

Bible Reading Notes
Judges

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Judges 1

Judges 1-2 serve as an introduction to the book giving the context for the troubles Israel would face during the period of the judges.

1:2 - Judah – In Judges, Judah (tribe of David) will take the leading role among all the tribes. This contrasts with Benjamin (tribe of Saul) who is presented in a negative light (v. 21).

1:5 - Adoni-bezek – Lord of Bezek – the title of the king.

1:21 - did not drive out – Note that this disobedience is mentioned 7 times.

Joshua 2

2:3 – The consequence of Israel not obeying the Lord's command.

2:10 – This is the result of a generation of parents who did not teach their children the things of the Lord and instruct them to be faithful to him.

2:11-22 serves as a summary of the book. This is the pattern that the book will reveal over the next 250 years. The pattern is Rest, Rebellion, Retribution, Repentance, and Restoration.

2:16 - Judges = Saviors or deliverers

2:19 – Israel will take a downward spiral from generation to generation.

2:21-22 – Just as the Lord had told Israel through Joshua (Jos. 23:13).

Judges 3

3:1-6 – The Lord used the remaining nations to test Israel (vv. 1, 4). Israel failed the test (v. 6).

3:12-30 – You can see the pattern of the judges – Rest (3:11), Rebellion (3:12), Retribution (3:12), Repentance (3:15), Restoration (3:15-29), Rest (3:30).

Judges 4

4:8 – Barak was not a man of great faith and shows his timidity here in response to the Lord's command.

4:9 – **will not lead to your glory** - Because his refusal to go forward was an act of unbelief.

4:21 – This was done in fulfillment of Deborah's prophecy in v. 9.

Judges 5

5:2 – Both leaders who lead and people willing to follow are essential for the church to thrive.

5:6-8 – The situation in Israel prior to Deborah was bleak.

5:15-17 – Some of the tribes did not take part in the battle – Reuben, Dan, Gilead (Eastern Manasseh), and Asher. Some other tribes are not mentioned. This all may have been the case because this was a regional war.

Judges 6

6:1 – Midian – According to Genesis 25:1-2, Midian was a son of Abraham. The Midianites lived southeast of Israel on the east side of the Red Sea.

6:11 – Winepress – Wheat is beaten out in the open on a hilltop where the wind is present. Gideon was trying to hide his wheat so the Midianites would not take it.

6:12 – The **angel of the Lord** is the LORD (v. 14).

6:36-40 – God’s graciousness to answer Gideon does not mean we should test the Lord as Gideon did.

Deuteronomy 6:16 tells us not to test the Lord. Gideon should have responded with obedience to the clear commands and promises of God (v. 36).

Judges 7

7:2 – the people with you are too many - The Lord recognizes our natural sense of self-sufficiency and sometimes works to make it clear that he alone should receive the glory for what we do.

7:10 – The entire account of Gideon reinforces his timidity and fear. The Lord graciously provides situations to strengthen Gideon and give him courage.

Judges 8

8:1-3 – The Ephraimites recognized that the tribe that leads in victory will be the leader of the nation.

We see in Gideon a man of righteousness (8:23) and wickedness (8:27, 30-31). A man just like us. This is another way that the book of Judges points out the need for Christ, the only truly righteous king.

8:26 – **1,700 shekels** = about 42 pounds of gold.

8:31 – **Abimelech** = My father is king. Gideon said he would not be king (v. 23), but he acted like he was king by taking the gold (vv. 24-26) and in the naming of his son.

Judges 9

As we saw in chapter 8, Gideon had his weaknesses. Judges 9 shows his worthless and ungodly son, Abimelech.

9:46 – **El-berith** means “god of the covenant.”

9:56-57 – This was done in fulfillment of Jotham’s words in v. 20.

Judges 10

Judges 10-11 is another synopsis of the book of Judges – Rebellion (v. 6), Retribution (vv. 7-9), Repentance (vv. 10-16), Restoration (10:17-11:33).

10:6 – Note that the number of foreign gods Israel is serving has expanded significantly.

10:13-14 – There are times that the Lord leaves sinful people to suffer the consequences of their sin (Romans 1:24ff).

Judges 11

Judges 11 provides the answer to the question asked in 10:18.

11:14-27 - Jephthah's answer is a rehearsal of Israel's time in the wilderness 300 years earlier (v. 26).

