



JUDGES

RODGER J. GREDVIG

LIVING WAY
BIBLE STUDY



LWBS

LIVING WAY BIBLE STUDY

Welcome to Living Way Bible Study

Thank you for your order! It is our prayer that the Holy Spirit will use this study to help you grow in your knowledge and appreciation of our God and His Word. "But grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ." 2 Peter 3:18

WHO WE ARE

Living Way Bible Study, Inc. is an auxiliary of the Pacific Southwest District of the Lutheran Church Missouri Synod (LCMS). All studies are written and/or edited by LCMS pastors. We have been providing studies to churches throughout the U.S. and Canada since 1982.

YOUR ORDER

These studies are available by email (pdf-file) or snail-mail (hard copy). For a *suggested* donation of \$1-per-lesson within a study (e.g., 23-lesson study of John is \$23) you receive an original of the study, from which you are then free to make copies for your class. Please honor our copyright of these materials.

All studies have the same basic format, using an effective four-step approach for Bible study. Please see the following pages for additional information on these four steps, as well as helpful hints for facilitating these studies.

As a non-profit 501(c)(3) organization that relies solely on freewill donations, *additional donations are much appreciated* and enable us to continue to produce and promote the study of God's Word.

CONTACT US

If you have any questions or comments on this study or any part of it, please contact us. We are always eager to hear from "our students" and appreciate your comments.

May God bless you as you walk in His Living Way!

Living Way Bible Study, Inc.

info4LWBS@aol.com

www.livingwaybiblestudy.org

 facebook.com/livingwaybiblestudy



LWBS Four-Step Method

Living Way Bible Study suggests this four-step method:

- 1. PERSONAL** – The student prays for guidance from the Holy Spirit and answers the Personal Application (P.A.) questions at home using only the Bible (no commentaries).
- 2. SMALL GROUPS** – The class meets for an opening and divides into small groups of 8–10 people. The small group leader guides the group through the P.A. questions, encouraging each to share their answers and discuss further as time allows.
- 3. THE MESSAGE** – The lecture or message is given by a pastor or layperson who has researched the material and presents the study, giving personal insight and augmenting, but not duplicating, the author's comments.
- 4. THE NARRATIVE** – The author's comments or narrative, along with the P.A. questions for the next lesson, are given out at the end of the class. At the next class meeting, before answering the P.A. questions, the small groups may choose to review the author's comments of the last lesson, and share what each has highlighted as meaningful or important.

Each lesson should be stapled together according to the number of the lesson in the right-hand corner of the page. The P.A. questions for the next week should be attached after the author's narrative for the current week, as they will be the home study for the next class session.

The first meeting of the class is an introduction to the study. Since the members of the small groups have no P.A. questions to discuss at the first meeting, they may use the time to get acquainted or to tell what they hope to receive by studying this course. At the first meeting, the lecturer presents background information about the course, using the Introduction lesson as a guide.

With this four-step method the student has the opportunity to study the particular section of Scripture covered by the lesson from four different approaches. This emphasizes the Bible text and gives the student an understanding and ownership for each section studied.



What our Students are Saying...

Lakeside Community Lutheran Church (Webster, WI): “Our Bible Study in Genesis is in full swing and I had to let you know so far it is a great success. We have been struggling for some time attracting people to our studies and finally I think we have hit the jackpot! We have a full house (room) of enthusiastic, constant participants, including MEN! Our lessons are animated to say the least and everyone participates fully. ... We have been using your studies since 2003 and really enjoy them as they are very precise and informative, easy to understand and uplifting.”

Shepherd of the Valley Lutheran Church (Anza, CA): “We will be beginning our fourth year of Living Way Bible Study... It has been such a blessing for our church...nurturing the women of our congregation and as an outreach to our community. The Lord has blessed us with women from the community and brought at least three of them into membership in our church.”

Palisades Lutheran Church (Pacific Palisades, CA): “Our breakfast Prayer Group again finds your studies helpful and rewarding.”

St. John Evangelical Lutheran Church (Stryker, OH - Pastor): “Our group leaders are very pleased with the additional background information that is provided with Living Way courses.”

Faith Lutheran Church (Sequim, WA): “Currently in our 10th year ...continue to be blessed... have between 70-90+ men and women... some are non-members of our church... use to plug new members in.”

