

0 (3s):

Welcome to the Bible teaching ministry of Dr. Ron Jones. Our prayer is that God will use his word to change your life and fill your heart with hope. And now here's rod

1 (16s):

In 1969. I'm gonna take you back to the boys in 1969 to country music, legends named buck Owens and Roy Clark debuted a what became a successful variety television program called <inaudible>. Now, how many of you remember he haw? All right. There's something good. It's a goods. Good smattering here. I played this out with some of the members of my family this week and they said, oh dad, dad, you're going to, you're going to go way back. Yeah, I'm going way back here. But he ha it was, it was great hillbilly humor, right? Corn bread humor. You had the heat haw honeys, and then buck Owens his band. You remember the name of buck Owens his band, the buckaroos.

1 (58s):

It doesn't get any better than the buckaroos. And with the help of syndication and reruns, he hall ran for 30 years until 1997. And they've got quite a fan base. Even today. My son was born in 1997, so he doesn't remember all this. I say, just, just look them up on the web. You're going to laugh like a hillbilly and one of the recurring musical sketches that was very successful starred Roy Clark and three of his hillbilly friends there. They are sitting on their front porch, sipping moonshine and singing sad songs about their miserable lives. Do you remember one? It goes like this gloom, despair and agony on me.

1 (1m 39s):

Come on. Single log, deep, dark depression, excessive misery. If it weren't for bad luck, I'd have no luck at all. Duluth despair and misery on me. You know, the eight o'clock service did a whole lot better with that than this group. I was afraid I'd lose my audience in these later two hours. But some of you are saying, pastor that describes my life about right now, bloom, despair, agony, excessive misery. I hope it doesn't, but it does. And it will. If we don't learn the lessons of biblical history from the book of judges, you know, the old saying, if you don't learn the lessons of history, you're destined to repeat the mistakes of history.

1 (2m 27s):

And that's true. As we read our Bibles, these stories are preserved for us, for us to learn from them and not to fall into the gloom. Then the despair and the misery that is described in the book of judges. Now, the book of judges covers 350 years of Israel's history. It's the 350 years following the death of Joshua. And it's a dark read on one, on one sense. And some people call it Israel's dark ages because not once, but twice in the book of judges that says everybody did what was right in his own eyes.

1 (3m 8s):

What does that sound familiar? The anarchy, the apostasy, the rebellion, the lawlessness, and almost describes a little bit of the times in which we're living right now, the lawlessness, the loosening of our own spiritual moorings in America. It makes me wonder if we might be entering into a dark, dark time in our

nation's history, and we need to learn the lessons well, for sure. Israel's disobedience brought gloom and despair and excessive misery upon the Israelites, not for years, not for decades, but for centuries 350 years.

2 (3m 46s):

This book covers.

1 (3m 49s):

Yeah. The book of judges begins with these words in chapter one in verse one, it says after the death of Joshua, the people of Israel, inquired of the Lord, who shall go up first for us against the Canaanites to fight against them. Remember Joshua had led the next generation of Israelites into the promised land. And they had a lot of battles to, to engage in, to, to defeat the nations, the Canaanite nations. There were seven Canaanite nations that were strongly embedded in the land, and it took them about 25 or 30 years to defeat their enemies. But some of them, they didn't defeat. Some of the Canaanites were left in the land because they were, they were pretty strong.

1 (4m 33s):

They were pretty mighty, they were fortified cities. They were difficult to overthrow. The Israelites did not completely destroy them. And instead they were satisfied to live among them or for them to live among them. And so they subjugated them, they made them their slaves. They said, oh, we're not going to destroy. We'll just, we'll just park you over here. We'll make you a slave. So we can control you judges chapter one and through about chapter three in verse four, describe how this cozying up to the Canaanites led to a gradual moral decline among God's people. And it didn't help that the generation that went into the promised land didn't pass their faith on to their kids and their grandkids.

1 (5m 19s):

In fact, in Joshua chapter two verses 10 through 12, it says that after Joshua died, there arose another generation after them that did not know the Lord or the work that he had done for Israel. And the people of Israel did what was evil in the sight of the Lord and served the bales, the false gods. And they abandoned the Lord, the God of their fathers who had brought them out of the land of Egypt. What's sad, sad words to read that, that next generation, after the promised land generation abandoned the Lord and not surprisingly, God was not pleased with them. The Bible on to say in verse 14. So the anger of the Lord was kindled against Israel and he gave them over to plunderers who plundered them.

