

The Book of
JUDGES

Testing the Heart of God's Children



Consequence of Compromise

Judges 1:1-36

Lesson 1

Background Information

After Moses died, God raised up Joshua to lead His people to conquer the Promised land. Israel only partially conquered the land before Joshua died, and God did not raise up a new leader to replace Him. Knowing the idolatrous nations still left in the land, Joshua gathered Israel together before his death charged them to wholly serve the Lord their God and obey His commandments. *Therefore be very courageous to keep and to do all that is written in the Book of the Law of Moses, lest you turn aside from it to the right hand or to the left, and lest you go among these nations, these who remain among you.* *Josh 23:6-7* The preservation of Israel was based on God's faithfulness to His promise to Abraham and his descendants. Their success, however, depended on their obedience to do what He had written in His Word.

Introduction to Judges

Jewish tradition attributes the author of Judges to Samuel. The Book of Judges is the continuing story of Israel, from the death of Joshua, to the time of Samuel, covering approximately 400 years. The Hebrew word for Judges, means *rulers, delivers* or *saviors*. Each judge first delivers the people from their enemies and then rules and administers justice. It is important to note that the book is not written in a strict chronological order, therefore exact dates are impossible to determine, covering an approximate time period of 1425 to 1120 bc.

Judges fits into the big picture of the Bible to show us that in spite of Israel's continual disobedience, God uses them, flaws and all, to accomplish His purpose to deliver Israel. As the book progresses the condition of the people, as well as the judges themselves spirals downward. The generation that witnessed the great and wonderful works of the Lord has now past. Another generation arose that neither heard God's voice nor saw His mighty works. These children and grandchildren have only heard the traditions and stories passed down about the Great and Mighty God.

The book of Judges stands in contrast to the book of Joshua. Joshua shows how obedient people conquer the land through trust in the Power of God. Judges on the other hand shows us how disobedient and idolatrous people are defeated time and time again because they choose to "do what is right in their own eyes." Chuck Missler says, "The Book of Judges is the book of 'no king,' 1 Samuel is the book of 'man's king' (Saul). 2 Samuel is the book of 'God's king' (David).

Seven times we will watch the cycle repeat itself. The pattern begins when Israel breaks

her covenant relationship with God, by **disregarding** His command and relying on their own ideas and abilities. Their rebellion brings God's promised **discipline** by the hand of their enemies. Israel sinks into **despair** causing them to cry out to God. God raises up a judge who leads Israel to **deliverance**, bringing a period of rest. The cycle begins again when Israel allows compromise to lead them down the same destructive path.

The three most prominent deities of Canaan were Baal, Asherah and Dagon. Baal was usually represented by a stone pillar and was a god of fertility, usually worshipped in the groves. Baal worship included fornication, self-mutilation and human sacrifice. Asherah was a wooden post set up in the "high places" of idolatrous worship. The Phoenician goddess of procreation and love, she was the chief female deity. Dagon was a Philistine deity having the body of a fish with human hands and face.

The key verses to the book of Judges are: *Then the anger of the Lord was hot against Israel; and He said, "Because this nation has transgressed My covenant which I commanded their fathers, and has not heeded My voice, I also will no longer drive out before them any of the nations which Joshua left when he died, so that through them I may test Israel, whether they will keep the ways of the Lord" . . . In those days there was no king in Israel; everyone did what was right in his own eyes.* Judges 2:20-22 and 21:25



Looking for Gold - What does it say?

The first step in mining for gold is getting the lay of the land. **Carefully observe the text** looking to see where you might dig to find hidden treasure. **Mark your text** looking for repeated words, contrasts or similarities. Look for answers to, Who? What? When? Where? Why or How?

Setting the scene: You may want to begin your reading with Joshua chapter 23 & 24. Refer to your map to get the lay of the land. Use an atlas or other sources to place the cities in the appropriate place on your map.

