THE
DISCIPLESHIP
PLACE

JUDGES AND RUTH

CLT Bible Study

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JUDGES AND RUTH

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SUGGESTIONS FOR STUDY

Welcome to the Continuing Lay Ministries series of Bible studies. You are engaged in a study venture that will be both helpful and enjoyable. Here are a few suggestions that will make this Bible study the most beneficial to you.

1. Since this is a Bible study, have your Bible near you at all times. This study outline is only designed to help you read the Bible.

2. The Bible version used for this study is the New International Version (NIV). The editor primarily used the language of the NIV to prepare the lessons. You may use other versions of the Bible if you choose. While the language may be different, the meaning will be the same.

3. Before you begin each section, read the entire Scripture passage. This is very important. The study outline will help you understand the particular Bible verses, but it does not tell what they say.

4. IMPORTANT: Note that scriptures from Judges or Ruth may not have the book's name. In sections referring specifically to the Book of Judges, if the Bible reference is (1:6-8), you will find these verses (6-8) in the first chapter of Judges. Whereas other books of the Bible will include the name in the reference, for example, Isaiah 53:1 and John 17:1.

5. Go through the study outline carefully. Take time to look up all the Scripture verses in the outline.

6. You may want to mark your study Bible as you go. Marking your Bible will help the words become more and more your own. It will be well if you have colored pencils at hand to mark the Bible as you go along. A simple system is to mark promises in blue and warnings in red. However you do it, mark your Bible, and it will become more and more your very own.

7. Finally, read the Bible passage again to better understand its meaning.

8. The editor has also included how to pronounce some of the more difficult proper names and other important words. The first time the word is introduced, the pronunciation will follow the word. At the end of each chapter, you will find a list of the words in the order in which they were introduced. Additionally, at the end of the document, all of the words and pronunciations will be listed alphabetically. For pronunciation of additional terms and their definitions, please refer to A Dictionary of the Bible & Christian Doctrine in Everyday English (Eby et al., 2004).

SUGGESTIONS FOR STUDY

If a family or a few friends decide to take this study together, here are two suggestions:

1. Have one person read the Bible passage and another person read the Continuing Lay Ministries outline.

2. Then discuss the Scripture and outline. Ask questions of each other to help clarify the meaning of the Scripture.

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CHAPTER 1. INTRODUCTION TO JUDGES AND RUTH

Section 1.1 Introduction to the Book of Judges

NOTES

A. TITLE

Judges is a historical book of the Old Testament that appears in the section of the Hebrew Scriptures known as "the Former Prophets." The "judges" were rulers in Israel from the death of Joshua until the time of King Saul (Acts 13:19-20). They were not judging in the modern sense. They were military chieftains with absolute administrative powers. They were not "elected" to office by popular vote but were invariably chosen by God. They were extraordinary people whom the Lord raised up to deliver Israel from oppression. Their exact number is unknown, but this book has preserved the names of twelve, namely, Othniel, Ehud, Shamgar, Deborah (and Barak), Gideon, Tola, Jair, Jephthah, Ibzan, Elon, Abdon, and Samson. Eli and Samuel are also counted among the judges, but neither is mentioned in this book.

B. AUTHOR

The Book of Judges is anonymous. It has been ascribed to Phinehas, Samuel, Hezekiah, and Ezra. The book's evidence points to the reign of either Saul or David as the probable date of composition.

C. CHRONOLOGY

The chronology of this period cannot be determined precisely. But the following facts should be helpful:

Reference		Years
3:8	Bondage to Chushan-rishathaim	8
3:11	Judgeship of Othniel	40
3:14	Bondage to Eglon	18
3:30	Peace After Moab Was Subdued	80
4:3	Oppression by Jabin	20
5:31	Peace After Jabin Was Defeated	40
6:1	Servitude to Midian	7
8:28	Judgeship of Gideon	40
9:22	Rule of Abimelech	3
10:2	Judgeship of Tola	23
10:3	Judgeship of Jair	22
10:8	Oppression by the Ammonites	18
12:7	Judgeship of Jephthah	6
12:9	Judgeship of Ibzan	7

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12:11	Judgeship of Elon	10
12:14	Judgeship of Abdon	8
13:1	Bondage to the Philistines	7
12:11	Judgeship of Samson	10
	Total	410

But, this list is incomplete because the Holy Spirit has chosen not to give us a detailed account of the oppressions by the Sidonians [SAI-doh-nee-uhnz], Amalekites [uh-MAL-uh-kyts], and Maonites [MAH-ohn-yts] (10:12) during this period; nor does He record the length of Shamgar's judgeship (3:31). Hence, let not man's faith waver because he cannot harmonize these figures with 11:26; 1 Kings 6:1; and Acts 13:20. "Let God be true, and every man a liar." (Romans 3:4). It is usually explained that since the oppressions and judgeships were local and did not involve all the tribes at one time, there may have been considerable overlapping at the periods referred to.

D. PURPOSE

This book is a sad commentary on the futility of trying to do an abiding work for God in the absence of a strong central organization. Without proper leadership, the result is chaos. This book also lays bare two basic principles in the spiritual world, namely, (1) Sin is the ruin of people and nations, and (2) Genuine repentance is absolutely necessary for salvation. Finally, this book witnesses to the fact that even in an era of deep apostasy [uh-PAA-stuh-see], there are a few (1 Kings 19:18) who cling to their faith and worship the true God (Judges 10:10-16).

E. FEATURES

The theme of Judges is disobedience. Key expressions are: (1) "The children of Israel did evil"; (2) "The anger of the Lord was hot"; (3) "Israel cried unto the Lord"; and (4) "The Lord raised up judges, which delivered them out of the hand of those that despoiled them" (2:11, 14; 3:15; 2:16). Six servitudes and as many deliverances are recorded in detail "for our admonition" (1 Corinthians 10:11). The normal sequence of events is: (1) apostasy, (2) servitude, (3) distress, (4) prayer, (5) deliverance. The key word is repetition. The geometric scheme is a circle. The divine attribute that is accentuated is mercy (James 2:13). The principal lesson is: "Keep yourselves from idols." (1 John 5:21)

Notice how many parallels there are between the period of the judges and the troubled times in which we live. Be sure to read the Bible passages that are given.

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Section 1.2 Introduction to the Book of Ruth

A. TITLE

The title of this book is derived from the name of its principal character, namely, Ruth, a Moabitess [MOH-uh-byt-uhs]. She was the greatgrandmother of King David, but whether she was the daughter of Eglon, king of Moab, is a matter of conjecture.

B. AUTHOR

The Book of Ruth is anonymous. It has been attributed to Samuel, Hezekiah, and Ezra. The only sensible answer is that of Origen (early third century A.D.) concerning the authorship of Hebrews, "God only knows."

C. DATE

Some negative critics have dated this book to the time of the later kings of Israel or even as postexilic [POHST-ek-sil-ik]. However, conservative Bible scholars are not convinced by the so-called "evidence." The events in Ruth transpired two generations before David was born. Just how long afterward the Holy Spirit inspired someone to record them is unknown. However, since David is specifically named, it seems safe to assume that the book was not written until after his birth (see Isaiah 44:28; 45:1). Furthermore, there are certain expressions in Ruth that might connect it with the general period of the Davidic monarchy; for example, "the Lord do so to me, and more also" (see Ruth 1:17 and 1 Samuel 3:17; 14:44; 1 Kings 2:23); "all the city was moved about them" (see Ruth 1:19 and 1 Samuel 4:5; 1 Kings 1:45); and "as it turned out" (see Ruth 2:3 and 1 Samuel 6:9; 20:26). Hence, the present writer suggests the reign of David as the most probable date of composition.

D. HISTORICITY

This book is neither myth nor legend. It is a sober historical narrative. The incidents related here occurred at a specific epoch in time, namely, in the days when the judges ruled (1:1). The language is simple and frank - never apologetic. Each reference to the customs of the period is accurate and factual. During these early days, there was peace between Israel and Moab (1 Samuel 22:3-4), and intermarriage was apparently not forbidden between the descendants of Abraham and Lot (Genesis 19:38). Furthermore, it seems very improbable that a writer of fiction should have "invented" a Moabitess as David's ancestor. It would have been more logical to fill this gap with an Israelite instead of a foreigner, especially if the author lived after the Exile (Ezra 9:2; 10:3). It is also significant that St. Matthew includes the name of Ruth in the genealogy of Jesus (1:5), and St. Luke's inspired list is in agreement (3:32). Therefore, we have every right to believe that Ruth is a historical person, a view which is further confirmed by

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David's friendly relations with the king of Moab (1 Samuel 22:3-4).

E. PURPOSE

This book was written to supply a missing "link" in the ancestry of King David (4:17-2). Thus, it becomes a very important branch of our Lord's genealogical "tree." Since Christ died for the whole world (2 Corinthians 5:15), it is quite proper that some of his ancestors, according to the flesh (Romans 1:3), should have been Gentiles. Ruth also provides us with valuable insights into the better domestic life of this period. It reveals that even back in those days of unrest and anarchy not all nobility and grace had disappeared from Israel. True piety and simplicity of manners never ceased to exist, even in the midst of a coarse age.

F. POSITION

In the modern Hebrew Scriptures, this book is included among the Megilloth [muh-GIL-uh], a subdivision of the "Writings" and is read publicly during the Feast of Weeks (Pentecost) at harvest time; but until about A.D. 450, Ruth was regarded as a continuation of Judges. In the Septuagint [SEP-twuh-gunt], the Vulgate, and in Josephus' list of inspired books, Ruth immediately follows Judges (as in our English versions today). Josephus apparently concluded Judges and Ruth to be one book, and perhaps St. Jerome implies that both were together in the Hebrew canon. How or Why Ruth was finally transferred to the Hagiographa [HAHG-ee-og-ruh-fuh] ("Writings") is unknown.

Although the story of Ruth is well known, there is real value to be found in reading the scripture passages again. The Bible Is a Mine that yields new treasure each time it is read.

Sidonians [SAI-doh-nee-uhnz]
Amalekites [uh-MAL-uh-kyts]
Maonites [MAH-ohn-yts]
apostasy [uh-PAA-stuh-see]
Moabitess [MOH-uh-byt-uhs]
postexilic [POHST-ek-sil-ik]
Megilloth [muh-GIL-uh]
Septuagint [SEP-twuh-gunt]
Hagiographa [HAHG-ee-og-ruh-fuh]

CHAPTER 2. JUDGES

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Section 2.1 The Preface (1:1 - 2:5)

A. Sowing and Reaping (1:1-7)

After the death of Joshua, Judah and Benjamin combined forces and attacked the Canaanites [KAY-nuh-neitz] and Perizzites [PER-iz-ightz] in central Palestine [PAL-us-tien]. In this campaign, they captured a petty "king" named Adoni-bezek [uh-doh-NEE_veh-ZEK] and amputated his thumbs and great toes. This harsh treatment may seem unwarranted, but indeed it was just, for, as Adoni-bezek confessed, he himself had inflicted the same punishment on seventy royal captives who picked up scraps (like dogs) under his table (Galatians 6:7-8). Apparently, Adoni-bezek had some knowledge of the true God because he recognized his chastisement as an act of God's retributive justice. He was taken prisoner to Jerusalem, where he died, perhaps as a result of his severe wounds.

