

A Better Savior

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[0 : 00] Well, we're here, this is the third and really the final interlude that we find in the narrative of the book of Judges, which as we have highlighted with Shamgar first and then more recently with Tola and Jair, that these are good opportunities for us to kind of take a step back and consider where we are in the larger context of the book.

When we get into these major Judges, we get so into the details of their life, there's so much information about them there that it's easy to kind of get lost in the context of what this book is doing and what it's about.

So God inspires this author, whomever he may have been, to include for us these little interludes, these minor Judges as we call them. Not minor in their significance, just minor in the information that we have about them.

And he gives us opportunity to kind of step and just kind of reset and think, okay, where are we here? What's happening and what is all of this actually about? So remember that Judges is essentially a sermon.

It's a sermon about, first, the downward spiral of apostasy. Apostasy being, we might define it as a willful turning away from God's truth.

[1 : 17] It is understanding God's truth, acknowledging that it is God's truth, but then still willingly turning away from it, knowing what you're doing. That's what Israel is doing over the course of this book.

And it's a downward spiral. It gets worse and worse and worse. So it's a sermon, the book, first on the downward spiral of apostasy. But it's also a sermon about the enduring mercy and love of God for sinners.

Why does he keep helping these people? Why does he do it? Because he's a merciful God. Because he loves them. Not because they've earned his love.

Just because he loves them. And which is a pattern that we see all through the scriptures. And we're foolish if we don't see the pattern in our very lives. In ourselves. We have the same downward spiral of apostasy.

That same tendency to turn away from God and to rebel. We have that. And yet God over and over and over comes with his mercy and his love and his grace for us. Not because we have deserved that.

[2 : 22] But just because he's merciful. And because he loves us. We haven't earned that love. He just loves us. And what a wonderful thing that is. Well the book is in narrative form, isn't it?

But the author's aim wasn't merely to give us historical facts about Israel that he could pass from one generation to the other. That's not why he's writing.

He is telling us actually declaring a message from God. A message about God. And he's using actual history from the nation of Israel to do that.

And we've reached a point in the narrative here where due to their continued rejection of God, Israel's existence in the land, in the land of Canaan, is nothing like what it was meant to be.

And now God is acting. It's not that he has left them. He's still active. He's sovereign in every circumstance over all of history. But he is acting from a position of silence now.

[3 : 27] And he's told them that plainly. I will deliver you no more. And in an ultimate sense, he's been true to that. We still see his work of mercy happening and unfolding in maybe subtle ways, but it's still there.

But he has not given the land complete rest since the days of Gideon. And we're well beyond the years of Gideon and the life of Gideon at this point in the story.

In fact, Israel's present enemy here, the Philistia, the Philistines, they're going to continue to assault Israel. They're going to continue to be a thorn in Israel's side, not just in the book of Judges, but even beyond it.

As the narrative of Israel continues beyond Judges into 1 Samuel and King Saul. It won't be until King David that any resolution is actually brought to that particular issue.

But beyond that, Israel at this point in Judges is self-destructing. They are turning on one another. And that's just going to get worse and worse as we move toward the end of the book.

[4 : 34] Here's the bottom line. The situation for Israel is really, really bad. And their extinction seems inevitable at this point. It's just a matter of time until they're just completely gone.

Well, God hasn't given them over to total destruction as with other nations, though. And as we journey to the end of the book, it's worth asking the question of why that is.

Why does he keep being patient with them? Why doesn't he just do away with them as he's done with many other nations and start over? What is it about Israel?

What is it about the Lord that he doesn't do that? Well, he didn't spare Israel because of something good in them. He spared Israel because of something good in him.

It is his faithfulness to his promise, his love for his chosen people, that prevents him from destroying them altogether.

[5 : 41] No matter how wickedly they act, God will fulfill his saving promise. And he's proven all through the book that he will judge their sin.

But ultimately, in the end, he will bring a better Savior who will take that judgment for their sin on himself, a substitute for those who love and believe him.

