

The Story Adult Study Guide

For the Week of October 27, 2019

Chapter 8: “A Few Good Men . . . and Women”



Key Events: the Israelites turn to false gods, God sends judges to deliver and rule Israel, the rule of Deborah, Gideon and Samson

Key Characters: Deborah, Gideon and Samson (see page 489 for descriptions)

Bible Reference for this Chapter: Judges 2-4, 6-8, 13-16

1. “. . . another generation grew up who knew neither the Lord nor what he had done for Israel.” (page 103) What might have caused this? Could this happen today? (Ken Ham) Reference Deuteronomy 6:6-9: “These commandments that I give you today are to be on your hearts. Impress them on your children. Talk about them when you sit at home and when you walk along the road, when you lie down and when you get up. Tie them as symbols on your hands and bind them on your foreheads. Write them on the doorframes of your houses and on your gates.” Are we succeeding in that today? What does this say about our daily lives and conversations?
2. What do Judges 2:11; 3:7; 3:12; 4:1; 6:1; 10:6; 13:1 have in common? The people followed a four-step progression:
 - 1 - Israel turns from God and serves idols
 - 2 - God turns Israel over to the oppressive surrounding nations
 - 3 - Israel turns to God and cries out for help
 - 4 - God raises up a judge to deliver them.How can we relate this to our lives?
3. On page 108, Gideon asks God, “Pardon me, my lord, but if the Lord is with us, why has all this happened to us?” What was Gideon implying? How might that question be used by God’s people today?
4. You are one of Gideon’s “fortunate 300” chosen to go into battle. You realize you are greatly outnumbered (about 450 to 1). Standing in line waiting for the weapons to be handed out, you notice each warrior is given a clay pitcher, a candle and a horn. What thoughts are going through your mind? What thoughts are going through Gideon’s mind?
5. God’s cleverness always seems to amaze us. Just consider the resourcefulness God used in each of the plagues on Egypt. In Judges we see his originality in providing weapons for his people. For instance, we see Shamgar using an ox goad, Jael a tent peg, Gideon’s army pitchers and horns, another woman uses a millstone, and Samson killed one thousand Philistines with the jawbone of a donkey. Elsewhere in Scripture we see other unusual weapons such as David’s sling stone, loud claps of thunder, and several times God promised to send the Canaanites

running by chasing them with swarms of hornets. Can you think of other instances when God used his creation to suit his purposes? What does this say about the power of God?



6. You are Samson near the end of your life. You have been captured, you are now blind, and you must spend every waking moment doing the work of an animal, slowly turning the huge stone grinding wheel in circles. You have countless hours to reflect on your life. What are you thinking? What would you tell Christians living today – both young and old? (Drawing is of Dagon)

7. Hebrews 11:32-34 (the Bible's great faith chapter) may surprise us when we read: "And what more shall I say? I do not have time to tell about Gideon, Barak, ***Samson*** and Jephthah, about David and Samuel and the prophets, who through faith conquered kingdoms, administered justice, and gained what was promised; who shut the mouths of lions, quenched the fury of the flames, and escaped the edge of the sword; whose weakness was turned to strength; and who became powerful in battle and routed foreign armies." What can we learn about ourselves and God from the events in Samson's life?
8. The book of Judges is filled with the sin of *Spiritual Compromise* by God's people as a whole and by certain individuals like Samson. *Spiritual Compromise* is a dangerous game to play. Christians often get caught in this trap in order to fit in with the world's ways or to avoid conflict. Spiritual Compromise always moves God out of first place. (Why did God place the first commandment FIRST?) It becomes a slippery slope leading us farther away from God as it jeopardizes our faith. Here are just five simple steps that can lead to Spiritual Compromise:

1. A lack of familiarity with the Word of God. That is, not knowing what God expects of his people. We and our families must be in God's Word every day!
2. Underestimating evil (including the failure to recognize temptation).
3. Rationalizing. "Well, David did it, so I guess I can do it too."
4. A failure to consider the consequences. God is certainly a God of love, but he also has a "business" side as well.
5. A sudden, deliberate choice to give in to sin. (Can easily be seen in children.)