B. Judah's Glorious Past (1:8-10)

This account of the fall of Jerusalem is probably a recapitulation of what had occurred back in the days of Joshua when the Israelites defeated an army from Jerusalem (Joshua 10:9-10) and slew her "king." The sacred penman now gives us additional details and informs us that the brave heroes in that bloody conflict were men from the tribe of Judah. These fierce warriors also distinguished themselves on other battlefields and, among other exploits, killed three giants "with long necks" (see Judges 1:10 with Joshua 15:14, and see Deuteronomy 9:2, where “Anak” means in Hebrew "long-necked").

C. A Brave Hero Rewarded (1:11-15)

Prior to the siege of Debir [deh-VEER], Caleb announced, "I will my daughter Achsah [AKH-sah] in marriage to the man who attacks and captures" it. The soldier who won the "award" was Othniel. Later, when the bride was en route to the home of her husband, she asked her father for a present. Caleb very kindly gave her a well-watered tract of land.

D. Judah's Incomplete Victory (1:16-20)

With God's help, the soldiers of Judah won one victory after another. They even expelled their enemies from the mountains. As long as they served the Lord, they were invincible (Leviticus 26:8), but later, they were unable to conquer the inhabitants of the plain. It is true that the foe withstood them with iron chariots, but this seems to be only part of the story. The whole

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pattern of Judges would indicate that the basic reason for defeat was disobedience to God. Disobedience always brings defeat.

E. The Stubborn Jebusites (1:21)

Joshua had assigned the territory of the Jebusites [JEB-yew-sightz] to Benjamin (Joshua 18:28), but this tribe never totally eradicated their hostile neighbors. In fact, later, when David began to reign, the Jebusites still held the citadel of Zion (2 Samuel 5:6-7).

F. Joseph Takes Bethel (1:22-26)

When the house of Joseph (Ephraim and the half-tribe of Manasseh) besieged the city of Bethel, "the Lord was with them." Fortunately, they captured a native Bethelite, who, in order to save himself, turned traitor and revealed a secret entrance into the mountain stronghold. When Bethel fell, the inhabitants were put to the sword, but this anonymous informer was spared with his entire family (see Joshua 6:25). The man then emigrated northward into “the land of the Hittites” [hi-TYTZ] and founded a city which he called Luz, after the former name of Bethel.

G. Those Obstinate Canaanites (1:27-33)

Manasseh, Ephraim, Zebulun, Asher, and Naphtali failed to drive the Canaanites out of their respective regions. Sometimes, the native population was subjected to forced labor but was never completely expelled as God had commanded (Numbers 33:52). Verse 27 shows dangerous self-confidence.

H. Some Hostile Mountaineers (1:34-36)

The Amorites [AM-uh-rietz] forced the children of Dan to retreat back into the hill country and would not let them set foot on the plain. These warlike Amorites, who usually inhabited the mountains, now insisted on dwelling by themselves in the cities of the plain.

I. A Solemn Message from God (2:1-5)

An angel appeared at Bochim [BOH-kim] and reminded the Israelites that it was God who had delivered them from Egyptian bondage. He also said that because they had been disobedient, the Lord would no longer drive out their enemies from before them. When the angel finished speaking, his audience broke down and wept. Hence, they named the place Bochim ("weepers").

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Section 2.2 Five Judges (2:6 - 8:32)

A. Introductory (2:6 - 3:6)

1. *Epitome of an Era* (2: 6-10)

The fickle Israelites worshipped God as long as Joshua and the elders lived, but when Joshua and his generation were dead, a new generation arose who had never heard about the great things the Lord had done for his people. Most spiritual movements that fail begin their decline in the second generation.

2. *A Perverse Generation* (2:11-15)

The children of Israel turned away from the true God and bowed down before the deities of the surrounding nations. They served both the Baals and the Ashtaroth. Therefore, God's fierce anger was kindled against them, and He permitted marauding parties to plunder them. The Lord even became their Adversary and caused them to be defeated in battle.

3. *The Strange Pattern of History* (2:16 - 3:6)

But, God in mercy raised up "judges" (governors) who saved the Israelites from those who despoiled them. Yet "stranger than fiction" - when the judge died, Israel returned to her idolatry (2 Peter 2:22) and behaved worse than her ancestors. Therefore, the Lord's wrath glowed against his people, and He allowed some of the pagans to share the land with them.

B. Othniel (3:7-11)

Because of Israel's idolatry, God sold them into the hand of Chushan-rishathaim [KUSH-an_ rish-ah-THAY-im], king of Mesopotamia [meh-suh-puh-TAY-mee-uh]. For eight long years, they paid tribute to this foreign master. Finally, they prayed to the Lord, and He raised up a savior who delivered them, namely, Othniel. He led an armed revolt against Chushanrishathaim, and the land enjoyed a rest period of eighty years.

C. Ehud (3:12-30)

1. *Moab Defeats Israel* (3:12-14)

Again, the Israelites did evil in the sight of the Lord, and (as punishment) He strengthened Eglon, king of Moab, against them. Eglon defeated Israel in battle and took possession of the city of palm trees. Thus, the children of Israel were in bondage to the Moabites for eighteen years.

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2. King Eglon Assassinated (3:15-22)

But, when the Israelites cried to the Lord, He sent them a deliverer from the tribe of Benjamin. He was a left-handed man named Ehud. When his countrymen selected him to convey the (annual?) payment to Moab, he made a double-edged dagger (about eighteen inches long) and girded it on his right thigh under his outer garment. Then, he delivered the taxes to Eglon - who, incidentally, was a very fat man. After Ehud had presented the tribute, he dismissed his porters. When he was by the idols near Gilgal, he turned back and said, "I have a confidential message for you, 0 King." Eglon commanded, "Silence!" and all his attendants went out from his presence. Later, as the king sat alone in his cool, secluded roof chamber, Ehud declared, "I have a message for you from the gods." Eglon (being an idolater) stood up respectfully. Ehud then drew his concealed weapon and quickly stabbed the king. He thrust the "sword" with such force that even the hilt disappeared into Eglon's huge belly. Ehud lost his grip on the slippery, blood-stained handle and was unable to jerk the dagger out of his victim. So, he hurried out into the porch, shut the doors of the roof chamber behind him, and locked them.

3. A Startling Discovery (3:24-25)

After Ehud had disappeared, the king's servants returned. When they noticed that the doors were locked, they commented, "He is relieving himself in private" (see 1 Samuel 24:3). They waited until they were ashamed, and yet he did not open the doors. Finally, they took a key and unlocked them - and, behold, their master lay dead on the floor!

4. Ten Thousand Moabites Slain (3:26-30)

While the royal servants tarried, Ehud escaped. When he arrived in the hill country of Ephraim, he blew a trumpet, and the Israelites rallied to him. They took the fords of Jordan and slew about ten thousand of the enemy. Thus, Moab was subdued, and the land rested for eighty years.

D. Shamgar (3:31)

Israel's third judge was Shamgar. This mighty man seized an ox goad and slaughtered six hundred Philistines. With this unimpressive weapon (and God!), he saved his nation from disaster.

E. Deborah (4:1-5:31)

1. Israel Oppressed by Canaanites (4:1-3)

After Ehud died, the Israelites again began worshipping false gods. This time, the Lord delivered them into the hands of Jabin, king of the Canaanites at Hazor, the general of whose army was Sisera [SIS-uh-ruh]. The Canaanites had 900 chariots, and they cruelly oppressed Israel for 20

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years. Therefore, the children of Israel turned to the Lord for help.

2. *Barak Musters Troops* (4:4-10)

Deborah, a prophetess, was judging Israel at that time. She sat under a palm tree, and the people presented their cases to her for judgment. Deborah sent and called Barak [BUH-rak] from Naphtali. "I have a message for you from the God of Israel," she said. "Take an army of ten thousand men and attack Sisera on the bank of the Kishon [KAI-shon]. The Lord will give you victory." Barak was willing on condition that Deborah accompany him on the expedition. Deborah consented but warned that Barak would not receive any credit for what was accomplished. "God is going to sell Sisera into the hand of a woman," she predicted.

3. *An Independent Kenite* (4:11)

Now Heber the Kenite had parted company with the descendants of Hobab [HOB-ahb], the brother-in-law of Moses. In fact, he moved near Kedesh.

4. *Sisera's Army Is Annihilated* (4:12-16)

When Sisera learned that Barak had gone up to Mount Tabor, he called out his troops to the Kishon. Barak led his soldiers down the slope of Tabor, and the Lord routed the enemy before them. The Canaanite army was annihilated, but Sisera himself escaped on foot.

5. *A Brawny Heroine* (4:17-24)

When Jael (Heber's wife) saw Sisera running away that day, she invited him to hide in her tent. He slipped inside, and she covered him with a carpet. Then, she gave him a drink of fresh milk, and Sisera fell into a deep sleep. But, it was the sleep of death (Psalm 13:3) because Jael crept stealthily to his side and drove a tent pin through his head. Thus, a mighty warrior died because he had a false sense of security (1 Thessalonians 5:3).

6. *Deborah's War Ballad* (5:1-31)

Read chapter 5 with care. Note the divisions in "The Song of Deborah":

a. The Lord Goes forth to War (5:1-5)
b. The Lord Is Forsaken by the Israelites (5:6-11)
c. The Lord's People - Patriotic and Unpatriotic (5:12-18)
d. The Lord Fights for Israel (5:19-23)
e. The Lord's Sacred Moral Code (5:24-27)
f. The Lord's Miserable Enemies (5:28-31)

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F. Gideon (6:1 - 8:32)

1. *Israel Ravaged by Midian* (6:1-6)

Again, the Israelites turned aside from the pathway of right, and this time, the Lord allowed Midian [MID-ee-uhn] to chastise them for seven years. The hand of these foreigners became so oppressive that the terror-stricken Hebrews fled to the mountains and lived in caves. They planted crops, but every year at harvest time, foraging parties would sweep through the land like a band of locusts. Thus, Israel was impoverished, and (as usual) they implored the Lord for aid.

2. *God Sends a Prophet* (6:7-10)

When the sons of Israel prayed, the Lord sent a prophet. He reminded them of God's mercies in the past and declared that all their trouble was the result of sin.

3. *The Lord Commissions Gideon* (6:11-18)

One day as Gideon was secretly beating out wheat, an angel appeared under the oak tree at Ophrah [OHF-rah]. The angel surprised Gideon by asserting, "The Lord is with you." "If the Lord is with us," Gideon replied, "why has all this happened to us?" That same day, the Lord commissioned Gideon to deliver Israel from the Midianites [mid-ee-uh-NYTS]. Gideon succeeded because he went in the confidence of a divine call (6:14).

4. *Gideon's Offering* (6:19-24)

Gideon prepared an offering for his divine visitor and placed it upon a rock. The angel touched the sacrifice with his staff, and fire sprang from the rock, which consumed the offering. Then, the heavenly messenger vanished, and Gideon feared that he would die because he had talked face-to-face with the angel of the Lord (see Genesis 32:30; Exodus 33:20).

5. *Gideon Cuts Down an Asherah* (6:25-27)

That night, the Lord commanded Gideon, "Pull down your father's altar to Baal and cut down the Asherah [or grove] which stands beside it. Then, build an altar to the Lord and offer your father's young bullock as a burnt offering." Gideon took ten servants and carried out the divine order under cover of darkness. The "groves" or Asherah were sacred poles or trees connected with the worship of the idol gods Baal and Ashtoreth.

6. *Joash Defends Gideon* (6:28-32)

Early the next morning, the townspeople were shocked when they saw their hallowed place of worship destroyed. They said to Joash, "Bring out your son. He must die." Joash replied, "If Baal is really a god, he can defend himself." So, Gideon was surnamed Jerubbaal [jer-UHB-ba-al]

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("let Baal plead").