But that time hasn't come yet. It won't come for a very long time after the book of Judges. So what does God do in the meantime? He sends these other deliverers, saviors, judges, as they're referred to in this particular book.

And what he does with them is he extends mercy and love to his people through them, constantly pointing their attention to a greater Savior that will one day come. And what we find in these verses that we just read is the very brief mention of three such deliverers.

We may not know much about who they were or what they did, but they still point us to a better Savior who has done for us what no one else could ever do.

[7 : 02] And that's the point. And so what I'd like to do this morning is I want to just take a few minutes to examine as much as we can about what's here with these three men.

But really what we want to do is we want to finish by seeing how the mention of them points us to the gospel of Jesus. Okay? You say, how can we find the gospel of Jesus in these little verses here?

Well, I'm going to show you. Okay? But let's start with the examination of who they are. Okay? First up, Ibzan. Okay? Ibzan. Verse 8. After him, Ibzan of Bethlehem judged Israel.

He had 30 sons and 30 daughters. He gave in marriage outside his clan. Can you imagine you moms? 60 kids you got to wrestle with?

30 daughters he brought in from outside for his sons, and he judged Israel seven years. Then Ibzan died and was buried at Bethlehem. Now, Ibzan was a man of Bethlehem. Probably not the one that you're thinking of, though.

[8 : 03] There were two cities in Israel that were named Bethlehem. The one we're familiar with was in the tribal allotment given to Judah.

And it is often in the scripture mentioned with a qualifying description like Bethlehem Ephrathah, we see in the prophets. Bethlehem Ephrath.

Bethlehem of Judah. Or Bethlehem in reference to the city of King David. And we see it mentioned all through the scriptures, but it almost always has one of those qualifying markers on it.

Well, there was a lesser known Bethlehem in the tribal allotment given to Zebulun, which was in the northern region of the promised land that we know better as Galilee.

Okay, so Judah is toward the south. Zebulun, along with many other of the smaller tribes, is in the north. And there's a Bethlehem in both places.

[9 : 01] Okay. The Bethlehem in view here with Ibzan is the Bethlehem in the north. The Bethlehem in the tribe of Zebulun. Now, that's worth knowing because it situates Ibzan's focus in a territory very close to where the previous conflicts in the book of Judges has taken place.

I want you to think about this for a moment. We can go all the way back to Barak or Barak and Deborah. Remember, they had this massive battle. Guess where it was?

It was in the north, in this northern region near Zebulun. Then we go from there to Gideon. And guess where Gideon's whole showdown was?

Same region. We get to Jephthah. What's happening with Jephthah? Or excuse me, before we even get there, we get to Abimelech and the problems with Abimelech. Same general area.

We get to Jephthah, and it's to the east. But when Jephthah turns in civil war against Ephraim, we're getting closer back over here to this northern, kind of central, northeastern area of the land of promise.

[10:08] Now, that's helpful for us when we're understanding the context here. Because we don't move from Jephthah to a completely different location, a completely different setting. All of these things are kind of happening in the same general area, which helps us understand a little bit of what Ibzan may have been doing.

So in addition to that, we're told Ibzan had 60 children, which indicates that he had a harem of wives. I hope that wasn't one wife, poor woman.

But a harem of wives, this would have been consistent with wealthy, powerful men of the time. But the focus, the distinction with Ibzan here is on his strategy for arranging his children's marriages. And that strategy is somewhat difficult for us to interpret. Was he trying to unite the tribes together? Is that why he was marrying all of his children outside of the clan of Zebulun, outside of his direct family?

This was unusual for them. We don't necessarily expect them to do that. So why is he doing it?

Well, maybe he's uniting the tribes together. Maybe he just wants to extend his own authority or his own power in some way.

[11:21] The passage doesn't explicitly tell us, but there must be a reason why the author included this particular note. Because when we get to Elon, it doesn't say anything about that.