St. James Lutheran Church (Cleveland, OH): “...we greatly appreciate the ministry of Living Way Bible Study! They're all very good! ...”

Faith Lutheran Church (Sequim, WA): “I'm looking forward to our study that your ministry has blessed us with ... Your study allows one to go as deep as time permits or give the simplest most direct answer ... providing materials for us to become proficient in His living and active Word.”

Holy Cross Lutheran Church (San Diego, CA): “The women...continue to enjoy the lessons you provide. We have had many lively discussions over the questions in the lessons.”

Lakeside Community Lutheran Church (Webster, WI - ELCA): “Your studies are excellent and we look forward to each study we undertake.”

Lutheran Church of the Good Shepherd (Olympia, WA - ELCA): “We're starting into year 12!...We've been enjoying all of the studies and appreciate your service.”

Good Shepherd Lutheran Church (Tacoma, WA): “Living Way Bible Study has been an excellent study that we have used for almost 30 years.”

Bethany Lutheran Church (Long Beach, CA): “We are going on our 30th year in LWBS. Our group of about 40 really loves it and grows in our faith with each new study.”

Crown of Life Lutheran Church (Sun City, AZ): “I used the Thessalonians study for the Ministry Staff Retreat (7 of us) and will be repeating a small portion of the study for a three week session with approximately 50 adults. The material is excellent and very helpful to me as I prepare to teach.”



The Book of Judges

REVEREND RODGER J. GREDVIG

19 Lessons

AUTHOR INFORMATION

Bibliography
Reverend Rodger J. Gredvig
Previous Publications

GROUP DISCUSSION

Group Discussion Questions
Jewish order of the Books of the Old Testament
Timeline in Judges
Map
Personal Application

INTRODUCTION

Outline
Personal Application – Judges 1:1-2:5

JUDGES 1:1-2:5

Judges 1:1-7
Judges 1:8-10
Judges 1:11-15
Judges 1:16 & 17
Judges 1:18 & 19
Judges 1:22 & 23
Judges 1:27-35
Judges 2:1-10
Personal Application – Judges 2:6-3:6

JUDGES 2:6-3:6

Judges 2:6-9
Judges 2:10
Judges 2:11
Judges 2:12-15
Judges 2:16-19
Judges 2:20-23
Judges 3:1-5
Personal Application – Judges 3:7-31

LESSON 1

i Overview – Judges 3:7-31
ii Othniel – Judges 3:7-11
ii Delivered by Ehud – Judges 3:12-30
Shamgar – Judges 3:31
Personal Application – Judges 4-5

LESSON 2

8 JUDGES 6
9 Personal Application – Judges 7-8

LESSON 3

12 JUDGES 7-8
13 Gideon's War with the Midianites
13 The Pursuit into the Transjordan
13 Offer of Kingship
13 Personal Application – Judges 9

LESSON 4

13 JUDGES 9
13 Abimelech (Judge/king)
13 Personal Application – Judges 10-11:28
14 JUDGES 10-11:28
16 Tola – 10:1-2
16 Jair – 10:3-5
16 Gilead Chooses a Leader
17 Personal Application – 11:29-12:15

LESSON 5

21
21
22
22
23

LESSON 6

26
26
27
28

LESSON 7

33

LESSON 8

36
37
37
38

LESSON 9

41
44

LESSON 10

47
47
48
49



JUDGES 11:29-12:15

Rash Promise	52
The Conflict with Ephraim	53
Ibzan – Judges 12:8-10	53
Elon – Judges 12:11-12	53
Abdon – Judges 12:13-15	53
Personal Application – Judges 13	54

JUDGES 13

Philistines and their gods	57
Samson's Birth and Calling	58
Personal Application – Judges 14	60

JUDGES 14

Samson's Marriage	63
Personal Application – Judges 15	65

JUDGES 15

Samson's revenge on the Timnites	68
Captured by the Judahites	69
Vengeance upon the Philistine Army	69
Personal Application – Judges 16	71

JUDGES 16

Samson's Downfall and Death	74
Personal Application – Judges 17-18	77

JUDGES 17-18

Appendices I – 17-18	80
The Danite Migration – 17:1-18:31	80
Personal Application – Judges 19	83

JUDGES 19

The Levite and his Concubine	86
The Gibeon Atrocity	87
Personal Application – Judges 20	88