Judges 1:1-7

1 Now after the death of Joshua it came to pass that the children of Israel asked the LORD, saying, "Who shall be first to go up for us against the Canaanites to fight against them?" 2 And the LORD said, "Judah shall go up. Indeed I have delivered the land into his hand." 3 So Judah said to Simeon his brother, "Come up with me to my allotted territory, that we may fight against the Canaanites; and I will likewise go with you to your allotted territory." And Simeon went with him. 4 Then Judah went up, and the LORD delivered the Canaanites and the Perizzites into their hand; and they killed ten thousand men at Bezek. 5 And they found Adoni-Bezek in Bezek, and fought against him; and they defeated the Canaanites and the Perizzites. 6 Then Adoni-Bezek fled, and they pursued him and caught him and cut off his thumbs and big toes. 7 And Adoni-Bezek said, "Seventy kings with their thumbs and big toes cut off used to gather scraps under my table; as I have done, so God has repaid me." Then they brought him to Jerusalem, and there he died.



Digging Deeper

Dig deeper using other resources such as a dictionary, concordance, maps & cross-references. Notate where you found it to share with the group. Look for commands to obey or questions to be answered. What does God want you to know about Himself?

Judges 1:27-36

27 However, Manasseh did not drive out the inhabitants of Beth Shean and its villages, or Taanach and its villages, or the inhabitants of Dor and its villages, or the inhabitants of Ibleam and its villages, or the inhabitants of Megiddo and its villages; for the Canaanites were determined to dwell in that land. **28** And it came to pass, when Israel was strong, that they put the Canaanites under tribute, but did not completely drive them out.

29 Nor did Ephraim drive out the Canaanites who dwelt in Gezer; so the Canaanites dwelt in Gezer among them.

30 Nor did Zebulun drive out the inhabitants of Kitron or the inhabitants of Nahalol; so the Canaanites dwelt among them, and were put under tribute.

31 Nor did Asher drive out the inhabitants of Acco or the inhabitants of Sidon, or of Ahlab, Achzib, Helbah, Aphik, or Rehob. **32** So the Asherites dwelt among the Canaanites, the inhabitants of the land; for they did not drive them out.

33 Nor did Naphtali drive out the inhabitants of Beth Shemesh or the inhabitants of Beth Anath; but they dwelt among the Canaanites, the inhabitants of the land. Nevertheless the inhabitants of Beth Shemesh and Beth Anath were put under tribute to them.

34 And the Amorites forced the children of Dan into the mountains, for they would not allow them to come down to the valley; **35** and the Amorites were determined to dwell in Mount Heres, in Aijalon, and in Shaalbim; yet when the strength of the house of Joseph became greater, they were put under tribute. **36** Now the boundary of the Amorites was from the Ascent of Akrabbim, from Sela, and upward.



Boiling it Down – What does it mean?



What **lesson** can I draw from my observations?

State each lesson in a simple sentence (aim for 10 words or less).

Judges 1:1–7 _____

Judges 1:8-15 _____

Judges 1:16–26 _____

Judges 1:27-36 _____



Refined as Gold - How can I apply it?

How should it change me? Ask yourself, “What **course of action** do I need to take to apply each lesson?” (aim for 10 words or less)

Judges 1:1–7 _____

Judges 1:8-15 _____

Judges 1:16–26 _____

Judges 1:27-36 _____

Challenge: Use cross-references to find correlating scripture that backs up the main point of the chapter. Summarize your findings in your own words.



Storing up Your Treasure . . .

What did God say? Deut. 7:2, 16

List how Israel failed to keep God's commands in Judges 1?

What was the result of Israel's compromise? Josh. 17:18 may help

How does Israel's example help you to know how God expects you to approach His word?

What words or phrases are repeated?

Checking for Clarity: See if you can boil down the meaning of **each section** into one or two words. This helps you fully understand what the author is trying to convey. (It's fun to alliterate if you want to try) Did you catch the vision?

Judges 1:1-7 _____
Judges 1:8-15 _____
Judges 1:16-26 _____
Judges 1:27-36 _____

Bars of Gold: State the main **point** of the passage in the form of a title.

Flex Your Muscles: Can you discover an N.T. example of this O.T. truth?

Hide Your Treasure in your Heart

So the Lord was with Judah. And they drove out the mountaineers, but they could not drive out the inhabitants of the lowland, because they had chariots of iron. Judges 1:19

Radiating His Truth . . .

What began with conquest soon became compromise as the defeated tribes gave in to the enemy. If we do not defeat the enemy completely, the enemy will eventually defeat us. -Warren Wiersbe