When we get to Abdon, we see the kids, but we don't see any kind of strategy for how he married the kids. Why does the author put this here? And I tend to think that this was the primary way that Ibzan worked as a deliverer of God's people.

That this was the characteristic, the nature of his judgeship in Israel. Let's flesh that out for just a second. We know that the Philistines were operating at this time in the south, but that's not quite very close to where Ibzan is at this point.

So we know that he's probably not fighting all Philistines. We also know that Ammon, the enemy to the east that was encroaching in closer and closer, they've already been dealt with, right?

God used Jephthah to deal with them. They've been completely subdued. So when we come to Ibzan here, we find that because he immediately follows Jephthah, there's no reason for us to think that there was an external enemy for him to fight.

[12:41] That's not what his work as a judge was. Rather, his work as a judge was to restore what had been broken by Ammon and Jephthah.

And I think he was attempting to unite the people together through marriage after Jephthah had just torn them apart with civil war. 42,000 Ephraimites were just slaughtered by the people of Gilead.

Well, Ephraim's real close to Zebulun. There's a lot happening. Perhaps Ibzan, he sees the brokenness. He recognizes the brokenness. God raises him up in a place of authority and leadership. And the way he exercises that leadership is with his 60 children.

He marries them off. He's trying to bring peace. He's trying to restore what's been broken among the people. I tend to think that's probably what's happening here. Of course, the plan, well-meaning as it might have been, had many flaws.

Not the least of which was polygamy or the objectification of women and children for political gain. Those are problems. Those are sins.

[13:46] And of course, none of these men are perfect men. But those aren't the biggest failures here. The biggest failure was that the fundamental objective, unity through marriage, was destined to fail from the very beginning.

And here's why. Unity among God's people can only truly exist when a shared love of, faith in, and obedience to God is the source of that unity.

Unity among God's people cannot truly exist unless loving God, believing God, and obeying God is the thing that brings those people together.

It's great if we find commonality in other interests in relationships. It's not that that's a problem. But it's only when the gospel of Jesus is the central focus of our togetherness that we will display the glory of God.

God desires that our unity together be centered on knowing him, which is the only way it will ever last. We talked about this in our most recent members meeting.

[15:12] Andy had given me a book that was so helpful in helping me understand this. That one of the things that displays the glory of God in the local church is the fact that it's kind of a ticking time bomb.

That God brings together all kinds of different people from all kinds of different backgrounds who have all kinds of different opinions about all kinds of different things. It's just like a bomb waiting to go off.

And as soon as we start to turn our attention, as soon as we start to make our unity about something other than Jesus, that's when the bomb goes off. That's when the conflict happens. That's when things really mess up. But so long as the focus is on Christ, so long as what brings us together is our common love for God and our faith in his word and our obedience to him, those are the things that will help us love the people that we don't really like.

I think that's what's happening with Ibzan. Good motive.

[16:23] He recognizes a real problem. But it didn't have any legs. It couldn't survive this way because that's not what unity as God's people actually means.

It's not what it looks like. I think this has become a glaring failure in the ministry of many modern churches. We can take maybe a different angle at it now.

It's not that churches are always abandoning Jesus and his gospel. It's just easy to let other things become the focus of our unity.

Think for just a moment. What is the main criteria that people use when looking for a church or deciding to leave a church? Certain programs, styles of worship, political engagement and preferences, generational dynamics even, have become the issues that some people are building their church upon.

Think about that generational dynamic for just as one example. There are churches who have just decided we want everybody to come, but we're really going to target the people who are maybe young couples with kids.

[17:45] Like that's where the money is. That's where the time is. That's where the energy is going to be right now. So we're going to gear everything that we're doing toward them. And their unity, it's not really about Jesus now. Their unity is about how many people within this generational demographic can we bring together so that our church looks like what we want it to look like, this vision that we have.

And the focus turns off of Jesus. It's not that they've abandoned him. It's not that they've changed their stance on the gospel. They've just moved their focus away from Jesus to something that doesn't, it's not going to last.