7. Gideon Recruits an Army (6:33-35)

The Midianites and their allies amassed troops and crossed over Jordan; the Spirit of the Lord took possession of Gideon, and he mobilized an army.

8. Gideon Tests His Call (6:36-40)

Gideon's faith faltered, and he asked the Lord to reassure him with a sign. "Tonight, I will lay a fleece of wool on the threshing floor", he said. "If the fleece is wet tomorrow morning, and the ground all around is dry, then I will know that you are going to deliver Israel by my hand," God answered his prayer, for when Gideon arose early the next day, the ground was dry, but he squeezed a bowlful of water from the fleece. Then, to double-check, he prayed that the fleece might be dry and the ground wet the next morning, and the Lord rewarded his childlike faith by performing this miracle also.

9. Gideon Screens His Troops (7:1-3)

Gideon led forth his great army of 32,000 men and encamped by the spring Harod. God said, "You have too many troops. If I give victory to so many, they will take the credit themselves. Allow all the fainthearted to return home." Gideon made the proclamation, and 22,000 draftees took a permanent leave of absence.

10. The Faithful Remnant (7:4-8)

The Lord said, "You still have too many soldiers. Lead them down to the water." Gideon obeyed, and God commanded, "Now separate them into two groups: those who lap like dogs and those who kneel down to drink." Gideon did so - but there were only 300 who lapped, putting their hands to their mouths. Then, the Lord promised, "By these 300, I will save Israel from the Midianites." Still today, spiritual battles are won by the faithful few rather than by the careless crowds.

11. The Mighty Cake of Barley Bread (7:9-14)

That night, Gideon took Phurah, his servant, and together they slipped down to the camp of Midian. One guard was telling a dream to his comrade. "I saw a cake of barley bread," he said. "It tumbled into our camp, struck a tent, and knocked it flat!" His startled companion replied, "This means that we are going to be defeated by Gideon."

12. Gideon Instructs His 300 (7:15-18)

After Gideon overheard the conversation of those two soldiers, he was encouraged. He returned to his own camp and divided the Israelites into three companies. To each man, he

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handed an empty water jar with a burning torch concealed inside. "Watch me," he commanded, "and do exactly as I do. When we blow our trumpets, you do the same and give a great shout."

13. The Overthrow of Midian (7:19-23)

Gideon and his little band arrived at the outskirts of the enemy camp at the beginning of the middle watch. They blew their trumpets and smashed the pitchers that were in their hands. The other two companies did likewise. Then they all shouted, "The sword of the Lord and of Gideon." The astonished Midianites were panic-stricken. Perhaps they thought the blazing torches represented an advance guard leading thousands of troops. They cried out and fled in terror, killing each other as they ran.

14. Two Midianite Commanders Slain (7:24-25)

Gideon dispatched messengers throughout all the hill country of Ephraim for assistance. The loyal Ephraimites rallied to him and even captured the two princes of Midian (Oreb and Zeeb). They slew both of them and brought their heads to Gideon from beyond the Jordan.

15. The Jealousy of Ephraim (8:1-3)

"Why did you insult us by not asking for our help in the beginning?" the men of Ephraim demanded. Gideon replied, "What have I done in comparison to you? God has delivered Oreb and Zeeb into your hands, which is far greater than anything I have done." When the volunteers from Ephraim heard this their anger was abated (Proverbs 15:1).

16. Some Skeptical Officials (8:4-9)

Gideon and his 300 crossed over Jordan, "faint, yet pursuing." At Succoth, he appealed to the officials for food, but they apparently feared retribution from the powerful kings of Midian and refused him. Gideon warned that he would return later and punish them for their disloyalty. Then he requested charity from the men of Penuel, but they also refused.

17. Gideon Captures Two Kings (8:10-12)

Zeba and Zalmunna were in Karkor with about fifteen thousand troops - all that remained of their huge army. Gideon approached by the caravan route and attacked. Zeba and Zalmunna both fled, but Gideon captured them.

18. Gideon Keeps His Word (8:13-17)

When Gideon returned from battle, he went to Succoth and exhibited Zeba and Zalmunna to the officials who had previously taunted him. Then, he took the thorns of the wilderness and taught them a bitter lesson. He also went back to Penuel, broke down the wall, and slew the male population.

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19. Gideon Executes Zeba and Zalmunna (8:18-21)

"What kind of men were they whom you massacred at Tabor?" Gideon asked Zeba and Zalmunna. "All of them were just like you," they boasted. "My brothers!" Gideon exclaimed. "If you had spared them, I would spare you." Then, he commanded Jether, his oldest son, to slay them, but Jether was but a lad and did not unsheathe his sword. So, Gideon executed them himself (see Deuteronomy 19:12-13).

20. The Golden Ephod (8:22-28)

The men of Israel invited Gideon to be their king, but Gideon declined, saying, "The Lord shall rule over you. But," he added, "I would appreciate the earrings of your plunder."

So, they spread a garment, and each soldier willingly cast in his gold, the weight of which was almost forty-two and one-half pounds. They also contributed neck chains from the camels and other prizes. Gideon took this spoil and made a very lavish ephod, apparently as a trophy of war, but this harmless memento became a snare to Gideon and his family. In fact, the whole nation began to venerate it. We must always avoid betraying the future by worshipping the past.

21. The Death of Gideon (8:29-32)

After Midian was subjugated, Gideon went and lived in his own house. He had numerous wives and begat seventy sons. He died at a ripe old age and was buried in his father's grave.

Section 2.3 Abimelech's Conspiracy (8:33 - 9:57)

A. Israel Plays the Harlot (8:33-35)

As soon as Gideon was dead, the children of Israel turned again to false gods. How soon they forgot the Lord, who had rescued them from enemies on every side! Nor were they kind to Gideon's family.

B. Abimelech Is Anointed King (9:1-6)

Abimelech, one of Gideon's sons (see 6:32 and 8:31), went to Shechem and visited his mother's relatives. "Ask the citizens of Shechem," he suggested, "whether it would not be more satisfactory if I reigned over you (now that my father is dead) instead of my seventy half-brothers. Remember, I am your bone and your flesh." His mother's family conferred with the men of Shechem. They decided that Abimelech was right and even gave him money to finance his "political campaign." So, Abimelech went to Ophrah and slew all his brothers upon one stone, that is, all except Jotham, the youngest, for Jotham had hidden himself. Then, the people

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of Shechem and Bethmille anointed Abimelech king.

C. Jotham's Fable (9:7-21)

When the news reached Jotham he climbed Mount Gerizim and made a speech to the Shechemites [SHEKH-em-eitz] below. "Once upon a time," he shouted, "the trees decided to anoint a king over them. First, they invited the olive tree to be their sovereign, but the olive tree declined the nomination. Then, they asked the fig tree, and next the vine, but each refused. Finally, in desperation, they approached the bramble. The perplexed bramble replied, 'If you are sincere, take refuge in my shade; if not, let fire come out of me and devour the cedars of Lebanon.' Now, 0 men of Shechem," Jotham continued, "if you acted in good faith when you anointed Abimelech, then rejoice in what you have done; but if not, let fire come out from Abimelech and devour you." Then Jotham ran away.

D. The Treacherous Shechemites (9:22-25)

Abimelech ruled over Israel for three years, but God stirred up trouble between him and the residents of Shechem (in order that both might be punished for their sins). The men of Shechem tried to assassinate their king, but the plot failed.

E. The Boastful Gaal (9:26-29)

Gaal moved into Shechem with his kinsmen, and the people of Shechem placed their confidence in him. They made wine, held a hilarious festival in their heathen temple, and cursed Abimelech. "Who is Abimelech," Gaal boasted, "that the citizens of Shechem should serve him? Would that I were the master here! How soon I would get rid of Abimelech!"

F. Zebul's Secret Message (9:30-33)

When Zebul, the "mayor" of Shechem, heard Gaal vilifying Abimelech he became angry and secretly sent messengers to Abimelech. "Gaal is implanting hostility against you in the hearts of the Shechemites," the couriers reported. "Therefore, come by night and lie in the open fields just outside the walls; attack at sunrise and do as occasion offers."

G. Gaal Flees Before Abimelech (9:34-41)

Abimelech came with his troops and ambushed Shechem with four companies. The next morning, as Gaal was standing at the gate, Abimelech and his men rose up from hiding and began marching on the city. Gaal observed them approaching, but when he reported it to

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Zebul he was told, "You see the shadows of the mountains as if they were men." Again, Gaal remarked, "Look! People are descending from the highest part of the land. One group is coming by way of the Soothsayer's Oak." This time Zebul replied, "Where now is your boasting, with which you reviled Abimelech? Go out and fight." Gaal went out, but many of his warriors fell down wounded, and the rest were chased back into the walled city.

H. Shechem Destroyed (9:42-45)

The next day, the men of Shechem ventured forth boldly into the fields (to work?), and Abimelech heard about it. He divided his army into three companies and waited just beyond the walls. When they came out (again?) Abimelech and his troops rushed forward and blocked the entrance to the gate while his other soldiers slew the laborers in the fields. Then he turned and attacked Shechem, but the stubborn defenders did not capitulate until the end of the day. Abimelech slaughtered the inhabitants, beat down the city until it was even with the ground, and then sowed it with salt.

I. Death at Berith's Temple (9:46-49)

The people at the tower of Shechem heard the terrible news and fled for sanctuary to the stronghold of Berith's temple. Abimelech learned of their desperate plight and led his army to Mount Zalmon. He cut down a bough from a tree, laid it upon his shoulder, and commanded his men to do likewise. Then, they all carried their branches to the stronghold, piled them against it, and set it on fire. Thus, the fort was burned, and about one thousand men and women perished in the flames.

J. Abimelech's Disgraceful End (9:50-57)

Next, Abimelech besieged Thebez and took it, but all the citizens took refuge within a strong tower. Abimelech approached the fortress and attempted to burn down the door, but a certain woman (on the roof) dropped an upper millstone, which struck Abimelech and crushed his skull. Abimelech was so mortified that he called hastily to his armor-bearer, "Draw your sword and kill me! I don't want people to say that I was slain by a woman." So, the young man thrust him through, and he died. When Abimelech's troops saw their captain lying dead, they discontinued the siege and went home. Thus, God repaid Abimelech for murdering his seventy brothers and caused the wickedness of the men of Shechem to fall back upon their own heads.

Note the many examples through Judges where evil deeds bring their own disastrous results.

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Section 2.4 Seven Additional Judges (10:1 - 16:31)

A. Tola (10:1-2)

After Abimelech's death, God used Tola to save Israel. He was of the tribe of Issachar, born near the Sea of Galilee, but he lived in the hill country of Ephraim. He judged Israel for twenty-three years. Then, he died and was buried at Shamir.

B. Jair (10:3-5)

Next arose Jair, who judged Israel for twenty-two years. He had thirty sons who rode on thirty male donkeys. Moreover, his sons possessed thirty towns in the land of Gilead. When Jair died, he was buried in Kaman.

C. Jephthah (10:6 - 12:7)

1. *Israel Backslides Again* (10:6-9)

Again, Israel forsook the Lord and served the gods of the surrounding nations. Therefore, God was angry with his people and allowed the Philistines and the Ammonites to vex them; for eighteen years, the Israelites were crushed in Gilead.

