

Judges, Part 1 – The Three Chairs

In the closing chapters of Joshua, we see a nation enjoying the blessing of God in the Promised Land. But the book of Judges portrays a nation suffering from invasion, slavery, poverty and civil war. **What happened?**

Judges 2:7-12 [7] And the people served the Lord all the days of Joshua, and all the days of the elders that outlived Joshua, who had seen all the great works of the Lord, that he did for Israel. [8] And Joshua the son of Nun, the servant of the Lord, died, being an hundred and ten years old. [9] And they buried him in the border of his inheritance in Timnath-heres, in the mount of Ephraim, on the north side of the hill Gaash. [10] And also all that generation were gathered unto their fathers: and there arose another generation after them, which knew not the Lord, nor yet the works which he had done for Israel. [11] And the children of Israel did evil in the sight of the Lord, and served Baalim: [12] And they forsook the Lord God of their fathers, which brought them out of the land of Egypt, and followed other gods, of the gods of the people that were round about them, and bowed themselves unto them, and provoked the Lord to anger.

Joshua was there, he was an active participant, when ...

- The ten plagues rained down on Egypt and delivered Israel from the grip of Pharaoh after 400 years of bondage
- The Red Sea opened up to allow Israel to pass through, and the pillar of cloud and fire led them onward
- Moses held his hands up to God on the mountain and Joshua defeated the Amalekite army in the valley below
- Moses climbed Mount Sinai with him to enter the Shekinah presence of God and receive instructions for Israel
- **Moses talked with God face to face in the Tabernacle; Moses went home, but Joshua lingered in God's presence (Ex. 33:11)**
- He and Caleb came back from a scouting mission into the future Promised Land saying, "We are well able to overcome it"
- Israel wandered in the wilderness forty years, with a supernatural Rock for water, manna to eat, and clothes/shoes that didn't wear out
- The priests bearing the Ark of the Covenant stepped into the Jordan River and it parted to allow Israel's passage
- The angel of the Lord appeared to him personally, promising that the walls of Jericho would fall if they would march and shout in unity
- Many battles were fought with pagan kings to conquer the territory that God had promised them

Exodus 33:11 And the Lord spake unto Moses face to face, as a man speaketh unto his friend. And he turned again into the camp: but his servant Joshua, the son of Nun, a young man, departed not out of the tabernacle.

CHAIR ONE - JOSHUA

- Experienced the reality of God firsthand; saw the miracles
- Submitted to God, even though it ostracized them from others
- Always on guard against the slide from godliness to godlessness
- Served the Lord - **COMMITMENT**
- Bible sets values; dedication to GOD - **GROW**
- What's right in GOD'S eyes?

CHAIR TWO - THE ELDERS

- Knew about the reality of God secondhand; told the stories
- Adopted convictions without understanding the depth of experience
- Knew about their faith, but it didn't shape their lifestyle; convenient
- Served the God of their fathers - **COMPROMISE**
- Fellow Christians set values; dedication to PARENTS - **PLATEAU**
- What's right in YOUR eyes?

CHAIR THREE - ANOTHER GENERATION

- Didn't know the reality of God; unfamiliar with miracles
- Saw all the hypocrisy of the preceding generation (talk, no walk)
- Rejected God because He was not as real to them as the world
- Served false Gods - **CONFLICT**
- World sets values; dedication to SELF - **GO WITH THE FLOW**
- What's right in MY eyes?

Just like the tribes in Judges 1 who "did not drive them out," we allow our Christianity to become a mixture of godliness, tradition and worldliness. That never works!

- James 4:4 - friendship with the world
- James 1:27 - spotted by the world
- 1 John 2:15 - loving the world
- Romans 12:2 - conformed to the world
- 1 Corinthians 11:32 - condemned with the world

Joshua 13:1 Now Joshua was old and stricken in years; and the Lord said unto him, Thou art old and stricken in years, and there remaineth yet very much land to be possessed.

The people of Israel were PROMISED all of the land, but they didn't POSSESS all of it, and therefore they couldn't ENJOY all of it!

Most Apostolics living today sit in the second (or even the third) chair. But God only gives revival to "First Chair" believers!