Because those young families aren't going to stay young families. They're going to get old. And one day that generational dynamic is going to change. It can't last that way. It just doesn't work.

It doesn't work. Their statement of faith may be biblically sound, but their unity isn't about the Lord. They may be purely motivated, well-meaning, but in the end it just won't work.

If fearing God isn't what brings us together, and if the gospel of Jesus isn't the focus of all that we do, our church, Lakeside Bible Church, is either going to die, or it's going to succeed in ways that are eternally fruitless, that just won't matter.

[19:03] You say, how do we avoid this? How do we avoid this tendency as a church? We stay gospel-focused in what we do. That's hard work.

We preach the gospel to ourselves, not Sunday by Sunday, day by day. And the next time that conflict is starting to peak its head around the corner between you and that other person, stop and ask yourself, what good is it for me to enter this?

Does it serve the purpose of the gospel, or am I making too much of something that I should? Evangelism. Not just trying to come up with all kinds of programs that we can put on a website and say, you know, we've got all the offerings.

We're the Walmart church. You can come and you can do all your shopping in one place. Just come here. That's not what's going to do it. Evangelism's going to do it. Actually talking to your

neighbors about Jesus.

Actually bringing up the gospel message to someone that you work with. Actually going to our community at an outreach event or whatever. Trying to engage people about the gospel of Jesus. Make it about Jesus.

[20 : 09] Jesus. It will mean that sometimes we're going to have to let some things go. The Bible says love covers a multitude of sins. There's going to be people that sin against you.

And those things need to be dealt with from time to time. But there could be some things that just says, you know what, I love this person. And I'm just going to let this one go. Because I love them. You say, I don't know how to do that.

Well, just look at your marriage. You've probably done that a million times. Yeah, that's just how he is. It's okay. I love him. You can't do that with people in your church.

As one author puts it. We're going to have to learn to love the ones who drive us crazy. Because all of us are driving somebody crazy. And if Jesus is the thing that has brought us together, we can get through that.

We can get through that. And the Lord can use us. And what we end up doing in the process is we display God's glory. We display God's glory. We glorify the gospel in that.

[21 : 16] Ibzan might have created a bond between certain clans and tribes that provided a measure of healing and security after they had gone through a difficult time. We can't discount that.

That's probably true of his leadership. But he still couldn't unite the nation in a way that ultimately pleased God. As long as the method was unity through marriage rather than unity through worship. And that was the fundamental flaw. And you say, well, Jared, I think you're reaching on that. You probably made a little too much of it. Well, that's okay. We'll move on to Elon then, okay? Elon is the second one.

Verse 11. Well, there's less information given about Elon than any other judge in the book.

We know his name. We know where he was from. We know that he was a judge, that he did that for 10 years, and that he died. That's it. But we can discern a couple of things.

[22 : 24] That he and Ibzan were both from Zebulun suggest that he picked up where Ibzan left off after his death. Notice the phrasing here. After him, after Ibzan, rose Elon.

They're both from the same general area. Perhaps they knew each other. Perhaps he's just kind of stepping up where Ibzan left off. But there is a unique connotation to his mention here.

He's not called Elon from such and such place like Bethlehem. He's called Elon the Zebulunite, almost like a title given. Which means that there is something specific maybe we need to draw from that.

Now, Zebulun, the people of Zebulun, there's negative connotations in chapter 1. Because like all the other tribes, they didn't drive the people of the land out. But since then, in the book of Judges, the men of Zebulun have come to be known as really courageous warriors.

They willingly answer the call to fight alongside Barak and alongside Gideon. They're active in both places. They're not said to have been active with Jephthah.

[23 : 31] But Jephthah didn't go all the way to Zebulun to recruit them either. He stopped at Manasseh. So, we see that what we see elsewhere in the book is that they were fighters.

They were willing to fight. So, the emphasis on Elon as a Zebulunite may indicate his capability in battle. So, perhaps his efforts as a judge of the people, a deliverer of the people, had to do with providing security at a time when they were really vulnerable.

