

**JUDGES 1:1-2**  
**THE DEATH OF A LEADER!**

Please turn in your Bibles this morning to Judges chapter 1 as we begin an in-depth study of this book.

Keep in mind that the book of Judges is really a continuation of the book of Joshua.

They are in the land of Canaan, the Promise Land. They have defeated the enemies in the land, doing battle for some seven years.

Now they are dealing with the pockets of resistance that remained in the land, but the battles are a little different now. No longer would they fight as a nation, but as the land was divided up between the various tribes, each tribe needed to deal with these pockets of resistance in their land.

Remember Joshua's farewell speech to the nation, as he knew his life was coming to an end.

These were the words he spoke to the people beginning in verse 13 of Joshua chapter 24, **“I have given you a land for which you did not labor, and cities which you did not build, and you dwell in them; you eat of the vineyards and olive groves which you did not plant.’** **‘Now therefore, fear the Lord, serve Him in sincerity and in truth, and put away the gods which your fathers served on the other side of the River and in Egypt. Serve the Lord! And if it seems evil to you to serve the Lord, choose for yourselves this day whom you will serve, whether the gods which your fathers served that were on the other side of the River, or the gods of the Amorites, in whose land you dwell. But as for me and my house, we will serve the Lord.’** So the people answered and said: **‘Far be it from us that we should forsake the**

**Lord to serve other gods; for the Lord our God is He who brought us and our fathers up out of the land of Egypt, from the house of bondage, who did those great signs in our sight, and preserved us in all the way that we went and among all the people through whom we passed. And the Lord drove out from before us all the people, including the Amorites who dwelt in the land. We also will serve the Lord, for He is our God.’ But Joshua said to the people, ‘You cannot serve the Lord, for He is a holy God. He is a jealous God; He will not forgive your transgressions nor your sins. If you forsake the Lord and serve foreign gods, then He will turn and do you harm and consume you, after He has done you good.’ And the people said to Joshua, ‘No, but we will serve the Lord!’ So Joshua said to the people, ‘You are witnesses against yourselves that you have chosen the Lord for yourselves, to serve Him.’ And they said, ‘We are witnesses!’ ‘Now therefore,’ he said, ‘put away the foreign gods which are among you, and incline your heart to the Lord God of Israel.’ And the people said to Joshua, ‘The Lord our God we will serve, and His voice we will obey!’ So Joshua made a covenant with the people that day, and made for them a statute and an ordinance in Shechem.”** Joshua 24:13-25.

I find it interesting that after Joshua challenged them to follow the Lord, to serve the Lord, and the people said they would, Joshua basically asked them, *“Are you sure?”*

In other words, don’t let this be some emotional response. Don’t do this half-heartedly because there are consequences to your actions.

And the people said that they would follow the Lord, they would serve the Lord.

Joshua then tells them that if this is something you want to do, then put away the foreign gods you are serving! Show that your profession of faith is real!

Isn't that interesting! They said they would follow the Lord and yet, they were worshipping false gods, foreign gods!

And Joshua makes this covenant with them and again, he wants them to “**put away the foreign gods which are among you.**”

What a great farewell speech, admonishing the people to follow the Lord and even if they refused, it was not going to change what Joshua and his family were going to do, they were going to follow the Lord, they were going to serve the Lord all the days of their life!

But, as we will see, for the children of Israel, instead of walking in the Spirit and seeing the salvation that the Lord would bring to the various situations in their lives, they went into apostasy.

Make no mistake about, the book of Judges covers a very dark, a very black period of time for the nation of Israel!

Now let me say this. Not every single Jew was in apostasy, there were those who loved the Lord!

But, as we will see, these God-fearing people are usually raised up during a time of judgment that came upon the children of Israel for their apostasy!

As we go through this book you will see this cyclical pattern that the children of Israel were in.

The cycle begins with a time of prosperity and rest as God blesses the nation. During this time of peace and prosperity they become complacent in their walk with God, they turn from God and fall into idolatry.

As they turn away from God, as idolatry fills their lives, God brings His judgment upon them. And this judgment is manifested as the enemies of Israel rise up and oppress them.

As this judgment continues on for years the children of Israel finally come to their senses and fall on their knees, repenting of their sins before God, the one they told Joshua that they would serve wholeheartedly! It is then that they do return to the Lord.

Then God raises up a Judge who comes on the scene to deliver the children of Israel from the oppression they were facing with their enemies.

Thus, out of this is born a time of peace and prosperity that continues on for a time, until the Judge dies, and then they return to their complacency and turning from the Lord and the cycle repeats itself over and over again!

