

## Judges, Sermon #35

Judges 10 is a story of a nation in decay.

The decay of Israel—the preservative of a nation is God and God's people—God's people being the salt and the light in the country.

God said He would preserve Sodom and Gomorrah—if there were 10 righteous (Genesis 18)

Three deficiencies that gave evidence of decay—we have the same problems—individually, nationally.

First, Israel's lack of gratitude

They forgot God—we saw that last week

Second, Israel's lack of submission to the Lord

Third, lack of leadership—look at this one next week

Let us pray.

Lack of submission

The Israelites turned to other gods (vs. 6)—at least seven gods.

Imagine engaging in the worship and idolatry of all these false religions.

The Israelites had become totally corrupt, utterly depraved, given over to the false religions of their world.

They had forsaken the LORD and no longer served Him—vs. 6e.

They refused to serve the living God, and look at what happened.

**Vs. 7**

Israel had to be chastened/corrected again, and this time God sent the Philistines and the Ammonites to do the job.

The Ammonites were distant relatives to the Jews; they were descendants of Abraham's nephew Lot

God reacted to the evil, reacted in judgment.

God chastised, disciplined His people.

God gave up the Israelites to their sin.

The LORD allowed them to suffer oppression of the Philistines and Ammonites.

God chastises us when we continue in sin.

God chastens us because He loves us and wants to prevent us from harming ourselves and other people.

Sin damages lives and destroys people.

Think of all the sin and evil in this world, the damage and destruction they cause.

**Vs. 8a**

They were afflicted for eighteen years.

What a waste of years and unnecessary suffering!

So, the Lord increased the intensity of discipline – vs. 9.

They were subjected to a foreign nation: Their homes were destroyed, property and crops confiscated, possessions stolen, and spouses and children abused.

People were brutalized and often killed.

God's people were crushed and broken.

At long last, helpless and hopeless within themselves, the Israelites cried out to the LORD, confessing their sins.

They confessed their terrible treatment of God and their having engaged in false worship and idolatry.

### **Vs. 10**

But note the response of the LORD.

Shockingly, He did not accept their confession.

Why? Because it did not include repentance

They were confessing their sins, but they were not turning away from their evil.

They wanted forgiveness and acceptance, but they wanted to continue in the ways of the world.

They wanted the pleasures of the world and the blessings of God.

God reminded the Israelites that He had repeatedly rescued them from the oppression of their enemies (v.11-14).

In fact, He had rescued them from seven major enemies, the very enemies whose gods they were now worshipping (v. 6; cp. v. 12).

The Israelites cried out to God for deliverance, but God said “no.”

When we call 911—we expect help to come.

When we call on our parents—they bail us out—it is sometimes good that they don't.

Crying out to the LORD for help was the result of the chastisement.

This point is a clear picture of calling on the LORD only in times of emergency.

God announced that He wouldn't help them anymore—vs. 13.

They could ask their new gods for help!

Let these false gods deliver you from your distress!

For the people to abandon God was one thing, but for God to abandon His people was quite something else.

They spurned God and now we see the **spurning of God**

Proverbs 1:23-31

In the past, He had responded to their cry, but no more.

There had to be more than just crying; there had to be genuine repentance.

What was Israel to do now?

This was too much for the Jews, so they repented, put away their false gods, and told God He could do to Israel whatever He wanted to do.

In desperation, they again confessed their sins but this time they repented.

They totally surrendered themselves to God and to His will for them.

### **Vs. 15**

They begged Him to rescue them immediately.

And note: Their repentance was not just a verbal confession.

They turned away from false worship, destroying the false gods they had been worshipping—vs. 16

And they began to follow God in a renewed commitment.

Once the Israelites had confessed and repented, God responded in compassion.

He heard their cry and began the movement to deliver His dear people from their cruel, crushing oppression.

### **Removal – vs. 16**

This is the second step of putting our life back together.

The first step was repentance—the second is removal.

★That which was a hindrance was removed.

Have we removed the hindrances in our life—wrong friends, books, computer, music, places, etc.?

Removal involves replacing the bad with the good.

That is why it is important to begin servicing the Lord—vs. 16.

When God chastens us in love and we're suffering because of our sins, it's easy to cry out to Him for deliverance and make all kinds of promises.

"I'll go back to church; I'll read my Bible; I'll treat my spouse better."

If we merely confess sin and do not turn away from it, this reveals an insincere, deceptive heart.

God knows that our confession is false and that we are only deceiving ourselves.

I John 2:9, *"He that saith he is in the light, and hateth his brother, is in darkness even until now."*

I John 4:20, *"If a man say, I love God, and hateth his brother, he is a liar . . ."*

The second evidence of decay—lack of submission

How do we reverse decay? Confess and serve/submit

Let us stand for closing invitation.

Are we away from God? Has our sin put us in a helpless situation?

Let us not squander any more of our life. Get right today!

Are there some things I need to remove from my life?