Discuss

ANSWERS

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1. There were a number of factors involved in their falling away. First, they lost touch with God’s Word. That caused their faith to wither and die and it made them susceptible to the ways of the world and the idolatry present all around them. They never completely removed the evil influence as God commanded. Moses spoke of this problem when he emphatically wrote that the ways of God must be taught diligently from one generation to the next.
2. “Then the Israelites did evil in the eyes of the LORD.” Each verse is identical in wording. No wonder Judges is often called the Bible’s saddest book! The on-again, off-again relationship with the Lord during the time of the judges shows the effects of sin on God’s people. A few things we can learn from this book: First, if sin goes unchecked it will take its toll. Second, with the help of the Holy Spirit, backsliding Christians can find a route back to the Lord – which is always provided them. Third, God will use discipline, sometimes harsh, to wake up his children and show them the right path. And fourth, God always keeps his promise to deliver his repentant children.
3. Gideon’s question seems to imply that God caused the suffering. This is a common question people ask. God, why did you cause my suffering or my loved one’s suffering, implying that God is the cause of such things. Unfortunately these claims miss the fact that there is trouble in this world not because of God, but because of sin and its consequences. The Israelites brought calamity on themselves through their faithlessness and idolatry. Suffering was and is a call to repentance and a tool for drawing us closer to God and his Word.
4. Answers will vary.
5. Some other examples might be the Lord using wind to separate the Red Sea, mud to make blind see, the sun stopping in its path, a star to lead the Magi. Since God created nature, he owns it and controls it. God’s omnipotent power has no limit, and he uses all of nature to do his will. Job 42:2 says, “I know that you can do all things; no purpose of yours can be thwarted.”
6. Answers will vary.
7. About ourselves: Christians are sinners/saints – we struggle with a sinful nature (old self) yet we have faith and the Holy Spirit in our hearts (new self); in spite of our best efforts, we sin and fall short of the glory of God; like Samson, our pride and arrogance get the best of us and we rely on ourselves instead of God; we fall prey to the world’s wisdom and pleasures and disregard God’s commands. About God: in spite of our rebellion, God loves us and washes away our sins in Jesus; like the prodigal son, God rejoices when we repent and turn back to him; God stays faithful and true to his promises even when we are unfaithful and disloyal; God doesn’t will us to sin, but he can use sin and its consequences to carry out his plan and purpose.

