



Judges

A 5-WEEK INDUCTIVE STUDY

SCRIPTURE PATHS BIBLE STUDIES

By Lisa Hughes

Judges

Lesson #1, Chapters 1-5

After the death of Joshua Israel entered into a new phase of history which continued until Saul was crowned king of Israel. During this time period, which lasted about 350 years, God raised up judges from among the people who were often needed to lead the people to deliverance when they were oppressed by their enemies. The book of Judges doesn't reveal who its author was, but Jewish tradition attributes it to Samuel.

Chapters 1-5

1. Read Chapters 1-5. After reading each chapter, briefly summarize the details of the chapter below. Please be aware that the events of some of the chapters are not strictly chronological, but shift back and forth between the time of the judges and Joshua's time. Next, in 1-2 sentences write out the theme of the chapter. Remember, a theme is just summing up the main point or the big idea of the chapter. Then, look for a verse in that chapter that best reflects the theme of the chapter. Finally, create a 3-5 word title for the chapter.
 - a. Chapter 1 summary, theme, key verse, and title.
 - b. Chapter 2 summary, theme, key verse, and title.
 - c. Chapter 3 summary, theme, key verse, and title.
 - d. Chapter 4 summary, theme, key verse, and title.
 - e. Chapter 5 summary, theme, key verse, and title.

Chapter 1

2. How often in Chapter 1 does the Bible record that the sons of Israel did not drive out the inhabitants of land in the different territories for each tribe?

Chapter 2

3. Chapter 2:1-5 follows the train of thought begun in Chapter 1. Though the Israelites had conquered much of the land, there were still Canaanites living among the Israelites. What did God have to say about this state of affairs in 2:1-5?
4. Judges 2:6 introduces a time shift as the writer takes us back to the days when Joshua was alive. Judges 2:6-9 corresponds to Joshua 24:29-31. What important piece of information is included in 2:10 which gives us insight into the time after Joshua's death?
5. According to 2:11-15 why was God angry with Israel? See also Josh. 24:19-27.
6. God did not have Joshua appoint a successor to lead the people, instead God raised up judges for the nation. What was the purpose of the judges according to 2:16-19?
7. What purpose were the Canaanite nations now supposed to play in the lives of the Israelites according to 2:20-23?

Chapter 3

8. Why were the nations left in the land according to 3:1-4?

9. Which nations were left in the land (3:3)?

10. Judges 3:5 begins ominously, *And the sons of Israel lived among the Canaanites, the Hittites, the Amorites, the Perizzites, the Hivites, and the Jebusites*. What happened to Israel because they lived among these people (3:6-7)?

11. Because they had defied the Lord and broken their covenant with Him, they were chastised by the Lord and enslaved to the King of Mesopotamia. But God, in His mercy, raised up Othniel to be the nation's deliverer and judge. What do you learn about this judge from 3:9-11 and Josh. 15:16-19?

12. What interesting facts do you discover about Ehud in 3:15-16?

13. What innovative way did Ehud come up with for delivering Israel from the Moabites (3:17-30)?

Chapter 4

14. What was the state of affairs for Israel after Ehud's death in 4:1-3?

15. List some of the distinct characteristics of the next judge (4:4-5).

16. It has been said that Israel had sunk so low spiritually that the best man for the job was a woman. Though there was a crisis in the male leadership at that time, Deborah was a uniquely gifted leader for the nation. How does Barak's response to God's plan for conquering Sisera seem to support this idea? Read 4:6-8.

17. What is the consequence for Barak's lack of faith and courage (4:9)?

18. Describe the role of the other woman in this chapter from 4:11-22.

Chapter 5

19. List 5 facts about life in Israel during Deborah's judgeship that she mentions in her song in Chapter 5.

20. Why is Jael a blessed woman according to 5:24-27?

21. How is the conclusion to Deborah's song in 5:31 a reminder to us to view things from God's perspective rather than from man's?

22. We must remember the words of 1 Cor. 10:11 which says: *Now these things happened to them as an example, and they were written for our instruction, upon whom the ends of the ages have come.* What lessons or reminders have you learned from the first 5 chapters of Judges?