JUDGES 20

The Benjamite Conflict	91
Call to War – 20:1-11	91
An Appeal for a Peaceful Outcome – 20:12-18	92
Benjamite Battles – 20:19-48	92
Personal Application – Judges 21	94

LESSON 11**JUDGES 21**

Restoration of the Benjamites	97
Observations	98
Changing Times	98
Concluding Remarks	98

LESSON 19**LESSON 12****LESSON 13****LESSON 14****LESSON 15****LESSON 16****LESSON 17****LESSON 18**



Bibliography – The Book of Judges

Daniel and Pat Alexander, *Eermans Handbook to the Bible*, Eermans Publishing, 1993 Grand Rapids

Henry Halley, *Halley's Bible Handbook*, Zondervan, 1965 Grand Rapids

Robert Pfeiffer, *Introduction to the Old Testament*, Harper & Brothers, New York, 1948

George Buttwick, et al, *The Interpreter's Dictionary of the Bible*, Abingdon Press, New York, 1962

Keil & DeLitzsch, *Commentary on the Old Testament*, Vol. II, Judges, Eermans, Grand Rapids, 1960

Roland Harrison, *Introduction to the Old Testament*, Eermans, Grand Rapids, 1971

Geoffrey Wigoder, et al, *Illustrated Dictionary and Concordance of the Bible*, G.G. Jerusalem Publishing House, LTD, Jerusalem, 1986

Daniel J. Lewis, *Dabarlines Biblical Literature Commentaries*, Diakonos, Troy, MI, 2002

Concordia Self-Study Commentary, Concordia Publishing House, St. Louis, 1979





LWBS
LIVING WAY BIBLE STUDY



Author Information – Reverend Rodger J. Gredvig

BA. Philosophy – San Diego State University (1968)

B.D. – Concordia Theological Seminary – Springfield. IL (1972)

M.Div. – Concordia Theological Seminary – Springfield. IL (1973)

First Lutheran Church – Lake Elsinore, CA (1972-82)

Peace Lutheran Church – San Diego, CA (1982-present)

PREVIOUS PUBLICATIONS

Questioned for Christ — a drama and Lenten Series

Creative Communications for the Parish





JEWISH ORDER OF THE BOOKS OF THE OLD TESTAMENT	2
TIMELINE IN JUDGES	3
MAP	4
PERSONAL APPLICATION	5

GROUP DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

Offered by the Leader at the first meeting.

1. How many of you are familiar with the arrangement of the books of the Bible? How are they arranged?
*Answer: The Jewish arrangement is by chronology, that is, by date (see handout). The Christian arrangement is systematic, that is, by category (see the front of your Bible). It is one reason why people have difficulty reading through the Bible from Genesis to Malachi. The stories get jumbled up and repeated out of sequence. It might help you to know that the Christian arrangement is in three major categories (History, Poetry, and Prophecy). That is, there are; 17 books of History (Genesis – Esther), 5 books of Poetry (Job – Song of Solomon) and then 17 books of Prophecy (Isaiah – Malachi).
Another way to understand the Old Testament canon is: 5 books of Law (Pentateuch or Torah), 12 Histories (Joshua – Esther), 5 books of Poetry (Job – Song of Solomon), 5 Major Prophets (Isaiah – Daniel), and 12 Minor Prophets (Hosea – Malachi).*
2. In what category does our study of Judges fall in this arrangement?
Answer: Technically, it falls into the history section. But even the Torah (the 5 books of Moses) is mostly history too. And while Judges is clearly in the time after Moses, it overlaps with Deuteronomy, so there is no clear separation.
3. Joshua and Judges were probably written by the same person (perhaps Samuel?), in that sense, the book of Judges is a sequel.
Name some other “sequels” in the Bible.
Possible answers: 1 & 2 “anything” (Chronicles, Kings, Samuel, 1 & 2 Peter, three Johns, Thessalonians, Timothy, Corinthians). Not so obvious: (Chronicles and Ezra, Jeremiah & Lamentations, Luke & Acts)
4. The book of Judges is very geographically grounded. You have been given several charts and maps. Please keep them handy as we go through this series. Let’s see if you can identify several prominent geological features of the eastern Mediterranean in general, and of the Holy Land in particular.

How many are familiar with the Holy Land?