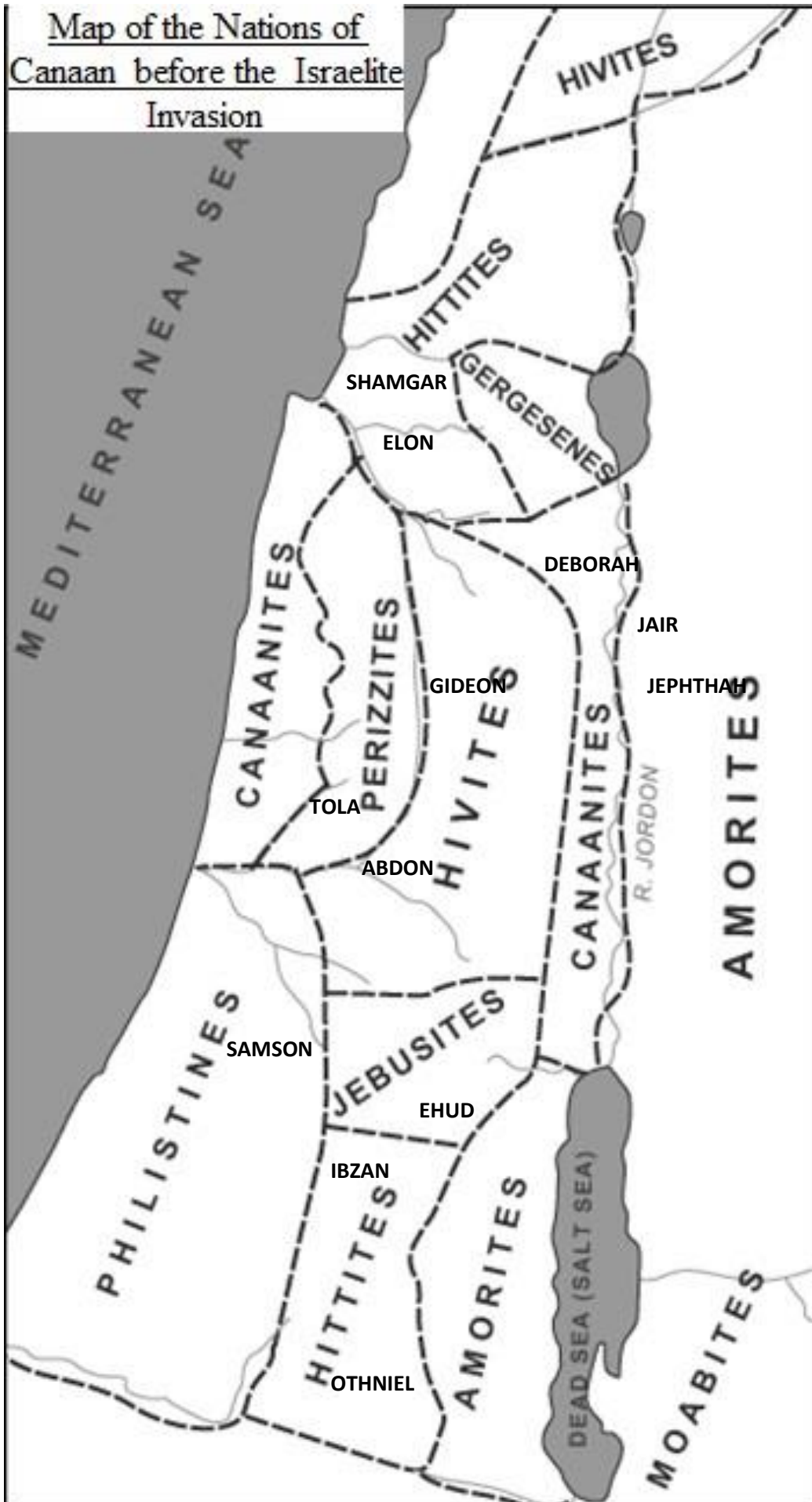
JUDGES OF ISRAEL

“There was no king in Israel in those days” Judges 17:6; 18:1; 19:1; 21:25

<i>Name</i>	<i>Tribe of</i>	<i>Enemy</i>	<i>Yrs. of oppression</i>	<i>Yrs. of rest</i>	<i>Of interest</i>	<u>THE “ITES”</u>	
<i>(UPPER CASE MAJOR JUDGE lower case minor judge)</i>							
OTHNIEL	Judah	Arameans	8	40	Caleb’s brother and son-in-law	Hivites	Descendants of Ham
EHUD	Benjamin	Moab	18	80	Left-handed, stabbed king	Hittites	From Babylon
Shamgar		Philistines			Killed 6000 Philistines with ox goad	Amorites	Descendants of Ham
DEBORAH	Ephraim	Canaan	20	40	Teamed with Barak, settled disputes	Philistines	Ancient civilization
GIDEON	Manasseh	Midianites	7	40	“Jerubbaal”, army of only 300	Moabites	Descendants of Lot
Abimelech (Appointed himself judge. Not a true judge.)						Ammonites	Descendants of Lot
Tola	Issachar		23			Edomites	Descendants of Esau
Jair	Manasseh		22		Rich man with 30 sons and 30 donkeys	Amelekites	Descendants of Esau
JEPHTHAH	Manasseh	Ammonites	6		Prostitute mother, made foolish oath to sacrifice his only daughter	Jebusites	Descendants of Ham
Ibzan	Judah		7		Had 30 sons and 30 daughters	Canaanites	Descendants of Ham
Elon	Zebulun		10			Perezites	Unknown
Abdon	Ephraim		8		Had 40 sons, thirty grandsons, rode 70 donkeys	Sidonians	Descendants of Ham
SAMSON	Dan	Philistines	40		Nazirite	Maonites	Unknown

Eli and Samuel are mentioned as having judged Israel but Eli was a high priest and Samuel a prophet. Following Samuel, the people demanded a KING! (See 1 Samuel 8)
Acts 13:20: “After this, God gave them judges until the time of Samuel the prophet.”

