

# A HERO WILL RISE

The Book of Judges

Text

Judges 2:1-10

Topic

The Lord talks to the generation after Joshua's death who refused to drive out Israel's enemies from the Promised Land

Title

*"Talkin' 'bout My Generation"*

Introduction

Grand-parenting is one of the incredible joys in life. Rudy Giuliani said, "What children need most are the essentials that grandparents provide in abundance. They give unconditional love, kindness, patience, humor, comfort, lessons in life. And, most importantly, *cookies!*"

In our case, it's chocolate, currently in the form of Hershey's Kisses.

I like this anonymous quote: "Grandfathers are just antique little boys."

Mr. Anonymous didn't forget grandmothers: "Grandmothers hold our tiny hands for just a little while, but our hearts forever."

There are, however, those who give grand-parenting a bad name. They're the ones that blatantly display the bumper sticker that says, "My Grandkids are Cuter than Yours."

Or this one: "My Grandkids are Smarter than Your Grandkids."

There's someone you know who cannot ever have grandkids.  
**God has no grandchildren.**

No one is sure who first said it, but here's the quote, with commentary, from Ken Ham:

**God has no grandchildren.** We are all individually responsible to God. When saved by His awesome power, we are adopted as His personal sons and daughters. Not one of us can claim the faith of our father or mother as our own. There is no such thing as a "spiritual grandchild" of God. We each must come to Him on our own. If we don't have our own faith, *we have no faith.*

The failure of the next generation to come to know the Lord has a name. It's called "second generation syndrome." The Israelites suffered from it in the Book of Judges, beginning right after the death of Joshua.

Jdg 2:10 When all [Joshua's] 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.

To use a modern idiom, they may have thought they'd be *grandfathered* in to a relationship with the Lord. But it doesn't work that way.

Thinking about ourselves, there are at least two applications:

1. One would be our own "second generation syndrome," and by that I mean imparting Jesus to our kids in a meaningful way.
2. The other application is to *any* Christian who may drift into a superficial, rather than a supernatural, relationship with Jesus.

I'll organize my thoughts around two points: #1 Maintain A First Generation Supernatural Walk With Jesus, and #2 Refrain From A Second Generation Superficial Walk With Jesus.

(Chapter two is not in chronological order; verses one through five are what happen *after* Joshua's death, reported in verses six through ten. We will therefore look at Joshua's death first).

## #1 Maintain A First Generation Supernatural Walk With Jesus

(v6-10)

I hate to quote him, and I don't want to give his words any spiritual significance... But Yoda once said, "Do or do not; there is no try."

The sentiment is appropriate here because, from the outset, I need to tell you that as we read these verses about Joshua, there are no suggested steps or principles to maintaining a supernatural walk. To borrow another famous quote, Joshua essentially said, *Just do it!*

Jdg 2:6 And when Joshua had dismissed the people, the children of Israel went each to his own inheritance to possess the land.

This looks back, historically, to Joshua's famous "as for me and my house" speech:

Jos 24:15 "... 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."

See what I mean about decisiveness? It's an either/or. You either choose to serve God, *or* you're choosing to serve false gods.

There was no *trying* to serve the Lord. Do, or do not. Just do it.

Either we can do all things through Christ, Who strengthens us; *or* we cannot (Philippians 4:13). We're not promised we can do some things through Christ, and the rest on our own.

God's power isn't portioned out; it isn't rationed. Think of a film you've watched where folks are lost at sea, drifting in their lifeboat for weeks on end. There's always a rationing of supplies - and especially the water. At the end, just before they get rescued, they squeeze-out the very last drop - just enough to keep them barely alive.

God the Holy Spirit is a Person, the third Person of the Trinity; but His effect in our lives can be compared to water. I sometimes act as if He has been rationed-out to me, as if I have just enough of the Spirit to barely survive my situation. I feel as though I'm squeezing out the last drop of His power.

Jesus described Him quite differently:

Joh 7:37 ... "If anyone thirsts, let him come to Me and drink.

Joh 7:38 He who believes in Me, as the Scripture has said, out of his heart will flow rivers of living water."