Now keep in mind that this is not a picture of the entire nation of Israel going through this at the same time. But these things occurred within the various tribes of Israel and God then raised up a Judge or deliverer to bring them out of the bondage they were in.

But as you will see, this apostasy or falling away from God will eventually cover the whole nation; they all will have a time of falling away!

Here is how it is played out.

We will see the southern region of Israel affected in Judges 3:5-31.

Then the northern region of Israel will be affected in Judges 4:1-5:31.

Next we will see the central region of Israel affected in Judges 6:1-10:5.

Then there is the eastern region of Israel affected in Judges 10:6-12:15.

And finally, we see the western region of Israel affected in Judges 13:1-16:31.

Not a pretty picture as all of Israel, in a time span of about 300 years or so went into apostasy!

Now, if you added up all the years of servitude and rest it would total 410 years but keep in mind that some of these judges and apostasies overlapped each other and in the end it was about 300 years and it brings us up to the time of Samuel.

Who wrote the book of Judges? Many feel that it was Samuel who not only wrote the book of Judges, but also Ruth and of course I & II Samuel. Also, the Talmud, which is a collection of ancient rabbinical writings, they too ascribe the book of Judges to Samuel as well as Ruth and Samuel!

Let me ask you this question. “How could a nation that was directed so powerfully by God, saw the hand of God upon their lives in so many ways, fall into such sin?”

The answer is given to us in the book of Judges several times.

In Judges 21:25 we are told, “**In those days there was no king in Israel; everyone did what was right in his own eyes.**”

And that is never a good thing! You see, there was no one leading them. The priests were not doing what God called them to do, and the people turned away from the Lord, doing what they felt was right in their own hearts.

And there is the problem because the Bible tells us that our hearts are wicked and capable of the most atrocious things. And a heart that is doing its own thing is a heart that is in opposition to what God desires of them.

But God is gracious and merciful and when the people cry out to Him in repentance, God does raise up Judges to deliver them!

Now when we think of a judge, we think of a person who sits in a courtroom, they are wearing black robes and they deal with the law.

That is not at all what these Judges were all about.

The Hebrew word is SHAPHAT and that is the title of this book, Judges and it basically means a deliverer or a heroic leader.

That is what these 12 men and 1 woman were all about!

Now some say that there were only 12 Judges and we will deal with that as we move on, but some say that Gideon's son was not a Judge.

Now don't get the idea that these Judges were some kind of superhero. They did not come flying in to save the day, but they did save the day, not in the power of their might, but the Lords!

I like that because I see over and over again God using average people, not superhero's according to the world's standards. He uses the weak, those that may not have all those degrees, those who are not powerful, those who are not rich, and He uses them in a very powerful way. And what God did back then He is still doing today, and I like that!

Paul makes this point in I Corinthians 1:20-31 as he tells us, **“Where is the wise? Where is the scribe? Where is the disputer of this age? Has not God made foolish the wisdom of this world? For since, in the wisdom of God, the world through wisdom did not know God, it pleased God through the foolishness of the message preached to save those who believe. For Jews request a sign, and Greeks seek after wisdom; but we preach Christ crucified, to the Jews a stumbling block and to the Greeks foolishness, but to those who are called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God and the wisdom of God. Because the foolishness of God is wiser than men, and the weakness of God is stronger than men. For you see your calling, brethren, that not many wise according to the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble, are called. But God has chosen the foolish things of the world to put to shame the wise, and God has chosen the weak things of the world to put to shame the things which are**

**mighty; and the base things of the world and the things which are despised God has chosen, and the things which are not, to bring to nothing the things that are, that no flesh should glory in His presence. But of Him you are in Christ Jesus, who became for us wisdom from God - and righteousness and sanctification and redemption - that, as it is written, 'He who glories, let him glory in the Lord.'**"

And here's the thing. God is looking for people who love Him and people that are available. He will use the weak, the poor, those that may not have all those degrees to put to shame those that do because they are gloating in them! You see, God will use us with the gifts, the abilities we have until we think that without us, God is in trouble and then you will be put on the shelf until you humble yourself before the Lord. You may still be involved in ministry, but it is not fruitful.

This morning we are going to focus on ***THE DEATH OF A LEADER!*** That is the title of this message and I think that leaders are very important but keep in mind, and this is important, Christian leaders are to lead you to Christ, not themselves!

And for many, they hold leaders up so high that once they are gone, look out, in a sense, their god died!

Let me share with you this story to show you the importance of leadership and then we will get to our text. We are told,

In ***Everyday Discipleship for Ordinary People***, Stuart Briscoe wrote, "One of my young colleagues was officiating at the funeral of a war veteran. The dead man's military friends wished to have a part in the service at the funeral home, so they requested the pastor to lead them down to the casket, stand with them for a solemn moment of remembrance, and then lead them out through the side door.