1 (6m 7s):

And he sold them into the hand of their surrounding enemies so that they could no longer withstand their enemies. And they were in terrible distress. Yes, gloom, despair, and excessive misery. They were experiencing. And they found themselves in a cycle. We'll talk about the cycle a little bit, but over and over and over again, they fell into debauchery and depravity and just evil ways. It says there in verses 14 and 15, then he gave them over to the plunderers. He just said, you know, just, just, just experienced the

consequences of your own rebellion and stubbornness and lawlessness.

1 (6m 47s):

It reminds me of that, that kind of scary phrase that echoes from the early chapters of the book of Romans read it sometime. It's a dark book that describes the total depravity of man and how God reaches a point where he just gives us over to the consequences of our own stubborn rebellion. It's a haunting haunting picture

2 (7m 13s):

In verses 16 and 17 though. It

1 (7m 17s):

Tells us then the Lord raised up judges who saved them out of the hand of those who plundered them yet. They did not listen to their judges for they hoard after other gods and bowed down to them. Reading the book of judges makes me want to rewind and go back to Joshua and embrace the generation of Israelites that crossed the Jordan river, did what the Lord told them to do and entered into the promised land. However, in judges hope rises out of the Ash heap of history, like a Phoenix when God delivers the Israelites from one powerful enemy after another. And he does this by appointing judges and it's during this dark season and during these dark cycles of history that God demonstrates his grace and proves himself faithful to the covenant that he made with Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, and the sentence.

1 (8m 11s):

Now the main body of the book is found in chapter three in verse five, all the way through chapter 16. And it describes the continuing battles fought by the Israelites against their enemies, the Canaanites, the Midianites, the Philistines, and a whole lot more. And in all, during this main body of the book, the book of judges records, the deliverances and the rising up of 12 different judges. You would include more. If you go on to the book of first Samuel, all the way up to the reign of king Saul, remember there was no king in the land during this time. And everyone did what was right in his own eyes to say it in another way, they made themselves king.

1 (8m 56s):

It's always a dangerous thing to do to make yourself king. No, you bow to the king of Kings. I bow to the king of Kings and the Lord of Lords, who is the Lord Jesus Christ. And when I put him on the throne, I just find that my life works out a whole lot better. And I can say goodbye to gloom, despair and agony on me. Now, who were the judges? You know, we say at the book of judges, now here comes the judge, or here come the judges who were these judges. There were 12 of them in all. Well, generally speaking, they were saved. You're like rulers who delivered divine justice.

1 (9m 36s):

And God raised them up. When the Israelites found themselves in gloom and misery and despair. And they cried out to the Lord. And that's when he would raise up one of the judges. Some of them like off Neil and Gideon were military warriors, others like Eli. He was a priest Samuel. If we go into the book of first Samuel, Samuel was a prophet. And so in the many ways that they serve these judges foreshadowed, here's our Christ connection. They foreshadowed the ministry of Jesus as prophet priest and king. They also picture the ministry of Jesus as king of Kings and Lord of Lords better yet as the judge of heaven earth.

1 (10m 19s):

And he is a judge worth bowing to Now following a lengthy prologue. And this is, you know, chapters, one going into chapter three, the author of the judges. And by the way, we really don't know who the author was. Some say it was Samuel content saying it's an anonymous author that compiled this biblical history, but in this main body, there, there is a cycle of history. Remember it learn the lessons of history or you'll repeat the mistakes of the past seven cycles of history over 350 years, Dr.

1 (11m 0s):

Charles Riley identifies what happened in a single historical cycle this way. He says, Israel served the Lord. Then they fall into sin and idolatry that anarchy and apostasy, then Israel is in slave. They're in bondage by their, their enemies. Then Israel cries out to the Lord. God raises up a judge and then Israel is delivered. And that cycle repeats itself over and over and over again, seven cycles of history for 350 years. One generation never learned what the other generation went through and avoided the mistakes of history. Overall, we learned this from the book of judges. This is your big idea. Moral compromise always leads to failure.