Joh 7:39 But this He spoke concerning the Spirit, whom those believing in Him would receive; for the Holy Spirit was not yet given, because Jesus was not yet glorified.

God the Holy Spirit, Who is our source of power and empowering, is not rationed out. The word for "rivers" is sometimes translated "torrents." The power to serve and obey the Lord is *torrential*, not *portional*.

Here is what I am saying. I am not given more of God's Spirit as I grow, or as I excel in certain disciplines. I can have His influence in my life in abundance, at any time.

I can prove it by looking at the conversion of people to Jesus Christ. I'll use myself as an example; but this is true of many of you who, like me, were saved as an adult.

A few seconds into being a baby-Christian, I was no longer a drunkard... Or a pot-head... Or someone who cursed every-other word. It wasn't on account of my maturity, or my spiritual discipline, in those ten seconds. It was the work of the now indwelling Holy Spirit.

I knew I was supposed to do certain things, in order to grow: To pray... To read the Bible... To go to church... To share my faith. But I had the power to do all that, and more, right away.

I could say "No" to sin. I could resist the devil before I ever knew I had spiritual armor.

Joshua had set the example, and now he gave the exhortation. Then he sent the tribes away on their mission to conquer their inherited lands.

Jdg 2:7 So the people served the LORD all the days of Joshua, and all the days of the elders who outlived Joshua, who had seen all the great works of the LORD which He had done for Israel.

The "elders," when they were children, had observed firsthand the Egyptian plagues, the parting of the Red Sea, the giving of the law, and the preservation in the wilderness.

In their adulthood, along with Joshua, they saw the Jordan River divide. They were there when Jericho's walls fall. They experienced the sun standing still. They watched as the hailstorm destroyed their enemies.

Jdg 2:8 Now Joshua the son of Nun, the servant of the LORD, died when he was one hundred and ten years old.

Only three men in the Old Testament are explicitly called "the servant of the Lord." The other two are Moses and David.

It's no lowly thing to be God's servant. Lowliness is the highest aspiration you can have.

Joshua died without appointing a successor. I'm not ready to say Joshua made a mistake, at the very end. God must not have told him to pick anyone.

It seems God did not want anyone to succeed Joshua. That makes no sense to us; but it made perfect sense to God. Each tribe had its elders, and, as we will see, the Angel of the Lord was in the land.

Jdg 2:9 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.

Joshua was buried in the center of today's Palestinian village of Kifl Haris, a short drive from the Israeli city of Ariel in the heart of Samaria. Every year thousands of Jews commemorate his death on the 26th of the Hebrew month of Nissan.

Jdg 2:10 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.

Did the parents blow it by not teaching their children the ways and the works of the Lord? When our kids fail to receive the Lord, or when they fall away, its hard not to blame ourselves.

The word translated "know" is better translated *acknowledged*. The next generation "did not *acknowledge*" the Lord.

**That means they had heard a lot about Him; their parents, and elders, had done their jobs.** Their children didn't acknowledge the Lord. It was their willful choice to reject Him. It was unbelief.

One commentator put it like this:

Israel had a godly heritage. They had the examples of the life of Joshua, the lives of the elders who survived Joshua, as well as the experiences of other godly men like Caleb. Still, they chose to turn their backs on God. The allure and excitement of the surrounding pagan culture was more enticing than a life of obedience and inner spiritual peace.

Were they at a disadvantage because they didn't see the works of God for themselves? Not really. Fast forward to Jesus. Think of the mighty works He went around performing. Most of the people who witnessed His healings, and His exorcisms, remained nonbelievers. Some of them even wanted to kill Jesus because of His mighty works.

Tell your kids about God. Read them the Bible over-and-over again. Make church real, and don't forget to make it fun.

Most importantly, bottom line, be, in their eyes, "the servant of the Lord."

Ultimately they must choose for themselves whom they will serve - whether the God of the Bible, or the gods of this world.

Joshua was a first generation believer who lived in the supernatural. **So are you, if you are saved.**

As we stated, God has no grandchildren - only sons and daughters. True, if you were saved as an adult, you experienced deliverance from sin differently than you would have if you'd been saved as a child.