2. *Israel Finally Repents* (10:10-16)

The Israelites prayed, "We have sinned, 0 Lord, because we have turned from You to the Baals." God answered, "I delivered you repeatedly from your enemies; yet you have left Me to serve other gods. Therefore, I will not help you anymore. Let those deities which you have chosen save you in the hour of your distress." The people answered, "We have sinned. Let your will be done; only deliver us today." This time their repentance was genuine because they renounced their idolatry, and the Lord looked upon them with compassion.

3. *Some Perplexed Officials* (10:17-18)

Then, the Ammonites were drafted and pitched their tents in Gilead. The Israelites assembled and encamped in Mizpah. But, the leaders of Gilead were in a dilemma because they had no adept general for this emergency. "Where can we find a man to lead an attack against the Ammonites?" they inquired. "He shall be governor over all Gilead."

4. *A Fugitive in the Land of Tob* (11:1-3)

Jephthah was a mighty warrior, but his mother was a harlot. Jephthah's father also begat sons by his lawful wife, but when they were grown, they compelled their half-brother to leave home.

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"You shall have no share in the family inheritance," they warned, "because you are the son of a strange woman." So, Jephthah fled from the faces of his brothers and dwelt in the land of Tob.

5. *Jephthah Comes Home* (11:4-11)

Later, when the Ammonites invaded Israel (10:17), the elders of Gilead hurried to the land of Tob. "Come and be our leader so we can defend ourselves," they pleaded with Jephthah. "Did you not hate me," he said, "and banish me from my father's house? Why do you turn to me now that you are in trouble?" They answered, "We realize that we treated you unfairly, and this is why we have come - so we might show our confidence in you (by making you our commander)." Jephthah declared, "If I am to return to fight for you, and the Lord gives me victory, you must make me your ruler!" These were harsh terms, but the delegation from Gilead accepted.

6. *Jephthah's Logic* (11:12-28)

Jephthah sent messengers to the king of Ammon asking, "What do you have against me, that you have invaded my country?" The Ammonite king replied, "Because Israel seized my territory at the time of the Exodus. Therefore, restore those lands peacefully!" Jephthah sent a second message: "This is not true! The Lord dispossessed the Amorites before Israel, and do you expect to annex this territory? The Israelites have dwelt in some of these towns for three hundred years; why didn't you recover this land during that time? I have not sinned against you, but you are doing wrong by declaring an unjust war against me." However, the stubborn king of Ammon did not heed Jephthah's message.

7. *Jephthah's Rash Vow* (11:29-33)

Then the Spirit of the Lord came upon Jephthah, and he marched out to meet the children of Ammon. "If You will indeed enable me to defeat the Ammonites," Jephthah vowed to the Lord, "when I return home in peace, whatever or whoever first comes forth from the doors of my house shall be the Lord's, and I will offer it (him) up for a burnt offering." So, Jephthah crossed over Jordan to fight the Ammonites, and God delivered them into his hand.

8. *Jephthah's Daughter* (11:34-40)

Then Jephthah went to his home at Mizpah, and tragically, his only daughter came out to greet him with timbrels and dances (see 1 Samuel 18:6-7). Jephthah was aghast, especially since he had no other children. He rent his clothes and exclaimed, "Alas, my daughter, you cause me great pain; for I have made a solemn vow to the Lord and I cannot take it back." "My father," she replied, "you have opened your mouth to the Lord, be sure to keep your word. Do unto me as you have promised [see Luke 1:38], now that God has avenged you on your enemies." Then she added, "Grant me this one favor: give me two months that I and my friends may go to the mountains and bewail my virginity." Jephthah consented and sent her away for two months, but when she returned, he did with her as he had vowed; that is, he probably offered her up as a human sacrifice to the Lord (although some would interpret the incident as meaning a ritual,

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by which she was "dedicated" to the Lord, such as a Catholic nun today).

9. Death for Mispronouncing One Word (12:1-7)

After Jephthah's great victory, the inhabitants of Ephraim were filled with jealousy. They called their men to arms, crossed the Jordan, and asked Jephthah, "Why didn't you ask us to help fight the Ammonites? Now we are going to burn your house over you with fire!" Jephthah answered, "When I called, you did not respond; so I took my life in my hand. I attacked the Ammonites and the Lord delivered them into my power. Now why do you wish to start a fight?" In the battle which followed, the men of Ephraim were defeated. Moreover, Jephthah's soldiers took the fords of Jordan, and whenever one of the fleeing Ephraimites tried to cross, the guards would ask, "Are you an Ephraimite?" If he denied, they would test him by demanding that he pronounce the word "shibboleth" ("an ear of corn"). Invariably he would say "sibboleth," because he could not pronounce the word properly. Then, he was seized and executed - in fact, 42,000 were slain at this time. Jephthah judged Israel for six years.

D. Ibzan (12:8-10)

Next, Ibzan from Bethlehem judged Israel. He had thirty sons, for whom he brought in thirty wives from outside his clan; in exchange, he sent thirty of his own daughters abroad. He ruled for seven years and was buried at Bethlehem.

E. Elon (12:11-12)

After Ibzan's death, Elon judged Israel for ten years. When Elon died he was buried at Aijalon in the land of Zebulun (Galilee).

F. Abdon (12:13-15)

Then, Abdon judged Israel for eight years. He had forty sons and thirty grandsons who rode on seventy young donkeys. When he died he was buried in the territory of Ephraim, in the hill country of the Amalekites.

G. Samson (13:1 - 16:31)

1. The Apostasy of Israel (13:1)

Again, the sons of Israel forsook the Lord their God, and this time, He delivered them into the hands of the warlike Philistines.

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2. *The Angel's Visit* (13:2-7)

There was a certain man from the tribe of Dan by the name of Manoah, whose wife was barren. One day, an angel appeared to her and said, "Behold, you have no children, but you shall conceive and bear a son. Therefore, be careful, and do not drink wine or strong drink, and do not eat anything unclean. This child will be a Nazarite to God from birth, and no razor shall touch his head; he will begin to save Israel from the Philistines." The woman went in and reported the strange incident to her husband.

3. *An "Expectant" Father* (13:8-14)

Manoah pleaded with the Lord, saying, "Please send back that man of God so he may instruct us how to care for the boy after he is born." In reply to his prayer the heavenly messenger reappeared to Manoah's wife as she sat in the field, but Manoah was absent. She ran quickly and said to her husband, "He's here! The man who appeared to me the other day!" (13:10) Manoah arose and followed her, and when he came to the stranger, he asked, "Are you the man, who spoke to this woman?" "I am," replied the visitor. Then Manoah inquired, "What sort of child will this be? And what will his occupation be?" The angel answered, "Let the woman do exactly as I commanded her."

4. *Manoah's Offering* (13:15-20)

Manoah did not realize that he was speaking to an angel of the Lord, and so he said, "If you can remain just a few minutes, we will prepare a kid goat for you." The angel replied, "Though you detain me, I will not eat your food, but if you prepare a burnt offering, present it to the Lord." "What is your name," Manoah asked, "so we may honor you when your words come true?" The angel answered, "Why do you want to know my name, seeing it is beyond understanding?" Then, Manoah took a kid goat with his bloodless sacrifice and offered it upon a rock to the Lord. When the flame rose up toward heaven, the angel ascended in the flame, and Manoah and his wife prostrated themselves on the ground (in awe and reverence).

5. *The Birth of Samson* (13:21-25)

The angel never returned, and by this token, Manoah knew he was an angel of the Lord. "We shall surely die," he lamented, "because we have seen God!" But, his sensible wife observed, "If the Lord had meant to kill us, He would not have accepted these offerings from us, nor would He have made known to us all these things." Later, the woman gave birth to a son and called his name Samson. The boy grew, and God blessed him. Moreover, the Spirit of the Lord began to move upon him in the camp of Dan.

6. *A Very Foolish Young Man* (14:1-4)

Samson went down to Timnah and fell in love with a Philistine girl. When he returned home, he shocked his pious parents (see Genesis 26:34-35; 27:46) by announcing, "I met a young lady at

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Timnah that I would like to marry." Then, he added, "now get her for me as my wife." His parents protested, "Isn't there a suitable girl among our own people? Why take a wife from among the heathen?" But Samson was insistent. "Get her for me," he demanded, "because she pleases my eyes." His parents were distressed; they did not realize that the Lord would salvage good from this unfortunate situation.

7. A Sweet Lion (14:5-9)

Samson went down to Timnah with his parents, and when he was by Timnah's vineyards, a young lion roared against him. Samson seized it and (with his bare hands) tore it apart as one would tear a kid goat, but he did not mention the incident to his father or mother. At the girl's house, he discussed the betrothal and was quite satisfied with his choice. About a year later (probably), he returned to claim his bride. On the way, he passed the place where he had met the lion and turned aside to see the carcass. He was surprised to find that bees had swarmed in the dead body and made honey. He scraped out the honey into his hands and walked on, eating as he went. When he rejoined his parents, he shared the delicacy with them but failed to explain where he had obtained it.

8. Samson's Riddle (14:10-14)

When Samson was married, he followed the custom of the day and made a great feast. Thirty Philistine men were invited. Samson challenged them, saying, "I have a riddle! If you can guess it before the end of this celebration I will give each of you a linen undergarment and a suit; but if you fail I shall expect every one of you to give me a linen undergarment and a suit." They answered, "We accept your wager; let us hear the riddle." Samson replied, "Out of the eater came forth food; and out of the strong came forth sweetness." At the end of three days they were still trying to solve it.

9. Samson's Deceitful Bride (14:15-20)

Finally, on the seventh day the guests were so frantic they threatened the bride. "Either find out the answer to that riddle," they warned, "or we will burn you and your whole family with fire!" So, she continued to weep before Samson and whined, "If you truly loved me, you would at least tell me the answer to your riddle.". Samson replied, "I haven't even told my parents, and shall I tell you?" But, at last (as she pressed him), he divulged the secret. She, in turn, told the guests, and before the sun could go down on the last day of the feast, they surprised Samson by asking, "What is sweeter than honey? What is stronger than a lion?" Samson retorted, "If ye had not taken liberties with my wife you would not have discovered the solution." Then the Spirit of the Lord came mightily upon Samson. He went out and killed thirty Philistine men, took their spoil, and gave their changes of clothing to his opponents. He was so angry that he returned to his father's house. In the meantime, Samson's bride was given to his friend - the one who had been "best man" (see John 3:29) at the wedding.

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10. Three Hundred Hot Foxes (15:1-8)

By the time of the wheat harvest, Samson's wrath had subsided. He took a kid goat as a "peace offering" and went to visit his wife, but when he tried to enter the bedroom, her father interposed apologetically. "I didn't realize that you still loved her," he explained. "I thought certainly you detested her, so I gave her to your friend." Then, he added, "Isn't her younger sister more beautiful than she is? Why not marry her?" Samson declared, "This time, I shall be blameless before the Philistines when I inflict injury upon them." He caught 300 foxes, turned them tail to tail, and put a torch between each pair of tails. Then, he set fire to the torches and released the foxes in the standing grain of the Philistines. Thus, he burned up the shocks, the standing grain, and even the olive orchards. When the agitated Philistines learned the whole truth, they retaliated by burning Samson's wife and father-in-law with fire. Samson was so enraged that he swore to avenge himself. He attacked the Philistines viciously, killing many of them, and thereafter went to live in a cave at Etam.

11. A 3,000-Man Posse (15:9-13)

The Philistines came up and raided Lehi. When the alarmed Judeans asked for a reason, the Philistines replied, "We want to bind Samson and punish him for his crimes against us." Three thousand men of Judah went down to the rock where Samson stayed and tried to reason with him. After they had solemnly promised not to kill him, Samson surrendered. They bound him with two new ropes and brought him up from the rock.