11:35 – I cannot take back my vow - Jephthah is wrong. A person is not bound to uphold an unlawful vow, which his vow certainly was.

11:39 – Some believe that Jephthah fulfilled his vow by making his daughter a perpetual virgin, but the language of the text indicates that he offered her as a sacrifice, which was clearly sinful.

Judges 12

12:1-6 – Ephraim initiated another conflict after a military victory, just as they had done with Gideon (8:1ff).

12:8-15 – This summary of several judges reveals the ongoing sin in Israel. All of these judges had multiple wives or concubines

Judges 13

Judges 13 begins the account of the last judge mentioned in the book, Samson.

13:1 – did what was evil – The cycle begins again.

13:3 – angel of the Lord – The angel is God's representative and spokesman. Sometimes the term is used of God

himself, other times it is unclear.

13:7 – Important passage for understanding that life begins in the womb. Samson was to be a Nazarite even in the womb of his mother.

Judges 14

14:1-3 – Samson’s sin and weakness are seen immediately in his disregard for tradition (parents arrange marriages, not the son) and for Scripture (marrying a pagan was unlawful).

14:3 – **she was right in his own eyes** – Repeated in v. 7. This was the standard of judgment that Samson was using and was one reason why he would fail to be a righteous judge.

Judges 15

15:5 – This would have been devastating to the Philistine economy.

15:8 – **hip and thigh** - It is unclear what the specific meaning of this phrase is, but it at least implies great destruction of the Philistines.

15:17 – **Ramath-lehi** means “the hill of the jawbone.”

15:18 – **die of thirst** – Unlikely scenario. Samson is now acting like rebellious Israel in the wilderness.

15:19 – **En-hakkore** – This means “The spring of him who calls.”

Judges 16

16:1 – saw – Once again Samson is being led only by his sight (14:3).

16:3 – Samson carried the city gates for about 40 miles.

16:20 – the Lord had left him – The blessing and strength which had come from the Lord would no longer be with him, until his last day (v. 28).

There is very little commendable about Samson, yet he was included in the list of those who lived by faith (Hebrews 11:32).

Judges 17

Judges 17-21 does not follow chronologically after Samson. It is most likely that these events took place between Joshua and Ehud and are placed thematically at the end to show the need for a king (17:6, 18:1; 19:1; 21:25).

Today's reading focuses on the religious apostasy taking place in Israel in the absence of strong leadership.

17:7 – young man – Later we learn that his name was Jonathan and he was the grandson of Moses (18:30).

Judges 18

18:1 – there was no king in Israel – This refrain will be the theme of the rest of the book as an argument for the need for a king in Israel.

18:1 – The tribe of Dan had received an allotment of the

land but had lost it according to Joshua 19:47. They were looking for a new place to settle.

18:3 – young Levite – This is the same Levite introduced in Judges 17. In v. 30 we are told that he was the grandson of Moses.

18:12 – Mahaneh-dan = Camp of Dan

Judges 19

19:1 – there was no king in Israel - We begin with the same thematic statement to begin the chapter and will see another example of the moral failure of Israel during this period.

Judges 19-20 serve an important function to show the superiority of David over Saul. Gibeah is the birthplace of Saul. Judah, the tribe of David, is seen as the first among the other tribes (20:18).

19:12 – Israel did not conqueror Jebus (Jerusalem) until the time of David.

19:12 – Gibeah – This was about 4 miles north of Jebus and was the birthplace of Saul.

19:22ff – The men of Gibeah act more like Sodomites than the people of God. This is ironic in that the Levite did not want to stay with foreigners in Jebus but with those of Israel (v. 12).

Hosea refers to the sins of Gibeah as the beginning of the fall of northern tribes (Hosea 9:9; 10:9).

19:29 – Just like Saul would later do (1 Samuel 16:6-8) to call the nation to war.

Judges 20

20:18 – Judah – This is part of the exaltation of Judah, the tribe that David came from.

20:48 – This was a devastating destruction of the tribe of Benjamin. It is the context for the next chapter.

Judges 21

This last chapter of Judges gives a final argument why a king was needed for Israel.

The actions taken are not well thought through and only lead to other problems that are solved through more sin.

21:25 – Samuel is pointing forward to David, but he too will fail to be the righteous king Israel needs. Their need will only be fulfilled generations later with the coming of Christ.