Are you familiar with Southern California, it bears some striking similarities?

What similar features can you identify?

5. As you can see, the country of Israel (or the general area of Palestine) is a relatively small country, roughly 120 miles long and 50 miles wide (depending which historical borders you consider). Let's explore some of the geo-political factors associated with this tiny country.

Why was Israel such a prized position? (take a look again at their location in what was then the known world).

Answer: location.

We often say "follow the money" when we want to discover the motives for actions.

What economic force was at play there?

Answer: Trade route between East and West and to N. Africa

Besides economics, what political factors can you surmise from their location?

Answer: Strategic passes.

6. In ancient times, Judaism was in conflict with foreign gods because of the bad influence idolatry posed to their trust in God. Most of the time foreign religions didn't care about what the Israelites believed.

Today much of the conflict is over religion as well as territory, why?

Answer: Emergence of Islam as dominant after Biblical times. When did the land of Canaan become significant for the people of Israel? How much do you know about the promise to Abraham? Elaborate.

Do you think ancient concerns and conflicts have any bearing on today?

If you had the power, what would you want to see happen in Israel, and would it be Biblically relevant or not?

7. Christians usually study the Bible to understand God's Word and promises, as well as wanting to know the historical roots of what they believe.

What brought you to this study of the book of Judges? Are you more interested in historical factors or answering religious questions?

What do you expect to learn?

Do you expect this study to impact your faith-life?

How about your faith-response (Witnessing)?

How do you expect it to be changed?

JEWISH ORDER OF THE BOOKS OF THE OLD TESTAMENT

Torah – The Law

Bereshit – Genesis
 Shermot – Exodus
 VaYikra – Leviticus
 BaMidbar – Numbers
 Devarim – Deuteronomy

Neviim – The Prophets

Yehoshua – Joshua
 Shoftim – Judges
 Shmuel A – 1 Samuel
 Shmuel B – 2 Samuel
 Melachim A – 1 Kings
 Melachim B – 2 Kings
 Yermiyah – Jeremiah
 Yechezchial – Ezekiel
 Treisar – The Minor Prophets
 Hoshea – Hosea
 Yoel – Joel
 Amos – Amos
 Ovadiyah – Obadiah
 Yonah – Jonah
 Michah – Micah
 Nachum – Nahum
 Chabakuk – Habakkuk
 Tzefaniyah – Zephaniah
 Chaggi – Haggai
 Zechariyah – Zechariah
 Malichi – Malachi

Ketuvim – The Writings

Theilim – Psalms
 Mishlei – Proverbs
 Eyov – Job
 Megilot
 Shir HaShirim – Song of Songs
 Ruth – Ruth
 Eichah – Lamentations
 Keholet – Ecclesiastes
 Esther – Esther
 Daniyel – Daniel
 Ezra – Ezra
 Nechemiya – Nehemiah
 Divrei Yamim A – 1 Chronicles
 Divrei Yamom B – 2 Chronicles

TIMELINE IN JUDGES

(Based on chronology by Henry Halley, and dates by Keil-Delitzsch)

Oppressions by:	Duration	Followed by a Judge, or a Period of Rest	Duration	Date B.C.
		Exodus and Wilderness	40 years	1492-1453
		Conquest of Canaan by Joshua	7 years	1452-1445
Mesopotamians	8 years	Othniel, of Kiriath-sepher, in Judah	40 years	1445-1387
Moabites, Ammonites, Amalekites	18 years	Ehud, of Benjamin	80 years	1387-1289
Philistines, Canaanites	20 years	Shamgar Deborah, of Ephraim; Barak, of Naphtali	40 years	1289-1229
Midianites, Amalekites	7 years	Gideon, of Manasseh	40 years	1229-1182
		Abimelech (usurper), of Manasseh	3 years	1182-1179
		Tola, of Issachar	23 years	1179-1156
		Jair, of Gilead, in E. Manasseh	22 years	1154-1134
Ammonites	18 years	Eli, high priest	40 years	1154-1114
		Jephthah, of Gilead, in E. Manasseh	6 years	1134-1110
		Ibzan, of Bethlehem, on Judah (?)	7 years	1110-1103
		Elon, of Zebulun	10 years	1103-1093
		Abdon, of Ephraim	8 years	1093-1085
Total Periods	111 years +		339 years = 450 years	
Philistines	40 years	Samson, of Dan	20 years	1116-1096
		Samuel	19 years	1094-1075
		Saul, King	20 years	1075-1055
		David	40 years	1055-1015

MAP



PERSONAL APPLICATION

Heavenly Father, help us to remain faithful. Keep us from wandering away from you by the attraction of the gods of this world, such as power, wealth, or security. Keep us from abandoning you through fear, doubt, or disobedience. Bind us to you through the grace and power of your Son Jesus, our Lord and Savior. Amen

1. The book of Judges is a sequel to the book of Joshua. What was Joshua's main concern for the Israelites (Joshua 24:14) ?