12. A Unique Weapon (15:14-20)

When Samson arrived (as a captive) at Lehi, the Philistines came shouting to meet him. The Spirit of the Lord took possession of Samson. The ropes on his arms became like flax when it is burned in fire, and the restraints melted from his hands. He picked up a fresh jawbone of a donkey, and (with this as his only weapon) he slaughtered 1,000 of the enemy (see 2 Samuel 23:11-12). He remarked, "With a donkey's jawbone ... I have killed a thousand men." After the conflict Samson was so thirsty that he prayed for a drink. God broke open the hollow place at Lehi, and water flowed forth. The Lord's brave warrior drank; his spirit returned, and he revived (see 1 Samuel 30:12). Therefore, the place was called En Hakkore [en-HAK-er-eh], which means "the caller's spring."

13. Samson Escapes from Gaza (16:1-3)

At Gaza, Samson visited a harlot, and thus, his presence became known to the Philistines. When the men of the city learned that their public enemy had appeared, they surrounded the place; all night, they quietly lay in wait at the city gate. "We will kill him at dawn," they whispered. But, at midnight, Samson arose, grasped the doors of the gate (and the two posts), and pulled them up - bar and all! Then he hoisted them upon his powerful shoulders and carried them about twenty miles.

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14. Samson Is Bound with Bowstrings (16:4-9)

Afterward, Samson had a mistress named Delilah in the valley of Sorek. The lords of the Philistines heard about it and made Delilah a very attractive offer. "Entice him," they urged, "and learn why he is so strong. If you find out how we can overpower him, each one of us will pay you 1,100 pieces of silver." So, Delilah said to her husky lover, "Please tell me wherein your great strength lies and how you might be bound and subdued." Samson replied, "If they bind me with seven fresh bowstrings which have not been dried, then I shall become weak like any other man." The Philistine lords supplied the moist bowstrings, and Delilah bound him while men lay waiting in an inner chamber. Then, she announced, "The Philistines are upon you, Samson!" But, he snapped the bowstrings like thread when it touches fire! Thus, the secret of his strength was not known.

15. Samson Is Bound with Ropes (16:10-12)

"You have mocked me," complained Delilah, "and told me lies. Please tell me how you might be bound." "If they bind me with new ropes which have not been used," Samson answered, "then I shall become weak like other men." So, Delilah bound him with new ropes and said, "The Philistines are upon you, Samson!" But, he broke the ropes from off his arms like a thread, and again, the men concealed in Dehlah's house were disappointed.

16. Human Hair Woven in a Loom (16:13-14)

Delilah was indignant, "Until now, you have only mocked me and lied to me!" she stormed. "Tell me how you might be bound." Samson replied, "If you weave the seven braids of my hair into the fabric on the loom and tighten it with a pin, I'll become as weak as any other man." (16:13) So, while he slept, Delilah wove his long hair into the fabric and fastened it with the pin. Then, she said, "The Philistines are upon you, Samson!" But, he awoke from his sleep and wrecked the loom.

17. Samson Reveals His Secret (16:15-17)

"How can you say that you love me," Delilah sighed, "when your heart is not with me? Three times you have deceived me and refused to tell me your secret." As she urged him daily and nagged him, his soul was finally worn out by her insistence, and he told her all he knew. He confessed, "A razor has never touched my head because I have been consecrated to God as a Nazarite from my mother's womb. If my head were shaved, my strength would depart from me and I would be like any other man."

18. Samson Is Betrayed (16:18-22)

When Delilah saw that he was sincere, she sent a message to the lords of the Philistines. "Come up once more," she begged, "because he has told me everything." They came and brought the money in their hands. Delilah cauesd Samson to fall asleep upon her lap. Then, she had a man

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hands. Delilah caused Samson to fall asleep upon her lap. Then, she had a man shave off the seven locks of his head. Thus, she began to humble him, and his superhuman strength left him. When she awakened him with the familiar words, "The Philistines are upon you, Samson!" he opened his eyes and boasted, "I will go out as usual and shake off my bonds." But, he did not know that the Lord had departed from him. The Philistines grabbed him, gouged out his eyes, and bound him with chains of brass, and he was put to work grinding grain with a hand mill in the prison. Sin is always "blinding, binding, and grinding". But, the hair on his head began to grow again.

19. Samson Entertains the Philistines (16:23-27)

The lords of the Philistines assembled to offer a great sacrifice to Dagon, their god, and to rejoice. "Our god has subdued the destroyer of our country," they said. When everyone was in a cheerful mood, they requested, "Let Samson be brought so we may laugh repeatedly." Samson was called from the prison, and he entertained them. Finally, they made him stand between the two pillars on which the building rested. The house was packed with people. All the Philistine tyrants were present, and in addition, there were about three thousand men and women on the roof watching the "show."

20. Samson Sacrifices Himself (16:28-31)

Samson prayed, "0 Lord, remember me, I pray ... please strengthen me just once more, and let me with one blow revenge on the Philistines for my two eyes." (16:28) He grasped the middle pillars, one with each hand, and leaned his weight upon them. "Let me die with the Philistines!" he murmured. Then, he pushed with all his might, and the huge building collapsed upon the multitude within. Thus, he killed more Philistines at his death than he had killed during his entire lifetime. Later, Samson's family came for his body, and they buried him between Zorah and Eshtaol in the grave of Manoah, his father. He had judged Israel for twenty years.

Section 2.5 An Appendix (17:1-21: 25)

A. The Danites Expand (17:1-18:31)

1. Micah's Private Shrine (17:1-6)

There was a man of the hill country of Ephraim named Micah (not the same, of course, as the later prophet Micah). One day, he confessed to his mother, "Those 1,100 pieces of silver which were stolen from you, and about which you uttered a curse, are in my possession. In fact," he added, "I am the one who stole them." His grateful mother exclaimed, "The LORD bless you, my son [and praise be to the Lord!]" (17:2) Then, Micah restored the money to his mother, and she said, "I solemnly consecrate this silver to the LORD for my son to make a carved image and a cast idol. I will give it back to you." (17:3) His mother gave 200 pieces of her treasure to the silversmith, who fashioned a molten image (perhaps of some object in the Tabernacle) and

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an idol, and it was kept in Micah's house. Micah now proceeded to set up a shrine. He made an ephod (a garment used in Hebrew worship) and small household idols (teraphim) and installed one of his own sons as a priest. In those days, there was no king in Israel to instruct the people. Each man did what he thought was right (21:25) - a sure road to ruin for any nation.

2. *Micah Hires a Levite* (17:7-13)

There was a young Levite by the name of Jonathan who had been living in Bethlehem in the tribe of Judah but had recently left his native town in search of employment. As he traveled north he came to Micah's home in the hill country of Ephraim. "Where are you from?" Micah inquired. "From Bethlehem in the land of Judah," the youth answered. "I came here looking for work." "Why do you not stay here?" Micah suggested. "Be a father and a priest to me. I will give you ten pieces of silver annually, a complete suit of clothes laid out in order, and your food." So, the Levite went in. He consented to dwell there and became like one of the family. Micah consecrated the Levite, and he became Micah's private chaplain. "Now I know the Lord will prosper me," remarked Micah, "because I have a Levite as my priest."

3. *Five Unexpected Visitors* (18:1-6)

In this period, just before the establishment of the Israelitish kingdom, the tribe of Dan (to which Samson belonged) was seeking more territory, for the Danites had not yet received all of their inheritance (Joshua 19:40-48). Hence, they sent out five valiant men to spy on the land and explore it. When these scouts came to the hill country of Ephraim, they lodged at Micah's house. How surprised they were to recognize the voice of the young Levite! "What are you doing up here so far from home?" they asked. The youth explained that Micah had hired him as a priest. "Ask God whether our journey will be successful," they requested. "Go in peace," the Levite replied after consulting the Lord at Micah's shrine; "the Lord approves your venture."

4. *The Report of the Spies from Dan* (18:7-10)

The spies departed and, continuing their northward journey, came eventually to Laish, a town near Mount Hermon, north of the Sea of Galilee. They observed how the local people lived: quiet and secure, without even a magistrate to enforce any laws. Furthermore, they were isolated and had no dealings with other communities. The scouting party returned and said, "Let's go up immediately and attack them, for we have seen the land, and it is very fertile. The people are unsuspecting, and the land is spacious. It is a place where there is an abundance of everything."

5. *The Danite Army* (18:11-13)

An army of 600 Danites set forth, armed with weapons of war. They went up into the territory of Judah and encamped in Kirjath jearim [KIR-ee-ath_JEE-ah-rim]. Then, they passed on to the hill country of Ephraim and came to the home of Micah.

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6. Micah's Shrine Is Plundered (18:14-20)

The 5 spies confided to their colleagues, "Do you realize that there are an ephod, teraphim, and a molten image with its covering in the house over there? Now therefore consider what you should do." They turned aside and saluted Micah, and while the 600 armed men stood at the entrance of the gate with the Levite, the 5 scouts went in and carried out Micah's treasures. When the priest protested, they replied, "Silence! Put your hand over your mouth and come with us. Isn't it better to be a priest of a whole tribe instead of just one family?" The young man agreed and joyfully accepted the promotion.

7. The Marauders Escape (18:21-26)

The roving party of Danites departed - with the cattle, the children, and the precious things up in front. After they had gone quite a distance they were overtaken by Micah and his neighbors. When the pursuing company shouted, the bandits turned around and called to Micah, "What's wrong with you? Why are you gathered together?" Micah replied, "You steal the gods I made and my priest. How can you ask what's the matter with you?" The Danites answered, "Stop arguing with us, or some hot-tempered men will attack you, and you and your family will lose your lives." (18:25) Then, the raiders went on their way, and Micah turned sadly homeward, for he saw they were too strong for him.

8. The Danites Take Laish (18:27-31)

The Danite army pushed on to Laish. They put the defenseless inhabitants to the sword and burned the city with fire. Then, they rebuilt Laish and named it Dan in honor of their forefather. They erected the graven image for their own devotions, and Jonathan and his descendants were priests to this tribe until the Captivity several hundred years later.

B. The Benjamites Are Almost Annihilated (19:1 - 21:25)

1. An Unfaithful Concubine (19:1-9)

In these days, when there was no king in Israel, there was a certain Levite living in the remote parts of the hill country of Ephraim. He had acquired a concubine from Bethlehem in Judah, but she soon deserted him and returned to her father's house in Bethlehem, where she remained for four months. At the end of this time, the Levite went to visit her, intending to speak kindly to her and, if possible, to bring her back. He took with him his servant and a pair of donkeys. When he found her, she brought him to her home, and her father rejoiced to meet his "son-in-law." He was so hospitably received that he willingly remained there for three days, enjoying the atmosphere of a well-to-do household.

On the morning of the fourth day, the visitor arose early, intending to start home, but his father-in-law suggested that he remain a little longer. "Strengthen your heart with a morsel of

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bread before you go," he said. After they had eaten and drunk together, his father-in-law said, "Kindly accept my invitation to stay all night, and let your heart be merry." The man stood up to go, but his gracious host urged him, and he remained for that night also. Finally, on the fifth day, the Levite arose early to depart, but the girl's father pleaded, "Refresh yourself. Wait till afternoon!" Once more, they ate together. When at last the man arose to leave, his father-in-law said, "Now look, it's almost evening. Spend the night here; the day is nearly over. Stay and enjoy yourself. Early tomorrow morning, you can get up and be on your way home." (19:9)

2. *The Sun Goes Down at Gibeah* (19:10-15)

But, this time, the visitor was determined; he rose up, took his servant and his concubine, and departed. By the time they reached Jebus (Jerusalem), it was late afternoon, and the servant suggested that they find lodging there. But, the cautious Levite refused to stay overnight in a foreign city (for Jerusalem was still in the hands of their enemies), and so they passed on toward Gibeah and Ramah. The sun went down as they were near Gibeah in Benjamin, and they turned aside and went in. Apparently, their reception was "cool" because nobody invited them home, so the Levite sat down in the street with his concubine and his servant beside him.

