



Judge

THE CYCLE OF DISOBEDIENCE

Judges 1-2

The Daily Word from Laura Martin

Despite Joshua's warnings to have no other gods and worship the Lord only, the Israelites did not listen. They did what was evil in the Lord's sight and worshipped Ba'al and other gods, abandoning the Lord, the God of their fathers. They lived in disobedience to the Lord and did not keep their eyes on Him. And as a result, they failed in battle and found themselves in chaos. However, despite their sin, the Lord raised up judges to help save the people from their enemies. The Lord rescued them from darkness.

In the same way, God the Father saw the chaos and sin of the world and sent His Son Jesus to come rescue you. Jesus came to save you from darkness and the power of sin. He came to bring life and hope, even in the midst of your chaos. *Will you turn to Jesus and allow Him to rescue you?* Or will you press on in your own strength, your own wisdom, and try it in your own power? Friend, allow Jesus to help you. Today, believe and receive His love, grace, and power. He is there for you because He loves you.

"Whenever the LORD raised up a judge for the Israelites, the LORD was with him and saved the people from the power of their enemies while the judge was still alive."

—Judges 2:18

FURTHER SCRIPTURE

- *1 Corinthians 10:13* — "No temptation has overtaken you except what is common to humanity. God is faithful, and He will not allow you to be tempted beyond what you are able, but with the temptation He will also provide a way of escape so that you are able to bear it."
- *Colossians 1:13-14* — "He has rescued us from the domain of darkness and transferred us into the kingdom of the Son He loves. We have redemption, the forgiveness of sins, in Him."
- *1 Thessalonians 1:10* — "And to wait for His Son from heaven, whom He raised from the dead—Jesus, who rescues us from the coming wrath."



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Teaching Notes

INTRO

We just wrapped up Joshua, the first of the historical books, and now we're moving into Judges. The first verse of Judges explains Joshua had died, so Judges presents a new season for the Israelites. The book of Judges feels a little chaotic. Mindy's new painting is a little dark with a snake and a skull, but that's what we're talking about in the book of Judges. Judges is about multiple leaders, or judges.

The author of the book is believed to be Samuel (1 Samuel 10:25). *Nelson's Commentary* said Israel's judges "did not normally hold court, listen to complaints, or make legal decisions (except for Deborah). Rather, they were political leaders who delivered Israel from foreign threat or oppression."¹ The book was probably written after Saul had been anointed king but before the reign of David.² Interestingly, Judges can refer to both the book of the Bible, or to the period of about 300 years in which the judges were in place when chaos reigned in Israel. The book of Judges was a sequel to the book of Joshua. Within this book, 15 judges are named.

Chuck Swindoll suggests these reasons for the period of Judges in which there was great apostasy in Israel³:

1. There was tremendous political and religious turmoil because the tribes of Israel were continuously trying to obtain the rest of the Promised Land they hadn't completely conquered. There was a halfway obedience to God's commands.
2. The tribes of Israel began fighting against each other. In fact, the tribes of Manasseh (Judges 12) and Benjamin (Judges 20–21) were almost wiped out.
3. A cycle of sin, punishment, repentance, and forgiveness took place. God's people rebelled through idolatry and disbelief, so God brought judgment through foreign oppression. Then God would raise up a deliverer or judge who brought the people back to God in repentance. However, within a couple of chapters, the people fell back into sin and the cycle started over again.

The image is of one who came to save the people, not hammer them into obedience. This is a picture of the coming Savior. In her painting, Mindi used the bitten apple to represent the Israelites' cycle of sin that we all have from the fall in Genesis; the snake to represent how sin is always coming after us; and the skull represents death. Each supports the theme of the book—God will not allow sin to go unpunished.

The book of Exodus explains how Israel became God's people and followed Him in the wilderness. In the book of Joshua, He led them to conquer the Promised Land, and the book ended with Joshua's speech warning against forgetting what God had done (Joshua 24). And in Judges, God had to discipline His people for following other gods, for disobeying His law, and for immorality.