Okay? So, if Ibzan is the networker, then Elon is the security guy. He's the security guard. And that's the way that perhaps the two of them were helping.

Well, aside from that, we don't know anything about him. But that's okay. Because there's a point to his inclusion that we're going to get to here in just a minute. Okay? Third guy, Abdon.

Verse 13. After him, that is after Elon, Abdon the son of Hillel, the Parathonite, judged Israel. He had 40 sons and 30 grandsons.

[24 : 40] So, now we're up to a lot more than even what Ibzan had. These guys rode on 70 donkeys. And he judged Israel eight years. Then Abdon, the son of Hillel, the Parathonite, died and was buried at Parathon in the land of Ephraim in the hill country of the Amalekites.

So, we get here and it seems like the characteristics of Abdon's tenure are a combination of the other two judges. Most notably, he's from Ephraim.

Now, this should mean something to us now, right? Because it's only been about 15 years, maybe 20, since Gilead and Ephraim went to civil war and 42,000 Ephraimites died.

And he's coming not too long after that. His own tribe, his own people would have been desperate for care at this point. And Abdon, with his 70 sons and grandsons, step up, it seems, and made a name for themselves as helping to deliver their people, deliver the nation.

Now, believe it or not, the best clue about the nature of Abdon's leadership is that his sons and his grandsons rode on 70 donkeys. That's the best clue, and it's a helpful one, actually.

[26 : 03] At that time, donkeys were used for two things, work and ceremony. Let me give you an example. Do you remember when Jesus had his triumphal entry into the city of Jerusalem?

And it was imperative that he ride on a donkey's colt that had never been ridden on before. There was ceremonial significance to that. It was a symbol of royalty that they would ride on donkeys in these ceremonies that had never been ridden before.

It was preserved just for that moment, just for those people. But the other thing that a donkey would be used for is work, farming, building, construction, all the things that Ephraim needed.

And both of those uses are probably in view here. Abdon's family had power. They had wealth, all consistent with a tribal king.

And his usefulness in delivering the Ephraimites likely had to do with building a future for those families who lost fathers and sons and brothers in the war with Gilead.

[27 : 08] But that's all we know. All right, let's bring it all together now. There are some commonalities between the three judges. All of them led the nation in the aftermath of civil war.

Silently, God was using them to care for his people. He was using them to provide healing, security, restoration from war.

We can't discount that. God's using them even with their flaws. Praise God for that, that he would use any of us even with our flaws and our sins.

But our disappointment with these three men is that all we can discern of their leadership was civil, not spiritual.

Now, that doesn't mean that they didn't worship God. It doesn't mean that they didn't exercise spiritual leadership in some way. They just aren't noted for it either.

[28 : 11] That wasn't the thing that marked them. It wasn't that Ibzan was a worshiper of God and he loved God and he tried to point the people's hearts back to truly worshiping God. Surely the author would have included that if that was true.

He includes it with the other people that it's true with. But none of these men are mentioned for their spiritual leadership, only for their civic leadership. And Israel certainly needed strong civic leaders.

But they needed spiritual leadership most of all. The rebuilding of society in and around Ephraim wouldn't matter in the long term if the people continued to forget the Lord.

It was their apostasy that got them into the mess. And it would only be repentance and faith that would lead them out of the mess.

So as much as we'd like to come to these three guys and think, okay, things are going to start to turn around for Israel at this point. Look at the restoration work that they're doing. Unfortunately, things in Israel stayed much the same.

[29 : 15] They even get worse if you can believe it. And there's a simple lesson in this for us. We can experience success and progress in many ways that will mean nothing, nothing, if we haven't been reconciled to God.

Those things will mean nothing. We can raise our kids to be wildly successful. We can work to build a life of comfort and security for our families. We can make efforts to improve the society and the culture in which we live.

We can even build a church ministry. But if we do not lead others to know and love Jesus, we will have done nothing of lasting value for them. All of those other things are temporary.

