

As we start into the book of Judges this week, those of you who are really familiar with the entire book (and not just the stories of Gideon and Samson) might be thinking, “*Why this book?*” It’s true it has some rough sections—and I honestly wish once we got done with [Ch. 16](#), I could just close it and walk away.

- But the truth is [this book is a very timely warning for many both on a personal and national level](#).
- And what we’re going to see throughout this book is [how amazingly deep the grace of God goes](#). For although we are going to see the nation of Israel engaging in all kinds (and the worst kinds) of depravity, what we’re also going to see is **when they turn back to the Lord, He will repeatedly deliver them**.
- And there might be some here today who feel they have fallen so deeply into repetitive sin that there is no way God would save you from that sin and its captivity. You want to stay with us through this study because God will prove you wrong. [God is waiting on you to decide](#) you’ve had enough misery in your captivity to repent and return to Him **that He might do a miraculous work of restoring you**.

And as we have learned in previous studies, [for every NT truth we read about, God has provided us an OT illustration](#). One such example is **Ruth and Boaz** in the OT illustrates for us [the bride of Christ \(a gentile bride, BTW\)](#) and Jesus our kinsman redeemer in the NT. We are going to see numerous illustrations we can pair (or match up) with NT truths in this book.

- Which is another reason those who disregard or ignore the OT are seriously missing the boat.
- But they need to be illustrations that are biblical, meaning the Bible needs to verify our illustration.

Now the book itself can be broken into [three basic sections](#). Chuck Swindoll labeled like this; [Ch. 1–2](#) the **causes** of failure, [Ch. 3–16](#) the **courses** of failure, and [Ch. 17–21](#) the **curses** of failure. I have found this to be the best bumper sticker overview so far. So, let’s look a little more at each. (I enjoy the introductions)

Ch. 1–2

We will see the **conclusion of Joshua’s life** and the failure of the children of Israel to finish what the Lord told them to do in taking the land. (for what reasons; lack of faith, settling for less...)

- And as **that generation** that took the land comes to an end, [we will see how this set up the next generations to go deeper into sin](#). (and growing worse with each generation after)
- And this will introduce [the sin cycle](#) in this book which will be repeated 7 times over 340 years ([Acts 13:20](#)).
- **1)** the children of Israel would sin against the Lord, **2)** the Lord would give them over to their enemies to be oppressed and abused by them, **3)** they would come to their senses and cry out to the Lord in repentance and for deliverance, **4)** the Lord would send a deliverer (a judge), **5)** they would enter back into sin again when the judged died and be more sinful than they were before.
 - This sets us up for the second section.

Ch. 3–16

This is where we actually begin to see the **judges** which are better understood as **deliverers empowered supernaturally by God**. And depending on how you count them the numbers range from **12–15**. I'm going to go with 12 because some that are counted by others are **1** not listed in this book (such as Samuel—likely author).

- And when we get to a guy named **2** Abimelech in **8:31**, we see no supernatural gifting because he was not called by God and was simply **a self-proclaimed king**. (there are no kings before or in this period)
- But one thing we will learn about these judges is **they are simply flawed people God chose** to use to deliver flawed people. Which is **encouraging** if you wonder if God could ever use you or any of us.
- But you will also note that **none of them will be as revered by the people as Moses or Joshua before them.**

Ch. 17–21

This section shows us an overall **snapshot** of the period of the judges and of **what you get with apostasy, immorality and anarchy**. And as I said earlier, I wish we could just skip this part because it's not even fun to read. Now to be sure, all the book has some unpleasanties, but this section gives the bigger overview of how bad it was.

Of this book **Guzik** said he wished he could fast forward through parts, and **Swindoll** said if there was one book of the Bible he could remove, it would be this one. And **it might be good to read ahead to know which chapters children should skip** (chapter 19 comes to mind).

- But as a **nation** and as **individuals** that can loop around the sin cycle, I think we must even look deeply into the ugly parts of this book. **It's the account of subtle erosion that leads to an erosion explosion.**
 - And I think you'll be able to see where we are as a nation in terms of that progressive slide.
- For those in a sin cycle I pray this will be the warning that will cause you to **stop at the cycle of repentance and stay in that place of peace with the Lord**, because **He loves restoration and has more grace than you have sin, but He will not let sin go unpunished** (because of love).
- For those who are not in one of these cycles, I pray it will **keep us from going down that road**. And finally, **I hope it helps us in determining how to pray for our nation and the others in the world.**

So, let's jump in now to **1:1** (just 4 verses today)

1^aNow after the death of Joshua...