Sean McDowell, son of apologist Josh McDowell, tells the following story:

Even though I grew up in a Christian home, with parents in professional Christian ministry, there was a time that I walked away from God. I was tired of the rules, authority, and simply wanted to live life my own way. And as you can imagine, I hit rock bottom. Feelings of loneliness, despair, and the weight of sin simply overwhelmed me and I hit the end of my rope...



*And so when I was four years old, I got down on my knees and decided I was going to follow Jesus.*

It humorously highlights the difference between an adult conversion and a childhood conversion. Do we really believe that being saved from an early age is some kind of disadvantage? If we do, we need to stop. It's different; that's all.

I, for one, could only wish I'd been saved sooner than I was. It was great being delivered from sin, but it would have been greater to never have sinned in some of those ways in the first place.

As far as the supernatural, Joshua saw a lot of that, as we chronicled. Do you know what is truly supernatural? **Having God live within you.** Being able, at any moment, to yield to the influence of the third Person of the Trinity is pretty supernatural. Joshua experienced many wonders, but these Old Testament guys and gals did not have the indwelling of the Spirit. They were saved, and He came upon them, to empower their service. But we - as the church - experience something far greater.

We need to stop thinking of Him as being rationed out to us, and instead experience His torrential presence in our lives, in order that we might do **all** things through Jesus Christ.

## #2 Refrain From A Second Generation Superficial Walk With Jesus (v1-5)

Second generation syndrome is an important topic. We definitely want our children to know the Lord. No matter how much you read about it, it ultimately boils down to *example* and to *evangelism*:

- Be an example of loving Jesus, and loving others. After all, that is the summary of the Law, is it not?
- Be an evangelist to your kids, and to kids in general. Realize they need to come to know, and to receive, Jesus for themselves. There are no spiritual grandchildren.

What I want to focus on is the other application of this text that I mentioned in the introduction. It's the danger that any son or daughter of God might drift into more of a second generation, superficial walk with the Lord.

It's the danger that you or I might become lukewarm, backslidden, leavers of our first love for Jesus.

Jdg 2:1 Then the Angel of the LORD came up from Gilgal to Bochim...

Stop. Who is this guy, making a surprise visit to the second generation?

The word "angel" throws us. It doesn't always mean a being we call, and the Bible calls, an "angel." The word itself simply means *messenger*.

There are at least two possibilities:

1. The Angel of the Lord is a mighty angel who acted as the special representative of the LORD.
2. OR, it is God the Son, Jesus, taking a body for a short period of time.

I'll quote one of the commentators, who gives this concise review of the evidence:

The Angel of the Lord is very likely the pre-incarnate Christ, He who would become flesh for us. Here is some biblical evidence that this being was more than a man:

- He was distinct from the Lord, yet was called the Lord (Genesis 16:7-13, 18:1-21; 19:1-28; 22:11-12; Exodus 3:26; Judges 13:3-22).
- Gideon's father, Manoah, said that the angel of the Lord was God (Judges 13:3,9,18,19-22).
- The angel of the Lord claimed that he was God; note the shift in Exodus 3:2-6 from "angel of the LORD" (v2) to "I am the God of your father" (v6).

The Israelites in our chapter were quite familiar with the Angel of the Lord. He had appeared to Joshua, right at the beginning of their initial conquest of the land, as the commander of the Lord's army:

Jos 5:13 And it came to pass, when Joshua was by Jericho, that he lifted his eyes and looked, and behold, a Man stood opposite him with His sword drawn in His hand. And Joshua went to Him and said to Him, "Are You for us or for our adversaries?"

Jos 5:14 So He said, "No, but as Commander of the army of the LORD I have now come." And Joshua fell on his face to the earth and worshiped, and said to Him, "What does my Lord say to His servant?"

Jos 5:15 Then the Commander of the LORD's army said to Joshua, "Take your sandal off your foot, for the place where you stand is holy." And Joshua did so.

It was at Gilgal that the Angel appeared to Joshua. It served as a headquarters for Him.

Jdg 2:1 Then the Angel of the LORD came up from Gilgal to Bochim, and said: "I led you up from Egypt and brought you to the land of which I swore to your fathers; and I said, 'I will never break My covenant with you.