Map of the Nations of Canaan before the Israelite Invasion



Gone in Only One Generation

Battle for Kids' Minds

by [Ken Ham](#) on January 1, 2013; last featured June 1, 2015

How long does it take to lose a culture, from a Christian perspective?

Actually, it takes only one generation. The devil knows this, and of course God warns us about it. Adolf Hitler understood this when he said, “He alone, who owns the youth, gains the future!” Over and over again in Scripture, God instructs His people to make sure they train up the next generation. For instance, when God miraculously enabled Joshua to lead the people through the Jordan River, the first thing He told Joshua to do was to take twelve stones from the riverbed to build a memorial. But what was the memorial for? Joshua explained, “When your children ask their fathers in time to come, saying, ‘What are these stones?’ then you shall let your children know . . . the Lord your God dried up the waters of the Jordan before you until you had crossed over . . . that all the peoples of the earth may know the hand of the Lord, that it is mighty, that you may fear the Lord your God forever” (*Joshua 4:21–24*). The stones were to remind the parents to make sure they taught the next generation about the true God. They were instructed to pass on the knowledge and fear of God to their children.

I think one of the saddest pages in the Bible is in *Judges 2:10–12*, “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. Then the children of Israel . . . forsook the Lord God of their fathers, who had brought them out of the land of Egypt; and they followed other gods from among the gods of the people who were all around them.”

After Joshua and all the first generation of parents who entered the Promised Land died, the next generation served false gods! It took only one generation to lose the spiritual legacy that should have been passed on.

What happened? In *Deuteronomy 6:6–7* God had given clear instructions to the fathers: “These words which I command you today shall be in your heart. You shall teach them diligently to your children, and shall talk of them when you sit in your house, when you walk by the way, when you lie down, and when you rise up.” Obviously the parents in Joshua’s day did not teach their children as they should have—and in one generation, the devil had those kids! While it’s ultimately a matter of God’s grace that anyone is saved, God has given parents an immense responsibility to do their part. Over and over again, the Jewish fathers were told about their crucial role but they shirked it (see *Psalms 78*).

It’s Happening to This Generation

Sadly, this same situation already has occurred or is happening now in Western nations once influenced by Christianity. Many fathers today are not carrying out their God-given, God-commanded role to be the spiritual head of their house and to take the responsibility for training their children in spiritual matters.

In England, two-thirds of young people now say they don’t believe in God—in a culture where most people once went to church. In America, a major poll indicated that two-thirds of young people will leave the church once they live on their own.³ Answers in Genesis commissioned America’s Research Group to find out why this is happening and published the results in the book *Already Gone* in 2009. It showed clearly these kids were doubting and thus begin to disbelieve the Bible at a very young age. We also established that around 90% of those who leave church attended public schools, where by and large God, creation, the Bible, and prayer (in other words Christianity) have been thrown out. Atheistic evolution is taught as fact. The vast majority of these students were not taught apologetics (how to give a reasoned defense of the Christian faith) in their homes or churches, so they don’t believe it themselves and certainly can’t defend it to others.

An Aggressive New Agenda against God

The public schools have been teaching their own brand of apologetics: how to defend the idea of evolution and history over millions of years, thus causing multitudes of U.S. students from Christian homes to doubt the history in Genesis. Doubts about Genesis place young people on a slippery slide of unbelief that eventually destroys their confidence in the rest of Scripture. Their trust in the soul-saving gospel itself, which is grounded on the Bible’s historical claims, is undermined.

Young people are woefully unprepared to understand and defend their beliefs. Even when parents pull their kids out of public school, the anti-God message is so prevalent in the media, museums, and colleges—and even among friends, neighbors, and workmates—that young people are woefully unprepared to understand and defend their beliefs. Even many leaders in Christian education have compromised with evolution and earth history over millions of years. Many groups are now even producing homeschool curricula that promote evolution and millions of years! Eventually, most kids will leave the church.