Judges

Lesson #2, Chapters 6-9

Chapters 6-9

1. Read Chapters 6-9. After reading each chapter, briefly summarize the details of the chapter in the space below. Next, in 1-2 sentences write out the theme of the chapter. Remember, a theme is just summing up the main point or the big idea of the chapter. Then, look for a verse in that chapter that best reflects the theme of the chapter. Finally, create a 3-5 word title for the chapter.
 - a. Chapter 6 summary, theme, key verse, and title.
 - b. Chapter 7 summary, theme, key verse, and title.
 - c. Chapter 8 summary, theme, key verse, and title.
 - d. Chapter 9 summary, theme, key verse, and title.

Chapter 6

Note: Gideon's home was in Ophrah which is west of the Jordan River up near the Sea of Galilee.

2. Chapter 6 verse 1 begins, *Then the sons of Israel did what was evil in the sight of the Lord; and the Lord gave them into the hands of Midian seven years.* What was life like for the Israelites during this time according to 6:2-6? How did the Lord respond to the sons of Israel as they cried out to Him in their sorrow (6:8-10)?

3. Who appears to Gideon in 6:11-18? Does Gideon immediately understand who he is talking to? What happens that changes Gideon's understanding of who his visitor really is in 6:11-24?
4. How is Gideon described in 6:11-18?
5. What does the Lord command Gideon to do and how does he go about it in 6:25-27? How does this fit with Gideon's description of himself?
6. Gideon's father stands between the crowd and his son. What wise counsel does he give to the mob (6:28-32)?
7. Gideon is famous for his fleece test. Why does he want to test God in this way (6:33-40)? What is Gideon trying to discover in his little test (6:36)?

Chapter 7

8. Gideon's army is quickly gathered, but God has some changes to make. Why (7:2)? What is the Lord's solution to this problem (7:3-8)?
9. How does the Lord strengthen Gideon in 7:9-14?
10. God's encouragement does its work and Gideon is emboldened to proceed against the Midianites. What are the details of this unique battle (7:15-25)? Is it successful (see also 8:10)?

Chapter 8

11. In 7:24-25 Gideon calls the men of Ephraim to come and help him in the battle. Though they help in battle they are not happy with Gideon. Why (8:1)? How does Gideon calm them down (8:2-3)?

Note: Succoth and Penuel are located on the east side of the Jordan River. Penuel is near the Jabbok River. Penuel is where Jacob wrestled with the angel of the Lord, seeking to be blessed, before his meeting with his estranged brother, Esau.

12. What obstacles does Gideon encounter as he pursues the fleeing Midianites? See 8:4-12.
13. Rather than allowing God to deal out consequences to the inhospitable inhabitants of Succoth and Penuel, Gideon takes matters into his own hands. What does he do (8:7-17)?
14. The sons of Israel want to make Gideon king over them. How does he respond to that tempting offer (8:22-24)?
15. What is an ephod? See Ex. 28:6-12; Judges 8:26-27; 17:5; 1Chron. 15:27; and Hosea 3:4. After looking up the preceding verses, consider how the ephod that Gideon made would become a snare to him, his household, and the people?
16. What things did Israel forget about in 8:33-35? What were the results of their forgetfulness?

17. Gideon can be a frustrating man to study. One moment he seems to be trusting in the Lord and the next moment he is being rash and impetuous. List the high points of his life from these chapters and then list the low points. How is his life an encouragement and/or a warning for you?

18. What words of wisdom would you share with Gideon (or someone like him) that would help him to walk with the Lord in obedience and faithfulness?

Chapter 9

19. Who is Abimelech and what plan does he promote and carry out? See 8:29-31 and 9:1-6.

20. Gideon's only surviving son, Jotham, confronts the men of Shechem with a parable in 9:7-15. Who is the bramble and what kind of ruler would he be to the people?

21. What curse does Jotham pronounce against the people and Abimelech in 9:16-20?

22. How does 9:57 sum up the rest of the events of the chapter in light of Jotham's curse?

Thoughts to Ponder

In her little book, *Kept for the Master's Use*, hymn-writer Frances Ridley Havergal says: "Of ourselves we may have but little weight, no particular talents or position or anything else to put into the scale, but let us remember that again and again God has shown that the influence of a very average life, when once really consecrated to Him, may outweigh that of almost any number of merely professing Christians. Such lives are like Gideon's three hundred, carrying not even the ordinary weapons of war, but only trumpets and lamps and empty pitchers, by whom the Lord wrought great deliverance, while He did not use the others at all. For He hath chosen the weak things of the world to confound the things that are mighty."

