

No King - Judges 21:25, 2:6-23
Notes, Family Worship, Bible Reading

Notes from the Sermon

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

I've had Judges on the radar as a book we might preach for a while. And since considering it for our preaching consumption I've had a title for the series. For years I've wanted to call the series "No King". This title would have come directly from Judges 21:25 which is the theme for the entire book. Judges, as a historical book sits between the victorious story of the conquest of Canaan and the rise of the kings in Israel. Moses and Joshua served as consecutive leaders raised up by God to lead the people. 350 years later Israel will cry out for a king to rule, and get the king they deserve, an awful leader named Saul. Yet, in grace, God will establish His Kingdom through King David and his descendants. So in once sense, this final statement is preparing the reader for the next phase in the story, the story of the first kings. Without this leadership the nation of Israel pursued only their own wishes and desires. But herein lies the irony we should see. Israel did have a King, God was always supposed to be their King. He formed a covenant with them, and He was to be their God, they were to be His people. Judges, therefore, is showing us the horrible consequences when the people of God reject His rule and grace while pursuing their own hearts and desires. We are to see in their story the danger for our story. So this is where the title "No Kings" made so much since. We as Americans have made this the mantra of our culture. Nobody rules us, we follow our own heart, live for our own dreams, and build our lives on the identity we create for ourselves. So, bummer that a political tribe hijacked the title while also proving the danger inherent in the statement.

Judges 2 introduces the trajectory for the book. It begins with Joshua as the leader and tells us that his generation served the LORD. They had a godly leader and had front row seats to see the glory of God displayed as God kept His promises and gave them the Promised Land. Yet, the faith was not passed on and eventually there was a new generation who did not serve the LORD and began to give themselves to idols, the idols of the Canaanites whom they did not drive out of the land. Chapter 2 shows us a cycle that begins with this generation and continues for those 350 years, a cycle that leaves far from God, outside of His protection and blessing, and takes them to the sort of evil, violence, and sexual brokenness that should disgust us. The cycle is repeated, with each generation getting worse, knowing the True God less, and falling further into apostasy. We will use this "ABCDE" acrostic throughout the series to describe the cycle.

Apostasy - Israel rejects God, embraces the idols and false gods of the nations around them, and fall into awful practices, injustices, and immorality. Rather than representing God to the world around them, specifically the Canaanites, they begin to embrace the idols and sinful practices of Canaan, gradually mixing in the worship of Baal and other deities with the worship of Jehovah. But this always means the ultimate rejection of the True and Living God replacing Him with gods who are worthless and cannot save.

Bondage - As the Israelites reject God while embracing idols, God removes His protective presence and delivers them to the nations around them. Generally, God gives His people over to the very people groups whose idols the Israelites worship and sinful practices they endorse. The result is a season of oppression, harassment, and even enslavement.

Cry Out - From their place of bondage and oppression, the Israelites cry out to God seeking His deliverance. The prompting to cry out comes from the Holy Spirit, as the people remember their God and His love for them. And the God who loves them hears their cry.

Deliverance - Therefore, God raises a deliverer or judge who represents His rescue for their deliverance. The judge either fights their enemies on Israel's behalf or raises up an army from the nation to cast off their oppressor. In all cases the victories won are miraculous, revealing the faithfulness and grace of God as He fights for His people. By the end of each judge's story, the people are back to the place of blessing, rescued from the oppressor and free to worship Jehovah.

Ease - The God of covenant begins to bless His people, keeping His promises, and they have a season of blessing and ease. But they quickly reject Him, begin believing in their own greatness, and start falling back into idolatry and injustice, and so starts the next season of apostasy.

The point for us is that this is the trajectory of any people living for themselves, who do what is right in his or her own eyes. The people of God should be different, we have a King. So the hope for this and any culture is when we live in the purpose and glory of our King.

Bible Reading for the Week

Daily Bible Readings

Sun	Mon	Tues	Weds	Thurs	Fri	Sat
Jeremiah 24	Jeremiah 25	Jeremiah 26	Jeremiah 27	Jeremiah 28	Jeremiah 29	Jeremiah 30

Reading from this past week's sermon: Judges 21:25, 2:6-23

Reading in preparation for this coming Sunday: Judges 3:1-6

Family Worship

Song - *He Will Be*

<https://youtu.be/TmQOUvSo-4M?si=pjyReO4ibGi2RFWf>

Gospel Project

Unit: Hope at Home

Story: The Prophet Zechariah

Big Picture Question: How did God plan to fix what sin broke?

Answer: Before He created the world, God planned to send the Messiah.

Scripture: Zechariah

New City Catechism

Question 2: How many persons are there in God?

Answer: There are three persons in one God: the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit.

Verse: 2 Corinthians 13:14

Judges 21:25, 2:6-23

- What does Judges 21:25 express about the trajectory of Israel in this book? How do we tend to follow that same trajectory?
- How would Judges be different if God only gave Israel what they deserved? How does He give them grace?
- Can you recite the cycle of the book of Judges? What does each step reveal about God's people and their trajectory?
- How does this passage give us hope and point us to Jesus?
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Prayer

*Pray that we would trust Jesus and walk in faithfulness with Jesus.

*Pray for the issues of racial justice and life this week as we remember Martin Luther King, Jr. Day and Right for Life Sunday.