This he proceeded to do, but unfortunately the effect was somewhat marred when he picked the wrong door.

The result was that they marched with military precision into a broom closet, in full view of the mourners, and had to beat a hasty retreat covered with confusion.

This true story illustrates a cardinal rule or two. First, if you're going to lead, make sure you know where you're going.

Second, if you're going to follow, make sure that you are following someone who knows what he is doing!"

- Stuart Briscoe, Everyday Discipleship for Ordinary People

With that as our background, let's begin reading in Judges chapter 1, starting in verse 1, and let's see what the Lord has for us as we study through His Word, and specifically, the book of Judges!

## **JUDGES 1**

### **VERSES 1-2**

As we move from the book of Joshua to the book of Judges, we have this link. "**Now after the death of Joshua . . .**"

Here was another leader in Israel that had died.

First there was Moses, the Law giver, the Deliver! He led the children of Israel for forty years in the wilderness as they wandered in unbelief.



They wandered until that generation that refused to enter the Promise Land because of unbelief died and it was their children that then entered in under the leadership of Joshua!

Can you imagine forty years dealing with people who were constantly complaining about this and complaining about that. And not only were they complaining, but this camping trip lasted forty years!

And yet, Moses led them all those years, he kept them moving forward. He was a great leader.

And when Moses was coming to the end of his life, he passed the mantel or leadership position on to Joshua!

We see this played out for us in Deuteronomy 31:1-8, where we are told, **“Then Moses went and spoke these words to all Israel. And he said to them: ‘I am one hundred and twenty years old today. I can no longer go out and come in. Also the Lord has said to me, “You shall not cross over this Jordan.” The Lord your God Himself crosses over before you; He will destroy these nations from before you, and you shall dispossess them. Joshua himself crosses over before you, just as the Lord has said. And the Lord will do to them as He did to Sihon and Og, the kings of the Amorites and their land, when He destroyed them. The Lord will give them over to you, that you may do to them according to every commandment which I have commanded you. Be strong and of good courage, do not fear nor be afraid of them; for the Lord your God, He is the One who goes with you. He will not leave you nor forsake you.’ Then Moses called Joshua and said to him in the sight of all Israel, ‘Be strong and of good courage, for you must go with this people to the land which the Lord has sworn to their fathers to give them, and you shall cause them to inherit it. And the**

**Lord, He is the One who goes before you. He will be with you, He will not leave you nor forsake you; do not fear nor be dismayed.”**

Here was this great leader of Israel passing the mantle to Joshua, who would now led the people into the promise land.

I want you to see what Moses did in the life of Joshua, to help build up the skills that he would need to lead the nation. Yes, Joshua was going to have to trust in the Lord and walk by faith, but God also gives us these tools to do the work that He wants us to do. And we see Moses instruct Joshua so he could bring the children of Israel into the promise land.

We are told,

Leadership is always a temporary assignment - always. It is a temporary assignment because leaders do not ultimately own the teams, ministries, or organizations that they lead. They simply steward what the Lord has entrusted to their care for a season.

Wise leaders embrace the temporal reality of leading, and they prepare the ministry for the future. Because the assignment is fleeting, developing others for leadership is an essential responsibility of a leader.

Moses understood the temporary nature of leadership and the necessity of succession. He personally selected and invested in leaders. He modeled leadership by replicating leaders. . . .

As you read through the Scripture, you see Moses pouring into Joshua. Moses brought Joshua up the mountain to receive the Ten Commandments from God (Ex. 24:13). Joshua observed Moses' righteous indignation when Moses smashed the two tablets (Ex. 32:17-19), and Joshua was witness to the holy communion Moses shared with the Lord as he guarded the tent of meeting (Ex. 33:11).

Through all these critical moments in the life of God's people, Joshua was there with Moses. Moses helped ensure the following generation would love and fear God. He served his people by pouring his life into another. And immediately after Moses' death, Joshua was ready to lead Israel.

Moses' behavior is a model for modern-day leadership. We can see the priority he placed on the future by how he empowered younger leaders like Joshua. Simply put, leaders are responsible for future leadership.

A leader who is not developing future leaders is not serving the organization well. The leader is either being shortsighted or selfish - shortsighted in that the future is not being considered or selfish in that the leader thinks only about himself/herself.

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And, as we talked about, at the end of Joshua's life, at the close of the book of Joshua, we see him come before the people and he is telling them that they need to choose this day who they will serve.

