

NEW CANEY CHURCH OF CHRIST ADULT BIBLE CLASS

JUDGES

WEDNESDAY EVENINGS

SUMMER 2009

JUDGES

- Lesson 1 Failure & Judgment
- Lesson 2 The First Three Judges
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FAILURE & JUDGMENT

1. For each of the tribes, tell how they failed to please God.
 - A. Judah (1:1-20)
 - B. Benjamin (1:21)
 - C. Tribes of Joseph (1:22-29)
 - D. Zebulun (1:30)
 - E. Asher (1:31-32)
 - F. Naphtali (1:33)
 - G. Dan (1:34-36)
2. What promises to Caleb were fulfilled before Joshua died?
3. How had the Israelites not obeyed God (2:1-5)? What was the result of this sin?
4. What happened one generation after Joshua died (2:11-15)?
5. What was the attitude of the people toward God's judges (2:16-17)?
6. Judges 2:16-19 relates what we typically call "the judge cycle". What is the judge cycle?
7. How did God determine to test the Israelites (2:20-23)?

APPLICATION

1. Discuss Caleb's faithfulness compared with the sons of Benjamin (1:20-21).
2. How can people today turn aside "quickly from the way in which their fathers walked" (2:17)? How did it happen for the Israelites?
3. Why did God send judges to the Israelites (2:18)? How has He demonstrated this attribute for us today?
4. Does God test us today like He did the Israelites (2:22)? How?

LESSON

1

READING: JUDGES 1:1-2:23

Chapter two is a synopsis of the book, a recounting of the book in miniature. In Chapter two we see how subsequent generations arose who did not know or obey God. We are shown the results of their disobedience and God's wrath brought upon them in judgment. Additionally we find some of God's reasons for sending judges, the typical response of the people during the life of the judge and immediately after the judge's death. A good understanding of chapter two will greatly help in understanding the entire book.

READING:
JUDGES
 3

The forces of Eglon crossed the Jordan river and took the City of Palm Trees (3:13). Deuteronomy 34:3 plainly tells us this was the city of Jericho. This seems surprising since Joshua had pronounced a curse upon anyone who rebuilt the city. In the time of Ahab we see an account of the fulfillment of this curse (1 Kings 16:34). It was a militarily strategic location. That they possessed it does not mean it was much of a city, but is relaying the borders of Eglon's reign as encroaching on what was previously Israelite territory.

THE FIRST THREE JUDGES

1. How were the remaining nations used to test the Israelites (3:1-4)?
2. How did the Israelites fare with God's test (3:5-8)?
3. Name the first three judges. Relate how long Israel served their enemies (for each judge), and how long they had rest (for each judge)?
4. What message of God did Ehud bring to Eglon (3:20)?
5. How and why did Ehud get away?
6. Because of his actions, what did the other Israelites do?
7. Use the text of chapter three to demonstrate the judge cycle found in 2:16-19.
8. How does chapter three indicate idolatry leads to servitude?
9. Why does the text indicate God gave the enemy (3:10) or did not give the enemy into their hands (3:8)?
10. How did God individually help a judge? (see 3:10; 3:15; 6:34; 13:25; 14:6; 15:14)

APPLICATION

1. What does Caleb being the older brother of the first judge tell us about parental teaching of spiritual truths?
2. How does the text indicate God is in control of the nations? Why is this important for us today?
3. Compare the faith of each of these judges with our faith.

DEBORAH

1. From the text, what can be determined about Deborah's role as the only female judge?
2. How was Deborah's prophecy in 4:9 fulfilled?
3. Where were armies gathered from to fight alongside Barak? (4:6, 10; 5:13-15)
4. Compare the military strength of the armies of Sisera and Barak.
5. What was the battle like (according to chapter 4 and 5)? And where? (4:12-16; 5:19)
6. Discuss why Sisera's murder was celebrated rather than renounced (5:24-27).
7. How did "God subdue Jabin the king of Canaan" (4:23)?
8. Who were the "Kenites" (4:11, 5:24)?
9. Was "Machir" a tribe of Israel (5:14)?
10. Give three main points made in Deborah's song (chapter 5).

APPLICATION

1. Discuss what a spiritual woman can accomplish in the Kingdom of God, comparing her to Deborah.
2. Discuss the faith of Barak to run into the battle. Include discussion about our trust in God in the face of "battles".
3. Why was Meroz cursed (5:23)? Considering the attitudes of some of the tribes (5:16-18), what is God's attitudes about "observers" in the Kingdom?

LESSON

3

READING:
JUDGES
4:1-5:31

Deborah's Song

The Song of Deborah is one of the finest examples of an ode of triumph preserved in Israelite literature and it is generally agreed that it is contemporary with the events it describes... The Hebrew still retains a vividness, an almost staccato effect of action and a spirit of sheer exultation that indicates a participant, or at least an eye witness.