1 (11m 43s):

And that's what happened with that generation that went into the promised land. And the Lord said, destroy the Canaanites, destroy them completely. And they got to of the strongholds and they said, ah, it's a little bit tougher than we think we'll just sub the gate. I'm over here. They compromised, morally take away from judges is that we will never fully enjoy the promised land. And you remember how we defined it in Joshua abundance, victory and rest. We'll never fully enjoy the promised land. If we tolerate what is unholy and in the eyes of God. And this is what the subsequent generations experienced seasons, where there was no abundance.

1 (12m 29s):

There was no victory. There was no rest in the land. And because they compromised with their Canaanites. Now, remember last week we defined the seven Canaanite nations. We said, think of them this way. Not as you know, historical, but build the applicational and spiritual bridge, or maybe the seven Canaanites could be thought of as the seven deadly sins, like pride, anger, lust, laziness, gluttony, envy, and greed. The Lord finds that evil in his eyes and he says, destroy it don't coddle your pride or your lust, or say, I can handle my anger or whatever it might be.

1 (13m 9s):

You're deep reflection on the judges. Jason, though Baxter says, if we make it league with questionable things, because they seem harmless, we shall soon find ourselves wedded to the desires of the flesh again and down from the Heights to which God it has lifted us. What a deep insight into the history we learn from them. Book of judges. Baxter also says that judges is a book of high calling and low living. Yeah, the children of God had been called to the high, high calling of God. They were the chosen people of God, but they descended into low

2 (13m 48s):

Living.

1 (13m 50s):

And we must decide, which will define our lives, high calling or low living judges as a sober reminder, that if you don't destroy the Canaanites, the Canaanites will eventually destroy. You just remember that when you think about pride, anger, lust, laziness, gluttony, ND, greed, whatever that biscuit adding thing is that desire of the flesh, the promised land will be out of reach the abundance, the victory, the rest. If you don't deal with the Canaanites, destroy them completely. I think of the alcoholic who says, no, I can handle on small drink and just keeps a bottle hidden in the cabinet.

1 (14m 33s):

I think of the drug abuser who, who doesn't learn the lessons or hear the warnings about gateway drugs and says, well, this made me high. What else will make me high? I think of the person who says, you know, I'm not ready to forgive this person who hurt me. I'm going to nurse my bitterness and my anger. Not knowing that unforgiveness is like drinking a bottle of poison and expecting it to hurt the other person. No, it just eats you up from the inside and destroys you. If you do not destroy the Canaanites, the Canaanites will eventually destroy

2 (15m 7s):

You.

1 (15m 10s):

And if you're not careful, your family finds themselves in cycle after cycle, after cycle, after cycle, after cycle, and one generation doesn't learn from the mistakes of the previous generation, the repetition of the historical cycles in judges also reminds us of the wickedness and the here's the word, the devolution of the human heart. And one of the lies in our culture today is that we're evolving. We're evolving. We're getting better and better. No, we're not the human heart unredeemed Deval Jeremiah 17 in verse nine, says the heart is deceitful above all things and desperately wicked who can understand it.

1 (15m 54s):

Jesus said of the human heart for out of the heart, come evil, thoughts, murder, adultery, sexual immorality, theft, false witness in slander. This is the depravity to which you and I had the potential of falling into, unless our heart is redeemed by the blood of Christ. And if we are redeemed, the Bible says, guard your heart because in guarded, heart will still rebel against the will of God.

2 (16m 26s):

And this

1 (16m 26s):

Is, this is the, the lessons that we learn again from the book of judges, to that point, the latter part of the book chapters 17, through the end of the book record, some of the most utterly heinous acts of evil found lurking in the human heart. I read through it at the beginning of last week, got up on Monday morning. I think my alarm went off at five o'clock or at least my body clock did. And I had just read through the book of judges. Wasn't exactly the way I wanted to start my week. Because by the time I got to chapter 17 through 21, it shocked my soul.

1 (17m 11s):

It includes stories of idolatry, superstition, homosexuality, rape murder. I hesitate to even provide an example from these chapters, but I was reminded maybe the holy spirit reminded me that God never conceals human depravity. And so why should I, in fact stories like the one I'm about to summarize and I'll just summarize, one of them illustrate our need for redemption. They illustrate the sickness of the human heart that needs to be redeemed by the blood of Jesus Christ, which by the way, is, is what the ultimate road trip through. The Bible is all about.