What decision were they to make (v. 15)?

2. Where did Joshua get his authority to lead; what two sources of authority are mentioned in Deuteronomy 34:9 and Joshua 1:5-6?
3. What was God's two-fold promise to the people of Israel given way back in the time of Abraham (Genesis 12:1-2; and 15:18-21)?

4. What is the common name for the territory promised to Abraham and his descendants (Genesis 13:12)?

What was the general area called prior to 1948? (Hint: with whom do the Israelis contend today?)

5. Of what was God painfully aware long before the conquest of Canaan (Deuteronomy 31:16-18)?

What did Moses fear (Deuteronomy 31:27)?

6. Name the idols which Moses feared the people would follow (Deuteronomy 32:15)?

Pope John Paul II once said that the two greatest evils in the world are communism and materialism. Which god do we tend to let rule us (Matthew 6:24; Luke 18:24-25)?

7. What should we never forget (Deuteronomy 32:18, Matthew 6:31-33)?
-

8. The U.S.A. is a powerful country. What is the risk in relying on our military might for protection (Deuteronomy 32:28-30, Psalm 20:7-8)?

9. What is the most threatening idol to us today (Judges 17:6, 21:25; Philippians 2:3-4)?

10. How is this (the answer to question #9) idolatry (Genesis 3:4-5)?

11. While we may not bow down to worship idols of stone and bronze, give a list of common idols today using the Scripture verses below.

Scripture	"Idol"
a. Philippians 3:19	_____
b. Proverbs 16:18	_____
c. 1 John 2:16	_____
d. Mark 10:42-43	_____
e. Luke 14:26	_____
f. Colossians 3:5	_____
g. Psalm 20:7-8	_____
h. Ephesians 5:18	_____
i. 1 Timothy 5:5-6	_____
j. Acts 12:21-23	_____

12. In addition to the above list, name some other "idols" we are tempted to let rule us.

13. What was God's intention in establishing a homeland for the tribes of Israel (Genesis 12:2-3, 17:15-16, 28:14)?

14. God expects more than just a mental or head-faith belief in Him. What does God expect of us according to these passages:

Deuteronomy 32:45-47 _____

Psalm 96 _____

Joshua 22:5 _____

Micah 6:8 _____

James 1:27 _____

John 6:28-29 _____

15. A judge, in the narrow sense, is one who gives and applies the law with justice. In what sense is Jesus a judge (Matthew 5:17, John 12:30-33)?

In what sense is He not a judge (John 3:17, 12:47-48, Luke 18:6-8)?



OUTLINE

8

PERSONAL APPLICATION – JUDGES 1:1-2:5

9

“...these Judges were more military leaders than they were legal magistrates...”

The book of Judges is the second book of the “Former Prophets” in the Jewish chronology, following the book of Joshua. It is among the books of History in the Christian canonical list. It is a continuation of the history of the conquest of Canaan after the death of Joshua up to the establishment of the monarchy during the time of Samuel. After the initial conquest, Israel became a loose confederation of tribes vying for power with each other as well as against pagan neighbors. It was a period of vacillation between faithfulness to God and apostasy. The situation was exacerbated by the failure of Israel to eradicate the Canaanites who became a negative spiritual influence. The recurring theme would be a period of prosperity that degenerated into idolatry, God’s consequential rejection and punishment (usually in the form of subjugation by their enemies), followed by repentance and cries for mercy. In response, God would send a deliverer (Judge) to rescue them from their oppression. Israel would remain faithful until the passing of the Judge, and then would once again fall into tergiversation. This pattern serves to emphasize the basic nature of man’s sinfulness contrasted with the mercy and patience of our forgiving God.

