

The book of Judges covers Israel's history from about 1380 B.C. to 1050 B.C. - from Joshua's death until the beginnings of monarchy. The land was mostly conquered under Joshua's leadership, but there remained several Canaanite strongholds.

The people served the Lord all the days of Joshua, and all the days of the elders who survived Joshua, who had seen all the great work of the Lord which He had done for Israel.

After Joshua died, there arose another generation who did not know the Lord, nor yet the work which He had done for Israel. Then the sons of Israel did evil in the sight of the Lord and served Baal and the Ashtaroth.

The anger of the Lord burned against Israel. God allowed the Canaanites to remain in the land (1) to punish Israel's apostasy, (2) to test Israel's loyalty, and (3) to teach Israel how to fight. <sup>1</sup>

Periodically, the Lord would raise up judges for the Israelites. The judges were military and civil leaders ruling during this time when the nation was a loose confederacy.

The Lord was with the judge and delivered them from the hand of their enemies all the days of the judge. But it came about when the judge died, the people turned back and acted more corruptly than their fathers, in following other gods.

Day 91 - Judges 1-5 • List the first four judges and the enemy subdued under their leadership.

1. \_\_\_\_\_ (3:9-11)
2. \_\_\_\_\_ (3:12-30)
3. \_\_\_\_\_ (3:31)
4. \_\_\_\_\_ (4)

Day 92 - Judges 6-8 • The Lord gave the sons of Israel into the hands of Midian seven years, because they did what was evil in the sight of the Lord. The Midianites would come up with the Amalekites and destroy the produce of the earth, leaving no sustenance in Israel.

The angel of the Lord appeared to Gideon, who was of the tribe of Manasseh, telling him to go and deliver Israel from the hand of Midian. That night Gideon pulled down the altar of Baal and cut down the Asherah, and in its place he built an altar to the real Lord and sacrificed a bull there. Then all the Midianites and the Amalekites and the sons of the east assembled themselves; and they camped in the valley of Jezreel (an historical battleground in the heart of Palestine).

The Spirit of the Lord came upon Gideon, and he blew a trumpet. In response, men from Manasseh, Asher, Zebulun, and Naphtali came to meet him. An Israelite army of 32,000 assembled to fight the Midianites. But the Lord said to Gideon that there were too many. Eventually, the army was reduced to 300 men. Gideon's victory over the Midianite/ Amalekite army is recorded in chapters 7 and 8. Midian was subdued and there were forty years of peace in the days of Gideon.

List the three signs Gideon asked the Lord for before he rose up to attack the Midianites.

- (6:17-21) \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_
- (6:36-38) \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_
- (6:39-40) \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Day 93 - Judges 9 • As you read through this chapter, recall from Judges 6:32 that Gideon was named Jerubbaal (meaning "let Baal contend") after he tore down the altar of Baal.

Now Gideon had seventy sons who were his direct descendants, for he had many wives. In Judges 9, his son Abimelech killed all but one of Gideon's other sons and was made king. The surviving son, Jotham, warned the people of Shechem that Abimelech could offer no security to them, and that Abimelech would be both the cause and the means of their destruction. <sup>1</sup>

How long was Abimelech's tyrannical rule over Israel (Judges 9:22) and how did it end (Judges 9:53-54)?

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Day 94 - Judges 10-12 • Little is recorded about five of the next six Judges.

The names of the next six Judges (plus Gideon) and their length of service, follows.

5. Gideon, 40 years (8:28)
6. Tola, 23 years (10:2)
7. Jair, 22 years (10:3)
8. Jephthah, subdued the sons of Ammon, 6 years (12:7)
9. Ibzan, 7 years (12:9)
10. Elon, 10 years (12:11)
11. Abdon, 8 years (12:15)

Jephthah, the son of Gilead and a harlot, received no inheritance and was driven away from his father's house. Being a valiant warrior, Jephthah was asked to return when need arose to fight the Ammonites. The Gileadites made Jephthah their head and chief.

The disputed land was located east of the Jordan where the tribes of Gad, Reuben, and half of Manasseh had settled. The Ammonites were making a false claim to the land, since it belonged to the Amorites when Israel first captured it.