3. *A Friend Indeed* (19:16-21)

That evening an elderly man, coming from his work in the field, noticed the forlorn travelers in the marketplace. He was not a Benjamite but an Ephraimite who had made his home in the Benjamite city of Gibeah. "Where are you going?" he asked. "And where are you from?" "I have been over at Bethlehem in Judah," the Levite explained, "but my home is in Ephraim. Just now, I am on my way to the house of the Lord in Shiloh. We have enough fodder for the animals and bread and wine for ourselves, but there is no one to receive us into his house." "Don't worry about anything," the old man said. "I will care for all your needs; only do not spend the night in the street." He took the wayfarers to his home, and after giving fodder to the animals, washed the feet of his guests; and they all ate and drank together (see Genesis 18:1-8; 24:31-32).

4. *A Terrible Crime Is Committed* (19:22-26)

As they were enjoying themselves that night, some wicked citizens of Gibeah ("sons of Belial"; good-for-nothing fellows) surrounded the dwelling, pounding on the door. They called to the owner of the house, "Bring out the man who came in to lodge with you, that we may take him with us, to do with him as we please." The old man went outside and argued with them. "Please," he implored, "do not act so wickedly. This man is my guest. I will bring out my virgin daughter and even my guest's concubine. You may take them with you; only do not treat this visitor in such a vile manner." But, his depraved neighbors continued their loud demands. So, the Levite pushed his concubine out the door and slammed it shut. The fellows then went off with her and kept her all night. As the day began to dawn, they let her go, and she returned to the house where her master was and fell down at the door (Hosea 9:9).

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5. *Twelve Pieces of Human Flesh* (19:27-30)

Later that same morning, the Levite arose to continue his journey, but when he opened the doors, he found his concubine lying there with her hands upon the threshold. "Get Up!" he commanded. "Let's go." But, the girl did not answer, for she was dead. So, he picked her up, loaded her on the animal which his servant was riding, and went on his way. When he arrived at his own house in a remote part of Ephraim, he took a knife, carved her body, limb by limb, into twelve pieces, and sent a piece to each of the twelve tribes in Israel. Everyone who knew what had happened was shocked and said, "Such a crime has never been committed in Israel since the days of the Exodus. Therefore, consider, take counsel, and speak your mind."

6. *Justice Cries Aloud* (20:1-11)

Then all the other eleven tribes of Israelites, from Dan to Beersheba, were gathered together unto the Lord at Mizpeh. All the chiefs of the tribes presented themselves in the assembly (20:2) of the people of God. There were in all 400,000 soldiers in their company. The husband of the murdered woman testified. He charged the culprits from Benjamin with lewdness and violence and asked counsel from his fellow tribesmen. When he finished speaking, the congregation of Israel "voted" unanimously to avenge this crime immediately. They said, "We will appoint one-tenth of our number to fetch provisions; and the rest of us will go up against Gibeah, choosing by lot those who shall have a part in the attack." Thus, all the men of Israel, except, of course, the Benjamites, were assembled against the city, united as one man.

7. *Benjamin Musters an Army* (20:12-16)

Messengers were sent throughout the entire tribe of Benjamin saying, "Now surrender those wicked men of Gibeah so we may put them to death." (20:13). But, the stubborn Benjamites, instead of heeding the ultimatum, mustered an army of 26,000 swordsmen, plus 700 choice young warriors from Gibeah. Among these troops were 700 picked men who were left-handed. Every one of them could sling a stone at a hair and not miss.

8. *The Israelites Are Routed* (20:17-23)

The leaders of the 11 tribes went up to Bethel and inquired of God, "Which tribe shall attack first?" The Lord replied, "Judah". In the morning, the men of Judah drew up the line of battle against Gibeah, and the Benjamites came out and killed 22,000 of them. The Israelites took courage and re-formed their battle line in the same place as before. Afterward, they wept before the Lord and asked, "Should we again assault our brethren, the Benjamites?" The Lord answered, "Go up against them."

9. *Israel Is Smitten Again* (20:24-28)

On the second day, Israel advanced against Gibeah again. This time, the Benjamites rallied forth and slew 18,000 men who drew sword. The entire besieging army withdrew to Bethel

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where they fasted, wept, and presented offerings to the Lord. Moreover, they inquired, "Shall we, or shall we not, attack our brother Benjamin again?" God answered, "Yes, for tomorrow I will give you victory."

10. Gibeah Is Ambushed (20:29-48)

The Israelite army was apparently divided into three companies. One was sent secretly to Baal-tamar, a second was sent to ambush Gibeah, and a third was sent to form the line of battle in plain view before Gibeah, as previously. Once again, the Benjamites rushed out and began to strike down the men of Israel. About thirty were slain on the highways and in the fields, and the rest ran away. The naive Benjamites supposed their enemies were routed as before and gave chase. But, the crafty Israelites gave ground for only one reason, namely, that they might draw the foe away from their stronghold. When this had been accomplished, the troops at Baal-tamar formed their battle line, and the ambush in the meadow rose up and burned the besieged city.

When the fleeing Israelites looked back and saw the great column of smoke ascending from Gibeah, they turned around and attacked their pursuers. The Benjamites realized too late that they had been tricked. They turned and fled toward the wilderness, but the fierce battle overtook them, and 18,000 of their number were slain. Moreover, 5,000 fugitives were cut down on the highways, and 2,000 more were killed as they ran toward Gidom in the wilderness. Thus, 25,000 Benjamites fell in battle that day; all of them were valiant men who were accustomed to fighting in the armies of Israel. But, 600 escaped to the cliff Rimmon. The Israelites also ravaged the territory of Benjamin. They burned the cities and slaughtered all the animals, together with every man, woman, and child.

11. Matrimony or Death (21:1-15)

The victorious Israelites came to Bethel and wept before the Lord; too late, they realized they had carried their revenge too far. They had ruthlessly wiped out all but 600 men and had solemnly sworn at Mizpeh not to allow their daughters to marry Benjamites. "Why, 0 Lord," they prayed, "has one tribe been cut off from Israel?" The next day, they built an altar and sacrificed to the Lord. "Who was absent," they enquired, "when we all took the oath at Mizpeh?" An investigation revealed that no one from Jabesh-gilead had been present. So, they sent an army of 12,000 men against Jabesh. These troops took the city and massacred all the inhabitants - with the exception of 400 young virgins. Then, the Israelites sent a message of peace to the 600 Benjamites in the rock Rimmon. The fugitives returned and received the 400 captives as brides. But there were only 400 girls and 600 eligible males!

12. Two Hundred Girls Kidnapped (21:16-25)

"Where shall we find wives for the rest of these men?" the elders of the congregation lamented. "We want each to have a family, and thus perpetuate the tribe of Benjamin; but we dare not give them our daughters lest we fall under the curse." Fortunately, they remembered that at

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Shiloh, there was an annual feast for the Lord. So, they counseled the remaining refugees to go to Shiloh. "Hide in the vineyards on the eastern side of the highway, and watch." (21:20). When the daughters of Shiloh came to dance, each of the refugees was to dash out, catch a wife, and disappear into the land of Benjamin. Later, when their fathers (or brothers) came in great numbers, the elders would say, "Do us kindness by helping them … you are innocent." (21:22) They did not give these girls to the Benjamites – the Benjamites took them. The 200 desperate men went to Shiloh, and when the unsuspecting maidens came out to dance, every refugee hastily captured for himself a bride. Then, they escaped to their homeland, rebuilt the waste cities, and dwelt in them. In those chaotic times, there was no king in Israel; every man did what he considered to be right.

Canaanites [KAY-nuh-neitz]
Perizzites [PER-iz-ightz]
Palestine [PAL-us-tien]
Adoni-bezek [uh-doh-NEE_veh-ZEK]
Debir [deh-VEER]
Achsah [AKH-sah]
Jebusites [JEB-yew-sightz]
Hittites [hi-TYTZ]
Amorites [AM-uh-rietz]
Bochim [BOH-kim]
Chushan-rishathaim [KUSH-an_rish-ah-THAY-im]
Mesopotamia [meh-suh-puh-TAY-mee-uh]
Sisera [SIS-uh-ruh]
Barak [BUH-rak]
Kishon [KAI-shon]
Hobab [HOB-ahb]
Midian [MID-ee-uhn]
Ophrah [OHF-rah]
Midianites [mid-ee-uh-NYTS]
Jerubbaal [jer-UHB-ba-al]
Shechemites [SHEKH-em-eitz]
En Hakkore [en-HAK-er-eh]
Kirjath jearim [KIR-ee-ath_JEE-ah-rim]

CHAPTER 3. RUTH

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Section 3.1 Tragedy Strikes a Hebrew Family (1:1-22)

A. A Lonely Widow (1:1-5)

In the days when the judges ruled, there was a man named Elimelech of Bethlehem Judah. His wife was Naomi, and their two sons were Mahlon and Chilion. They were Ephrathites [EH-fra-thyts] (belonging to one of the older families of Bethlehem), but on account of a famine in Palestine, they migrated to the land of Moab and lived there. Elimelech died, and each of the sons took a Moabite [MOH-uh-byt] bride. Chilion married Orpah, and Mahlon wed Ruth. They lived in Moab for about ten years. Then Mahlon and Chilion both died, and Naomi was left alone with her two daughters-in-law.

B. A Difficult Decision (1:6-14)

One day, Naomi heard that the Lord had given food to his people, Israel, so she arose and started for home, accompanied by Orpah and Ruth. As they walked along together, Naomi said, "Why don't you girls turn around now and each go back to your mother's house? May the LORD show kindness to you as you have shown to me. May the LORD grant that each of you will find rest in the home of another husband." (1:10) Then, Naomi kissed them, and they all wept, but both girls still insisted on going with her. "Return home, my daughters," Naomi pleaded, "why would you come with me? Am I going to have more sons, who could become your husbands? … If I had a husband tonight and then gave birth to sons, would you wait until they grew up? … It is more bitter for me than for you, because the LORD's hand has gone out against me!" 1:11-13). Then, Orpah kissed her mother-in-law and returned, but Ruth clung to her.

C. Ruth's Devotion (1:15-18)

"See," Naomi observed, "Orpah has returned to her people and her religion. Why don't you go back with her?" But Ruth replied, "Please do not ask me to leave. Wherever you go, I will go. Where you lodge, I will lodge. Your people shall be my people, and your God my God. Where you die, I will die, and there will I be buried. May the Lord do so to me (and more also) if even death separates me from you." When Naomi saw that Ruth was determined to go along, she said no more. Ruth's choice was more than the expression of human sentiment. It was a religious choice - to worship and serve the true God.

D. Two Strangers at Bethlehem (1:19-22)

So, they walked on until they came to Bethlehem. When they arrived at the beginning of the

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barley harvest, the whole village was stirred. "Is this Naomi?" the women asked. "Don't call me Naomi," she begged. "Call me Mara ('bitter,' 'sad') because the Almighty has dealt very bitterly with me. I went away full, but the Lord has brought me back empty. God has testified against me, and the Almighty has afflicted me."

