

Session 10: Judges

- The generation who settled the Promised Land under Joshua **failed to catechize their children** (Dt 6:7). Thus, not grounded in the One True Faith, the younger generations turn to Canaanite spirituality, which involved demon worship, child sacrifice to demons, and sexual perversion.
- Judges 2:11-23 describes the **cycle that characterizes this period of several hundred years**. Specifically, Israel's **sinful rebellion** leads to **servitude to the Canaanites**, from which they cry out in **supplication to God**, Who raises up for them a **redeemer called a judge** (charismatic leader), but this redemption is soon forgotten after the death of each judge, **and so the Israelites return to the Canaanites' diabolical beliefs and practices**.
- Therefore, **the dominant metaphor of Judges is that of Israel playing the harlot by not being faithful to God her Spouse**, but instead committing spiritual adultery by becoming involved with demons (Jgs 2:11;17).
- The judges, continually raised up by God to redeem His People, are proof of God's extraordinary patience and compassion, as well as His covenant fidelity to Abraham.
- Of the twelve judges, the first are good, the next are morally the ambiguous, and the last are bad. **The descending character of these judges mirrors the descending moral state of the Israelites**.
- **Most of the judges were unlikely candidates for leadership, and none came from the ministerial priesthood tribe of Levi, nor from the royal tribe of Judah**. For example, Deborah was a woman yielding authority in a predominantly patriarchal world; Gideon was a coward from the weakest clan of the weakest tribe; Jephthah was born to a prostitute; Samson, though physically strong, was pathetically weak in guarding his purity and in keeping his religious vows.
- **The chain of twelve judges eventually ends because of the moral shortcomings of judges like Samson, who were deeply flawed individuals much like their compatriots, and also the corruption of the Levitical priests (Jgs 17-19)**.
- The first story of moral corruption by the Levitical priests ironically involves Moses' grandson Jonathan, who is shockingly so corrupt that he even sets up an idol of a god/demon in the territory of Dan at Shiloh in the very house of the Lord where the Ark of the Covenant resides.
- The second story of moral corruption by the Levitical priests involves the Levite and his concubine, whom he permits to be raped by the Gibeonites of the tribe of Dan, then killed, and whom he then dismembers, triggering a civil war among the tribes, with many war crimes.
- The last verse of Judges summarizes the miserable plight of Israel as **moral relativism**, as it reads, "In those days, there was no king in Israel, **as every man did what was right in his own eyes** (Jgs 21:25)." Essentially, Israel's sins led to **spiritual blindness**, to not knowing right from wrong, even though they had been given the Ten Commandments.

- **The judges are types (foreshadowings) of Christ, Who is *the Judge* (Jdgs 11:27).** Specifically, just as the judges acted as saviors and deliverers, sent by the mercy of God to fight off His enemies, restoring peace to His People, **so too is Christ *the Savior and Deliverer*, sent by the mercy of the Eternal Father to fight off His enemies, and to restore peace to His People.**
- **Jael crushing the head of the Canaanite general Sisera is a type (foreshadowing) of the Holy Virgin crushing the head of Satan, who is general of all demonic legions (Gen 3:15).** Also, Jael is called **most blessed among women** (Jgs 5:24), as will the Holy Virgin also be called (Lk 1:42), which is why she is called **Blessed Virgin**.