And there are really only two choices. They will serve the Lord, which is best for them or the foreign gods, and that is bad.

But they could not serve the true and living God and these foreign gods at the same time, and thus, choose who you will serve!

And remember how the people responded back to Joshua by saying in Joshua 24:21,

**“And the people said to Joshua, ‘No, but we will serve the Lord!’”**

And in Joshua 24:24 we are told, **“And the people said to Joshua, ‘The Lord our God we will serve, and His voice we will obey!’”**

Now would they be faithful in what they promised not only to Joshua but also to the Lord.

We will see what happens here in the book of Judges, but as you have heard already, it is not good.

In fact, by the time we get to the last few chapters, what a mess the nation is in and it is seen in their actions, the things that they were doing, the worldliness that had affected and infected their lives!

Now, as we look at the life of Joshua, some have a problem with his leadership abilities. And the reason that they have a problem is because he did not raise up another leader to take over for him.

I don't agree with that picture that they are trying to paint. Yes, Moses trained up Joshua, but I think Joshua tried to train up a nation so that they would not have to depend upon one person, but they could go to the Lord and be directed by Him and His Word.

And that is truly what a good leader should do, point them to the Lord so that they can walk and grow accordingly, depending more and more upon Jesus!

And look at some of the leadership qualities of Joshua.

First of all, look at Joshua 1:1-6, where we are told, **“After the death of Moses the servant of the Lord, it came to pass that the Lord spoke to Joshua the son of Nun, Moses’ assistant, saying: ‘Moses My servant is dead. Now therefore, arise, go over this Jordan, you and all this people, to the land which I am giving to them - the children of Israel. Every place that the sole of your foot will tread upon I have given you, as I said to Moses. From the wilderness and this Lebanon as far as the great river, the River Euphrates, all the land of the Hittites, and to the Great Sea toward the going down of the sun, shall be your territory. No man shall be able to stand before you all the days of your life; as I was with Moses, so I will be with you. I will not leave you nor forsake you. Be strong and of good courage, for to this people you shall divide as an inheritance the land which I swore to their fathers to give them.’”**

The first point we see here is that *Joshua was a leader who was willing to step-up to the plate*, you might say. God called and Joshua was to take that leadership position since Moses is now dead!

Next, we are told in Joshua 1:7, **“Only be strong and very courageous, that you may observe to do according to all the law which Moses My servant commanded you; do not turn from it to the right hand or to the left, that you may prosper wherever you go.”**

Here we see that *Joshua was a leader who was willing to follow the Lord’s direction*. How important that is. This was not Joshua’s ideas or plans; this was from the Lord!

Then, in Joshua 1:13 we are told, **“Remember the word which Moses the servant of the Lord commanded you, saying, ‘The Lord your God is giving you rest and is giving you this land.’”**

And the idea here is that Joshua was a leader with a vision who had hope in the promises of God!

Through Moses God promised them the land and in Joshua chapter 1 we see the Lord remind Joshua of this promise. And thus, as Joshua walked by faith, he knew what the Lord had promised them, and this hope was in the promises of God. And it is not that Joshua thought that this might happen, but he understood that they would obtain this land that God had promised them.

We are also told in Joshua 1:16-17, **“So they answered Joshua, saying, ‘All that you command us we will do, and wherever you send us we will go. Just as we heeded Moses in all things, so we will heed you. Only the LORD your God be with you, as He was with Moses’”**

Here we see that *Joshua was a leader who had people who were willing to follow his direction, what he said.*

And the reason that they were willing to follow Joshua, was because Joshua was following the Lord. If he didn't follow the Lord, they were not going to follow him!

And in Joshua 3:6-8 we are told, **“Then Joshua spoke to the priests, saying, ‘Take up the ark of the covenant and cross over before the people.’ So they took up the ark of the covenant and went before the people. And the Lord said to Joshua, ‘This day I will begin to exalt you in the sight of all Israel, that they may know that, as I was with Moses, so I will be with you. You shall command the priests who bear the ark of the covenant, saying, “When you have come to the edge of the water of the Jordan, you shall stand in the Jordan.””**

What I see here is that *Joshua was a leader who had no problem leading the way*. What he was telling the priests was not something that was easy and yet, he knew what the Lord told him, and he told the priests! It is not always easy as a leader, but we must do what the Lord is telling us and not let the people, not let the situation sway us from following the Lord!

Then, in Joshua 18:3 we are told, **“Then Joshua said to the children of Israel: ‘How long will you neglect to go and possess the land which the Lord God of your fathers has given you?’”**

I like this because we see here that *Joshua was a leader who challenged those around him*.