Dwight L. Moody noted, "It is observable that God has often called men to places of dignity and honor when they have busy and honest employment of their vocation. Saul was seeking his father's donkeys and David his father's sheep when called to the Kingdom. The shepherds were feeding their flocks when they had their glorious revelation. God called the four apostles from their fishing and Matthew from collecting taxes, Amos from the horsemen of Tecoah, Moses from keeping Jethro's sheep, Gideon from the threshing floor, Elisha from the plows. God never called a lazy man. God never encourages idleness and will not despise persons in the lowest employment."

Judges

Lesson #3, Chapters 10-13

Chapters 10-13

1. Read Chapters 10-13. After reading each chapter, briefly summarize the details of the chapter in the space below. Next, in 1-2 sentences write out the theme of the chapter. Remember, a theme is just summing up the main point or the big idea of the chapter. Then, look for a verse in that chapter that best reflects the theme of the chapter. Finally, create a 3-5 word title for the chapter.
 - a. Chapter 10 summary, theme, key verse, and title.
 - b. Chapter 11 summary, theme, key verse, and title.
 - c. Chapter 12 summary, theme, key verse, and title.
 - d. Chapter 13 summary, theme, key verse, and title.

Chapter 10

2. After almost 50 years of peace 10:6 records that Israel again did evil in the sight of the Lord by serving the gods of the nations. What was the result of the nation turning away from the Lord (10:7-9)?
3. The people had all the right words (10:10), but the Lord didn't immediately step in to help them. What was God waiting for in addition to their confession of sin (10:15-16)?

4. What do the Scriptures have to say about confession of sin and the subsequent blessings that brings? See Ps. 32:1-7; Prov. 28:13; 1 Jn. 1:8-10.

5. Are there any areas in your life where you have confessed something as sin, but have not truly repented of it, where you have put that sin away from you and turned to the Lord and His ways? As difficult as it might be, deal now with that area of sin, turning away from it and toward the Lord.

A thousand years of remorse over a wrong act would not please God as much as a change of conduct and a reformed life. —A. W. Tozer

Chapter 11

6. When Israel repented of their idolatry, the Lord raised up a leader for them. What do you learn about this new leader from 11:1-3?

7. Now that they are facing a war with the Ammonites, the elders of Gilead decide Jephthah would be helpful to have around. What deal is struck between the two parties and who is witness to its terms (11:6-11)?

8. The king of Ammon wants his land back. What is Jephthah's argument concerning Israel's right to the land in 11:14-27?

9. In the Old Testament the Spirit occasionally came upon people to enable them to do God's will and to empower them for a special task. Often in the book of Judges we read of the Spirit coming upon the judges for a specific purpose. Look up the following verses to determine some of the times when the Spirit of the Lord came upon someone and any special circumstances for the empowering of the Spirit. See Judges 3:9-10; 6:33-34; 14:4-6; Ex. 31:2-5; Num. 11:24-25; 24:2-4; *1 Sam. 16:13-14.

10. In light of what you have learned about the special empowering of the Spirit, read Ps. 51:10-12 and explain what David meant about the Holy Spirit in his prayer.

11. Jephthah wisely goes to the Lord and asks for help in the battle against the Ammonites, but he makes a very unwise vow. What was his vow to the Lord (11:30-31)? Why wasn't the vow necessary? See Deut. 20:4; Josh. 10:42 and 23:10.

12. What happens when Jephthah returns home victoriously in 11:34-40?

Chapter 12

13. Explain the contentions between the Ephraimites and Jephthah in 12:1-6 and the end results.

14. The Ephraimites had a knack for complaining. Review Judges 7:24-8:3 and Josh. 17:14-18 and explain what their contentions were in both places.