1 (17m 51s):

This is God's story. It is his story of redemption. So get ready and just strap on your seatbelts for a moment. And let's go to judges chapter 19, where we learn about a certain lever who took a knife and cut up the body of his sexually abused concubine in a Jeffrey Dahmer like manner. Dahmer has nothing on this guy. He then sent 12 pieces of her mangled flesh throughout all the territory. One piece to each of the 12 tribes of Israel. Now he had offered his Virgin daughters to a group of homosexual men who knocked on his door and demanded to have sexual relations with his male guest.

1 (18m 36s):

Some guy had been visiting the Levi's and ironically, the Levi looks at these homosexual men demanding to have sex with his male guests and said, your desires are too wicked. And so he takes his concubine, throws her out the front door, locks the door. They abuse her all night long and then dump her on the front doorstep of the Levi's, where he finds her. The next morning, he takes a knife, cuts her up into 12 pieces and sends it throughout the land. I didn't make up that story. I didn't pull the story from last week's cable news cycle either, but sometimes we hear stories like it.

1 (19m 17s):

Now this comes from the Bible, that story of untold darkness, depravity and evil is found in God's holy word, judges 19 in verse 30 says, and all who saw it said such a thing as never happened or been seen from the day that the people of Israel came up out of the land of Egypt until this day, consider it take counsel and speak. We hear stories like that frequently. Again, the human heart is not evolving and getting better and better. The depth of depravity and darkness that leads to misery and gloom and excessive agony resides in every one of our hearts.

1 (20m 6s):

The heart is deceitful above all things and desperately wicked who can understand it. It's why we need redemption. Why would God include such an evil story like this in the pages of his holy word? Well, for the same reason that a jeweler takes a handful of sparkling diamonds and how does he put it, put those diamonds on display. He lays out a dark black velvet cloth and then sprays the diamonds on top of that. And they sparkle and brilliance don't they God's grace, his mercy, his plan of redemption sparkles brilliantly against the darkness of depravity that we read about in

2 (20m 51s):

The book of judges.

1 (20m 54s):

In fact, on the balance of the 350 years. And here's a little glimmer of hope. You know, we talked about gloom, despair and agony on me that really just describes 100 of the 350 years. The rest of the time when Israel went through one of their cycles and became so miserable, they cried out to God. He raised up one of the judges, one of the deliverer,

2 (21m 21s):

And they fought their battles. They

1 (21m 25s):

Destroyed the Midianites, the Philistines, the Canaanites, whoever it was that had them in misery and in bondage, wiped them out. And then the Bible would say, and the land had rest for the next 20 years or the land had rest for the next 40 years. So during Israel's dark ages, the balance of time in the 350 years, 250 of those years, two and a half times more than the rest of the time, God's grace was shining like a brilliant diamond against the backdrop of the blackness and darkness of the depravity we read about there. It reminds me of the book of Romans that says where sin increased grace, super abounded. And that's what we get here in the book of judges.

1 (22m 7s):

You may find yourself in a place of gloom and despair and misery and agony right now because of some sad, sad consequences, your experience experiencing based upon your rebellion and your disobedience, and listen, cry out to God. And he is more than ready to raise up. No, he has already raised up his deliverer. The Lord Jesus Christ, who died on the cross for your sins was buried rose again from the dead. He has the power to deliver you from whatever has you in bondage. And then you can experience abundance and victory and rest in that promised land that he has.

1 (22m 48s):

Yeah. Now there are 12 judges. I don't have time to mention the activities of all 12, but at least three of them I'll take the time to highlight here. Their names. All of them are worth mentioning often. <inaudible> Debra Gideon, Tola

2 (23m 9s):

Jair, Jephthah

1 (23m 10s):

<inaudible> Ilan Abdon and Samson are, these are the great champions who stand on a stage like in a great hall of faith. They're not perfect people, and we're going to highlight some of their imperfections, but God used imperfect instruments to carry on his purposes and help deliver the people of Israel. Let's take a look at three of them, starting with Deborah. Let's start with the only judge who is a female in the list, and let's not forget. She stands out as the only female judge at a time when it was rare for women to assume leadership roles.