How important that is. We all need to be challenged from time to time and a leader will do that to help people go farther in their walk with the Lord!

Also, in Joshua 18:8 we are told, **“Then the men arose to go away; and Joshua charged those who went to survey the land, saying, ‘Go, walk through the land, survey it, and come back to me, that I may cast lots for you here before the Lord in Shiloh.’”**

Here we see that *Joshua was a leader who encouraged his followers to check it out!*

How important that is that we encourage people to taste and see that the Lord is good. To have people see that what God has said in His Word He will bring to pass!

Here is another good point in regard to Joshua being a great leader. In Numbers 14:5-12 we are told, **“Then Moses and Aaron fell on their faces before all the assembly of the congregation of the children of Israel. But Joshua the son of Nun and Caleb the son of Jephunneh, who were among those who had spied out the land, tore their clothes; and they spoke to all the congregation of the children of Israel, saying: ‘The land we passed through to spy out is an exceedingly good land. If the Lord delights in us, then He will bring us into this land and give it to us, “a land which flows with milk and honey.” Only do not rebel against the Lord, nor fear the people of the land, for they are our bread; their protection has departed from them, and the Lord is with us. Do not fear them.’ And all the congregation said to stone them with stones. Now the glory of the Lord appeared in the tabernacle of meeting before all the children of Israel. Then the Lord said to Moses: ‘How long will these people reject Me? And how long will they not believe Me, with all the signs which I have performed among them? I will strike them with the pestilence and disinherit them, and I will make of you a nation greater and mightier than they.’”**

In these verses we see that *Joshua was a great leader who had no problem expressing his opinion.*

Yes, to be politically correct here Joshua should have gone along with the rest of the nation and say that there were giants in the land, were dead. We can't go into this land.

But Joshua did not do that. He did not let the fear of man drive him, but he let the fear of the Lord guide him.

And, as we have seen as we have gone through Joshua, under his leadership the children of Israel broke the back of the Canaanites military strength.



But there were still those pockets of resistance that needed to be dealt with and the children of Israel ask the Lord who should go and fight against these Canaanite pockets of resistance? You see, without a national leader they now had to go and seek the Lord and trust Him and what He tells them on a more individual level. That is not a bad thing. In fact, it shows spiritual growth!

So I believe that Joshua was a great leader because he got the people not to look to a man, but to God for their direction.

Let me show you how this can be a problem, looking to a man, even a godly man can cause us to trust in the man instead of the God this man was serving.

Turn to Isaiah chapter 6 and let's read Isaiah 6:1-9a, where we are told, **“In the year that King Uzziah died, I saw the Lord sitting on a throne, high and lifted up, and the train of His robe filled the temple. Above it stood seraphim; each one had six wings: with two he covered his face, with two he covered his feet, and with two he flew. And one cried to another and said: ‘Holy, holy, holy is the Lord of hosts; The whole earth is full of His glory!’ And the posts of the door were shaken by the voice of him who cried out, and the house was filled with smoke. So I said: ‘Woe is me, for I am undone! Because I am a man of unclean lips, And I dwell in the midst of a people of unclean lips; For my eyes have seen the King, The Lord of hosts.’ Then one of the seraphim flew to me, having in his hand a live coal which he had taken with the tongs from the altar. And he touched my mouth with it, and said: ‘Behold, this has touched your lips; Your iniquity is taken away, And your sin purged.’ Also I heard the voice of the Lord, saying: ‘Whom shall I send, And who will go for Us?’ Then I said, ‘Here am I! Send me.’ And He said, ‘Go, and tell this people . . .’”**

What I find interesting here is that when King Uzziah died, it says that Isaiah saw the Lord!

Why did it take the death of this godly King for Isaiah to see the Lord?

First of all, King Uzziah was a good King for most of his life as he reigned in the Southern Kingdom of Judah.

We are told in II Kings 15:3 that King Uzziah, “**... did what was right in the sight of the Lord, according to all that his father Amaziah had done.**”

And for 52 years he led the nation to the point of being a military power, economically they were strong, the land was fertile, he invented military weapons and had strong military leaders, they were able to gain territory from their enemies even having them pay a tribute tax to Judah.

And thus, Isaiah and the rest of the nation grew up under the leadership of a great man and they probably looked to this man instead of the Lord for security, for strength.

And when Uzziah became complacent with his relationship with the Lord, towards the end of his life, so did the nation.

Then, when King Uzziah died, it was kind of like the end of an era.

It was like what took place in Europe in 1914 as they were thrown into World War I. All those times of prosperity in Europe were being cast aside and as Sir Edward Grey saw what had taken place, the significance of it, he wrote, “The lamps are going out all over Europe; we shall not see them lit again in our lifetime.”