15. What warnings and encouragements do the Scriptures give about "Ephraim-like" attitudes? See Ps. 106:24-25; Prov. 15:18; 16:28; 22:10; 26:20; Rom. 16:17-18; James 3:13-4:3 and Jude 16.

16. The mirror of the word of God may reveal a family connection between you and the Ephraimites. How can you apply what we have learned about these harmful attitudes?

Chapter 13

17. What announcement does the angel of the Lord make to Manoah's wife in 13:2-3? What extra details are given to her in 13:4-7?

18. Just who or what is a Nazirite? See 13:5; Num. 6:1-8, 21; 1 Sam. 1:11, 28; Luke 1:15; Matt. 11:18-19; and possibly, Acts 18:18.

19. What events in Chapter 13 convince Manoah that the angel of the Lord who appeared to them was God?

20. Manoah's response was one of fear once he realized that the angel of the Lord was God. His response is not an isolated one. What do you observe from the following verses about people's reactions when they realize they have seen God? See Gen. 32:30; Deut. 5:26; Judges 6:22-23; Is. 6:5; Mark 4:35-41; Luke 5:8; and Rev. 1:17-18.

21. Manoah's wife breaks through his fear with her quieting words. What details does she piece together to have assurance that they would not die after seeing God (13:23)?

22. How are the two reactions of Manoah and his wife toward God lived out in your life? How is fear to be balanced with assurance in our lives?

4. Samson is an example of what happens when we don't use wisdom and give way to the things that tempt us. Another example is given for us in 2 Sam. 11:2-4. What cautions do the Scriptures give about protecting your eyes and heart so that you won't give way to temptation? See Job 31:1; Prov. 6:20-26; James 1:14-15.

5. How did Samson directly defy the word of God in 14:5-9? See 13:4 and Num. 6:1-8 as references.

6. Samson was indeed a flawed man! Yet God raised him up for a specific purpose. What hints do you find of that purpose in 14:4?

7. What events in Chs. 14-15 were spun into place to deliver the Israelites from the oppression of the Philistines when Samson went courting a Philistine woman?

Chapter 16

8. The Philistines were ready to ambush Samson in 16:1-3. How did his escape remind the Philistines of how remarkable a man he was?

9. Women were definitely a weakness for Samson. How did Samson's enemies use this weakness against him in 16:4-5?

10. Delilah repeatedly asks Samson the secret to his great strength. What were the different stories he told her in 16:6-14?

11. How does Delilah finally get Samson to tell her the truth about his great strength? See 16:15-16.

12. Delilah calls the Philistines and Samson is captured. What crucial information is recorded for us in 16:20?

13. Warren Wiersbe in his commentary on this passage points out that if Samson had stopped visiting Delilah, he would have kept his hair and his power, but he kept going back, and each time she implored him to reveal his secret. Samson's will gave way to the continual barrage of Delilah's temptation. Too often we are just like Samson, visiting the temptations that slowly nibble away at our restraint until we are lost in the sin. If you find yourself visiting temptations that keep you from obeying God and growing in His way, what steps do you need to take to be set free? See Josh. 23:6-8; Gal. 5:16-24; James 4:7-10.

14. How did the Philistines punish and humiliate Samson (16:21-22, 25)?

15. What plan forms in Samson's mind as he is standing before the Philistines (16:26-30)?

16. Samson was raised up and given great strength by God to overcome the Philistines who were plaguing the Israelites. Though he was often distracted from the task God had called him to do, in the end he fulfilled his purpose. How much better it would have been if he had kept his eyes on the Lord instead of on his own plans and purposes! How is his life a warning to you to live for the glory of God for your whole life?

Chapter 17

17. The key to understanding Ch. 17 lies in verse 6. What clues in this chapter reveal the truth of 17:6 where every man did what was right in his own eyes?

18. Micah makes up his own religion and thinks to earn God's favor by having a Levite priest as part of his household. Many do this today, making up a religion that is pleasing to them and thinking that if they throw in a few Bible verses or some church attendance that God will bless them. How does God view these acts? See Prov. 14:12; Is. 66:3-4; Matt. 15:8-9; Rom. 10:3.

19. What are some specific ways you can heed the warning of this chapter so that it could never be said of you she did what was right in her own eyes?