The Angel recalls His power and faithfulness in the exodus, and in the conquest of the Promised Land thus far. He could most assuredly be counted upon to help them now, to finish the conquest of the land.

Jdg 2:2 And you shall make no covenant with the inhabitants of this land; you shall tear down their altars.' But you have not obeyed My voice. Why have you done this?

The Angel is talking to them after the history recorded in chapter one, where we read they did not drive out their enemies as they were instructed, but instead put them under tribute, lived side-by-side, and were influenced by their pagan religion.

"Why have you done this?" The Angel was calling upon them to repent: to agree with Him, to repent, and to be restored.

Anything less than agreeing with God is superficial. In our case, sure, our sins are all forgiven at the Cross, and that includes present sins. But we must own them, confess them to God, in order to be brought back into fellowship with Him.

When the indwelling Holy Spirit says, "Why have you done this?", it's no good denying sin, or excusing it.

Jdg 2:3 Therefore I also said, 'I will not drive them out before you; but they shall be thorns in your side, and their gods shall be a snare to you.' "

These were nothing more than the natural consequences of disobedience.

- If not driven out, their enemies would remain enemies, and be a constant source of opposition.
- If not driven out, their carnal, sensual religious rituals would ensnare them.

A typical second generation mindset is to think that God's boundaries, His restrictions, are too confining. We see that today in what people call the Sexual Revolution. I mean, how can heterosexual, monogamous marriage, for life, be the norm for modern societies?

**It remains the norm.** More than that, it's the only way societies can survive.

What societies, and individuals, will always find is that disobedience to God leads to servitude and slavery, while obedience yields true freedom.

We are free within God's loving, wise, and even logical boundaries, to enjoy all things. He is so much more than an earthly father, and yet we recognize that fathers and mothers must set boundaries for their children. We ought to revel in God's boundaries, not rebel.

Jdg 2:4 So it was, when the Angel of the LORD spoke these words to all the children of Israel, that the people lifted up their voices and wept.

Jdg 2:5 Then they called the name of that place Bochim; and they sacrificed there to the LORD.

"Bochim" means *weeping*. Their weeping looks and sounds good; but we know better. Their sacrificing looks and sounds good; but we know better.

We have the after-story, where we read of their disobedience:

Jdg 2:11 Then the children of Israel did evil in the sight of the LORD, and served the Baals;

Jdg 2:12 and they 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, and they bowed down to them; and they provoked the LORD to anger.

Jdg 2:13 They forsook the LORD and served Baal and the Ashtoreths.

One commentator noted, "If their slobbering spectacle had reflected genuine repentance, the Book of Judges would have been a lot different from this point on."

If someone repents, we ought to believe them; but true repentance will yield spiritual fruit. The person will change.

The Angel of the Lord did not ask for a sacrifice. He called for obedience.

Later, the author of the Book of Judges, the prophet Samuel, would tell the first King of Israel, "To obey is better than sacrifice, and to heed is better than the fat of rams" (First Samuel 15:22).

We don't normally bring sacrifices to the Lord. But I think sometimes we offer Him less than confession and repentance. We make promises to read the Word more... Or to pray longer... Or to attend midweek services.

Those are all good things; things we ought to be doing. But they won't avail us any spiritual benefit if we don't agree with God, and repent.

Sacrifice can never substitute for obedience.

Second generation syndrome doesn't only affect the next generation. It can affect any Christian who allows their supernatural walk with the Lord to become superficial.

If you feel as though God the Holy Spirit has been rationed-out to you, realize that He is a torrential flow into, then through you.

I'm not talking about you acting crazy at church. I'm talking about you acting calm in all of life - whether you are being blessed, or are being buffeted.

I'm talking about you being strengthened to do all things - including enduring the worst imaginable trials, troubles, sorrows, and sufferings.

Even if you are reduced to groanings, He will interpret those to our Father in Heaven, Who saves our tears - each of them - in His bottle.

You believe in God; **believe God**, right now, for His empowering.

If you're not a believer, God the Holy Spirit is revealing Jesus to you. He is freeing your will so that you might receive the Lord and be born-again.