The writer, who might also be the author of the book of Joshua, mirrors the same style and format of that first book. It is clear that the author is very familiar with the history and theology of Israel. This has led some scholars to conclude that Samuel may have penned both books, but there is no evidence either way.

One of the difficulties with the book is its chronology. Superficial calculations yield a period of 400 years, but the time from the Exodus to Samuel is about 300 years if you chose an early date for the Exodus (c.1400 bc), which coincides with Judges 11:26. Other scholars calculate a period of about 200 years if a date of 1240 BC is determined as the beginning of the Conquest. However, most discrepancies can be accounted for by recognizing that certain dates and reigns overlap. For example, we see from Judges 10:7 the Ammonite oppression in the east occurred at the same time as the Philistine domination in the west. Then too, not all judges reigned over the entire nation, but were merely tribal rulers. Questions about the use of 20, 40 and 80 representing generations rather than actual years would also resolve some of the numerical problems.

In fact, the refrain heard over and over in Judges is ‘In those days there was no king in Israel; everyone did what was right in his own eyes.’

Although the appellation “Judge” (shophetim) is applied to the heroes of this period, these Judges were more military leaders than they were legal magistrates (except for Deborah who served in both capacities). In their roles as deliverers and regional rulers, they still expected that God was ultimately in charge (theocracy), evidenced by appeals to the Lord before any decisions to act (1:1, 2:5, 6:24, etc). This arrangement was generally satisfactory until the time of Saul when the people began to cry for a king rather than to the Lord. In fact, the refrain heard over and over in Judges is “In those days there was no king in Israel; everyone did what was right in his own eyes” (17:6, 21:25, 18:1, 19:1).

For those unfamiliar with the geography of the middle east, it might help to picture Southern California, specifically San Diego county, east from the pacific coast to the Salton Sea (which is 227’ below sea level), and north from San Diego to just short of the San Bernardino mountains. Israel or the Palestinian area has a coastal plain of temperate climate rising gently into dry, brushy foothills (Jerusalem is at about the 2300’ elevation). Then, the land turns rocky and devoid of vegetation, and sharply drops off into Jordan rift valley until it descends to the Dead Sea which is the lowest place on earth (1312’ below sea level). The south is dominated by desert (Negeb) and the north is more temperate situated below the seasonal tributaries (wadis) of snow capped Mt Hermon (9230’) located in Lebanon. Not counting the present day slice of the Sinai to the Aqaba, San Diego county is actually bigger than the whole country of Israel.

OUTLINE

Most scholars agree that the book of Judges can be divided into three sections

- I. Prologue 1:1–3:6 Summary of conquests; and the development of the system of Judges.
- II. Core 3:7–16:31 Heroic accounts of Judges sent to deliver Israel.
- III. Appendixes 17:1–21:25 Two Supplementary stories: The migration of the tribe of Dan; and The inter-tribal conflict among the Benjamites

Another way to divide the contents is to consider the periods of oppression. That is:

1. The period from the commencement of apostasy to the rule of the Canaanite king, Jabin, i.e., the times of the judges Othneil, Ehud, Shamgar, Deborah, and Barak (Chap. 3-5);
2. The period of the Midianite oppression followed by rescue during the time of Gideon, Abimelech, Tola and Jair (6-10:3); and
3. The period of Ammonite and Philistine domination with the judges Jephthah, Ibzan, Elon, Abdon and Samson (10:6-16:31).

More specifically the period can be sub-divided into the following geo-political divisions. (See Chronology list pg. 2, Timeline pg. 3 and map pg. 4)

PERSONAL APPLICATION – JUDGES 1:1-2:5

Lord, we see your powerful hand defeat our greatest enemies (sin, death and the devil); help us to trust you to conquer the enemies within (disobedience, apostasy, fear). In the name of Jesus, Our Savior. Amen

Judges 1:1-10

1. Verse one tells us that Israel inquired of the Lord before acting. What was the Lord's reply?

How do we inquire of the Lord? (Joshua 1:8, Colossians 4:2)

2. The book of Judges is filled with conflict and savagery, sometimes brutal in nature. What did Adonibezek say was the reason for his mutilation (v. 7)?