Section 3.2 Ruth Gleans after the Reapers (2:1-23)

A. Ruth Meets Boaz (2:1-7)

Ruth said to Naomi, "Let me go out to the fields where they are gathering the harvest. Surely someone will permit me to glean (see Deuteronomy 24:19-21) among the ears of grain." Naomi consented, and Ruth gleaned after the reapers. Providentially, she wandered to a portion of the open field that belonged to Boaz, a very wealthy person in her father-in-law's family. While she was there that day, Boaz himself came from Bethlehem and greeted his workers, saying, "The Lord be with you." "The Lord bless you," they responded. Boaz noticed Ruth and inquired, "Who is this?" The servant replied, "The Moabite maiden who returned with Naomi. She asked permission to glean among the sheaves and has been here ever since morning - except for the little while that she remained in the house."

B. Boaz Converses with Ruth (2:8-13)

"Listen, my daughter," Boaz advised Ruth, "do not glean in any other field. Stay right here, close to my maidens. I have charged the young men not to touch you. When you get thirsty, go to the vessels and have a cool drink." Ruth bowed herself to the ground. "Why have I found favor in your eyes, seeing I am a foreigner?" she asked. Boaz replied, "I have heard all about your kindness to Naomi since the death of your husband and how you left your own parents and your native land and have come to dwell among strangers. May the Lord reward you fully since you have come to take refuge under his wings." Ruth answered, "You have comforted me and spoken to my heart, even though I am not like your maidservants."

C. Ruth Eats with Boaz (2:14-16)

At mealtime, Boaz called to Ruth, "Come here, eat some bread, and dip your piece into the wine vinegar." She sat beside the reapers, and Boaz passed her the parched grain. Ruth ate all she wanted and had some left over. When she rose up to work, Boaz instructed his young men, "Let her glean even among the sheaves and do not shame her. Pull out some from the bundles and drop it for her to pick up, and do not rebuke her."

D. A Blood Relative (2:17-23)

Ruth gleaned until evening. When she beat out what she had found, it was almost an ephah

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(about a bushel) of barley. She carried it into the village and showed it to her mother-in-law. She also gave Naomi the food she had saved from her lunch. "Where did you glean today?" Noami asked. "Blessed be the man who took notice of you." Ruth replied, "Today, I worked with someone named Boaz." Naomi exclaimed, "May he be blessed of the Lord, whose kindness has not forsaken the living and the dead. This man is a blood relative, one of our nearest kinsmen!" Ruth added, "He also said that I should stay close to his servants until the end of harvest." Naomi observed, "It is well that you toil with his maidens, for fear that (in another field) the men might molest you." Ruth gleaned on the farm of Boaz until the end of both wheat and barley harvests, and she lived with her mother-in-law.

Section 3.3 Ruth's Strange Request (3:1-18)

A. Naomi Advises Ruth (3:1-5)

"My daughter," Naomi said to Ruth, "shall I not seek a home for you, that it may be well with you? Is not Boaz our relative? Behold, tonight he is winnowing barley at the threshing floor. Therefore, bathe, put on your best clothes, and visit him; do not let him know who you are until he has finished eating and drinking. When he retires, note the spot carefully, then slip over, uncover his feet, and lie down. He will tell you what to do next." "I will do as you say," Ruth promised.

B. Boaz Takes an Oath (3:6-13)

Ruth went down to the threshing floor that night, and when Boaz had eaten and drunk, and his heart was merry, he lay down at the end of the heap of grain. Then, Ruth came softly, uncovered his feet, and lay down also. At midnight, Boaz was startled. He turned over and saw a woman lying at his feet! "Who are you?" he demanded. "I am Ruth, your maidservant," she replied. "Spread your skirt over me, for you are next of kin." Boaz said, "May the Lord bless you, my daughter. Your last kindness to me is greater than the first. You are not interested in young men, whether rich or poor. Now, don't be anxious. I will grant your request, for all the assembly of my people know that you are a woman of ability. It is true that I am a near relative, yet I am not really the nearest. Stay here tonight. In the morning we will see whether the next of kin is willing to perform his duty; and if not, as the Lord lives, I will do it myself. Lie down until morning."

C. Ruth Returns with a Gift (3:14-18)

Ruth lay at his feet until morning but rose up before it was light enough to be recognized. Boaz did not want anyone to know that a woman had been at the threshing floor. Before she left, he said, "Bring the cloak that you are wearing and hold it out." Ruth obeyed, and he gave her six measures of barley.

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He laid it upon her shoulder, and she went into the village. When Naomi saw her, she asked, "Well, what happened?" Ruth told her everything and added, "He even gave me all this grain because he did not want me to return to you empty-handed." Naomi commented, "Wait, my daughter, until you find out what happens. For the man will not rest until the matter is settled today."

Section 3.3 Boaz Redeems Elimelech's Inheritance (4:1-22)

A. The Goel Changes his Mind (4:1-6)

Boaz went up to the village gate and sat down, and Ruth's next of kin came by. Boaz invited him to sit down and then asked ten elders of the town to do likewise. Thus, a court was convened, and Boaz presented his case. He said to Goel, the next of kin, "Naomi, our relative who has recently returned from Moab, is selling the field which formerly belonged to Elimelech, our deceased brother. I thought I would let you know and give you the opportunity to buy it (Leviticus 25:25) here in the presence of these witnesses. But, if you are unwilling to redeem it, please tell me because there is nobody else who can do it. You are the only one, and I am next in line." The kinsman replied, "Certainly I will redeem it." "Of course," Boaz slyly added, "when you buy this field from Naomi, you are also buying yourself a widow, namely, Ruth the Moabitess." When the kinsman heard that, he was astonished and said, "I don't see how I can possibly do it. You buy the field."

B. A Wedding at Bethlehem (4:7-12)

In former times, there was a peculiar custom in Israel concerning redeeming and exchanging. In order to confirm a transaction, one person would take off his sandal and hand it to the other. Thus, the matter was attested. So, when the next of kin gave Boaz permission to buy the field, he also reached down and drew off his sandal. Boaz then addressed the assembled elders and townspeople as follows: "You are witnesses today that I have purchased the inheritance of Elimelech from Naomi, and that I have also bought the widow of Mahlon to be my wife, in order to perpetuate the name of the dead." The assembly responded, "We are witnesses. May the Lord make Ruth to be like Rachel and Leah, who built up the house of Israel. May you prosper and become famous in Bethlehem, because of the children which the Lord will give you by this young woman."

C. The Birth of Obed (4:13-17)

Boaz took Ruth, and she became his wife. Moreover, God granted her conception, and she gave birth to a son. "Blessed be the Lord," the women said to Naomi, "who has not left you without a kinsman to redeem you. May this child become famous in Israel. He shall be a restorer of life to you and a nourisher of your old age, because your affectionate daughterin-law - who is more to you than seven sons - has borne him. "Naomi laid the child in her bosom and became his nurse.

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The women in the neighborhood called the baby Obed and said, "A son has been born to Naomi!" Obed was the father of Jesse and the grandfather of David.

D. The Genealogy of King David (4:18-22)

This is the family history of Perez, the ancestor of King David: Perez was the father of Hezron, and Hezron was the father of Ram, and Ram was the father of Aminadab, and Aminadab was the father of Nahshon, and Nahshon was the father of Salmon, and Salmon was the father of Boaz, and Boaz was the father of Obed, and Obed was the father of Jesse, and Jesse was the father of David the king.

Ephrathites [EH-fra-thyts]
Moabite [MOH-uh-byt]

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Judges and Ruth Study Questions

Chapter 1: Introduction to Judges and Ruth

1. Although the author of the Book of Judges is anonymous, it has been ascribed to:
   A. Phinehas
   B. Samuel
   C. Hezekiah
   D. all of these

2. What is true of the Book of Judges?
   A. Judges is a historical book of the Old Testament, appearing in the section of the Hebrew Scriptures known as "the Former Prophets."
   B. The "judges" were rulers in Israel from the death of Joshua until the time of King Saul.
   C. The “judges” were extraordinary people whom the Lord raised up to deliver Israel from oppression
   D. all of these

3. What is not true of the Book of Judges?
   A. The “judges” were not judges in the modern sense.
   B. The “judges” were military chieftains with absolute administrative powers.
   C. The “judges were "elected" to office by popular vote.
   D. all of these

4. Since the oppressions and judgeships were local and did not involve all the tribes at one time, there may have been considerable overlapping in the periods referred to.
   A. True
   B. False

5. The Book of Judges is a sad commentary on the futility of trying to do an abiding work for God in the absence of a strong central organization.
   A. True
   B. False

6. The Book of Judges witnesses to the fact that even in an era of deep apostasy, there are a few who cling to their faith and worship the true God.
   A. True
   B. False

7. The theme of Judges is “complete obedience.”
   A. True
   B. False

NOTES

8. What is true of the title of the Book of Ruth?
   A. It is derived from the name of the mother-in-law of its principal character.
   B. It is derived from the name of the mother-in-law of its principal character.
   C. It is derived from the name of its principal character.
   D. It is derived from the name of the daughter of its principal character.

9. What is not true about the dating of the Book of Ruth?
   A. The events in Ruth transpired two generations before King David was born.
   B. There are certain expressions in Ruth that might connect it with the general period of the Davidic monarchy.
   C. It was probably written during the time of Joshua.
   D. During the reign of David is the most probable date of its composition.

10. What is not true about the historicity of the Book of Ruth?
   A. This book is neither myth nor legend.
   B. This book is a sober historical narrative.
   C. The incidents related in the Book of Ruth occurred at an unspecified epoch in time.
   D. Each reference to the customs of the period is accurate and factual.

11. What is true about the purpose of the Book of Ruth?
   A. It was written to supply a missing "link" in the ancestry of king David.
   B. It is a very important branch of our Lord's genealogical "tree."
   C. It provides us with valuable insights into the better domestic life of this period.
   D. all of these

12. What is true about the position of the Book of Ruth?
   A. In the modern Hebrew Scriptures, this book is included among the Megilloth, a subdivision of the "Writings."
   B. Until about A.D. 450, Ruth was regarded as a continuation of Judges.
   C. How or why Ruth was finally transferred to the Hagiographa "Writings" is unknown.
   D. all of these

Chapter 2. Judges

Section 2.1 The Preface (1:1 - 2:5)

13. How many "judges" appear in the Book of Judges?
   A. 10
   B. 11
   C. 12
   D. 13

NOTES

14. Two additional judges, not mentioned in the Book of Judges, include Eli and Samuel.
    A. True
    B. False

15. After the death of Joshua, Judah and Benjamin combined forces and attacked the Canaanites and Perizzites.
    A. True
    B. False

16. Prior to the siege of Debir, Caleb announced, "I will give my daughter Rachel in marriage to the man who attacks and captures it."
    A. True
    B. False

17. Joshua had assigned the territory of the Jebusites to Ephraim (Joshua 18:28), but this tribe never totally eradicated their hostile neighbors.
    A. True
    B. False

Section 2.2 Five Judges (2:6 -8:32)

18. The Israelites worshipped God as long as Joshua and the elders lived.
    A. True
    B. False

19. Who delivered Israel from the hand of Chushan-rishathaim?
    A. Ehud
    B. Shamgar
    C. Othniel
    D. Eglaon

20. Who was the judge who assassinated King Eglon and delivered the Israelites from the Moabites?
    A. Eglaon
    B. Shamgar
    C. Ehud
    D. Jael