When King Uzziah died it was like the light of the nation was going out. It was a defining moment for Isaiah because we are told that “**In the year that King Uzziah died, I saw the Lord sitting on a throne, high and lifted up, and the train of His robe filled the temple.**”

As this earthly King was dead Isaiah saw the Sovereign King reigning, his eyes were open to the true King who is seated upon the throne! I believe it is here that we see the ministry of Isaiah begin, in the year that King Uzziah died he saw the Lord!

I see this as a problem today, as well. Where people hold up a man instead of the living God. And that can be dangerous, it all depends where this man is leading you.

All I can say is that when I was growing up as a Christian, and I am still growing up, I looked to men like Pastor Chuck Smith, and my Pastor, Phil Ballmaier. And the reason this was so important is that they were teaching me about God, but they were not drawing me to themselves, but to the Lord!

Again, I think that is what Joshua was doing.

Have you placed someone or something, a Uzziah you might say, on this throne and that situation died, that hope is now lost, there is no more life and the throne is empty and so are you.

Maybe the Lord has brought you to this point so that you will look up instead of outward and see that He is seated upon the throne, He is high and lifted up, and His glory fills the Temple.

He is not dead but alive and thus, we have to let go, put to death in a sense those things we have put on the throne of our lives so we may see the Lord high and lifted up!

What do I mean by this “*Uzziah*” in your life? Think of it like this. Your Uzziah might be a godly mentor, a vibrant church, a saintly friend.

But until your Uzziah is less important to you than the Lord is, you’ll never really see Him.

That is the only way you will see the Lord, by removing all those other things that are blocking your view of Him as this earthly King, Uzziah had died and now Isaiah saw the Lord!

And we see these Seraphim, one of God's created angelic beings, above the throne of God. They are not the same as Cherubim. The Cherubim are around the throne of God, while the Seraphim are above the throne of God. Their name, Seraphim, means *"the burning ones."*

First of all, notice what these Seraphim don't say, *"Love, love, love, love is all you need!"*

Please understand that I am not downplaying God's love because it is rich, and it is deep.

But what happens today is that many just want to focus on God's love. And in doing so they place God's love above all His other attributes, or they just focus on God's love and ignore everything else.

The problem is you can't pick and choose what you like and what you dislike.

Yes, God's love is rich and deep as I have said. His grace is abounding. He is rich in mercy. But what about His righteousness, His Justice and you can go on-and-on speaking of God's multifaceted attributes.

But if you could just pick one, out of all the others, His holiness would have to stand out. That is why these Seraphim are crying out, **"Holy, holy, holy is the LORD of hosts."**

**"Holy"** in the Greek is HAGIOS, which speaks of being set apart. We, as Christians are to be set apart for God. But in respect to God, it speaks of his perfection, that there is no darkness, no sin in Him at all.

Now, as Isaiah gets this vision of the Lord why does he see himself as destroyed, cut off, doomed to die?

Remember what we just read. He saw the holiness of God and he saw himself and how far short he came when compared to God. And any time sinful man has an encounter with God, this is the reality, they are undone!

Prior to this maybe this was Isaiah's problem because in chapters 1 through 5 he is speaking of the sins of the people, how they have fallen away from God.

And as Isaiah placed his spiritual condition next to the people of Judah, he felt pretty good about himself. He was clean in his own eyes until he came before a holy God, and then he saw himself just as he needed to see himself - *UNCLEAN!*

Not only is the nation in this condition, but so too is Isaiah. And it is after this we see the ministry of Isaiah begin because, as Spurgeon reminds us, *"God will never do anything with us till he has first of all undone us."*

So, Isaiah sees himself in this hopeless situation, he is unclean, and God does not leave him or us there.

Once Isaiah recognized his sinful condition, we see God bring to him the cleansing, the atonement for his sins!

And we see this take place as the Seraphim take a **"live coal"** from the brazen altar or the altar of sacrifice, and he touches Isaiah's mouth with it cleansing him.

And after he is cleansed by God, we see God make this statement, **"Whom shall I send, And who will go for Us?"**

Now don't get the idea that God didn't know who He was going to send into this ministry.

God is giving Isaiah an opportunity to step forward, take a step of faith, and go where God is leading.

Now what created this kind of heart in Isaiah that when the Lord called, he was ready to go forward and serve Him?

First, he had a heart that had been in the *presence of God*.

He had a heart that knew *his own sinfulness*.

He had a heart that *knew the need among the people*, the need for God's word.

