

Judges

Israel's Spiritual Dark Age

Have you ever wanted to “do your own thing”? Maybe you were tired of listening to others telling you what to do, or tired of trying to follow God's Word, or you just felt like everyone else was having fun so why shouldn't you. The book of Judges describes a period of time in the nation of Israel's history when seemingly everyone _____ God and just did what _____ wanted!

The book of Judges gets its name from the twelve _____ and one _____ who served as judges (_____ and _____ leaders) during the period of time following Joshua's death, up until the time of Samuel, the last _____ and the first _____ in a continuous line of prophets (Acts 3:24), and the setting up of Israel's _____. None of the judges were national leaders like Joshua or Moses, but all were leaders who ruled _____ over _____ geographical areas. The judges did not all rule consecutively, but had _____ periods of rulership over different _____ of Canaan.

Following the death of the godly leader, Joshua, Israel plunged into a _____-year spiritual dark age. The book of Judges describes this period as _____ cycles of sin, servitude, supplication, and salvation. The book closes with two _____ illustrations of Israel's depravity and a sad epitaph of the nation's condition, *“In those days there was no _____ in Israel; everyone did what was right in his _____ eyes”* (Judges 21:25).

The book of Judges records the _____ of Israel's _____ due to the nation's _____, and sets the stage for the nation's future _____. Whereas the book of Joshua is a book of Israel's _____, the book of Judges is a book of Israel's _____.

Judges can be divided as follows:

<u>Chapters</u>	<u>Topic</u>
1-3	The _____ of Apostasy
4-16	The _____ of Apostasy
17-21	The _____ of Apostasy

Some key events:

1. Israel _____ to drive the idolatrous Canaanites from the land (Judg. 1:21,27-33; 2:1-3).
2. The _____ generation of Israelites did not know _____ or His _____ in the past (Judg. 2:10).
3. The Israelites became _____ and worshiped the gods of the Canaanites (Judg. 2:11,12).
4. The people _____, God sent judges to _____ them, but then the people _____ again (Judg. 2:18,19).
5. The terrible pattern: "*The sons of Israel _____ did _____ in the sight of the Lord*" (Judg. 2:11; 3:7,12; 4:1; 6:1; 10:6; 13:1).
6. **Ehud**, the _____ judge, stabs the overweight Moabite king in the _____ (Judg. 3:15-23,30).
7. **Deborah**, the only _____ judge, defeats Jabin the king of Canaan. Another _____ (Jael) kills Sisera, the commander of Jabin's army (Judg. 4:1-9, 17-21).
8. **Gideon** _____ God's clear calling and puts out the _____ (Judg. 6:36-40).
9. **Gideon** _____ the Midianites, but then _____ idolatry (Judg. 8:22-28).
10. **Jephthah** _____ the Ammonites, keeps his vow, and gives his _____ up to God as an _____ (Judg. 11:30-40).

11. **Samson** was a _____ from birth, meaning he could not _____ wine or _____ the dead or _____ his hair (Judg. 13:5)—all things he violated! He touched a _____ lion (Judg. 14:8,9), _____ with pagans (Judg. 14:10), picked up a _____ donkey’s jawbone (Judg.15:15), and _____ 1000 Philistines with it (Judg. 15:15). And when he _____ his hair (Judg. 16:17), that was “the last straw,” and he _____ his supernatural power from God. But then his hair crew back (Judg. 16:20–30)!
12. A Levite’s concubine (mistress) is _____ to death and the angry Levite _____ the concubine’s corpse into twelve pieces and _____ these twelve body parts throughout Israel (Judg. 19:22–30)!
13. A civil war ensues between the sons of Israel and the tribe of Benjamin in _____ for the death of the concubine. As a result, the tribe of Benjamin is _____ (Judg. 20:44–48).
14. The decimation of the tribe of Benjamin leads to a need for women to be _____ for the surviving Benjamite men. This results in two bizarre events used to _____ wives for the Benjamites: first, the _____ of all the inhabitants of Jabesh-Gilead, except for _____ girls who would be given as wives to the Benjamites (Judg. 21:10–12), and second, the _____ of girls from Shiloh who were on their way to a _____ (Judg. 21:19–21).

The book of Judges ends with this very sad commentary, *“In those days there was no king in Israel; and everyone did what was right in his own eyes”* (Judg. 21:25).

Ruth

Beauty and the Boaz

Almost everyone enjoys reading a good _____ story, especially one that starts out “ugly” but ends up beautiful! The book of Ruth is such a story. Set amidst the ugliness of the period of _____, when every man was doing what was right in his _____, the story of Ruth (Ruth means “beauty”) shines forth like a beautiful bright star in a very dark sky.

During a period of great _____, Ruth displays high moral standards. In an age of great _____, Ruth portrays great selflessness. At a time when much of Israel is turning to _____, Ruth is turning from idolatry to the one true God. While the guilt-filled people around her are committing horrific _____ of passion, Ruth is innocently committing simple _____ of love.

Ruth is a Moabite _____ who leaves her homeland (Moab) to live with her widowed, _____ mother-in-law in the city of Bethlehem. While humbly following her mother-in-law’s instructions to glean in the grain fields, Ruth gleanes more than just grain! She attracts the attention of the _____ of the field, Boaz, who falls in love with her and _____ her!

Ruth’s personal _____ is in stark contrast to the national _____ of Israel.

Ruth is redeemed by her kinsman redeemer, Boaz. The redemption of Ruth by her kinsman redeemer is a beautiful portrayal of how _____ is our Kinsman Redeemer and redeems us, taking us as his _____.

The book of Ruth is one of only two books of the Bible named after a _____. The other one is the book of _____.

And Ruth is one of only _____ women mentioned in Jesus’s genealogy in Matthew 1—three of the four being _____.

The book of Ruth can be divided as follows:

<u>Chapter</u>	<u>Theme</u>
1	Ruth _____ With Naomi
2	Ruth _____ in Boaz's Field
3	Ruth _____ at Boaz's Feet
4	Ruth _____ Boaz

The key players:

1. Elimelech, the father, whose name means _____.
2. Naomi, the mother (in-law), whose name means _____.
3. Mahlon, the son, whose name means _____.
4. Chilion, the other son, whose name means _____.
5. Orpah, the daughter-in-law, whose name means _____.
6. Ruth, the other daughter-in-law, whose name means _____.
7. Boaz, the kinsman redeemer, whose name means _____.

Some key events:

1. Due to famine in Bethlehem (the house of _____), Elimelech moves his family to the pagan land of Moab (God's _____, Psa. 108:9), where his sons _____ Moabitesses. While there, Dad and his three sons all _____, leaving behind three _____ (Ruth 1:1-5).
2. Naomi hears that there is food back home, so she tells her daughters-in-law to go back to their _____ families and beliefs while she returns home to Judah (Ruth 1:8,14,15).
3. Ruth declares her _____ to Naomi and to God and goes with Naomi (Ruth 1:16,22).
4. Ruth gleanes in Boaz's field and gets _____ (Ruth 2:1-3,8-10).
5. Ruth puts the "_____" on Boaz (Ruth 3:1-6).
6. Boaz discovers that "a _____ was lying at his feet" and agrees to _____ (marry) her (Ruth 3:8-13).

7. Boaz meets with the elders of the city and arranges to _____ (marry) Ruth (Ruth 4:9,10).
8. Boaz and Ruth _____ and have a son, Obed, who became the grandfather of _____, and the ancestor of _____, the Kingsman Redeemer (Ruth 4:13,14,17).