Tyndale Old
Testament
Commentaries
Volume 7, p.90

**READING:
JUDGES
6:1-7:8**

In chapter 6 Gideon cuts down his father's Asherah and uses the wood to offer a burnt offering to Jehovah. The Asherah was an Assyrian goddess of fertility. The tree trunk was where she supposedly dwelt. The trunk of the tree was often provided branches and assumed a kind of "tree of life" significance. Where the Baal was "torn down" (likely made of stone), Gideon "cut down" the Asherah. In later years young king Asa also cut down his mother's Asherah (1 Kings 15:13). The plural form 'Asherim' is often mentioned in Scripture.

THE OPPRESSION OF MID-

1. Relate how the judge cycle (end of chapter 2) is demonstrated at the transition of chapter 5 to chapter 6.
2. Describe the oppression of the Midianites upon the Israelites (6:2-6).
3. Why were the Midianites successful against Israel (6:7-10)?
4. What was Gideon's attitude about the current situation with Midian (6:13)?
5. Discuss how the angel referred to Gideon and how Gideon saw himself (6:11-16). what was the difference?
6. Gideon had doubts. Discuss God's patience with Gideon in answering him (6:17-24; 6:36-40).
7. Describe Gideon's faith in obeying God in 6:25-27. Why did God demand this of him first?
8. Why did Gideon become a leader? Was it a result of his father's defense (6:28-35)?
9. Why did God reduce the size of the army twice? Describe the faith of Gideon to release and send home so many soldiers.

APPLICATION

1. How can we "go in might" like Gideon did? What can we accomplish?
2. How does God answer our doubts? How important is it that we become convinced of God's will in our life?

THE DEFEAT OF MIDIAN

1. What additional proof does God provide to Gideon (7:9-15)?
2. Discuss the faith of Gideon to lead the men in the battle plan described in 7:16-21.
3. Why did the Midianites flee (7:22)?
4. Who came back to assist Gideon (7: 23-24)?
5. What argument did Gideon make to quiet the men of Ephraim (8:1-3)?
6. How many men did Gideon take against the Midianites in Karkor (8:10-12)? What was the outcome of this battle?
7. Why did Gideon “discipline” Succoth and Penuel (8:16-17)? Were these Israelites? How does this compare with Debraoh’s Song (5:16-18, 23)?
8. What did Gideon make an ephod out of? What became of it?
9. Explain how a man of God could have “many wives” and a “concubine” (8:30-31)?

APPLICATION

1. Discuss Gideon’s response regarding his ruling the people in light of the attitude of some who pedestalize preachers.
2. Discuss how the account of Gideon reveals good and bad qualities. Does this in any way indicate the inspiration of God?
3. How can such a violent account be reconciled with God’s will for Christians to show kindness to all men?

LESSON

5

READING:
JUDGES
7:9-8:32

In Numbers 22:7 we read of the Midianites as allied with the Moabites in their hostility to the children of Israel, and we find them willing agents of Balaam’s iniquitous counsels (Numb. 25:6, 17-18; 31:7-8), and suffering a terrible chastisement from the Israelites in consequence. An abiding national feud was the natural consequence; and this, added to their love of plunder, no doubt led to the present invasion.

The Pulpit
Commentary
Volume 3
p.57

READING:
JUDGES
8:33-9:57

History remembers Abimelech as “The Bramble King” because of the parable of his younger brother Jotham.

He was the first to attempt a monarchical reign in Israel. It only lasted three years, however, it indicates the mind of the people in desiring a King many years before the prophet Samuel and King Saul. Their minds no longer remembered Jehovah and all that He had done in delivering them.

ABIMELECH'S CONSPIRACY

1. Compare Gideon's statement in Judges 8:23 with 9:1-2 and verse 6. What was wrong with the attitude of the people of Shechem?
2. Did Abimelech rule as King over Shechem or Israel (9:6, 22)?
3. Why did Abimelech kill his brothers?
4. Explain Jotham's illustration about trees and kings (9:7-20).
5. How did this curse come true (9:57)?
6. Why did the men of Shechem turn against Abimelech (9:23-25)?
7. Who was Zebul? What role did he play in the events at Shechem?
8. Why did Abimelech sow the city with salt after he captured it (9:45)?
9. How did Abimelech die?
10. What was God's role in these events (9:56-57)?

APPLICATION

1. What problems resulted from Gideon having a concubine (8:31)? Discuss the consequences of sin.
2. Describe the character of Abimelech. How does he compare with his father? Discuss the importance of a father's training up of a child.
3. What are the dangers of forgetting the Lord (8:33-35)?

