

# Judges 1:1-2:5

Previously in the book of Joshua, God raised up men to lead His people into the Promised Land. The big message was that since God keeps His promises, God's people can bravely obey and worship Him. And this sets the scene for the book of Judges.

In your life, what does discipleship look like?

In Joshua 1:3-8, what was the promise and the command (with implied warning) that God's people received?

What was Judah's first response after being sent into battle first (Judges 1:1-3)? How might this be seen as the first act of disobedience?

In Judges 1:1-18, it all seems like good news, with people seeming to obey God's command. What changes as we read 1:19-36? Why does Judah not drive out the people with iron chariots (1:19)?

List the failures of the tribes to drive the people out and the consequences of failing to do so (1:19-36).

When do you find it hardest to follow God's commands, instead of your own "common sense"?

What are the promises God reminds His people of in 2:1-3?

What tension do these promises raise? What is the solution to these promises (2 Cor. 5:21)?

What does the solution say about God's conditional and unconditional love for us?

In what part of your life do you better need to understand God's grace and our response of obedience?

# Judges 2:6-3:6

Sadly this passage seems to be a summary of the whole book of Judges. What will the rest of the book look like, if this is the case?

What were some of the great things the Lord did for Israel up till this point?

How is it that this new generation didn't "know" God or what He had done (2:10)?

What did this lead them to do (2:11)?

What is the consequence of Israel turning away from God (2:12-15)? Where have these enemies come from? (think back to the failure of chapter 1)

Verse 15 says the people are in great distress, what is God's response to that (2:16)? What was the people's response to this?

How does 2:17 describe chasing after other gods? What does this say about the relationship God wants with His people? How might this description help us to take sin a little more seriously?

How have you seen the "Judges cycle" (disobedience, disaster, repentance, rescue) in your own christian life?

How does the reality of your sin and God's grace prompt you to worship Him?

How can you live a godly life among non believers today?

# Judges 3:7-31

We finally get to meet the first three Judges. Shamgar is only in one verse, but we meet them and see the trouble that Israel has with those nations which they failed to drive out of the country in earlier chapters.

What is the evil that Israel did in God's eyes? (v7)

What does it mean that Israel forgot God?

How do you transfer head knowledge (what you know to be true) to heart knowledge (putting into practice what you know to be true)?

What is God's response to Israel's 'forgetting'? What is Israel's response to God's judgment?

What is the pattern we see developing in this passage?

What is the role of the judges that are raised up by God? What is the short fall of Othniel, and all the judges for that matter (3:11; 4:1)?

How does Jesus differ from the judges we read about in this passage?

Why would Ehud have been an unexpected choice of judge (saviour) for Israel (3:15)?

What does this show about the power and plan of God?

Read Isaiah 53:2-3. What does this say about the way God saves? How does this compare to judges like Ehud?

Why is it encouraging to see that God can use weak and outcast people like Ehud?

# Judges 4:1-5:31

It seems that chapters 4 & 5 deal with the same event from different perspectives. One from the side of a historian, the other from the side of a poet.

What is becoming all too familiar about verses like 4:1?

What do you notice is different about Deborah, when compared to the judges, who come before and after her?

What are the similarities and differences between Barak and the other rescuers we have seen so far? (4:6-9)

Read Hebrews 11:32-33. How does the man we read of in Hebrews differ from the man we meet here in Judges 4? Where do we meet the Barak of Hebrews 11? What causes this change of attitude in Barak?

In what ways does Barak actually show a lot of faith in God (4:8-15)?

Can you think of a particular time that you trusted God 100% with something? What was the result?

Why might it be helpful to look back at life and recognise what God was doing through things that have happened? How might this help us in relating to and trusting Him more?

In reading chapter 5 it stands out that God really doesn't need our help. In these chapters we see that no matter the circumstances or likelihood, God wins. Assuming this is true, what would you be willing to give up to be a part of His victory?

How is it encouraging to know that God works through flawed people?

Spend time reflecting how it is that God has used you in the past and how you can be available for Him to use you in the future.

# Judges 6:1-40

We are growing weary of the cycle of Israel's failure already. How does this oppression seem a little worse than others so far in Judges (6:1-6)?

What is the sin of the people in this section (6:7-10)? Why is idolatry so offensive? What forms does it take today?

What is the difference between godly sorrow and worldly sorrow?

What comes first, God's raising up a judge to save his people, or their repentance (6:12)? What verse in Romans might this remind us of? (Romans 5:8 might help)

What do these verses say about God's character, and the thought that God would never accept me, because my sin is too bad?

In what way does Gideon's question in 6:13 seem reasonable? What troubles are you facing? Do you see them more as something God needs to take away, or possible ways of growing you and changing you (Romans 8:28-30)?

Gideon famously lays out the fleece to test what (6:36-40)? What seems right about this? How might trying this sort of thing lead to trouble?

What 'false gods' call out to you and demand that you worship them along side the one true God?

What does it mean to trust more fully in God's promises and in His Son? What areas of your life do you need to do this more?

# Judges 7:1-25

When have you boasted about your Christian walk?

How is boasting an enemy to faith? How is being conceited closely related?

What is God's reason for thinking that Gideon had too many men (7:2)? What would have been your response if you were in Gideon's position?

We can make sense of the those being scared to be sent home (7:3), but why do you think it is then based on how they drink water (7:4-5)?

What is this section teaching about the way God saves?

What similarities do we see between this passage and 2 Corinthians 12:7-9? How is God's strength in your weakness seen in your life? How does this move you to praise Him?

Re-read Judges 7:7-12. How many men did Gideon have? What about the opposition? What assurance from God does Gideon get here? How is this confirmed?

How are vv13-14 a little crazy, but a clear confirmation of God at work?

How do passages like this encourage you in your weakness to trust God more?

How are you encouraged that while things that oppose us can be stronger than us, they are never stronger than God?

What humble circumstance(s) has God given you to use your gifts to serve Him?

# Judges 8:1-10:5

What has upset Gideon in his pursuit of the Midianite kings (8:4-9)? What is his response once he captures the kings of Midian (8:13-17)?

What is encouraging about Gideon's response to the people requesting him to be king in 8:22-23? What is the immediate disappointing thing about Gideon in 8:24-27? What is the result 8:27?

What is the difference between knowing something to be true, and actually living out this truth? (As Gideon did in knowing God to be king, but failing by making a gold ephod and worshipping it)

How does the gospel of grace help us deal with any success that we might have in this life?

What is the difference between all the previous rulers we have seen in Judges so far, and what Abimelek is attempting in 9:1-2?

What is the point of Jotham's parable in 9:7-14? (It is explained in 9:16-20)

Chapter 9 seems to indicate that Israel are their own worst enemy. When do we need saving from ourselves?

How is God's grace shown in 10:1-5? How is it that God's people should receive such grace?

How is God's grace constantly shown to...

Our world?

Us?

# Judges 10:6-12:15

What is surprising about 10:6?

Discuss the irony of Israel worshipping the idols/gods of the countries which are oppressing them. What warning does this give us about idolatry?

In 10:7 we read that God “sold them into the hands of their enemies” what does this mean for the people of God? (Think about what happens when you sell something, what right does that person have over the goods you sold.)

Read what is described in 10:6-9. Would you agree that this is the worst oppression of Israel yet?

What is surprising about God’s response to His people 10:13-14? What is not so surprising about it?

What is the difference between being sorry for the consequence of sin and being sorry for sin?

How are you tempted to want what God gives you *more* than you want relationship with God? How might we guard against this temptation?

What is the argument that Jephthah uses against the king of the Ammonites (11:12-27)?

Read 11:29-31. Why is this a terrible vow on so many levels? Why would he even make such a vow?

What does the vow say about Jephthah’s understanding of God’s character? (and about the influence of the countries around him)

Are we affected more by our culture or God’s word? How do we ensure we are more influenced by God’s word than by culture?

# Judges 13:1-25

What clues are given in 13:1-5 that this baby is going to be special? List some of the other “special babies” we see throughout the Old and New Testament.

What seems to be absent from the Judges who are mentioned in Judges 12:8-15? Judging by the number of kids they had what seemed to be their plan?

The quote, “did evil in the eyes of the Lord” has been repeated several times throughout the book so far. This is the last time we read it. From this point, the sin is more “every did what was right in his own eyes.” What might be the difference?

What do these phrases teach us about sin? What is going to be the problem if evil is only determined by our own eyes? Or expert’s eyes? Or the majority of society’s eyes?

Apart from God what are the things you spend most time thinking about, getting excited about, care about? How might these things become your idol? How can you take care to ensure they don’t?

Throughout Judges, what have we seen is at the heart of sin? How do we rationalise our own sin?

Back to the improbable birth. What do all the improbable births of the Bible precede? Which is the most significant of all? What does this tell us about God? (Matthew 1:46-55; Romans 4:17)

Samson is the last of the judges. Thinking ahead in the story and how he brings the Philistine rule to an end, how is it appropriate that he is the last of the judges (or saviours) of Israel?

# Judges 14:1-15:20

In 13:25 we are told that Samson is stirred by the Spirit of the Lord. What seems to be stirring him as we get to 14:1-4?

If 14:3 isn't about racial hatred or bias (which I don't believe it is), what is it about? Why does the Bible warn against marrying outside of the people of God?

How is Samson's approach sadly reflecting the approach of Israel up to this point?

Why is assimilation into the surrounding culture so attractive for believers and churches? How do you feel this pressure in your own life?

How is Samson seen to break his Nazarite vow in 14:5-9 (see also 13:4)? How is it obvious that God is using Samson (14:4; 6 & 19)?

How is it that God could use such flawed people as Samson? Shouldn't God be using people who are good and godly? How is this thinking flawed about God?

Do God's promises only come about when things are good and right in our lives? How does God work through the dark and difficult times also?

In chapter 15 we see a lot of tit-for-tat going on. But in 15:10-12 we see God's people turn on Samson. What was their problem? How does this show a lack of trust in God?

How does God come through (15:13-20)?

How have you witnessed God working through weak and sinful people? How is it encouraging to know that God works through flawed people?

# Judges 16:1-31

How are Samson's actions in 16:1-2 weak and foolish?

What is the problem with Samson failing to see or acknowledge that his strength is from the Lord?

Why might it be the worst thing in the world for God to give us the desires of our hearts?

What motivates Samson's new girl to betray him (16:5)?

What makes no sense about 16:6-16 from both Delilah and Samson's perspective?

It seems crazy to us that Samson couldn't see what was happening. But what dangers does this section expose about pride and arrogance?

How do we let our pride and arrogance rule at times?

Samson failed to see how dependent he was on God's grace? How can pride block our need for grace?

How does 16:28 show us Samson understood where his strength came from?

How might outward gains in life become inward losses? And vice versa?

When you think of God's blessing, why do you think God will bless you?

# Judges 17:1-18:31

Why does Micah seemingly confess to the theft of the shekels? (17:1-2)

How does 17:5-6 seem to summarise what is happening in Israel at this time and right through the book of Judges?

What is Micah's logic behind inviting this Levite into his home to be his priest? (18:13)

How does 18:24 reflect big issues in Micah's life and that of the life of Israel at this time? What does this show us about self made religion?

How might the words of John 6:68 encourage us, and how might they have helped Micah in the situation he found himself?

Which part of God's word would you like to be different? What temptation is there to ignore these bits?

Reflect on your life and look at which parts of God's word you take more seriously than others?

How do we fall into the trap of making God into something or someone that we want him to be?

# Judges 19:1-21:25

Warning: Disturbing Content!

If ever there was a block of the Bible that showed our desperate need of a Saviour-King, it is these three chapters. The closing verse of the book seems to sum it all up best. But in this section we read a violent, disturbing account of the goings on in Israel. It is so very sad and disturbing, but also a clear picture of where our world is in regard to the things of God.

How is 19:1 a warning to what follows?

Read Genesis 19:1-11. How are the pagan city of Sodom and the Israelite city of Gibeah the same? What does this say about living without God as king?

How does the Levite 'edit the truth' of what happened (20:1-5)?

What happens to our understanding of the gospel, if we don't admit to our own inherent sinfulness?

It seems that Israel is united for the first time in the book of Judges. What is the problem they face as they go to purge the people of Gibeah (20:8-16)?

Notice in 20:18-21 Israel is at civil war. How has their failing to obey God and drive out the other nations led to them fighting amongst themselves?

How through history have we seen evidence of living without a king, working out very similar to the book of Judges?

In what way has the book of Judges been encouraging and discouraging? What has it taught you about our great and mighty God?

How has Judges changed the way you view God, yourself, others and our world?