We remember it was **Moses** who was called to take them out of the Egyptian captivity. Then the Lord chose **Joshua** to take them into the promised land. And as a sneak peek, after the period of the Judges, they will come into the era of **the Kings and the Prophets**. But here and in **2:8** we hear of **the death of Joshua** and ultimately the death of this generation who took the land with him.

- What we're going to see is they were **1)** given a specific task (to take all the land and remove all the inhabitants for their wickedness), **2)** under a unified leader (Joshua), and **3)** they did not complete it (as we will see).
- Which, by the way, was a picture of how ruthless we're to be with the old sin nature when we come into **salvation, not making compromises with it.** We will come back to this next week.
- So, this is the transition piece to the judges and that next generation (**2:10**). And **one of the most important verses** (repeated four times in this book) that tells of this era is first found in **17:6**; "*in those days there was no king in Israel; everyone did what was right in his own eyes.*"

Now Moses and Joshua were not kings, **but they followed the direction and leading of the King of Kings**, and what we are going to see is **this next generation will not.** Nor did they want to have any rules or regulations to keep the nation in check.

- Does this ring any bells in terms of what some in our country want right now? And when everyone does **what is right in their own eyes, the outcome will always be division, injury and chaos** (at the least).
- And **who gets to decide what's right and wrong when God's moral law is thrown out?** The answer is everyone will do what they **determine** is right or simply will call right because they want to do it (**Is 5:20**).
- What we need is a **real understanding of the Bible and real abiding relationship with God**, because **the world has already shifted** its thinking to its own desires, while **our desire is only for Jesus!**

^bit came to pass that the children of Israel asked the Lord, saying, "Who shall be first to go up for us against the Canaanites to fight against them?" ² And the Lord said, "Judah shall go up. Indeed I have delivered the land into his hand." ³ So Judah said to Simeon his brother, "Come up with me to my allotted territory, that we may fight against the Canaanites; and I will likewise go with you to your allotted territory." And Simeon went with him. ⁴ Then Judah went up, and the Lord delivered the Canaanites and the Perizzites into their hand; and they killed ten thousand men at Bezek.

This account reminds me of the difference between the battle of **Jericho** where the people sought the Lord for direction and He led them to a miraculous victory, only to find themselves defeated right afterward by a significantly smaller and less fortified **AI** because they didn't seek the Lord.

- The moral of the story is when we aren't sure exactly what we are to do, **we need to ask God what His plan is.**
- And I find it interesting He calls Judah to go first for two reasons: **1)** because it's the tribe Jesus would come from (**Gen. 49:10, Rev. 5:5**) and **2)** He always leads the way to victory in the battles we face (**Josh. 5:13–15**).

But **also**, because Judah means "*praise*," and if we move forward to **2 Chron. 20**, we will find **Jehoshaphat**, King of Judah, experiencing a real trial as multiple nations were coming to wipe them out. **But we learn here of the use of praise in delivering the victory in these battles!**

- And in **verse 4–13** we see all the people of Judah **come together to hear Jehoshaphat praise the Lord** by **1)** declaring all the Lord had done for them before and **2)** how God had kept all His promises. And then the Lord answers back in **verse 17** "*You will not need to fight in this battle. Position yourselves, stand still and see the salvation of the Lord, who is with you, O Judah and Jerusalem!*" *Do not fear or be dismayed; tomorrow go out against them, for the Lord is with*

you.” And it continues; ¹⁸ *And Jehoshaphat bowed his head with his face to the ground, and all Judah and the inhabitants of Jerusalem bowed before the Lord, **worshipping** the Lord.* ¹⁹ *Then the Levites of the children of the Kohathites and of the children of the Korahites stood up to praise the Lord God of Israel with voices loud and high.* ²⁰ *So they rose early in the morning and went out into the Wilderness of Tekoa; and as they went out, Jehoshaphat stood and said, “Hear me, O Judah and you inhabitants of Jerusalem: Believe in the Lord your God, and you shall be established; believe His prophets, and you shall prosper.”* ²¹ *And when he had consulted with the people, he appointed those who should sing to the Lord, and who should praise the beauty of holiness, as they went out before the army and were saying: “Praise the Lord, For His mercy endures forever.”* ²² *Now when they began to sing and to praise, the Lord set ambushes against the people of Ammon, Moab, and Mount Seir, who had come against Judah; and they were defeated.*

- Folks, **we are in a spiritual war right now** and our enemy cannot be defeated with guns, tanks, or aircraft carriers because **he is a spiritual being**. And though he may **1)** manipulate, **2)** create strife, and **3)** feed on fear and greed of people and nations, **neither he nor any of them can defeat our God!!!**
- And it’s time for us to **praise our way to victory**. We can praise our God in proclamation like Jehoshaphat did when he stood before the people. Or we can move into all-out singing. Or both! But with our praising of our King we will be positioned in the right place for eternal victory!!!