1 (23m 53s):

And she is a reminder to me as is queen Esther as is Mary Magdalen and the two women who were the first to the tomb, the empty tomb and the gospels remind me that God has always been pro women. Come on now. God has always been pro women. You don't have to sing ladies. I am woman. Hear me roar. Just follow Jesus. Just be a gospel person because they're everywhere. The gospel has gone. It has elevated women. And I think Deborah reminds us of that in a dark place in Israel's history,

3 (24m 27s):

A woman rises up

1 (24m 32s):

Because the Israelites did evil in the eyes of the Lord. They endured heavy oppression under the Canaanites for 20 years, they were at the end of a cycle and they cried out to God. And Deborah was judging Israel at that time. And she used her considerable influence to raise up an army. And she leaned upon a guy named Barak to do that. Now I call him Barack. The wimp. Barack was a military leader. He had access to 10,000 men in an army and he was probably just as weary as anybody else at the Canaanites. But when Deborah

said, Hey, Barak, raise up your army of 10,000 men and go defeat the Canaanites. You know what Barak said? I won't go Deborah, unless you go with us.

1 (25m 15s):

What a wimp man up, dude, I'm sorry. You know, Deborah said to Barak, she said she would go, but nevertheless, the road on which you are going will not lead to your glory for the Lord will sell Cicero. That it was the commander of the Canaanites will sell Cicero into the hand of a woman. That was Deborah's way of Sam brown. You're a wimp, you're a wimp. And that day, the Lord handed the Israelites a victory over the Canaanites. And the Bible says there was rest in the land for the next 40 years. That's judges chapter four and chapter five, Deborah in Barak,

2 (25m 55s):

Write a song,

1 (25m 57s):

The song of Deborah and Brooke. They became rock stars in Israel after that, right? That's Deborah. She, she is a woman of wow woman. I call her and she worthy of study and meditation upon her life. Another judge is Gideon. If Deborah was a wild woman, a woman of wisdom, Gideon is a man of valor. Valor means courage. The Midianites had been beating up Israel and destroying their economy for about seven years. Every time Israel would grow some crops, the Midea Midianites would come and trash the crops or steal the crops. And that's when the angel of the Lord said to Gideon, the Lord is with you, oh, mighty man of valor.

1 (26m 41s):

You imagine, you know, just kind of doing your thing during the day. And the angel of the Lord

2 (26m 46s):

Comes up to you and basically says,

1 (26m 49s):

You know, John, I've got a plan. You mighty man of courage and valor. Well, if you know anything about getting and you read his story in chapters six through eight Gideon was anything but a mighty man of valor and courage. When the angel of the Lord found him. In fact, when the angel of the Lord appears to him in chapter six, Gideon is hiding. He's hiding in the wine press and he's trying to hide some of the grain because the Midianites have been stealing their grain for seven years and he's tired of it, but he's not out facing the enemy he's hiding. And the angel kind of speaks, I would say, into his potentiality Guinea and reminds me a little bit of the, of the lion in the wizard of Oz, who every time he said the word courage, you know, he, he stuttered a little bit courage.

1 (27m 40s):

You know, he, wasn't a man of valor when the angel came, do you remember? Baxter says, judges is a book of high lit high calling and low living. Deborah was a high calling, high living kind of person. Gideon is kind of a, a low living guy in the sense that he had a low self-esteem. He didn't think very highly of himself. Wasn't a man of courage, but the angel brings this high calling and eventually through a lot of different things you can read about in judges six through eight Gideon defeated the Midianites with a much smaller army that he anticipated.

1 (28m 21s):

And the Lord saw potential in Gideon, a mighty man of valor. That's not me. Just remember God, doesn't call the qualified. He qualifies the called and that's, that's how he approached Gideon. Gideon. I see potential in you. You don't see in yourself, you mighty man of valor. And the Lord was patient with him and drew out of him. Some great courage. I almost imagined Gideon singing these words written by bill Gaither. I am a promise. I am a possibility. I am a promise with a capital P. I'm a great big bundle of potentiality.

1 (29m 2s):

He wasn't singing that in chapter six, but by chapter eight, he believed it now. And some of you are wondering, can God use somebody like me?