What was done in the Old Testament when people wanted revenge? (Leviticus 24:20)

What is better? (Matthew 5:38-42, Leviticus 19:18, Romans 12:17-21)

What is the role of the government in contrast to the individual? (Romans 13:1-5)

According to Deuteronomy 7:16, 9:3 & 31:3, what had God commanded in His covenant with His people?

If we find it difficult to understand God's commands, to what assurance can we turn? (Romans 11:33-36)

Describe the action of the men of Judah in verses 8 to 10.

Judges 1:11-15

3. Caleb and Joshua were the only ones from the exodus from Egypt allowed into Canaan and given land. Why? (Numbers 13:30-33, Deuteronomy 1:34-38)

How is Othniel related to Caleb, and what request did Achash make of her father, and why?

4. What was a common dispute in this land even back in the time of Abraham? (Genesis 21:25-34)

Today, wars are fought over oil fields. Some predict the next world conflict will be over what natural resource?

Where can we find an everlasting source? (John 4:13-14)

Judges 1:16-21

5. The descendants of Moses' father-in-law, the Kenites (descendants of Midianites), were allowed to settle among the Amalekites in the southern desert south of Arad. What was the risk? (Judges 2:12)

Why did Joshua put the ban or "curse" on certain cities? (Numbers 21:1-3)

What does it mean for a city to be thoroughly cleansed?

How are we cleansed? (Mark 16:16, Hebrews 10:22, Revelation 1:5-KJV)

6. The cities (Gaza, Ashkelon, Ekron) along the southern coast of Palestine were under whose control during the period of the Judges? (Judges 13:1)

Why couldn't Israel conquer them? (1:19, 2:3)

Judging from the name of one of the cities above, what is that area called today?

Why is it still a troublesome area?

7. What pagan group still remained in Jerusalem? (v. 1:21)

Why is Jerusalem still a divided city today?

Judges 1:22-26

8. The city of Luz was conquered with the help of a traitor. Of what other biblical city and traitor are we reminded? (Joshua 2:1)

Of what modern day tyrant are you reminded who was brought to justice by a paid traitor (hint: Iraq)?

Sometimes being a traitor is necessary (against Hitler, Stalin, etc.). But who is the worst traitor and why? (Luke 22:4-5)

Judges 1:27-35

9. Many pagan tribes were conquered but not eliminated. What did Israel do with them which seemed so ironic in light of Israel's past experience in Egypt? (Exodus 1:8-15, Genesis 15:12-13)

How would their pagan neighbors feel and react?

What does St. Paul say is our condition? (Romans 6:16, 20-21)?

How are we freed? (Romans 6:6, 13:8 KJV, John 8:31-36)



JUDGES 1:8-10	13
JUDGES 1:11-15	13
JUDGES 1:16 & 17	13
JUDGES 1:18 & 19	13
JUDGES 1:22 & 23	13
JUDGES 1:27-35	13
JUDGES 2:1-10	13
PERSONAL APPLICATION – JUDGES 2:6-3:6	14

The book of Judges begins near the end of Joshua's life. It overlaps in time with the latter half of the book of Joshua. Chapters 1-2:10 summarize some of the conquests from the period of the initial invasion (Joshua 13) as well as describing the difficulty the tribes of Israel had in eradicating the pagans from the land as God had instructed.

Either because of eagerness to settle the land, or weariness from war, the tribes no longer maintained their esprit de corps, their "all for one, and one for all" commitment that once characterized their nation (Joshua 17:12-15). Joshua had ordered detailed maps to be drawn (Joshua 18) and finally ordered the tribes to take possession of their respective allotments (Joshua 22: 1-9). They held a convocation at Shiloh to reaffirm their commitment to one another (chapter 19). However, almost immediately bickering broke out over a monument that the tribes of Gad and Reuben had erected (22:10f). Eventually, after clarification of the misunderstanding, feathers were smoothed, and they once again agreed to solidarity.

Aside from inter-tribal conflicts, each tribe still contended with remnants of pagans interspersed among them. Chapter one of Judges lists a few examples which sets the stage for the subsequent events.

