

LONG STORY SHORT

The Judges

Judges

The Setting

Joshua son of Nun, the servant of the LORD, **died** ... After that whole generation had been gathered to their ancestors, **another generation** grew up who knew neither the LORD nor what he had done for Israel.

(Judges 2:10, NIV)

- 1) **God** was to be their king.
- 2) **The Law** was to be their guide.

The Landscape

- 1) A Cycle of **Defeat**.

Disobedience

The Israelites **did evil** in the LORD's sight and served the images of Baal. They **abandoned** the LORD, the God of their ancestors, who had brought them out of Egypt. They went after other gods, worshiping the gods of the people around them. And they angered the LORD. (Judges 2:11–12, NLT)

Disaster

This made the LORD burn with anger against Israel, so he **handed them over** to raiders who stole their possessions. He turned them over to their enemies all around, and they were no longer able to resist them. (Judges 2:14, NLT)

Deliverance

Then the LORD raised up **judges** to **rescue** the Israelites from their attackers. (Judges 2:16, NLT)

- 2) A Culture of **Blindness**.

"In those days there was no **king** in Israel; everyone did what was **right** in their **own eyes**." (Judges 21:25, NASB)

The Pathways

- 1) Samson: A man who had his eyes **put out**.

Blind to the **purpose** of God for his life.

The boy is to be a Nazirite, **dedicated to God from the womb**. He will take the lead in **delivering** Israel from the hands of the Philistines." (Judges 13:5, NIV)

Blind to the **power** of the relationships in his life.

Samson went down to Timnah and saw there a young **Philistine** woman. When he returned, he said to his father and mother, "I have seen a Philistine woman in Timnah; now **get her for me** as my wife." His father and mother replied, "Isn't there an acceptable woman among **your relatives** or among all **our people**? Must you go to the uncircumcised Philistines to get a wife?" But Samson said to his father, "Get her for me. She's the **right** one for me." (Judges 14:1-3, NIV)

"Bad company corrupts good character." (I Corinthians 15:33, NIV)

"When you're fifteen, somebody tells you they love you, you're gonna believe them." (Taylor Swift)

Blind to the **nature** of the God of his life.

After putting him to sleep on her lap, she called for someone to shave off the seven braids of his hair, and so began to subdue him. And **his strength left him**. Then she called, "Samson, the Philistines are upon you!" He awoke from his sleep and thought, "**I'll go out as before** and shake myself free." But he did not know that **the LORD had left him**. Then the Philistines seized him, **gouged out his eyes** and took him down to Gaza. Binding him with bronze shackles, they set him to grinding grain in the prison. (Judges 16:19–21, NIV)

Samson closed his eyes and lost his anointing.

You can be **blind** without losing your **sight**.

2) Gideon: A man who had his eyes **opened**.

Eyes open to the **purpose** of God for his life.

The angel of the LORD came and sat down under the oak in Ophrah that belonged to Joash the Abiezrite, where his son **Gideon** was threshing wheat in a **winepress** to keep it from the Midianites. When the angel of the LORD appeared to **Gideon**, he said, "The LORD is with you, **mighty warrior**." "Pardon me, my lord," Gideon replied, "but **if** the LORD is with us, **why** has all this happened to us?" "**Where** are all his wonders that our ancestors told us about when they said, 'Did not the LORD bring us up out of Egypt?'" "But now the LORD has **abandoned** us and given us into the hand of Midian." (Judges 6:11-13, NIV)

Eyes open to the **power** of the relationships in his life.

The LORD turned to him and said, "**Go** in the strength you have and save Israel out of Midian's hand. **Am I not sending you?**" "Pardon me, my lord," **Gideon** replied, "but **how** can I save Israel? My **clan** is the weakest in **Manasseh**, and I am the **least** in my **family**." Then the Lord answered, "Oh, never mind. I must be at the wrong house." (Judges 6:14-16)

Eyes open to the **nature** of the God of your life.

The LORD answered, "**I will be with you...**" (Judges 6:16, NIV)

"**Will you be with me?**"

So Gideon built an **altar** to the LORD there and called it The LORD Is Peace. To this day it stands in Ophrah of the Abiezrites. (Judges 6:24, NIV)

Gideon opened his eyes and received his anointing.

You can be extraordinary by choosing to see.

**The distance between disaster and deliverance
is only the distance between
one open eye to the other in humble prayer.**