



The Judges and Jesus

John 1:1-18

He came to his own, and his own people did not receive him. But to all who did receive him, who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God (John 1:11-12—ESV).

The LORD warned the Israelites repeatedly about the dire consequences of rebellion, of turning from the LORD, of willfully disobeying His commands, and thus needing discipline. When they turned from Him, He sometimes punished them by allowing their enemies to oppress them. When they cried to the LORD, He mercifully raised up judges to deliver them. Because the LORD loves His children, the LORD also repeatedly showed them His willingness to forgive them by sending them judges as deliverers who defeated their enemies and saved them from suffering. Their disciplinary suffering repeatedly led them to cry out to the LORD, and His merciful deliverance gave them another opportunity to trust and obey Him. Sadly, their obedience seldom lasted from one generation to the next.

The name Jesus means Deliverer or Savior or “the LORD saves.” Jesus came as the Ultimate Deliverer, who did what no man or woman could ever do. The history of Israel and all the nations of the world point everyone to our need of an Ultimate Savior from slavery to sin and evil. More than this, our Ultimate Savior gives us peace, rest, and eternal life with God

and all who love Him in His Kingdom. No mere human deliverer or judge can give us what we ultimately need, only Jesus can deliver us and give us what God alone can give.

Every day the Lord Jesus still teaches the lessons the Bible teaches. Think about His first coming. When even the leaders of Israel had become so corrupt and evil that they turned the temple into a robbers' den and the people away from the LORD, God sent the ultimate and only true Savior to rescue His people and the world. But most refused to receive Him and believe in Him, as many do today. Jesus offered them and Jesus offers us His peace forever, not just for eighty years. When Jesus came into the world, ONE man, the Son of God, fully God and fully man, was enough to deliver all God's children from all their enemies forever. His victory over sin, death, and the devil is finished, but no one will be perfect or live in a perfect world until He returns as He promised.

By turning to Jesus as the Bible reveals, believers who receive Him as Lord and Savior are freed from fear of death and slavery to the world, the flesh, and the devil. They know they are substantially better people than they used to be, but they still strive to become completely the person Jesus wants them to become. They pray for God to increase their capacity to receive more of Jesus and believe more in Him day by day. As our Ultimate Deliverer, Jesus died for us, rose from the dead for us, and will never die again. Because He loves us, He will be with us here and hereafter forever, not only for eighty years. Jesus in our Friend and Brother, and we strive to live as a better friend and brother or sister to Him.

The history of the Church is also a history of what Jesus can do as He works through one faithful person. His followers can

relieve suffering, oppose evil, and lead people to Jesus, the ONE who loves them, saves them, never leaves them. The ONE who lives with them and helps them live day by day. Those who receive Jesus live not only in His power; they also live with the fruit of the Holy Spirit transforming their lives and making them better one day at a time. They are so blessed and filled by the Holy Spirit that they can share the fruit of the Spirit with others by being loving, kind, and patient toward others. The followers of Jesus have turned from what they once were before they met Jesus and become true children of God. By the grace of God, they will become better people, but never live perfectly until they meet the Lord Jesus face to face. But even now, they can show and tell others about the “love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control,” which are fruits of the Holy Spirit given from knowing and following Jesus (Galatians 5:22–23).

Today, you may be the one person Jesus Christ will use to help someone come to believe in Him, receive the Holy Spirit, and become a new person. Even if others have tried to help them before you, with the help of Jesus you may be the one who makes the difference they have needed. Someday, Jesus will return and take away the sin of the world and make all things new (John 1:29; Revelation 21:5). If we go to be with Him before He comes again, we will be able to look back and bless all the “ones” who helped us come to believe in Jesus and become the person He wants us to be. We will bless the ones who helped us maintain our faith in Jesus, our Lord and Savior, through many, trials, temptations, and personal failures. You too may be one of those they remember and for whom they thank the Lord Jesus to the praise of His glory.