And folks, this works in the smaller personal battles too. When you’re angered, frustrated, uneasy, grieving, or any other state we might find ourselves in, **start praising the Lord!** There’s victory there because **He’s there!**

And some have asked the question, “*Was it wrong for Judah to ask Simeon to join him?*” Commentators go either way, but I think the answer comes in two parts:

- The **first** being the victory, because **God doesn’t partner with our bad decisions**. The fact they were victorious stands as a testimony to this move being of the Lord.
- Second**, in looking at their history we know they are brothers through Leah ([Gen. 35:23](#)). And [Joshua 19:1](#), speaking of **Simeon**, says “*And their inheritance was within the inheritance of the children of Judah*”. So, this was their piece also, being God had already established the boundaries of every tribe in [Josh. 13–22](#).
- Folks, the Lord loves it when His people come together and work together to **1)** do His will and **2)** glorify Him. And in the NT, He calls the church **His body** and makes the point that we need each other to function victoriously ([1 Cor. 12](#), [Rom. 12:4–8](#), [Eph. 4:1–16](#)).

This couldn’t be timelier **as we have the opportunity to come back together as church families**. We need each other because the Lord designed us that way.

- And if the hand or the foot or the eye chooses to stay in their recliner, it will be a real loss.
- And the church is under attack right now throughout the world and in our own nation. But together we can both **strengthen** the believers and **reach** the lost. There is a spiritual battle going on; **don’t get separated from the body!** (It’s not the Lord’s will, and people get picked off there)

I hope you will find this book as timely as I do. There's a lot of **great instruction and warning** for us here. **Let's make sure we act upon the parts the Lord is revealing to each of us.**

- For some this might be that call to repent of the place you find yourselves in now, knowing that He is a God who loves to restore the lost who will humble themselves before Him.
 - For others who are walking with Jesus, you will find pieces of instruction and encouragement throughout. I pray we will **act** upon the instruction and **rest** in the encouragement.
 - But if you don't know Jesus, He is inviting you into a relationship with Him today as your Savior and King.
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Scripture References

Act 13:20 NKJV - (20) "After that He gave them judges for about four hundred and fifty years, until Samuel the prophet.

Jdg 8:31 NKJV - (31) And his concubine who was in Shechem also bore him a son, whose name he called Abimelech.

Jdg 2:8 NKJV - (8) Now Joshua the son of Nun, the servant of the LORD, died when he was one hundred and ten years old.

Jdg 2:10 NKJV - (10) When all that generation had been gathered to their fathers, another generation arose after them who did not know the LORD nor the work which He had done for Israel.

Isa 5:20 NKJV - (20) Woe to those who call evil good, and good evil; Who put darkness for light, and light for darkness; Who put bitter for sweet, and sweet for bitter!

Gen 49:10 NKJV - (10) The scepter shall not depart from Judah, Nor a lawgiver from between his feet, Until Shiloh comes; And to Him shall be the obedience of the people.

Rev 5:5 NKJV - (5) But one of the elders said to me, "Do not weep. Behold, the Lion of the tribe of Judah, the Root of David, has prevailed to open the scroll and to loose its seven seals."

Jos 5:13–15 NKJV - (13) And it came to pass, when Joshua was by Jericho, that he lifted his eyes and looked, and behold, a Man stood opposite him with His sword drawn in His hand. And Joshua went to Him and said to Him, "Are You for us or for our adversaries?" (14) So He said, "No, but as Commander of the army of the LORD I have now come." And Joshua fell on his face to the earth and worshiped, and said to Him, "What does my Lord say to His servant?" (15) Then the Commander of the LORD's army said to Joshua, "Take your sandal off your foot, for the place where you stand is holy." And Joshua did so.

Gen 35:23 NKJV - (23) the sons of Leah were Reuben, Jacob's firstborn, and Simeon, Levi, Judah, Issachar, and Zebulun;

Rom 12:4–8 NKJV - (4) For as we have many members in one body, but all the members do not have the same function, (5) so we, being many, are one body in Christ, and individually members of one another. (6) Having then gifts differing according to the grace that is given to us, let us use them: if prophecy, let us prophesy in proportion to our faith; (7) or ministry, let us use it in our ministering; he who teaches, in teaching; (8) he who exhorts, in exhortation; he who gives, with liberality; he who leads, with diligence; he who shows mercy, with cheerfulness.