2 (29m 11s):

Yeah, you can.

1 (29m 12s):

You're a mighty man or a mighty woman of something. And he has plans for you and sees potential in you that you don't see yourself. There's one more judge worth mentioning Debra, the woman of wisdom, the Gideon, the man of valor. And then we have Sampson. You've probably heard of Samson. You haven't heard of Neil and E hood and abdomen, but Sampson is somebody who rises up out of the old Testament history books. And it's a sad story. If you look at Gideon and he's a little wimpy and a little unsure of himself, and you don't see the potential in him, you look at Samson and say, this guy has got all the goods.

1 (29m 57s):

He was a strong man than a He-Man, but he had a, she weakness. I mean, he, he, he had all the potential. Somebody would have to be a deliverer, a great delivery in his potential was on display. I mean, he was popping muscles everywhere in places. You didn't even know you had muscles, but Samson had an eye

2 (30m 22s):

For the women. And he kept nursing that, do you remember pride, anger, lust, laziness.

1 (30m 31s):

His Canaanite that dogged him till the day he died was his one. Hi. I even took a Nazarite vow, which

restricted the length of his hair. He let his hair grow long. He couldn't touch certain things or eat certain things or drink certain things. But, but he, he neglected his vow to the chagrin of his parents. You read in there, the story of Samson and Delilah, she was the one that finally tricked him into revealing the secret to his strength, you know, as long hair. And when she cut his hair, the Canaanites come running in the Philistines rather, and they cut his hair and

2 (31m 14s):

He loses his strength.

1 (31m 17s):

It's not the end of the story. In chapter 16, we find Sampson with his eyes, gouged out,

2 (31m 25s):

He's a prisoner. And

1 (31m 28s):

He just asked the Lord for one last bit of strength to reach to the pillars there in the room where he is. And he pulls them such that the building comes down upon the pagan leaders and the gods and, and Samson dies the He-Man with the Xi weakness. He fulfilled God's purpose. Okay. You're never going to get in the way of God's purpose, but Samson never reached his potential. He was full of potential. Remember, if you don't destroy the Canaanites, the Canaanites will eventually destroy

2 (32m 8s):

You.

1 (32m 10s):

The Lord says it's evil in his eyes. Don't call good. What the Lord calls evil and say, I can handle this. I've got it under control. Yeah. During the time of the judges, every man did what was right in his own eyes. They kinged themselves. And that's a very, very dangerous play place. But it was also a time when God's grace shined, where sin increased. The Bible says in Romans five in verse 20, the grace of God abounded more.

1 (32m 50s):

That's good news, isn't it? Yes. We need reminders from judges. The dark depressing agonizing consequences of sin and depravity, but quickly, we need to be reminded of the grace of God and his redemption plan. Don't let the cycle of history repeat itself. Be the generation that says, no, I'm not going to follow in the footsteps of my father and my mother, the mistakes that they made or set the example for your kids, for your grandkids, be ruthless with the desires of the flesh.

1 (33m 30s):

Jesus said, if anyone would come after me, let him deny himself, take up his cross daily and follow me. Yes. There's self denial, not self-indulgence there's death, taking up your cross and died to that thing that will eventually kill you and destroy you. And it will be a painful death because the flesh wars against the spirit and the spirit wars against the flesh, there is a battle going on inside of the redeemed heart, in which also resides the sin nature. And you have to ruthlessly in the power of the holy spirit, go after it, putting on the full armor of God that you may defeat the schemes of the devil dress for spiritual victory and go into your day every day, knowing that the Canaanites are coming, the Canaanites are coming, the Philistines are coming.

1 (34m 27s):

The Midianites are coming, but king Jesus, our deliverer, the judge of heaven and earth has already won the victory, right? And we appropriate that as we bow before him and kneel before him, not only as our savior, but as our king, as our judge, as the king of Kings and Lord of Lords that he

2 (34m 53s):

Is. And then the abundance and the power and the victory and the rest comes.

1 (35m 3s):

I know you've probably been experiencing some gloom, despair and agony and misery that doesn't have to define your life childhood. God doesn't have to define your life. As long as we do what God tells us to do, pick up the resources he's given to us and more than even on balance, but in the totality of our lives, we can live in that promised land,

0 (35m 39s):

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