 13:25, we learn that the Holy Spirit was with Samson as he was growing up.

/However, Samson the Nazirite loved foreign women more than the women of his people. /He fell in love with a woman at Timnah, a Philistine woman, and he married her. /Because of his marriage with the woman of Timnah, Samson killed many Philistines.

/Samson went down his own way because of his love for the woman, but God saves Israel through Samson. /After marrying the woman of Timnah, Samson falls in love with a prostitute at Gaza.

/Furthermore, he loves Delilah as well. /However, Delilah loved money too much. /The Philistines asked Delilah to figure out the secret of Samson's strength. They promised to give her money if she found out.

/Samson was a man used by God, a distinguished Nazirite, but he loved Delilah in a human way. /He eventually tells Delilah his secret. /He tells her that his strength comes from his hair that has never been cut.

/Delilah shaves Samson's head, and Samson, who loses his power, has his eyes removed and is taken away by the Philistines. /Was the secret to his power his hair? /The secret to Samson's strength was his identity as a man distinguished for God's salvation.

/God abandoned Samson, who gave away his final identity. /We too, living as people of God in this world, as people who believe in Jesus, have no power if we do not keep our faith. /Samson's story does not end here. /He prays to God.

/He prays for strength one last time so that he may punish the Philistines who had removed his two eyes. /God listens to his prayer and strengthens him to kill many people.

/Samson killed more Philistines than he had up to that moment to save Israel. /It may seem like Samson lived according to his desires, but God used him to deliver Israel.

/Judges 17 to 22 are the conclusion. /First, chapters 17 and 18 show us how an individual and how a certain tribe serve God. /From chapter 17, we see repetitive verses like this.

/17:6 says, / "In those days there was no king in Israel. Everyone did what was right in his own eyes."

/Israel should serve God according to God's ways, but they served him according to their own ways. /A man named Micah from the hill country of Jerusalem makes a carved image and serves God in his own way.

/People of the tribe of Dan come and take away Micah's carved image, and they fail when they serve God in their own way. /18:31. /In chapters 19 to 21, we learn about the things that happen to a certain Levite, a man serving God who takes for himself a concubine.

/When the Levite's concubine is killed in Gibeah, which belongs to Benjamin, the man tells everything to the people of Israel. /Eventually, Israel goes to war with the tribe of Benjamin.

/After two wars, the tribes of Israel lose to the tribe of Benjamin. /But in the third war, the tribes of Israel defeat the tribe of Benjamin. /Everyone but six hundred people of the tribe of Benjamin die. A tribe was in danger of disappearing.

/Judges 21:25 reads, "In those days there was no king in Israel. Everyone did what was right in his own eyes."

/What kind of period was the period of the judges? /It is a story about how people served God in their own ways and how they conquered the land that God had given them in their own ways. /What is the result of the people who lived according to their own ways?

/They failed in their relationship with God. /They also did not conquer the remaining land. /Despite the Israelites' failure, God's grace stands out.

/God showed his grace to such a sinful place. He also saved the Israelites and protected them. /Israel's salvation and the salvation of all the people of the world lie in God's sovereignty.

/At our next time, we will study the book of Ruth.

/Thank you.