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Jephthah made a vow to the LORD, and said, "If You will indeed give the sons of Ammon into my hand, then it shall be that whatever comes out of the doors of my house to meet me when I return in peace from the sons of Ammon, it shall be the LORD's, and I will offer it up as a burnt offering."

The sons of Ammon were subdued before the sons of Israel. When Jephthah returned to his house, his daughter, his one and only child, came out to meet him. Jephthah's daughter was permitted to go to the mountains for two months to weep. Upon her return, Jephthah did to her according to the vow which he had made (11:39).

The Bible is silent regarding what Jephthah did to his daughter to fulfill his vow. Jephthah's daughter could have been only dedicated to the service of God in a life of celibacy and not actually slain.

What became a custom in Israel, as a result of the dedication of Jephthah's daughter (11:34-40)?

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Day 95 - Judges 13-16 • The sons of Israel again did evil in the sight of the Lord, so that the Lord gave them into the hands of the Philistines forty years. Judges 13-16 tell the story of Samson, a Nazirite to God from the womb. As an adult, Samson would begin to deliver Israel from the hands of the Philistines.

Samson married a Philistine woman. But, her father thought he hated her intensely and gave her (in marriage) to Samson's companion (his best man). After Samson sought revenge, the Philistines burned her and her father with fire.

Samson judged Israel twenty years in the days of the Philistines. It came about that Samson loved a woman named Delilah.

Delilah was promised 1,100 pieces of silver from each of the five lords of the Philistines, if she could discover the secret to his strength.

Delilah pressed Samson daily with her words, until he revealed the secret of his strength.

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Delilah had Samson's head shaved while he slept, and when he awoke he found that his strength had left him. The Philistines gouged out his eyes, successfully bound him with chains and made him a grinder in prison.

Briefly list four occasions where Samson did harm to the Philistines:

(14:19) \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

(15:4-5) \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

(15:11-17) \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

(16:25-30) \_\_\_\_\_

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Day 96 - Judges 17-18 • The last chapters of the book contain details regarding the apostasy of Israel during the period of the Judges. In the hill country of Ephraim, Micah made a graven image (wood overlaid with silver), a molten image (solid silver), a shrine, and an ephod. Then Micah hired a Levite to become his priest. Later, the tribe of Dan stole Micah's priest and idols, having lost much of their land to the Amorites.

What do we learn about the nation of Israel during the time of the Judges, in verse 17:6?

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Day 97 - Judges 19-21 • Judges 19 details the reason for the Benjamite war, a dreadful scene reminiscent to that of Genesis 19.

The men of Gibeah (of Benjamin) were responsible for the death of a certain Levite's concubine (his wife). However, the Benjamites would not deliver up the guilty men (worthless fellows) in Gibeah.

Judges 20-21 record the civil war between the tribe of Benjamin (26,700) and the other Israelites (400,000). Only 600 Benjamites escaped.

The other tribes swore not to let any of their girls marry a Benjamite.

What did the Levite do, which served as a call to action in the Benjamite war (19:29)?

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Day 98 - Ruth • The author of the book of Ruth is unknown. The events of Ruth occurred during the period of the Judges.

Chapter 1 records the death of Ruth's husband Mahlon, the decision of her mother-in-law Naomi to return from the land of Moab to Bethlehem, and Ruth's statement of commitment - perhaps the most beautiful in all literature.

The responsibilities of the kinsmen-redeemer included (1) redeeming family property that had changed ownership, and (2) marrying a childless widow to raise up children in her dead husband's name. When there was no brother to raise up children in the name of the deceased, the responsibility was extended to the next of kin.<sup>1</sup>

In chapter 4 Ruth marries Boaz, a relative of Naomi. Boaz was not Elimilech's nearest relative. The nearer kinsman had interest in purchasing the land of Naomi's husband Elimelech, but he did not want to marry and support the widow Ruth.

The Lord enabled Ruth to conceive and she gave birth to a son. Note that Ruth 4:13 tells us that children are a gift from God.

Who was the great grandson of Boaz and Ruth (Ruth 4:21-22)?

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References

<sup>1</sup> *Ryrie Study Bible*, Moody Press, 1995, pp. 372-421.