A SON OF A HARLOT

1. Name the two judges who followed Gideon.
2. Trace the “judge cycle” in chapter 10. This cycle is first introduced in Judges 2:16-23.
3. Who was Jephthah that the people looked to him (11:1-6)?
4. Was Jephthah a God-fearing man or an idol worshipper like everyone else?
5. Why did Jephthah refuse to return the land peaceably to the King of Ammon (11:12-28)?
6. Describe the vow Jephthah made (11:30-31) and tell how it was fulfilled.
7. Why did Gilead do battle with Ephraim? What were they upset about?
8. How did the Gileadites know who was an Ephraimite when guarding the crossing of the Jordan river?

APPLICATION

1. Discuss Jephthah’s understanding of a vow and compare it with the vows we take in marriage.
2. Discuss God’s patience and frustration with Israel (10:10-16). Compare this with God’s attitudes toward us.
3. How did a knowledge of God’s dealings in the past help Jephthah (11:12-28)? How will such knowledge help us?

LESSON

7

READING: JUDGES 10:1-12:7

Gilead was a mountain region East of the Jordan river, called “the hill country of Gilead” (Gen. 31:25). It extended from the Sea of Galilee to the upper end of the Dead Sea, about 60 miles long and 20 wide. It bordered Bashan on the North and Moab and Ammon on the South. Reuben and Gad desired to possess this territory because of the need of pasture for their herds (Deut. 3:12-17).

The New Unger’s Bible Dictionary, p.476

**READING:
JUDGES
12:8-14:20**

Judges 10:7 tells us God sold the Israelites into the hands of the Philistines. They settled in the coastal plain in great numbers in the cities of Gaza, Ashkelon, Ashdod, Ekron and Gath. They continued to push inward encroaching on more of the tribal lands of the Israelites, including Dan from which arose Samson. The conquering of the land by the Philistines was not by a direct and cruel oppression (as was the case which faced Gideon from the Midianites), but instead was through intermarriage and trade.

A NAZARITE TO GOD

1. Name the four judges that followed Jephthah.
 - A.
 - B.
 - C.
 - D.
 - E. What is significant about 30 sons and 30 daughters, or seventy donkeys? Why is this mentioned?
2. What was a “Nazarite to God” (13:5; see Numbers 6:1-21)?
3. What plans did God have for Samson?
4. How did Manoah and his wife learn they had been speaking to an angel? What was their reaction?
5. What was God’s Law regarding Israelite marriage (Ex. 34:16; Deut. 7:3)?
6. What motives drove Samson to want to marry the woman in Timnah?
7. Twice the Spirit of the Lord came upon Samson “mightily” in chapter 14. Why was Samson unique among the judges and the people of Israel?
8. Why did Samson suddenly propound a riddle?
9. Did Samson have an anger control problem which led to the death of 30 men (14:19)?

APPLICATION

1. How do the angel’s instructions to Manoah’s wife indicate the fetus was a human being known by God?
2. Discuss Samson’s disagreement with his parents over his choice of wife. Consider his lack of submission and out-right rudeness. Why did his father allow this?
3. Consider how the answer to Samson’s riddle was obtained. Discuss the problem in the marriage relationship which resulted.

SAMSON & DELILAH

1. Why did Samson burn the Philistine's crops? How does this compare with Judges 14:4? How could he consider himself "blameless" (15:3)?
2. How did the Philistines escalate the conflict with Samson? How did Samson respond (15:8)?
3. Why did 3,000 men of Judah go to get Samson?
4. What happened when the Spirit of the Lord again came upon Samson (15:14-15)?
5. How do we know this was God's will?
6. What two acts of great strength are described in Judges 16?
 - A.
 - B.
7. Why did Samson tell the source of his strength? Why couldn't he see what Delilah would do with that information?
8. Discuss how Samson kept or violated the Nazorite Vow. Was Samson a holy man?

APPLICATION

1. What lessons do you see for us in Samson's apparent impulsiveness and fulfillment of desires?
2. Describe the character of Delilah and discuss Samson's poor choice.
3. Discuss God's use of Samson, including His answering of prayer at the end of his life. How does God use men today?

LESSON

9

READING: JUDGES 15:1-16:31

Samson was a unique judge. Unlike other judges, there was no call to arms, no gathering of the men to fight. Samson fought a one-man war with the Philistine nation. The end of his life indicates he had personally killed more than 3000 of the Philistines during his 20 years as a judge. Unlike the reading of other judges, there was no real deliverance from their rule. Nevertheless, in the eyes of the Israelites, and in our eyes, Samson is a historical figure who's story is passed on from generation to generation.