JUDGES 1:1-7

Without God speaking to Moses or Joshua directly, Israel went to the priests to inquire of the Lord. Scriptures mentions the use of the Urim and Thumin (Exodus 38:29-30, Leviticus 8:6-8), an unknown means for divining the will of God (some scholars theorize that they were like dice or bones, tantamount to flipping a coin to indicate 'yes' or 'no'). By this means, Judah and Simeon agreed to help each other to attack the Canaanites remaining in the hill country of Judah and Ephraim. Apparently, a ruthless king, named Adonibezek (Lord of Bezek), had planned an attack from the north on Ephraim with an army of 10 thousand men. Judah countered with a preemptive attack destroying the army and capturing King Bezek. Before executing him, they cut off his thumbs and big toes as a sign of vengeance and irony for his brutal reign where he would abuse victims in this same manner. This torture was a way to subjugate victims making it difficult to hold weapons or quickly flee.

JUDGES 1:8-10

While Jerusalem had been conquered in the initial invasion (Joshua 12:9-24), the Jebusites had recaptured and fortified the walls, so there was a need to do it again. But even this effort would prove to be futile, and the Jebusites would continue to inhabit the area until King David finally ousted them two centuries later.

JUDGES 1:11-15

The next verses, reiterate the story of Othniel (Caleb's nephew) winning the hand of Caleb's daughter (Joshua 15) by victory over the pagans in Debir. Caleb and Joshua, you may recall, were the only two people from the original Exodus from Egypt who were allowed to enter the promised Land because they had faithfully encouraged the early conquest of Canaan forty years earlier.

JUDGES 1:16 & 17

The story of the Kenites (v. 16) reminds the reader why certain parts of Israel were populated by pagans even up to the time of the monarchy. Moses' brother-in-law, Hobab, and his Kenite family had traveled with them through the wilderness, and as converted foreigners, were allowed to live among the Amalekites south of Arad in the Negeb (desert area). However, this proximity to ancestral relatives encouraged them to become assimilated again with their pagan brothers. (v. 17) Again the tribes of Judah and Simeon unite to rid the country of Canaanites in Zephath (later renamed Hormah). This area had been conquered by Joshua, but like many parts of Israel, it had not been entirely purged, so the area was retaken by the Canaanites. As one of the city's under the "ban" by Joshua, it had to be recaptured and thoroughly cleansed, not only of pagan gods, but of all indigenous people (see Numbers 21:1-3).

JUDGES 1:18 & 19

While the hill country of Judah was secured by the tribes of Judah and Benjamin, the "shephelah" (coastal plain) region was still under the control of the Philistines. Ironically, this area, known today as the Gaza strip, continues to be a hotbed of Palestinian resistance to the Israelis.

JUDGES 1:22 & 23

In the central part of the country the tribes of Ephraim and Manasseh conquered Luz (later renamed Bethel). Their success was due to the assistance of a traitor to whom they

promised immunity. He must have been paid well since he later resettled in the land of the Hittites (Syria/Turkey) and because he built a city and called it Luz. This story reminds us of the millions of dollars paid to the informant who revealed the hiding place of Saddam Hussein. We're also reminded of the beginning of the Conquest and the story of Rahab and the spies.

JUDGES 1:27-35

The writer again, illustrates the failure of Israel to obey fully the order of Moses and Joshua to eliminate the pagan influence still within the borders of the promised land. Town by town moving north, the writer enumerates the areas where pagans still live. Apparently, the most Israel was willing to accomplish at this point, was to subject the conquered people to servitude (28-35). In the far north, the Tribe of Dan could not even do that. Instead, the Amorites controlled the fertile plains and forced Dan into the less desirable hill country above Galilee.

JUDGES 2:1-10

These series of failures and disobedience would doom Israel. God finally sent an angel to declare his judgment upon them. Their punishment, which would be revisited on them many times, would be to worship the false gods of their pagan neighbors who would become a snare and a spiritual trap for them (2:3). The "angel of Gilgal" is mentioned to remind them that this message was truly from God as the same agent God sent to Joshua at Gilgal (Joshua 5). The location at Bochim (meaning "weeper") although unknown is probably a place near Bethel known as the "oak of weepers"; although, it could be a reference to Israel as a whole.

In the next section, the death of Joshua is again recorded (see also Joshua 24:29) with the added prediction that along with his death, and the death of his generation (that is, those who witnessed and participated in the Conquest) there would also be the death of faith. The people would forget about God their Savior "...and the next generation forgot the Lord and what He had done for Israel" (2:10).

As we will see, Israel would suffer horribly for their apostasy until they reached the point where they would once again cry unto God for a Deliverer.