

## Judges 2:10

“Delivers in dark times”

- I. Intro
- II. Overview of the book of Judges
- III. Personal Conviction and Cooperate Prayer

### I. Intro

**The headlines could have read:**

- Family feud leaves 69 dead
- Powerful government leader caught in “love nest”
- Gang rape leads to victim’s death and dismemberment
- Girls at party kidnapped and forced to marry strangers
- Woman judge says travelers not safe of highways

These headlines were not ripped out of the pages of the metropolitan news paper but rather from the pages of the book of Judges. History has a way of casting its shadow before us into the future. Philosopher George Santayana said: *“Those that cannot remember the past are condemned to repeat it.”* Someone has well said, *“Strait ahead lies yesterday!”* The book of Judges describes Israel’s condition but it eerily seems to be the same place our nation finds its self in.

- **No leadership in the nation**
- **All the people are doing what is right in their own eyes**
- **People are in bondage to the freedoms they enjoy**
- **God’s people can’t seem to work together**
- **God is rising up His people to trust Him alone, confront the enemy in the mirror and take as many as willing with them!**

What happened to the nation of Israel that according to Joshua 24:31 *“served the Lord all the days of Joshua, and all the days of the elders who outlived Joshua, who had known all the works of the Lord which He had done for Israel”*? We need only to read Judges 2:10 where we are

informed that “*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.*” The next generation went from **apathy** to **apostasy** to **anarchy!**

## II. Overview of the book of Judges

The 21 chapters of Judges record 12 men and 1 woman who were instruments to deliver God’s people away from the mess they had made when they walked away from God. The message from Joshua to Samuel is that no matter what the situation is **sin does not pay**. In Joshua 13:1 as Joshua came to the end of his life we are told that “*the Lord said to him: You are old, advanced in years, and there remains very much land yet to be possessed.*” According to Judges 3:4 “*they were left, that He might test Israel by them...*”

Folks we are always going to be a people “*on the move*” the only question that remains is in **which direction will we be heading?** Joshua’s book spanned only 15 years: The book of Judges covers 25 % of Israel history or around 335 years. Based upon the content of those 21 chapters these were the “*dark ages*” of the nation. The final sentence of the book (21:25) says was that, “**everyone did what was right in his own eyes.**” The book of Judges like the rest of the Bible is a mirror in which we are able to see ourselves in and we will either see the reflection of Jesus or one that looks far too much like the folks in this book. As one reads through the 21 chapters of this book and the 13 judges God used to bring the people back to Him we can pick up on the **five cycles that the people found themselves in:**

- **Sin – rebellion**
- **Servitude - retribution**
- **Supplication – repentance**
- **Salvation – restoration**

- **Silence - rest**

Because of the nature of this book some have thought that it ought to be called the “*Book of Failure*”. But remember that though **they continued to fail God continued to deliver.**

### **III. Personal Conviction and Cooperate Prayer**

**As part of “*Pulpit Freedom Sunday*”** on Oct. 7 nearly 1,400 American pastors publically endorse political candidates — an act that flies in the face of Internal Revenue Service rules about what tax-exempt organizations, such as churches, can and cannot do. The IRS says tax-exempt organizations, or what they refer to as a 501(c)(3), are prohibited from participating in partisan campaigning for or against political candidates. The regulation has been in place since 1954, but in 2009, the U.S. District Court of Minnesota ruled the IRS no longer had the appropriate staff to investigate places of worship after reorganization changed who in the agency had the authority to launch investigations. New procedures for conducting church audits have been pending since 2009, which has left the IRS virtually impotent in conducting any kind of new investigations. I believe as Erik Stanley, senior legal counsel for the Arizona-based Alliance Defending Freedom stated that. “*Every pastor and every church has the right to decide what their pastor preaches from the pulpit and to not have that dictated to them by the IRS.*” My action this morning has less to do with the election than it does with the federal governments attack on my 1st amendment rights under the constitution: The 1<sup>st</sup> amendment guarantees two freedoms: Our freedom of speech and our freedom of religion. Why was this act placed upon pastors and churches limiting our 1<sup>st</sup> amendment rights?

