

## Joshua, Judges, Ruth

We are now entering the twelve History books of the Old Testament: *Joshua, Judges, Ruth, 1 & 2 Samuel, 1 & 2 Kings, 1 & 2 Chronicles, Ezra, Nehemiah, and Esther*. There is history in almost all books of the Bible, but these are distinctly historical, and cover the history of Israel from their arrival in the Promised Land until their demise and defeat at the hands of the Assyrian Empire, and then later the Babylonian Empire. What a way to end a history lesson. But thankfully, the history books also include Ezra and Nehemiah describing the return of the Jewish people back to their land, and their return to God as a nation.

### **The Book of Joshua**

#### **Joshua - Conquering the Promised Land**

This book serves as the connecting link between the five books of the Pentateuch and the later historical books; its name is derived from the principal character, Joshua. Chapters 1 to 23 describe the conquest of the land and its division among the tribes of Israel. In the final chapters (23-24), Joshua exhorts the people "to keep and to do all that is written in the book of the law of Moses," (Josh 23:6) and earnestly challenges them to maintain their covenant commitment to God.

**Author:** More than likely, most of this book was written by Joshua the son of Nun. The latter part of the book was written by at least one other person after the death of Joshua. The Hebrew name "Joshua" is the same as the name "Jesus" in Greek! They both mean "Jehovah Saves!"

**Date of Writing:** The Book of Joshua was likely written around \_\_\_\_\_ B.C.

**Purpose of Writing:** The Book of Joshua provides an overview of the military battles to conquer the land that God had promised to Abraham and his sons through Isaac. At the beginning of the Book of Joshua, the new nation is now ready to enter the Promised Land, conquer the inhabitants and occupy the territory. The Book itself gives only selective details of many of the battles and the manner in which the land was not only conquered, but how it was divided into tribal areas.

**Key Scriptures:** Start well, Joshua 1:6-9, and stay \_\_\_\_\_ to God, Joshua 24:14-15

#### **Brief Summary of the Book of Joshua**

Chapter 1	Provides the commissioning of Joshua and the Lord's instruction and encouragement.
Chapter 2	The spies enter Jericho and are hidden by _____ the _____.
Chapters 3 and 4	The crossing of the Jordan River on dry ground, a miracle reminiscent of the early parting of the Red Sea, which the ancestors of this generation of Israelites had experienced. A memorial was established to aid future generations to remember God's faithfulness.
Chapter 5	The ceremonial ritual of male circumcision was reestablished. The supply of manna ends, and the people eat food that was the produce of Canaan. At the end of the chapter the Lord appears to Joshua with further instruction on God's methods of conquering the land.
Chapter 6	The Lord continues His instructions. Jericho falls as the people under those instructions march around the city.
Chapter 7	Sin is in the camp, and as a result several men die in minor battle for Ai. The camp is purged of sin by the execution of a man named _____ (the sinner) and his family.
Chapter 8	The defeat of Ai, as the people once again follows God's precise instructions.
Chapter 9	Joshua and all of Israel are deceived by some of the land's occupants into allowing them to live among God's people.

- Chapter 10 Further victories as the Lord throws enemy armies into confusion. It is also in this chapter that the miracle of the stopping of the earth's revolution occurs.
- Chapters 11 and 12 A lengthy list of battles and of areas conquered.
- Chapters 13-19 The allocation of the land by tribes and by families. Here we also find the tragic statements that in many cases Israel did not drive out and destroy the godless people living in the land.
- Chapter 20 The establishments of the cities of \_\_\_\_\_.
- Chapter 21 Further details on the allotment of the land.
- Chapter 22 A near disaster is averted through Godly confrontation and Spirit-led intervention.
- Chapters 23 and 24 Joshua is advanced in years. He recounts the faithfulness of Jehovah God to Israel, and admonishes them to live in obedience to God's law. Joshua dies at the age of 110.

**Practical Application:** Joshua is a great example of the result of effective \_\_\_\_\_. For years Joshua followed Moses closely. He watched Moses as he followed God in an almost flawless manner. He learned from Moses how to truly pray. He learned how to obey through the example of Moses. Joshua also learned from Moses' sin of anger and the cost of it. The truth is, as long as you are alive, you are a mentor – a teacher. Someone, somewhere, is watching you. Some younger person or someone that you are influencing is seeing how you live and how you react to life's problems. Someone is learning from you. Someone will follow your example. Discipleship (mentoring) is far more than the words that are spoken by the mentor. His or her entire life is on display for all to see. How do you measure up today? How worthy are you to be a person worth imitating? How carefully and fearfully are you living with this awesome privilege and responsibility? Joshua was able to effectively lead Israel because he himself had been a good follower at first. All of his life had prepared him for this challenge. What is God preparing you for?

## **Judges**

### **Judges - Stuck in a Rut**

This Book is named after the people called "*the Judges of Israel*." They are the heroic leaders whose deeds it records, this book covers a period of time from the death of Joshua to the birth of Samuel, an era often called "the dark ages" of Hebrew history. Here is a story, on the human side, of disobedience and disaster, and on the divine side, of direction and deliverance. Of the 13 judges named, only 3 are well known: \_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_, and \_\_\_\_\_. The Book of the Judges covers about 400 years of history.

**Author:** The Book of Judges does not specifically name its author. The tradition is that the Prophet Samuel was the author of Judges. Internal evidence indicates that the author of Judges lived shortly after the period of the Judges. Samuel fits this qualification.