He had a heart that had *been touched by God's cleansing fire*.

And he had a heart that *heard God's heart to reach the nations*.

And it is out of that we see him say, "**Here am I! Send me.**" May we have that same kind of heart that is willing to go as God leads!

And I like this because in the first part of Isaiah 6:9, after Isaiah is ready to go, after Isaiah says, "**Here am I! Send me**" we see that God says to go and speak to the people of the coming judgment.

Yes, even Godly people can get off course, but the wonderful thing is that God wants to draw us back to use us!

And as leaders, we need to point people to Jesus, not to ourselves or anyone else!

But we do fight the Lord at times. Let me share this with you and you will see what I mean.

We are told,

I read about a 4-year-old little girl who was the classic strong-willed child. She kept trying to go AWOL on her tricycle.

Her mom, worried about her adventurous spirit and daring, said, “Look there is a tree right here and a driveway right there. You can ride your tricycle down the driveway and on the sidewalk to this tree, but you can’t go past the tree. If you go past the tree or on the other side of the driveway, you are going to get a spanking. I’ve got to go inside because I have to clean the kitchen, but I am going to be watching you. Don’t go past either of those boundaries or you are going to get a spanking! Do you understand?”

The little girl looked at her mom for a moment, got off her tricycle, backed up to her mom, pointed to her bottom and said, “You might as well spank me now, because I’ve got places to go and things to do.”

At different points in our life, we can all sympathize with the momma and the little girl. We’ve had those, I don’t care, just go ahead and beat me moments. We wanted what we wanted regardless of what others said or the consequences.

That attitude describes the prophet Jonah, one that says, “I hear you. I understand but I don’t wanna’ and I ain’t gonna.’”

- Robert Dawson, Running from God

That is a funny story when it is someone else’s child! But when it is your own, not funny!

And, like I have said, that is us at times. We need to listen and obey what the Lord is telling us, because, like this mom, she was trying to protect her child. And our heavenly Father is watching over us, protecting us from the danger that is out there.

So, the call here in Judges is this, as the children of Israel asked the Lord, “**Who shall be first to go up for us against the Canaanites to fight against them?**” Judges 1:1.

And we are told, “**And the LORD said, ‘Judah shall go up. Indeed I have delivered the land into his hand.’**”

Joshua had passed down a godly heritage to the children of Israel. How can I say that? Because we are told that Israel sought the Lord, they were not sure what they should do and the Lord answered them, the Lord directed them.

It is as Jesus said in Luke 11:9, “**So I say to you, ask, and it will be given to you; seek, and you will find; knock, and it will be opened to you.**”

In the Greek all three of these verbs: ask, seek and knock are to be a continuous action and not a one-time prayer even though God does answer our prayers like that sometimes.

I think The Amplified Bible gives us a better reading of this verse as it tells us, “**So I say to you, Ask and keep on asking and it shall be given you; seek and keep on seeking and you shall find; knock and keep on knocking and the door shall be opened to you.**”

You see, I believe God answers every single one of our prayers but not like the health, wealth and prosperity teachers teach us.

Sometimes God says, “*Yes.*” And other times God says, “*No.*” And then there are times that God says, “*Not yet.*”

You see, He does answer them; we just might not like what He is telling us! But the idea here is that we need to keep praying for the situation we are in because God will direct us as He did here with Israel!

And what we see here is that God calls the tribe of Judah to go forth and destroy these Canaanite pockets of resistance. And here is the great thing; God already assures them of the victory, all they needed to do is walk by faith.



And folk's, Paul also tells us this in I Thessalonians 5:24, "**He who calls you is faithful, who also will do it.**"

The Amplified Bible puts it like this, "**Faithful is He Who is calling you [to Himself] and utterly trustworthy, and He will also do it [fulfill His call by hallowing and keeping you].**"

You see, God is working in you and through you and since He called you, He will complete the work, He will give to you those victories against the enemies of your life, primarily the flesh!

But we see that there are times in our life that we refuse to walk, either we don't want to let go or we are afraid to walk. Keep your eyes focused on Him and see the salvation He will bring to you!

One last point here. God called the tribe of Judah to defeat this enemy and Judah means praise. I truly believe as we go into these battles, if we do so in praise, God will give us the victory.

If we go in murmuring and complaining, how is that honoring to God? Case in point.

In Acts chapter 16 Paul and Silas are thrown in a Philippian jail for delivering a girl who was demon possessed, a fortune-teller. You see, her owners lost their income with her deliverance and had them thrown in jail.