SPIES FROM DAN

READING:
JUDGES
17:1-18:31

According to the International Standard Bible Encyclopedia, the city of Laish, which the Danites captured (18:28) is called "Leshem" in Joshua 19:47, which also records them capturing the city. The book of Joshua records events that occurred prior to those in Judges, which presents a small problem. Most scholars contend that Joshua 19:47 was added to the book at a later date to indicate where the Danites actually settled.

1. Describe Micah's attitude toward obedience.
2. Describe the Levite's attitude toward obedience.
3. Both Micah and the Danites desired for the Levite to be their "father" and "priest" (17:10, 18:19). What was wrong with this attitude? (Matt. 23:9)
4. The Danites believed "an inheritance had not been allotted to them as a possession among the tribes of Israel" (18:1). Compare this with Joshua 19:40-48 and Judges 1:34.
5. When Jonathan, the Levite, was asked to "inquire of God, that we may know whether our way ...will be prosperous" (18:5), what do we learn about the confidence that was being placed in the priesthood (a Levite)? Are any assumptions being made?
6. Why did the Danites take Micah's graven images (18:18)?
7. Why did the Danites ask Micah, "what is the matter with you" (18:24)?
8. Explain what you know about the "house of God" which was at "Shiloh" (18:31).

APPLICATION

1. Everyone did what was right in his own eyes (Judges 17:6). Why is this an unscriptural way to live? Discuss how some, even in the church, continue to practice religion in this way.
2. Discuss Micah's confidence (17:13) and compare it with the confidence many possess who call themselves "Christian".

CIVIL WAR

1. The Levite took a “concubine” (19:1) who “played the harlot against him” (19:2) and he is called her “husband” (19:3). Define “concubine” and explain this relationship.
2. What other Old Testament story is similar to Judges 19:16-26?
3. What was the Levite’s reason for going on to Gibeah rather than staying in Jebus?
4. How did the Levite’s initial impression of Gibeah differ from his expectations (19:15-19)?
5. What reputation did the citizens of Gibeah have which was known by the old man (19:20)?
6. Who seized the concubine (19:25)?
7. Why did the Levite cut his concubine into pieces and send her throughout Israel (19:30)?
8. Describe the problem with Gibeah’s refusal to single out the guilty men (20:13).
9. Why did the people against Benjamin inquire of the Lord (20:23-28)?
10. How many Benjamites were killed on the third day of battle?

APPLICATION

1. Discuss the concept of hospitality (as shown by the old man) versus his willingness to offer his virgin daughter (19:24).
2. What language in this text condemns homosexuality? Give other proof texts which indicate homosexuality is sin.
3. Compare “everyone doing what was right in his own eyes” (17:6) with the reaction of the nation (20:10-11).

LESSON

11

READING:
JUDGES
19:1-20:48

Many in our religious society point to Scripture saying it does not condemn homosexuality. Passages such as Judges 19 are said to condemn the lack of hospitality. “Do not commit such an act of folly against this man” (19:24) is argued to say they should not violate the hospitality shown by the old man.

READING:
JUDGES
21

The book of 1 Samuel begins as a transition from the book of Judges to the time of the Monarchy under Saul, David and Solomon. Eli "had judged Israel forty years" (1 Sam. 4:18) and Samuel judged Israel all the days of his life, going in circuit to Bethel, Gilgal and Misphe as well as appointing his sons also as judges (1 Sam. 7:15-8:1). Because of these passages we include Eli and Samuel as judges over Israel. Samuel was also a prophet.

THE SURVIVAL OF BENJAMIN

1. How does 21:1 demonstrate how the Israelites felt about the sin of Benjamin?
2. The people wept in Bethel. Why had "this come about in Israel" (21:3)?
3. Does Chapter 21 indicate the Israelites were faithful to God? How or how not?
4. Why were the men, women and little ones of Jabesh-Gilead killed(21:10)?
5. Was Shiloh a part of the Israelite nation (21:19-23)? Why was this location chosen to get wives for the men of Benjamin?
6. Why did the Israelites feel Benjamin could not be blotted out (21:17)?

REVIEW

1. What was the role of a judge?
2. How were judges different from Prophets?
3. From this period of Israel's history, what should they have learned?
4. What do we learn? Try to give two or three answers.
 - A.
 - B.
 - C.

APPLICATION

1. Who made a "breach in the tribes of Israel" (21:15)? Discuss why God has allowed division in the church.
2. Discuss the treatment of women in this chapter as "possessions". Was this an unscriptural view for the Israelites to adopt? Is it sinful for men today?
3. Compare and discuss how upset the Israelites became over the sin of Gibeah, but not over the sin of Micah or the Danites in chapter 18.