TEACHING

Judges 1:1–18: Leadership was turned over to Judah and Simeon (vv. 1–3). In verses 4–5, the Israelites were still trying to conquer the rest of the Promised Land (Joshua 3:10). They pursued Adoni-bezek, captured him, and cut off his thumbs and big toes so he could no longer hold a sword or run in battle. *Nelson's Commentary* explains that "the practice of mutilating vanquished enemies is recorded in ancient sources . . . and was practiced by Adoni-bezek himself."⁴ Adoni-bezek died from the wounds (vv. 6–7). They seized Jerusalem, but not everyone died (v. 8) (Joshua 15:63). Judges gives a picture of Jerusalem that is incomplete without the information in Joshua. Then, Judah struck down the three giants in Hebron—Sheshai, Ahiman, and Talmi (v. 10). Remember that Caleb used marriage to his daughter as the prize to whomever delivered the land, which was Othniel (vv. 11–14). She asked for and received the double portion of springs of water (upper and lower) on the Negev Desert (vv. 15–16). Othniel became the first judge. In verses 17–18, several towns were captured.

¹ Earl Radmacher, Ronald B. Allen, and H. Wayne House, eds., *Nelson's New Illustrated Bible Commentary* (Nashville: Thomas Nelson Publishers, 1999), p. 309.

² Thomas Constable, *Dr. Constable's Expository (Bible Study) Notes: Judges*, p. 3; available online at <http://planbiblechapel.org/tcon/notes/pdf/judges.pdf>.

³ Chuck Swindoll, *Judges: Why Was Judges So Important?* Available online at <https://www.insight.org/resources/bible/the-historical-books/judges>.

⁴ *Nelson's Commentary*, p. 306.



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Teaching Notes

Judges 1:19–34: They took possession of the hill country but could not drive out the people in the valley who had “iron chariots” (v. 19). They failed due to a complete lack of faith on the Israelites’ part. Joshua 1:3 says the Lord would drive the people out. In Joshua 1:3–7, God said that everywhere they stepped, He would be with them and would give them the land. Failure didn’t just happen to Judah. Several tribes failed: Benjamin (v. 21); Manasseh (v. 27); Ephraim (v. 29); Zebulun (v. 30); Asher (v. 31); Naphtali (v. 33); and Dan (v. 34). These tribes failed because they didn’t trust God. They were told to completely destroy the inhabitants of the land so their faith would not be pulled away from God, but they failed (Deuteronomy 20:16–18). When they didn’t obey wholeheartedly, Deuteronomy 20:18 came true (Joshua 6:17; 11:14; Judges 2:11–12).

CLOSING

In Judges 2:1–4, the Angel of the Lord (Christ Jesus) came and told the people not to make a covenant with the inhabitants of the land. Even that was not enough to save the Israelites from the cycle of disobedience and rebellion (Judges 2:16). That leads us to our word for this study—*Judge*. These God-appointed judges in the book of Judges lead to the *Judge*.

The function of our *Judge* is found in Colossians 1:13–14: “He has rescued us from the domain of darkness and transferred us into the kingdom of the Son He loves. We have redemption, the forgiveness of sins, in Him.”

If you want to get off the cycle of sin, just look to the *Judge*—Jesus Christ.



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Reading Guide Questions

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1. After Joshua died, why do you think God told Israel that Judah should go up first to fight the Canaanites? (Genesis 49:8-9; Revelation 5:5)
 2. From who did Caleb's daughter, Achsah, request to ask Caleb about giving them land? Who wound up asking him? How did Caleb respond?
 3. In Judges 2, why did the people of Israel weep after hearing from the Angel of the Lord? What did they do after hearing this word?
 4. What were some sins of the new generation after Joshua?
 5. Even during the Israelites' rebellion, how did God show His compassion for them? What was His purpose for leaving the nations in the land that had not been driven out?
 6. What did the Holy Spirit highlight to you in Judges 1 —2 through the reading or the teaching?

