

## *From the Garden to Glory*

# Judges

**Author:** Possibly Samuel

**Timeline:** c. 1382 - 1032 B.C.

**Location:** Canaan

**Category:** Historical

**Theme:** Cycle of Sin, Oppression, Supplication, Deliverance

### **Overview:**

The book of Judges begins where Joshua left off. It covers approximately 350 dark, sin-filled years of the history of Israel. *"In those days there was no king in Israel; everyone did what was right in his own eyes."* (Judges 17:6)

The people had failed to completely drive out the heathen inhabitants of the land. They had mingled with the pagans and practiced idolatry. Because of their transgressions God used the people around them to oppress them. The children of Israel would cry out to the Lord, and He would graciously raise up a deliverer, a judge to lead them to victory. And so the cycle would begin again.

### **Introduction:**

The book of Judges chronicles seven cycles of "sin and salvation" as the rebellious, idolatrous Israelites were defeated again and again due to their disobedience to God. Before you start your study of the book of Judges, consider the following questions and write your answers:

1. What is one particular area in which you are "naturally" rebellious? How has the Lord helped you have victory in this area?
2. Read 1 Samuel 15:23. Why are rebellion and stubbornness such serious sins in God's eyes? Why does He equate them with idolatry and witchcraft?
3. Each of the judges seemed to have at least one "flaw" which became an asset when used under the Lord's direction. How have you seen the Lord use a *weakness* in your life when you have surrendered it to Him for His use?
4. List at least five negative consequences of "doing what is right in your own eyes."
5. The Israelites' main problem was that they refused to trust the Lord and obey Him. Rather than confess their sin and repent, however, they made excuses. Can you think of a time when you made excuses rather than obeying God? What was the outcome? How would you do it differently another time? Be specific.

### **Only Partial Victories**

Read Judges 1:1-2:5

1. Look at 1:1-2. What did the children of Israel ask the Lord? What was His response to them? What is the significance of the fact that the word *delivered* is in the past tense?
2. Look at 1:3. The weak tribe of Simeon was called into battle with the strong tribe of Judah. Who has come along side of you when you were weak? How have you reached out to a weaker sister?

3. Look at 1:19. What was the reason that Judah did not drive out the inhabitants of the lowland? What does Deuteronomy 20:1-4 say about this?

## **Institution of the Judges**

Read Judges 2:11-3:11

1. Look at 2:11-19. What did the children of Israel do? What did the Lord do to deliver His people? What was their response?
2. What purpose is given in 3:1-4 to explain why the Lord allowed Israel's enemies to remain?
3. Look at 3:5-11 and consider this quote from Charles Spurgeon, "God never allows His people to sin successfully." How has this been true in your life?

## **Deborah and Barak**

Read Judges 4:4-5:31

1. How is Deborah described in 4:4-5?
2. What were Deborah's words to Barak in 4:6-7? What was Barak's response in verse 8?
3. Chapter 5 is a song of praise to God for His victory. List five "victories" for which you can praise the Lord.

## **Gideon, the Farmer**

Read Judges 6:1-16; 7:16-25

1. Summarize 5:31- 6:1. What causes "rest" in your life? What disturbs your rest?
2. Look at 6:11-12. Why was Gideon threshing wheat in a winepress? How did the Angel of the Lord describe Gideon? How does this encourage you?
3. What were the Israelites told to say in 7:18? John MacArthur says, "Here was the power of God in harmony with the obedience of man." How have you seen God's power work in harmony with your obedience?

## **Jephthah's Terrible Vow**

Read Judges 11:12-40

1. Look at verse 12 and record what Jephthah did. Read Deuteronomy 20:10-11. What were the Israelites to do before fighting? Consider this quote from Lenya Heitzig and Penny Pierce Rose, "Jephthah rises to the task of leadership. Instead of rushing into battle with the Ammonites, he acts as a statesman." Think about your attitudes as well as actions when God has called *you* to be a leader. Do you tend to "offer peace" or "rush into battle"?
2. What did Jephthah call the Lord in verse 27? What does this mean? How has He "rendered judgments" in your life?

3. Read verses 34-40. There is disagreement among commentators as to whether Jephthah's daughter was actually sacrificed or became dedicated to a celibate life of service. Regardless, Jephthah's vow, although earnest and zealous, was rash. How do you keep from speaking in a rash manner? Consider the following: Psalm 39:1, 141:3, Proverbs 13:3 and 21:23.

## **Samson, the Strong Man**

Read Judges 15 and 16

1. Look at verse 15:18a. To whom did Samson cry out when he became thirsty? What spiritual thirst are you experiencing in your life right now? Look at Psalm 42:1-2. How do you make this a reality in your life?
2. Look at 16:1-4. What was Samson's area of weakness? Read 1 John 2:16. List one way each of these "snares" manifests itself in our world today. How do you protect yourself against these snares?
3. Comment on this quote from Lenya Heitzig and Penny Pierce Rose, "Delilah's treatment of Samson is a picture of Satan's treatment of us: he pretends to care for us, he offers us worldly pleasures, he lulls us into false security, then he sneaks in and robs us of strength and honor. Be on guard against the wiles of the enemy, he is out to destroy you." What is an area in which the enemy could attack you? How do you guard against "the wiles of the enemy"? Be specific.

## **Summary**

As you conclude your study of the book of Judges consider the following questions and write your answers:

1. What is the most important lesson you have learned from your study of this book? How can you apply this lesson in your life this week?

**2.** What "new insights" did you learn about the Lord and yourself from your study?

**3.** List one way in which your study caused you to do each of the following:

Praise and worship the Lord:

Confess an area of sin to the Lord:

Thank the Lord:

Ask for something from the Lord: