

**SESSION OBJECTIVE: JUDGES**

To reflect on the takeaways from Judges.

A Recap of Judges

Every week, at the end of our study, I have included some takeaways to sort of summarize the scope of the text at hand. As we wrap up our study in Judges, I thought it would be helpful to include all of the takeaways in one document. I've also included some of the applications we made in the "What About Now" sections. As you recap this study, my prayer for you is that you will recall all of the challenging aspects of this study and remember how fortunate we are in Christ to know God and His grace more fully than our predecessors.

WEEK 1: JUDGES 1:1-2:5

1. Judges shows the moral deterioration of God's people, and reveals that apart from the presence of God, the people of God are no different than anyone else.
2. The opening chapter of Judges serves as a prelude to the primary story that Judges presents.

WEEK 2: JUDGES 2:6-3:6

1. The people of Israel began to serve Baal and Ashteroth after the death of Joshua.
2. God raised up Judges to judge Israel in their sin and ultimately deliver them when they cried out for mercy.
3. The cycle of sin, judgment, and repentance is a repeating theme throughout Judges.

WEEK 3: JUDGES 3:7-31

1. The people of Israel fell under the judgment of Cushan-rishathaim and Eglon because of their disobedience.

2. God raised up Othniel, Ehud, and Shamgar to save Israel.

WEEK 4: JUDGES 4:1-5:31

1. The people of Israel fell under the judgment of Jabin, king of Canaan, and his army commander Sisera.
2. God raised up Deborah, and she enlisted her army commander Barak to fight them.
3. Jael, wife of Heber the Kenite, is ultimately the one God used to destroy Sisera.

WEEK 5: JUDGES 6:1-40

1. Gideon is called by God to judge Israel and redeem them from the Midianites.
2. Gideon struggles with doubt, requiring God to do multiple things before he will fully trust Him.
3. Gideon is sometimes referred to as Jerubbaal because he tore down the altar of Baal and the Asherah.

WEEK 6: JUDGES 7:1-8:35

1. Gideon is used by God to defeat the Midianites.
2. Gideon's anger problem led him to murder the men of Succoth and Penuel for not helping him and his men.
3. Gideon also crafted an altar for an idol that he created, and began to participate in idolatry, a marked shift from his actions as *Jerubbaal*.

WEEK 7: JUDGES 9:1-57

1. Through politics, Abimelech gains power and murders his brothers (except Jotham) in order to lead.
2. Jotham prophetically warns the people of Shechem what will happen to them if they had not acted in good faith, they would be destroyed by Abimelech for their treachery.
3. Abimelech kills the people of Shechem by fire, exactly as Jotham warned, and then died by the hands of the people of Thebez, fulfilling the words of Jotham.

WEEK 8: JUDGES 10:1-11:28

1. Tola and Jair judge Israel for a combined total of over 50 years immediately following the events with Abimelech.
2. Jephthah is called by the men of Gilead to come and contend with the king of the Ammonites who is about to wage war against them.

WEEK 9: JUDGES 11:29-40

1. Jephthah made a vow that is unlike any other recorded vow in the Old Testament.
2. Jephthah's lack of knowing Scripture is what ultimately led to the sacrifice of his daughter.

WEEK 10: JUDGES 12:1-15

1. Jephthah's story ended in violence.
2. Ibzan, Elon, and Abdon judged Israel in relatively quiet peace.

WEEK 11: JUDGES 13:1-25

1. Samson was to be a Nazirite from the womb until death, and a judge to save Israel from the Philistines.
2. Angels sometimes take the form of humans in such a manner that not even other humans are aware they are angelic beings.

WEEK 12: JUDGES 14:1-20

1. Samson's marriage to the Philistine woman, while forbidden, was ordained for a special purpose.
2. Samson's behavior indicates he is unpredictable and only concerned for himself.

WEEK 13: JUDGES 15:1-20

1. Samson and the Philistines engage in a back and forth retaliatory manner that only heightens the hostility.

2. Samson overcomes the Philistines according to God's plan even in spite of some of his disobedient decisions.

WEEK 14: JUDGES 16:1-31

1. Samson gives Delilah the secret to weakening him, and she betrays him to the Philistines.
2. Samson eventually fulfills his purpose by destroying the lords of the Philistines.

WEEK 15: JUDGES 17:1-18:31

1. Micah, the Levite, and Dan all did what was right in their own eyes, and it was wrong.
2. The tribe of Dan took the Levite from Micah, overtook the city of Laish, and renamed it Dan.

WEEK 16: JUDGES 19:1-20:7

1. The Levite and his concubine stay with her father, and then leave to the city of Gibeah.
2. The woman is violated and murdered.
3. The Levite divides her body into twelve pieces and sends the pieces to the tribes of Israel in judgment against Benjamin and the city of Gibeah.

WEEK 17: JUDGES 20:8-21:25

1. Benjamin is eventually destroyed by the 11 other tribes of Israel because of the sin in Gibeah.
2. Benjamin takes wives from Jabesh-Gilead and Shiloh by force, further highlighting the immorality of God's people.

What About Now?

1. God is willing to both bring judgment on Israel, and also redeem them after they repent. This is not too unlike our relationship with Him today, although our relationship mirrors the way God dealt with David more than the judges. God is willing to discipline us as our loving Heavenly Father, but never abandon us (2 Sam. 7:14-15).

Taken from Week 3

2. Gideon's story is particularly helpful for people who struggle with skepticism that is born out of difficult or even seemingly unfair life circumstances. Society almost expects people who have experienced higher than normal levels of trauma to be more reserved, drawn inward, and untrusting, and yet, the church views any form of skepticism as an almost cardinal sin. Gideon's narrative provides a space for Christians to consider that harmful events that have led to skepticism don't disqualify them from being used by God while coming to terms with the fact that skepticism isn't in and of itself, good.

Taken from Week 5

3. Despite being used by God in powerful ways, our character defects still have the potential to sabotage us if we do not get them under control.

Taken from Week 6

4. Whenever a community of people move away from the word of God, they will inevitably drift away from the ways of God and move in opposition to God's will.

Taken from Week 7

5. People have for a very long time used racial or ethnic markers as a way to identify and judge others. The Gileadites identify a phonetic divergence in the Ephraimite dialect, and use that to target and kill them. This kind of evil is not a new evil, but one that like all other evil practices is rooted in the sin nature in every human being.

Taken from Week 10

6. A quiet life is not a bad thing. If there is nothing to report, that means by extension that there is nothing bad to report, and that is in and of itself, a good thing. Some of the minor judges remind us that our lives need not be filled with major events in order for them to be impactful.

Taken from Week 10

7. One major theme throughout the entire book of Judges is how sin begets deeper sin. The people of Israel begin in the book of Judges in a bad spot; they are a generation removed from Joshua and this new generation did not know the LORD. By the end of the book, however, they had moved into full on debauchery and looked as bad (if not far worse) than the Canaanites that they were supposed to run out of the land. This principle so clearly seen throughout the scope of Judges is true today as well. When you give yourself over to sin, it will only continue to birth new and far more insidious sin in your life. If you follow the spiral long enough, you end up looking unimaginably horrendous.

Taken from Week 17