



“The Story of Redemption in the Face of Rebellion”  
Judges 2:10-17

**Idea:** God delights in delivering rebellious people from the mess they create.

**Intro:** Read Judges 21:25. According to the FBI’s annual report entitled “Crime in the United States, 2015,” there was a 3.9% increase in violent crimes, which include 15,696 murders, 90,185 rapes, and 327,374 robberies. Drug use continues to rise in America, and overdoses are becoming epidemic. We are seeing a dangerous rise in anti-authoritarian rhetoric in America as the Black Lives Matter movement has become mainstream. 135 police officers were killed in the line of duty in 2016. Twenty-one of those officers were killed in ambush-like attacks. Fortunately, the divorce rate in America did decrease in 2015 for the third consecutive year, but that number is offset by the fact that fewer and fewer people are getting married today. The marriage rate has decreased by 47% since 1980 according to Breitbart.com. What we are seeing is that more and more people are choosing to cohabit rather than marry.

The spirit of Judges 21:25 has its teeth in the church too. We are seeing an ever-increasing moral decline within the church as Christians divorce at nearly the same rate as the rest of the population, abuse drugs and alcohol, and shift in their acceptance of the LGBT lifestyle. Churches continue to fight, split, and push aside biblical truth for political correctness. *“Everyone did what was right in his own eyes.”* It scarcely needs to be pointed out how well that quotation describes the world of today, or how sharp a lesson the book of Judges may have for the individualism and anti-authoritarianism of our own society.

**Inquiry:** Few periods in Israel’s eventful history are as important as the time of the judges. During these centuries the nation took the wrong turn that led to her downfall and near destruction. The apostasy of the later generations has its origin in the early years of the settlement, and there is a clear line between the time when the nation first went after Baal and the dark age when the Jerusalem Temple itself was defiled with all the trappings of the Baal worship, not excluding cultic prostitutes (2 Kgs 23:4-7). There is much in Judges to sadden the heart of the reader; perhaps no book in the Bible witnesses so clearly to our human frailty. But there are also unmistakable signs of divine compassion and long-suffering. It may be that the modern reader of Judges will hear the warning voice of the Spirit, “This is not the way, do not walk in it.” Or, as the lives of these lesser-saviors are considered, there may be a realization of the need today for a greater Savior, of unblemished life, who is able to effect a perfect deliverance, not only in time but for eternity.

The period of the Judges takes place after the death of Joshua and his contemporaries. Israel has entered Canaan, the land promised to Abraham. Unfortunately, they became content to settle down amongst the Canaanites and lost the incentive to possess the whole land. Judges records the fact and its effect of mixed marriages (3:5-6), in which the question of the relationship of Yahweh and the Baal gods would become an

acute family problem. Whenever two groups of people come into contact there is an inevitable tendency to move toward syncretism. The gods become identified, or, in the case of the conquered country, their gods find an inferior place in the pantheon of their conquerors. This process is not conscious or deliberate, but it is nevertheless real. In the case of Israel there would seem to be a very specious reason why she would give attention to the gods of the land into which she entered. The God of Israel, Yahweh, was to the majority of the Israelites associated with the wilderness in which they had spent the earlier part of their lives. His superiority over the Baal gods had been demonstrated in the victories gained over the inhabitants of Canaan. But the gods of the land controlled the rain, springs and vegetation on which they would depend in their future settlement, at least, so the average Israelite, scarcely removed from polytheism, would argue. There was no conscious forsaking of Yahweh, but mixed marriages, the need to give deference to the forces controlling fertility, and the powerful appeal of Canaanite worship to the lower and more sensual nature, were all factors which led inevitably to an easy-going syncretism. Baal was identified with Yahweh, and Yahweh was worshipped, in degree, with the forms of Baal worship.

As we seek to understand Judges, we must keep in mind that Israel was God's special and chosen people. They were the descendants of Abraham through whom the nations would be blessed. They were to be a light to the world. They were to be the ones through whom the truth of the gospel would be proclaimed. God had promised to Abraham that his descendants would have land to possess. After the Exodus, Moses began to lead Israel to that Promise Land. Then Joshua and Caleb began the conquest of it by destroying the peoples of Canaan.

The Canaanites were an idolatrous, pagan people whose religion was nothing more than a nature cult designed to enlist the aid of the Baal pantheon and ensure the fertility of the land. This took the form of a simulated ritual in which male and

female cult-prostitutes were featured, seeking to promote the action of the gods in the wider sphere of nature. The culture of Canaan had been debased to the lowest level, and it is against this background that the command to exterminate the Canaanites must be seen. Israel, with its more austere morals and loftier faith, became the agent of divine judgment upon the Canaanites. But the divine command was also prophylactic. It was designed to safeguard the life of the nation from the corroding influences of Canaanite life. And since the purposes of God through Israel were redemptive, a redemption in which the whole world was ultimately to share, the importance of an Israel dedicated and uncontaminated is apparent. However, what we find in Judges is very much the opposite. The theme of Judges is the Canaanization of Israel. Rather than being and doing what God had set forth, they chose to do what they wanted. They said, "I'll have it my way."