21. Who was the third judge of Israel?
    A. Othniel
    B. Eglaon
    C. Shamgar
    D. Ehud

NOTES

22. Who was the prophetess judging Israel during the oppression by the Canaanites in chapter 4?
    A. Miriam
    B. Esther
    C. Deborah
    D. Jael

23. What is true of the death of Sisera?
    A. He was fleeing from the battle with Barak.
    B. He had a false sense of security.
    C. He had a false sense of security.
    D. all of these

24. What is true of Deborah's war ballad?
    A. The Lord Goes forth to War.
    B. The Lord Is Forsaken by the Israelites.
    C. The Lord's People - Patriotic and Unpatriotic
    D. all of these

25. What is not true of Deborah's war ballad?
    A. The Lord Fights for Israel.
    B. The Lord's Sacred Moral Code
    C. The Lord's Best Friends
    D. The Lord's Miserable Enemies

26. What is true of the calling of Gideon to be Israel's judge?
    A. The Israelites had turned aside from the pathway of right, and the Lord allowed Midian to chastise them for seven years.
    B. An angel surprised Gideon by asserting, "The Lord is with you."
    C. Gideon succeeded because he went in the confidence of a divine call.
    D. all of these

27. Which tribe was jealous of Gideon's success?
    A. Judah
    B. Benjamin
    C. Ephraim
    D. Dan

28. Who did Gideon say should rule Israel?
    A. Sisera
    B. Jerubbabaal
    C. the Lord
    D. Joshua

NOTES

Section 2.3 Abimelech's Conspiracy (8:33 - 9:57)

29. As soon as Gideon died, the children of Israel turned again to false gods.
    A. True
    B. False

30. Abimelech killed all the sons of Gideon except Jotham.
    A. True
    B. False

31. Abimelech made a speech about the trees selecting the bramble bush as their king.
    A. True
    B. False

32. When Gaal defied Abimelech, he was betrayed by Jotham.
    A. True
    B. False

33. Abimelech ruled over Israel for three years, but God stirred up trouble between him and the residents of Bethlehem.
    A. True
    B. False

34. Abimelech slaughtered the inhabitants of Shechem, beat down the city until it was even with the ground, and then sowed it with salt.
    A. True
    B. False

35. Zebul's skull was crushed by a millstone dropped from a tower by a woman.
    A. True
    B. False

Section 2.4 Seven Additional Judges (10:1 - 16:31)

36. What is true of Tola as judge of Israel?
    A. After Abimelech's death, God used Tola to save Israel.
    B. He was of the tribe of Issachar.
    C. He judged Israel for twenty-three years.
    D. all of these

NOTES

37. What is true of Jair as judge of Israel?
    A. He judged Israel for twenty-two years.
    B. He had thirty sons who rode on thirty male donkeys.
    C. His sons possessed thirty towns in the land of Gilead.
    D. all of these

38. What is true of Jephthah as judge of Israel?
    A. What is true of Jephthah as judge of Israel?
    B. The elders of Gilead urged him to be their leader and defend them.
    C. He agreed to fight Gilead's battles if they would make him their ruler when God gave him victory.
    D. all of these

39. What is not true of Jephthah's rash vow?
    A. He vowed, "When I return home in peace, whatever or whoever first comes forth from the doors of my house shall be the Lord's."
    B. When he successfully returned from the war, his only daughter came out to greet him with timbrels and dances.
    C. His daughter was immediately made a human sacrifice.
    D. He was aghast, especially since he had no other children.

40. What is true about those Ephraimites who said "sibboleth" instead of "shibboleth" during their war with Jephthah?
    A. They were unable to say the phrase that means "an ear of corn" properly.
    B. They were lying about not being Ephraimites.
    C. They were executed by Jephthah's soldiers.
    D. They were welcomed into Jephthah's camp.

41. How many years was Jephthah a judge of Israel?
    A. 4
    B. 5
    C. 6
    D. 7

42. What is true of Ibzan as judge of Israel?
    A. He was from Bethlehem.
    B. He had thirty sons, for whom he brought in thirty wives from outside his clan.
    C. He ruled for seven years.
    D. all of these

43. After Ibzan's death, Elon judged Israel for _____ years.
    A. 5
    B. 10
    C. 15
    D. 20

NOTES

44. What is true of Abdon as judge of Israel?
    A. He judged Israel for eight years.
    B. He had forty sons and thirty grandsons who rode on seventy young donkeys.
    C. When he died, he was buried in the territory of Ephraim.
    D. all of these

45. After Abdon's death, the sons of Israel forsook the Lord their God, and this time He delivered them into the hand of the warlike Philistines.
    A. True
    B. False

46. What is true Manoah?
    A. He was from the tribe of Dan.
    B. His wife was barren.
    C. He was promised a son who would be a Nazarite from birth.
    D. all of these

47. What is not true of the child born to Manoah and his wife?
    A. He was called Samson.
    B. He grew, and God blessed him.
    C. The Spirit of the Lord began to move upon him in the camp of Dan.
    D. He married a young lady from Jerusalem.

48. Samson once seized a lion and (with his bare hands) tore it apart as one would tear a kid goat.
    A. True
    B. False

49. When Samson was married, he followed the custom of the day and made a great feast.
    A. True
    B. False

50. Who betrayed Samson by telling others the answer to his riddle?
    A. his father
    B. his mother
    C. his bride
    D. his brother

51. How did Samson obtain the clothes for those who answered his riddle?
    A. His father purchased them.
    B. His father-in-law purchased them.
    C. He took them off 30 dead Philistines.
    D. He purchased them in the market place.

NOTES

52. Who betrayed Samson to the Philistines?
    A. his father
    B. his father-in-law
    C. Delilah
    D. Manoah

53. What is true about Samson's demise?
    A. He revealed the secret of his strength.
    B. The Lord had departed from him.
    C. He was bound and forced to grind grain in prison.
    D. all of these

54. What is true about Samson's death?
    A. God restored Samson's strength long enough to bring down a building full of his enemies.
    B. He killed more Philistines at his death than he had killed during his entire lifetime.
    C. He was buried between Zorah and Eshtaol in the grave of Manoah, his father.
    D. all of these

Section 2.5 An Appendix (17:1 - 21:25)

55. Micah stole 1,100 pieces of silver from his mother.
    A. True
    B. False

56. Jonathan was the priest hired by Micah.
    A. True
    B. False

57. The Ephraimites made Jonathan priest of their tribe.
    A. True
    B. False

58. What is not true of the war between Benjamin and the other tribes of Israel?
    A. The Benjamites married foreign women.
    B. Some Benjamites murdered a Levite's concubine.
    C. The Benjamites refused to punish those who attacked a Levite.
    D. The Benjamites gathered an army of more than 26,000.

59. What is true of the war between Benjamin and the other tribes of Israel?
    A. The Benjamites killed about 40,000 Israelite soldiers.
    B. The Israelite soldiers killed all but 600 Benjamites.
    C. The Israelites mourned that they nearly annihilated the Benjamites.
    D. all of these

NOTES

60. What is true of the tribes of Israel's help for the surviving Benjamites?
    A. They gave 400 wives from Jabesh-gilead to the surviving Benjamites.
    B. They allowed 200 wives to be captured from Shiloh.
    C. They allowed the surviving Benjamites to rebuild their cities.
    D. all of these

Chapter 3. RUTH

Section 3.1 Tragedy Strikes a Hebrew Family (1:1-22)

61. What is true about the writing of the Book of Ruth?
    A. The author is anonymous.
    B. It was probably written during the reign of King David.
    C. It is neither myth nor legend.
    D. all of these

62. The Book of Ruth supplies a missing link in the ancestry of King David.
    A. True
    B. False

63. Who was Naomi's husband?
    A. Boaz
    B. Mahlon
    C. Elimelech
    D. Chilion

64. Who was Ruth's first husband?
    A. Mahlon
    B. Elimelech
    C. Chilion
    D. Obed

65. Which daughter-in-law did not return to Bethlehem with Naomi?
    A. Orpah
    B. Ruth
    C. Rebecca
    D. Miriam

66. What does the word "mara" refer to about Naomi?
    A. bitterness
    B. happiness
    C. joy
    D. pleasure

NOTES

67. Whose field did Ruth glean in?
    A. Elimelech's
    B. Boaz's
    C. Naomi's
    D. Chilion's

68. Boaz was a distant kinsman to Naomi.
    A. True
    B. False

69. Naomi encouraged Ruth to visit Boaz at the threshing floor.
    A. True
    B. False

70. Ruth was probably pregnant before she married Boaz.
    A. True
    B. False

71. Goel was Ruth's first desire for remarriage.
    A. True
    B. False

72. When Boaz purchased Naomi's field, he also "purchased" Ruth.
    A. True
    B. False

73. Why did Goel remove his sandal during his talk with Boaz?
    A. His foot ached.
    B. He was confirming the transaction with Boaz.
    C. He planned to stay for a long meeting.
    D. He felt at home in the meeting.

74. What was the name of Ruth and Boaz's first child?
    A. Daniel
    B. David
    C. Obed
    D. Jesse

75. Who was the grandfather of King David?
    A. Jesse
    B. Boaz
    C. Mahlon
    D. Obed

NOTES

Methods of Study

Have you enjoyed this study of the Book of Joshua? Do you wish to study further? If so, here are a few more suggestions.

1. Compare the authorship of the Book of Judges to the authorship of the other historical writings of the Old Testament.

2. Compare the relationship of the Book of Judges to the other historical writings of the Old Testament.

3. Compare the authorship of the Book of Ruth to the authorship of the other historical writings of the Old Testament.

4. Compare the relationship of the Book of Ruth to the other historical writings of the Old Testament.

5. Compare Joshua's leadership of Israel to that of some of the judges of Israel.

6. Compare Boaz's redemption of Ruth/ Naomi to that of Jesus Christ.

Allow God, our Leader, to even more fully guide your life as you study the Books of 1 and 2 Chronicles!

Pronunciation Guide

NOTES

Achsah [AKH-sah]
Adoni-bezek [uh-doh-NEE_veh-ZEK]
Amalekites [uh-MAL-uh-kyts]
Amorites [AM-uh-rietz]
apostasy [uh-PAA-stuh-see]
Barak [BUH-rak]
Bochim [BOH-kim]
Canaanites [KAY-nuh-neitz]
Chushan-rishathaim [KUSH-an_rish-ah-THAY-im]
Debir [deh-VEER]
En Hakkore [en-HAK-er-eh]
Ephrathites [EH-fra-thyts]
Hagiographa [HAHG-ee-og-ruh-fuh]
Hittites [hi-TYTZ]
Hobab [HOB-ahb]
Jebusites [JEB-yew-sightz]
Jerubbaal [jer-UHB-ba-al]
Kirjath jearim [KIR-ee-ath_JEE-ah-rim]
Kishon [KAI-shon]
Maonites [MAH-ohn-yts]
Megilloth [muh-GIL-uh]
Mesopotamia [meh-suh-puh-TAY-mee-uh]
Midian [MID-ee-uhn]
Midianites [mid-ee-uh-NYTS]
Moabite [MOH-uh-byt]
Moabitess [MOH-uh-byt-uhs]
Ophrah [OHF-rah]
Palestine [PAL-us-tien]
Perizzites [PER-iz-ightz]
postexilic [POHST-ek-sil-ik]
Septuagint [SEP-twuh-gunt]
Shechemites [SHEKH-em-eitz]
Sidonians [SAI-doh-nee-uhnz]
Sisera [SIS-uh-ruh]