**The Date of Writing:** The Book of Judges was likely written around **1000** B.C.

**Purpose of Writing:** To provide an historical account of the struggles of the Jews against their enemies from both without and within. They had trouble following God, and ultimately will demand a king to lead them instead of God. But until a king finally reigned, Israel would have to learn just how quickly they could fall into sin, and how much they needed godly leadership.

**Key Verse:** Judges 2:16-19

**Brief Summary of the Book of Judges:** The Book of Judges is an account of how God was taken for granted by His people year after year, century after century. Yet, God has never failed to help His people whenever they repented from their wicked ways and call upon His name. (Judges 2:18) Through the \_\_\_\_ judges of Israel God honoured His promise to Abram to protect and bless his offspring (Genesis 12:2-3).

After the death of Joshua and his contemporaries the Israelites returned to serving Baal and Ashtaroah. God seeing this allowed the Israelites to be controlled by those whom they worshiped. It was then that the people of God would cry out to Jehovah for help. God then sent His children judges to lead them in righteous living. But time after time they would turn their back on God and return to their lives of wickedness. However, keeping with his part of the covenant with Abram God would save His people from their oppressors throughout the 480 year span of The Book of Judges.

Probably the most notable judge was the 12th judge, Samson, who came to lead the Israelites after a 40 year captivity under the rule of the ruthless Philistines. Samson led God's people to victory over the Philistines where he lost his own life after 20 years as judge of Israel.

**Practical Application:** The life of a believer is not intended to be a life of failures, judgments, and restorations. Yes, we all fail. Yes, we all need restoration and renewal from God. No, the Book of Judges should not be a description of our daily walk with Christ.

### **Extended Outline of the Book of Judges**

- I. Introduction (1:1-3:6)
  - A. Efforts and difficulties in occupying Canaan (1:1-2:5) – many failures
  - B. Life after Joshua (2:6-3:6) – much disobedience
- II. First Series of Judges (3:7-8:32)
  - A. Ohniel (3:7-11) – the first judge after Joshua
  - B. Ehud (3:12-30) – fought the Moabites
  - C. Shamgar (3:31) – Fought the Philistines

- D. \_\_\_\_\_ (4:1-5:31) – female prophetess – the only female judge – directed Balak to fight the Canaanites
- E. Gideon (6:1-8:35) – defeated the Midianites with only 300 men
- F. Abimelech (9:1-57) – became leader through treachery

III. Second Series of Judges (10:1-16:31) -

- A. Tola (10:1-2)
- B. Jair (10:3-5)
- C. Jephthah (10:17-12:7) – lost his daughter due to a rash vow
- D. Ibzan (12:8-10)
- E. Elon (12:11-12)
- F. Abdah (12:13-15)
- G. Samson (13:1-16:31) – fought the Philistines singlehandedly

IV. Epilogue (17:1-21:25)

- A. The Migration of Dan (17:1-18:31) – both to the extreme North and the South
- B. The Near-Destruction of the Tribe of Benjamin (19:1-21:24)
- C. Conclusion (21:25)

There were two more judges to come in 1 Samuel: \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_

## ***Ruth***

### **Ruth - Redeeming Love**

The Book of Ruth offers a striking contrast to the Book of Judges, but its story is associated with the same period. In Judges, national sin and corruption portray a dark picture. The story of Ruth the \_\_\_\_\_ (a nation cursed by God) and her loyalty and devotion to Naomi, her Hebrew mother-in-law, presents the reader with a picture of the better side of Hebrew life in the days of the judges, and pictures the redemption of this world by Jesus, the Redeemer.

**Author:** The Book of Ruth was probably written by the Prophet Samuel.

**Date of Writing:** The prevalent view is a date between 1011 and 931 B.C.

**Purpose of Writing:** The Book of Ruth was written to the Israelites, and it teaches that genuine love at times may require uncompromising sacrifice. Regardless of our lot in life, we can live according to the precepts of God. Genuine love and kindness will be rewarded. God abundantly blesses those who seek to live obedient lives. Obedient living does not allow for "accidents" in God's plan. God extends mercy to the merciful.

**Key Verses:** Ruth 1:16, Ruth 3:9, and Ruth 4:17

**Brief Summary:** The setting for the Book of Ruth begins in the heathen country of Moab, a region northeast of the Dead Sea, but then moves to Bethlehem. This true account takes place during the dismal days of failure and rebellion of the Israelites, called *the period of the Judges*. A famine forces Elimelech and his wife Naomi from their Israelite home to the country of Moab. Elimelech dies and Naomi is left with her 2 sons, who soon marry 2 Moabite girls, Orpah and Ruth. Later both of the sons die, and Naomi is left alone with Orpah and Ruth in a strange land. Orpah returns to her parents, but Ruth determines to stay with Naomi as they journey back to Bethlehem. This story of love and devotion tells of Ruth's eventual marriage to a wealthy man named Boaz, by whom she bears a son, Obed, who becomes the grandfather of David and the ancestor of Jesus. Obedience brings Ruth into the privileged lineage of Christ.

**Practical Application:** Check out Matthew 1:5 and you will find that Boaz is the son of the prostitute Rahab. Ruth was a despised foreigner married to the son of a prostitute - but she was an ancestor of Jesus Christ. These kind of things happen in the Bible. And we should be blessed that they do. We have the Master-weaver that has a place in His plan for each of us.

### **General Outline of the Book of Ruth**

- I. A Bitter Journey (1:1-22) – Leaving the Will of God, and Returning Broken
- II. Ruth Meets Boaz (2:1-23)
- III. Naomi Directs Ruth in Getting Boaz as a Husband for Ruth (3:1-18)
- IV. The Marriage of Ruth and Boaz (4:1-22) and the family of future king David