Joseph Stalin knew the power of education as a propaganda tool. In just one generation, he converted hordes of the deeply religious Russian people into followers of atheistic Marxism. He said, “Education is a weapon, the effect of which is determined by the hands which wield it.”⁴

Sadly, most of the people who control the West’s publishing and video industries today reject the God of the Bible, and they are winning over the next generation, indoctrinating them in evolutionary humanism. Day after day, our children are bombarded with their message.

The consequences in America were again confirmed in October 2012, when the Pew Forum on Religion and Public Life released new survey results. The CNN website reported, “The fastest growing ‘religious’ group in America is made up of people with

no religion at all, according to a Pew survey showing that one in five Americans is not affiliated with any religion The survey found that the ranks of the unaffiliated are growing even faster among younger Americans. Thirty-three million Americans now have no religious affiliation, with 13 million in that group identifying as either atheist or agnostic, according to the new survey.”

The Old Approaches Just Aren’t Working

For years I have been warning churchgoers about this danger in my presentations. Despite the fact America has many megachurches and more Christian resources than any other country in history, America as a culture is becoming more secular every day. America is heading down the same path as Europe and England.

The CNN item reported that atheist and secular leaders were elated by the Pew poll. Jesse Galef, communications director for the Secular Student Alliance, expected the growth to translate into greater political power for secular interests: “As more of the voters are unaffiliated and identifying as atheist and agnostics, I think the politicians will follow that for votes. We won’t be dismissed or ignored anymore.”

Just before the poll was released, Bill Nye the “Science Guy” (from a popular 1990s TV program), expressed the agenda of today’s elite in public education and the media. In a video entitled *Creationism Is Not Appropriate for Children*, Nye basically says if children aren’t taught evolution as fact, America will lose its edge in science, and no longer have engineers and other innovators. Bill Nye, incidentally, was voted humanist of the year in 2010. His words reflect the growing, deliberate agenda of the media elite to capture the next generation for the secular humanists.

In an article by a staffer from the National Center for Science Education (an organization begun in 1983 for the explicit purpose of attacking the influence of creationism and now headed by ardent atheist Eugenie Scott⁶), it is very clear that the atheists today are out to get our kids. The last paragraph of the article reads, “What we can do is work toward the day when American schoolchildren are taught evolution in the same way as any other well-established scientific idea, without caveats or apologies. With evolution at the center of biology, and thus important to the success of medicine, biotechnology, and agriculture, we can’t afford to keep it bottled up or to kick the can.”⁷

Atheists don’t want Christians teaching kids about God—*they* want to teach your kids there is no God! They really are out to get your kids, and they are using the public schools, secular media, museums, and other outlets to do this. The public schools (despite a minority of Christian teachers who are trying to be missionaries in the system) have by and large become churches of secular humanism. Yes, the atheists, like Hitler and Stalin, know that if they can capture the next generation (through the education system, media, etc.), they will have the culture. Christians need to take heed of God’s Word and ensure they are capturing the next generation for the Lord—passing that spiritual legacy along to the children, so they will not be captured by the world!

Yes, it takes only one generation to lose a culture. And America is on the brink of such a change right now! God’s people need to wake up and understand a battle for their kids is raging around them—a battle that is being won, at the present time, by those who seek to destroy the next generation spiritually!

A Call for Radical Change

In view of such relentless indoctrination that bombards our young people every day, giving a couple of thirty-minute lessons at church or home isn’t enough. While many parents have already opted to put their kids in Christian schools, weekly church programs, and homeschools, few appear to be doing a very good job filling in the gaps. More is needed.

Teaching young people how God’s Word—rather than the atheistic worldview—makes sense of our world requires intense study, commitment, and fervent prayer on our parts. The church and parents must reevaluate their old assumptions about the way we should be teaching our kids in a hostile culture, and work together to build the next generation by following the directives from God’s Word.

Imagine what would happen if God’s people raised up generations of kids who knew what they believed concerning the Christian faith, why they believe, and how to defend that faith against the secular attacks of the day. They could then proclaim the gospel with authority because they believed the authority upon which it stands. We would change the world!