The history of the “*Johnson amendment*” (as it is known) was designed to place IRS code restrictions on churches and non-profit organizations by then-Senator Lyndon Johnson. Prior to

1954, churches and non-profit organizations had no such restrictions on their freedom of speech or their right to speak out in favor or against political issues or candidates. The history of Johnson's IRS gag order is instructive. It began with what some historians believe to be a fraudulent election of Johnson to the Senate in 1948. It has been maintained by both conservative and liberal historians that Lyndon Johnson's election to the Senate in 1948 was won by massive voter fraud. Known as "Landslide Lyndon", Johnson was "elected" by only 87 votes. His challenger, Coke Stevenson, challenged his election and presented credible evidence that hundreds of votes for Johnson had been faked. Johnson, however, was successful in blocking Stevenson's effort by the clever use of "cooperative" court injunctions. In 1954, Johnson was facing re-election to the Senate and was being aggressively opposed by two non-profit anti-Communist groups that were attacking Johnson's liberal agenda. In retaliation, Johnson inserted language into the IRS code that prohibited non-profits, including churches, from endorsing or opposing candidates for political office. Then Senator Johnson used the power of the go-along Congress and the IRS to silence his opposition. Unfortunately, it worked. Some in Johnson's staff claimed that Johnson never intended to go after churches, only the two "nonprofits" in Texas. Nevertheless, his amendment to the tax code affected every church in America, and it is a violation of the First Amendment of the Constitution of the United States.

*Eric Metaxas* author of "[Bonhoeffer: Pastor, Martyr, Prophet, Spy](#)" wrote of Dietrich Bonhoeffer's courage that cost him his life. During Hitler's 12-year reign, people across Germany gave praise to the Fuhrer on his birthday! It was a day of national celebration. But by his 56th birthday Hitler was a shattered man, hiding like a rat beneath the shattered city that was to have been the capital of his new Germany. Ten days later he would commit suicide. Contrasting Hitler's end was Dietrich Bonhoeffer a brilliant soon too married 39 year old, whose

deep faith in God led him to get involved in the plot to kill Hitler. When Hitler learned of Bonhoeffer's involvement he flew into a violent rage and as one of his final acts of revenge – (just three weeks before he committed suicide) -- Hitler had Bonhoeffer hanged on April 9, 1945. Even more amazing is that Bonhoeffer had an opportunity to escape his fate. He had fled to America, but then decided to return to Germany, to face the horrors that lay ahead with his people. Why did he return when he didn't have to? And why didn't he have any regrets for doing so, even after he knew he would pay the ultimate price? Just before he died, Bonhoeffer told a fellow prisoner, *“This is the end. But for me, the beginning of life.”* Bonhoeffer believed in the extraordinary story of God's coming to Earth, dying and then rising from the dead to defeat death forever. Because this was true, he never feared death. All he needed to worry about was doing the right thing and trusting God with the results. Bonhoeffer stood up for the Jews of Europe, while Hitler, who condemned him to death, is reviled as a monster. If we believe in the word of God, as Bonhoeffer did, it will give us the courage do the right thing wherever we are. Like Bonhoeffer, **we will do the right thing and trust God with the consequences.**

For me this presidential election is not about pigment it's about policy! I refuse the label that suggests that if you reject a man's policy that just so happens to have pigment you are racist. I humbly ask: *“Is it a racist act to only vote for a person solely based upon the increased pigment of their skin instead of the content of their character and their policy?”* There are two supreme issues that influence my thinking far above a candidate's position on economics and foreign affairs: **The Sanctity of Life** and **The Sanctity of Marriage**! If a candidate is wrong on those two issues then it doesn't matter if they are right on the plan for the economy and the safety of our nation. **It for this reason that I will vote for Mitt Romney for President!** Though I will continue to not agree with him on many things; specifically his religion, he is not being

elected to a spiritual office but to a secular office. Again my statement is not about telling you who to vote for it is a public statement and action against the violation of my 1<sup>st</sup> amendment rights! God bless America! I invite you to join me in the time remaining to pray for this nation and those that will lead it!

In selecting men for office, let principle be your guide. Regard not the particular sect or denomination of the candidate—look to his character... It is alleged by men of loose principles, or defective views of the subject, that religion and morality are not necessary or important qualifications for political stations. But the Scriptures teach a different doctrine. They direct that rulers should be men who rule in the fear of God, able men, such as fear God, men of truth, hating covetousness... When a citizen gives his vote to a man of known immorality, he abuses his civic responsibility; he sacrifices not only his own interest, but that of his neighbor; he betrays the interest of his country.

—Noah Webster