They're temporal. They will go away. They will fail. And if we haven't led them to know and love Jesus, we've failed them. And even the best of motives won't be able to make up for the wrong emphasis and the wrong priorities in what we do.

Isn't this what Jesus is getting at in Mark 8? When he says, What does it profit a man to gain the whole world and yet forfeit his soul? For what can a man give in return for his soul?

[30 : 39] You can be successful. You can do a lot of philanthropic work that is wonderful and should be celebrated. But if you don't help people know Jesus, you're not really helping them in the

long run.

Well, let's turn the angle a little bit again. This also tells us of the dangers of looking for salvation in all the wrong places. At the end of the day, if the people in Ephraim and Zebulun and anywhere else in Israel had decided they were going to put all of their hope and faith in Ibzan and Elon and Abdon, they were fools.

Because Ibzan and Elon and Abdon all failed. At least in what mattered most, they failed. And we do the same thing.

We put our trust in so many things that will ultimately fail. We live as if things that really only bring momentary happiness will be the same things that fill the void, that bring true and lasting fulfillment. And it just never works that way. We look to relationships. We look to wealth. We look to successes.

[32 : 01] We look to societal movements to satisfy our longings. To try to bring an end to the brokenness that we immediately feel and never can seem to escape.

We're looking for all kinds of things to do that. At one point in our lives, we think, you know, if I could just get married, I'll be happy. Things will be better for me.

And then you get married and you realize, no, that didn't work. Maybe if I have kids, the kids will bring me the happiness and the joy and the fulfillment. But that doesn't work either because, let's be honest, they can be a handful.

And we love them. But they fail us too, don't they? You can say, well, if I can just improve my community, things will be better.

And maybe they help, but it still doesn't work. All of those things are fragile. They're fruitless saviors. People disappoint us.

[33 : 01] Jobs and wealth can vanish in just a moment. Cultural circumstances are constantly changing. None of those things last. But here's the thing. None of those things are our greatest need either.

The insufficiencies that we find in relationships and in culture and in all the other things that we try to put our trust in. The insufficiency in those things are appointed by God to reveal to us our real need and our true hope.

Our real need, our greatest need, is to be reconciled to God. That's the reason for the brokenness. The brokenness isn't because we just haven't evolved enough to figure it out.

The brokenness is because we're sinners. Our sinfulness, it makes us God's enemies. It makes us destined for his eternal wrath. But he graciously withholds that wrath.

That's what's so amazing about it. He graciously withholds that wrath. He gives what we call common grace, where even the people that are vehemently against him get to enjoy love, and they get to enjoy peace, and they get to enjoy creation.

[34 : 15] They get to enjoy so many things about life. And God withholds that judgment for a season in order that he may draw us to himself, in order that he may give us time to turn from that sin, in order that he may give us time to repent and come back to him.

But as he's withholding that judgment, he does allow us to endure suffering. Why? Why does he make the brokenness of this world such a present experience all through our lives?

Because the brokenness of this world teaches us that something's wrong. It points us to our greatest need, reconciliation with him, and it ultimately points us to a savior.

But see, our problem is that we think salvation is about fixing the brokenness now. So we keep turning to pseudo-saviors. All those other things that I've already mentioned.

We think, well, there's brokenness in my family, so I need to find some type of relational dynamic that will finally fix the brokenness, but it won't fix it. Salvation isn't about the here and now.

[35 : 22] Salvation is about what awaits beyond the here and now. So, even if we found ways to solve all of our problems, we would still lack a solution for our sin against God.

We'd still be headed to an inevitable death, which leads to an inevitable judgment, where we must give an account for the life that we've lived, and we must give an account for the sin that we've committed.

So what do we do? Well, by God's grace, there is a better savior, better than all these things, better than a husband or wife, better than children or grandchildren, better than cultural movements and societal movements, better than wealth, better than success.