4. The Danites stop by Micah's house again. How do they repay his previous hospitality to them (18:14-26)?

5. When faced with the loss of his priest and his household idols Micah wails, "What else do I have left?" Micah failed to understand a very important principle. Look up the following verses and explain what he missed: Ps. 17:15; 37:4; 63:3; 73:25; Is. 26:8-9.

6. What clues can you glean from Chapters 17 and 18 that tell you the spiritual state of the Levite priest. What does that tell you about the spiritual state of the tribe of Dan?

Chapter 19

7. The events of this chapter are so terrible and vile that it is hard to even read the chapter let alone spend any time studying it, yet God has included this sad piece of Israel's history for a reason. Read 1 Cor. 10:1-14. Keeping that in mind, how is 19:30 a commentary upon this time in Israel's story?

8. The idolatrous Israelites were shocked out of their complacency by the wickedness that had taken place within their own nation. They couldn't imagine how things had gotten to such a state. Read through Rom. 1:18-32. What do we know about the state of their hearts at this time?

Chapter 20

9. The nation gathers to hear the details of the crime. What action do they propose in 20:8-11?

10. What request is made of the tribe of Benjamin and how do they respond in 20:12-16?

11. What events happen in the battle that drive the men of Israel to seek the Lord in 20:18-28?

12. How does God use Israel's previous defeat against Benjamin in the remaining verses of this chapter?

Chapter 21

13. Once the dust settled, remorse set in over Israel's rash vows taken at Mizpah. What had they vowed and what was the consequence of those vows (21:1-4)?

14. Who didn't participate in the assembly at Mizpah (21:9)?

15. How was that group's lack of attendance a means of providing for the Benjamites? See 21:12-15.

16. Israel came up with another plan for providing wives for the Benjamites in 21:19-24. What was this new plan?

17. Explain the line of reasoning the Benjamites were to use if any fathers or brothers objected to the girls being taken (21:21-22).

18. The Bible Knowledge Commentary states, “Though Israel suffered under the oppression of many enemies, God’s grace was repeatedly evident when the people turned to Him in repentance. The Book of Judges illustrates both God’s justice and His grace—justice in punishing sin and grace in forgiving sin.” How has the book of Judges enhanced your understanding of God’s justice and His grace?

19. Write down a few words or phrases that you would use to describe the book of Judges. What chapter, event, or judge was the most significant to you? Why?

Warren Wiersbe wrote this at the conclusion of his commentary for the book of Judges: “For the fourth time (17:6; 18:1; 19:1), the writer tells us that “there was no king in Israel”; and for the second time (17:6), he adds that “every man did that which was right in his own eyes.” Today, there is no king in Israel because the nation chose Barabbas instead of Jesus (Luke 23:13–25). They said, “We will not have this man to reign over us” (Luke 19:14). Because there’s no king in Israel, people are rebelling against God and doing whatever pleases them; and it will be that way until the King returns and takes His throne on earth.”

“But God’s people today don’t live in the Book of Judges; they live in the Book of Ruth! It’s difficult to believe that the story narrated in the Book of Ruth takes place in the time of the Judges (Ruth 1:1). The story of Ruth is a love story about a man seeking a bride. It’s a redemption story, about a wealthy man willingly paying the price to purchase his beloved bride and make her his very own. It’s a harvest story about the Lord of the harvest bringing in the sheaves.”

“Through faith in Jesus Christ, all of God’s people today share in His love. We belong wholly to Him because He redeemed us by His blood when He died for us on the cross. We are laborers together in the harvest. What a wonderful life we have in a world torn apart by sin and selfishness! And what a wonderful privilege we have to share the Good News with others!”

In which book are you living—the Book of Judges or the Book of Ruth?

“The tragic comment of the inspired historian who wrote the book of Judges notes that a nation unified under Moses, and miraculously victorious under Joshua, had now fallen into sin, defeat, and disunity. Thus, the book of Judges gives us a picture of the tragic results of sinful compromise with an ungodly world. Fortunately, the appendix of the book of Ruth indicates that God was still at work among His people, even during this dark hour. A ray of hope was about to dawn through which God’s man would come to rule His people (The KJV Bible Commentary).”