Read Judges 2:10-17.

The history of almost two centuries is here summarized, indicating the principles behind the Lord's dealings with Israel. During this period there was a recurring cycle of four phases: apostasy, servitude, supplication, and deliverance. It is this pattern, which is illustrated, in the succeeding chapters. The nation forsook the Lord, a crime that involved disloyalty to their forefathers and a willful overlooking of the mighty works of God on their behalf, especially the deliverance from Egypt. All the evidence of their traditions ought to have ensured their faithfulness, but instead they turned to the gods of the people into whose midst they had come, whose religion seemed more directly concerned with their own prosperity.

Israel was a rebellious people, but the recurring cycle also reveals to us the redemptive heart of God. Judges is a story of redemption in the face of rebellion. In the same way, your story and my story are stories of redemption in the face of rebellion. From this summary passage four truths are presented that each individual must understand.

## **1. Each person by nature is sinful and rebellious. (2:10-13)**

The teaching of Scripture makes it clear that every person is a sinner from birth (John 3:3-8; Rom 3:23). You and I by nature, just like the Israelites in Judges, are in sinful rebellion against God. We follow the pattern of our father Adam (Rom 5:12-21).

Adam listened to the lies of the Serpent that questioned the goodness of God. As a result Adam believed that his way was better than God's way. God told Adam to enjoy everything that was in the Garden with the exception of one tree. The fruit from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil was not to be eaten. God's prohibition was a grace, but Adam considered it an offense.

The generation that followed Joshua's generation chose not to know God. They had witnessed and heard the stories of the victories at Jericho, Ai, and how the sun stood still at Gibeon. They knew the teaching of the Law, but in their sinful rebellion they chose to forsake God. They chose to walk in their sin because that was their nature.

## **2. Each person is accountable and responsible for his or her own sin. (2:14-15)**

There is only one true God, and He is the God revealed to us in Scripture. He is the Creator and Sustainer of all things, and He is the only one worthy of worship. Israel forsook God and worshiped the Baals and the Ashtaroath. Therefore, God's anger was kindled; literally God's nostrils began to burn. Divine anger led to divine action. He punished the Israelites sin by giving them over to the nations they loved.

God has not changed. Today, He still hates your sin. He still holds you responsible for your sin. *"For the*

*wages of sin is death*” (Rom 6:23a). Your sinful rebellion puts you under the just judgment and condemnation of a holy God. And just as Israel was responsible for their sin and rebellion, you too are responsible for your sin. Jesus said, *“Whoever believes in him is not condemned, but whoever does not believe is condemned already, because he has not believed in the name of the only Son of God”* (John 3:18). In your sin, you are condemned by God.

### **3. God is gracious and ready to redeem each person.** (2:16)

God’s anger led to Israel being given over to other nations for judgment. They were in terrible distress (vs. 15). The consequences of your sin bring terrible distresses in your life. Oh, your rebellion and sinful lifestyle may seem fun and enjoyable today, but the fun is temporary and the consequences great. But God is gracious and forgiving.

When Israel cried out to the Lord in their distress, He was gracious and merciful. God raised up judges to save them from their oppressors. These judges should not be viewed as the equivalent of our judges today. They did not have a bench where they held court. These men were divinely endowed with supernatural powers, which they manifested in delivering the people and in their subsequent rule.

God was ready to redeem the rebellious Israelites. All they had to do was cry out to Him in faith, and the same is true for us today.

*but God shows his love for us in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us.* – Rom 5:8

*For the wages of sin is death, but the free gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.”* – Rom 6:23

*"Come now, let us reason together, says the Lord:  
though your sins are like scarlet, they shall be as white  
as snow; though they are red like crimson, they shall  
become like wool. – Isaiah 1:18*

*9 because, if you confess with your mouth that Jesus is  
Lord and believe in your heart that God raised him  
from the dead, you will be saved. 10 For with the heart  
one believes and is justified, and with the mouth one  
confesses and is saved. – Rom 10:9-10*

God stands ready to redeem each individual.

#### **4. Each person by faith must choose to obey and follow God. (2:17)**

God doesn't have spiritual grandchildren. Every single person must come by faith. The generations that followed each of the judges chose to walk in their sin. They preferred to live in rebellion rather than walk by faith with God. Today God puts before each of us the same choice. Will you choose sin and death or righteousness and life? Will you learn from the eternal mistakes of the rebellious? Will you follow the example of the faithful few who set aside their sin and placed their faith in God?

**Conclusion:** We live in a moral declining culture. This should not surprise any of us because the vast majority of Americans are in rebellion against God. What should surprise us is that too often within our American churches we find people in rebellion against God. When those who claim to be Christ-followers reject the clear teaching of Scripture for what is politically correct or expedient, there is a spirit of rebellion in the church. When those who identify with Christ refuse to proclaim the gospel there is a rebellion. When those who identify with Christ fear the future, there is rebellion. The solution...come to Christ and trust Him.