And in Acts 16:25-34 we are told what transpired, **“But at midnight Paul and Silas were praying and singing hymns to God, and the prisoners were listening to them. Suddenly there was a great earthquake, so that the foundations of the prison were shaken; and immediately all the doors were opened and everyone's chains were loosed. And the keeper of the prison, awaking from sleep and seeing the prison doors open, supposing the prisoners had fled, drew his sword and was about to kill himself. But Paul called with a loud voice, saying, ‘Do yourself no harm, for we are all here.’ Then he called for a light, ran in, and fell down trembling before Paul and Silas. And he brought them out and said, ‘Sirs, what must I do to be saved?’ So they said, ‘Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and you will be saved, you and your household.’ Then they spoke the word of the Lord to him and to all who were in his house. And he took them the same hour of the night and washed their stripes. And immediately he and all his family were baptized. Now when he had brought them into his house, he set food before them; and he rejoiced, having believed in God with all his household.”**

Now you would not think of having victory in a dungeon, a jail but God gave Paul and Silas this victory and I believe it was born out of them praying and praising God.

They were not praising God for being in jail but for who He is.

And out of all this we see the Philippian jailer get saved, his family and I believe the other prisoners who were in that jail with Paul and Silas.

What a witness, what a victory all born out of Paul and Silas praying and singing songs unto the Lord, just praising Him. What a great lesson for us as we find ourselves in dark, stinky situations!

But, as we will see next time, Judah does not go into battle right away, not yet. First, they ask Simeon to help in this battle.

And many don't see a problem here, but there is. God told Judah to go into this battle and they would be victorious. But they added to what God had said and we are not to add or take away from God's Word.

And we will look at that more next time as we begin to look at the subject of

***PREPARING FOR FAILURE!***

And let me say this. We are not perfect; we do blow it and God does not put us on the bench. He wants to use us, but are we willing to surrender and follow Him as Joshua did?

Make no mistake about it, Joshua was a godly leader. Yes, he did not have another leader to take over after his death, but he had a nation of people who would be leading the way.

How can I be so sure?

Listen to what we are told in Judges 2:8-10, **“Now Joshua the son of Nun, the servant of the Lord, died when he was one hundred and ten years old. And they buried him within the border of his inheritance at Timnath Heres, in the mountains of Ephraim, on the north side of Mount Gaash. When all that generation had been gathered to their fathers, another generation arose after them who did not know the Lord nor the work which He had done for Israel.”**

The generation that Joshua instructed followed the Lord, but that next generation, they were not taught the things of God, they did not follow the Lord and the book of Judges is the evidence of what happens when you don't!

And let me close with this, because, maybe some of you feel that you have blown it so much God can't use you.

Let me tell you this, God wants to use you, are you willing to come to Him? Listen to this story and then I will close.

We are told,

On New Year's Day, 1929, Georgia Tech played University of California in the Rose Bowl.

In that game a man named Roy Riegels recovered a fumble for California.

Somehow, he became confused and started running 65 yards in the wrong direction. One of his teammates, Benny Lom, outdistanced him and downed him just before he scored for the opposing team.

When California attempted to punt, Tech blocked the kick and scored a safety which was the ultimate margin of victory.

That strange play came in the first half, and everyone who was watching the game was asking the same question: "What will Coach Nibbs Price do with Roy Riegels in the second half?"

The men filed off the field and went into the dressing room. They sat down on the benches and on the floor, all but Riegels. He put his blanket around his shoulders, sat down in a corner, put his face in his hands, and cried like a baby.

If you have played football, you know that a coach usually has a great deal to say to his team during half time. That day Coach Price was quiet. No doubt he was trying to decide what to do with Riegels.

Then the timekeeper came in and announced that there were three minutes before playing time.

Coach Price looked at the team and said simply, “Men the same team that played the first half will start the second.”

The players got up and started out, all but Riegels. He did not budge. The coach looked back and called to him again; still he didn’t move.

Coach Price went over to where Riegels sat and said, “Roy, didn’t you hear me? The same team that played the first half will start the second.”

Then Roy Riegels looked up and his cheeks were wet with a strong man’s tears. “Coach,” he said, “I can’t do it to save my life. I’ve ruined you, I’ve ruined the University of California, I’ve ruined myself. I couldn’t face that crowd in the stadium to save my life.”

Then Coach Price reached out and put his hand on Riegel’s shoulder and said to him: “Roy, get up and go on back; the game is only half over.”

And Roy Riegels went back, and those Tech men will tell you that they have never seen a man play football as Roy Riegels played that second half.

- Haddon W. Robinson, Christian Medical Society Journal

Make no mistake about it, God is not done with us. So, I will tell you as this coach told Roy, ***“Get up and go back; the game is only half over.”***