There's a better savior, and he's already dealt with our eternal need. He's already dealt with it. We're not awaiting for it to be dealt with. It's already done. That's what's amazing about it. Jesus, the sinless son of God, whose sacrificial death paid for the eternal debt owed by our sin. It's finished.

[36 : 40] Jesus has no sin for which he had to pay, but he still died. So why did he die? Well, it wasn't for his own sin. It was for someone else's sin.

He was a substitute. He took our death. And we know that's the case, because on the third day, God raised him from the dead.

And when he raised him from the dead, it was God's way of saying, I accept this. This is sufficient. When Jesus cries out, it's finished on the cross, God raises him from the dead and says, indeed, it is finished on the cross.

I am satisfied now, God says. He's already dealt with it. Through his death and his resurrection, Jesus meets our greatest need, reconciliation with God.

God, he took the punishment for our sins. He applies his righteousness to us in its place. And in the process of doing that, he makes peace between sinners and a holy God.

[37 : 54] He's the better Savior. He's the better Savior. Colossians 1. In him all the fullness of God was pleased to dwell. He wasn't just a man.

He was God in flesh. And through him, God reconciled to himself all things, whether on earth or in heaven, making peace by the blood of his cross.

And you who were once alienated, hostile in mind, doing evil deeds, he has now reconciled in his body of flesh by his death.

In order that, Paul says, he may present you holy and blameless and above reproach before God if you continue in faith.

2 Corinthians 5.21 For our sake, God made him to be sin who knew no sin so that in him we might become the righteousness of God.

[39 : 12] Christ has met our need and he calls us to receive the gift of eternal life and forgiveness and reconciliation with the Father simply through faith.

all those things we trust in to bring us life and fulfillment, to heal our brokenness, relationships and religion and politics, whatever it may be for you, you must abandon them to trust in Jesus.

You say, what in the world does that have to do with the judges? The judges teach us about all the things that cannot ultimately deliver us so that we might put all our hope in the one who can.

They lived, they died, but there's one who lives who died but remains living. He conquered death.

He did what they couldn't do. Their insufficiency reveals to us his sufficiency. So what's the author's intent then in mentioning these three minor judges in particular?

[40 : 29] He really just doesn't say much about them so what's the point in even including them?

And I think it's pretty simple. His purpose is to explain that other individuals besides the main six arose to lead the people but none of them could affect the deliverance that Israel needed.

This simple repetition of life, rule, and death in these three men, it reads like a series of failures.

Well here's Ibsam, maybe he'll do it.

Nope, he died too. Oh, well here comes Elon, maybe Elon will do it. Nope, he died. Well what about Abdon? Nope. Samson?

No. Saul? Nope. Nope. David, surely David. No. None of them. They couldn't do it.

Time passed. Some men governed to some extent but Israel's circumstances never really improved. They weren't reconciled to God. They didn't receive God's blessings in the land.

[41 : 41] They continued to be assaulted by their enemies. What did they need? They needed a king but not just any king. They needed God's king.

A savior who wouldn't only deliver them from the Philistines or from the Ammonites or whoever else. They needed a king who would deliver them from their sin. Who would lead them in perfect righteousness.

Who would unite them as God's chosen people. And the closest that they ever got was David. But even he couldn't do it. Even he was a murderer and an adulterer and a sinner that cost thousands of people innocent people their lives.

And he was the best one. But they all point us to a better savior. That's the point. They point us to a better savior and you don't have to know all the details about all the other people.

You just have to know that they failed. But Jesus didn't. Jesus is God's eternal king. And he's done exactly what we need to be part of his kingdom.

[42 : 49] So the question is are you trusting the better savior? Are you trusting the better savior? If you are trusting the better savior is he actually the central focus of your life and ministry to others?

Whether it's a ministry as a parent or a ministry as just a church member or whatever it may be. is Jesus at the center of that? So that what you're doing for others actually has eternal value to it.

Receive his mercy and then live in light of it moving forward. That's what we get from these three.NING