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Read Judges 2:6-23

3. What did the generation after Joshua not know? Why not?

4. What is the result?

5. What is their experience?

6. What does God do? Why?

What picture of Israel has developed by the end of Judges 2?

Discuss how we can be careful not to make the same mistakes:

- Teaching the next generation to know the LORD
- Obeying the Lord
- Honouring God's covenant with us (Jeremiah 31:31-34)
- Loving God alone

Study 2: Othniel, Ehud & Shamgar

Read Judges 3:1-6

1. What two reasons are given for why the nations were left?
2. Does anything here alarm you? (See Deuteronomy 7:1-4)

Read Judges 3:7-11

3. What does Israel do wrong?
4. What is the consequence?
5. Who is the enemy?
6. Who does God raise up?
7. See Judges 1:11-13. What do we know about Othniel? How do you rate him as a Judge of Israel?
8. What seems to be the relationship between Israel's actions & the LORD's reactions?

Read Judges 3:12-31

9. What strikes you in this story as funny or strange?

10. What's the same as the Othniel episode? What's different?

11. How do you feel about Ehud's methods?

12. How do you rate Ehud as a Judge of Israel?

13. We don't know much about Shamgar! What are we told? Why might this be significant?

What do you observe so far about Israel's relationship with the LORD?

What can we say about the kind of people God chooses?

See also **1 Corinthians 1:26-31**.

What encouragement or challenge is this for you?

Study 3: Deborah & Barak

Read Judges 4:1-3

1. What's the situation? Why?

Read Judges 4:4-5

2. Who is Deborah?
3. What is her role?

Read Judges 4:6-10

4. What is your impression of Barak?
5. What job does God have for him?
6. Does he really believe God? Why does he want to take Deborah with him?

Read Judges 4: 11-16

7. What is the outcome? Why?

Read Judges 4:17-24

8. Is this the ending you expected?
9. Who has the honour of defeating Sisera?
10. What makes her a surprising choice?

Read Judges 5

11. Who has saved Israel?
12. What does the song add emotionally to the account of chapter 4?

Do you ever doubt God's word like Barak did?

One commentator has said of Barak, "Just because someone has been chosen by God to accomplish a particular task does not give that person a special claim or hold on God. God's agents are not immune to God's discipline." Is this a helpful lesson from this episode?

Hebrews 11:32 includes Barak as an example of faith. How has faith been demonstrated in these chapters?

These chapters make it clear that God alone saves. What encouragement is this to you this week?

Study 4: Gideon

Read Judges 6:1-6

1. Describe Israel's situation.
2. Why has this happened? What do they do?
3. What do you expect God to do?

Read Judges 6:7-10

4. What's the problem?
5. How is Israel treating God?

Read Judges 6:11-24

6. What do we learn about Gideon from his call?

Read Judges 6: 25-32

7. What is Gideon's first mission?
8. What's the point?
9. What impression do you have of Gideon?

Read Judges 6:33-40

10. Are the requests for signs evidence of faith or lack of faith?
11. How does God deal with Gideon?

Read Judges 7:1-22

12. What is God's concern in this battle?
13. What kind of leader does Gideon turn out to be?

Read Judges 7:23-8:3

14. What's the issue?
15. How does Gideon handle it?

Read Judges 8:4-21

16. Here we see a different side to Gideon. What's his motivation?
17. Where is God in this?

Read Judges 8:22-35

18. Taking the story as a whole, what is admirable about Gideon? What is not?

What is revealed about Israel and the LORD?

What promises do we have from God in Christ?

How sure are you that God will do as he has promised to you?

Study 5: Abimelech, Tola & Jair

Read Judges 9:1-6

1. Who is Abimelech?
2. What does he want and what strategies does he use?
3. Where does his money come from?
4. What's his first act?

Read Joshua 24:19-27 and Deuteronomy 11:29.

5. What's the significance of Shechem and Mt Gerizim?

Read Judges 9: 7-20

6. What's the point of Jotham's fable?

Read Judges 9:21-57

7. How do you feel at the end of the story?
8. Has any good come from this whole series of events?

9. What are we told God is doing and why?

Read Judges 10:1-6

10. What are we told about Tola and Jair?

11. Why do you think they are included?

What is the state of Israel politically and spiritually at this point of the story of Judges?

Read Galatians 6:7 and Romans 12:9-21. How does the image of a God who avenges make you feel? How are we called to treat those who wrong us? How easy is it to leave vengeance to God?

Study 6: Jephthah

Read Judges 10:6-10

1. What's the situation?
2. How do the Israelites respond?
3. What do you expect God to do?

Read Judges 10:11-16

4. Are you surprised by God's reply?
5. It seems like God is torn between 2 responses (v14 & 16). Why does Israel's misery affect him?

Read Judges 10:17-11:11

6. What are your impressions of Jephthah?
7. What details might lead us to worry about his leadership? What details offer hope?

Read Judges 11:12-33

8. How does Jephthah handle the Ammonite King?

9. Is Jephthah's vow necessary? What does it tell us about Jephthah?

Read Judges 11:34-40

10. How do you feel about the outcome?

Read Judges 12:1-15

11. Compare Jephthah with Gideon (Judges 8:1-3). Who handles things better?

12. What's going wrong in Israel?

Recall Judges 3:11, 30; 5:31; 8:28. What's missing this time? Why?

Have you ever been like Jephthah and used a vow to try and make a deal with God? Why do we do that?

Are we ever like Israel and presume upon God's mercy despite repeated disobedience? How is Hebrews 10:26-31 a warning for us?

Study 7: Samson

Read Judges 13

1. What is your impression of Manoah's wife?
2. Does this episode remind you of any others in Scripture?
3. What is God doing?

Read Judges 14

4. What's your impression of Samson? What motivates him? What are his strengths/weaknesses?
5. Is he acting like someone who will save Israel from the Philistines?

Read Judges 15

6. What do you make of Samson's actions?
7. What seems to be the attitude of the men of Judah towards the Philistines?
8. What does God do in this chapter?

Read Judges 16:1-22

9. Think about the relationship between Samson and Delilah. What motivates each of them?

10. Why do you think Samson tells her the truth even after it's clear she's trying to trap him?

11. Why do you think the LORD allows Samson's capture?

Read Judges 16:23-31

12. Who do the Philistines credit with the capture of Samson?

13. What is Samson's motivation for crying out to the LORD?

14. What was God doing?

15. In what way did Samson begin the deliverance of Israel from the Philistines (Judges 13:5)?

In what ways does Samson point us to Jesus? (Consider especially his birth and death.)

At times it seems like Samson didn't want to be set apart for God; he wanted to be as any other man. Are there times when you find it difficult to live as one of God's holy people (1 Peter 2:9-12)?

Study 8: Micah's Idols

Read Judges 17

1. List down all the things that are wrong in this story!

2. What view of God does Micah have?

Read Judges 18

3. What's the situation for the Danites? (See also Judges 1: 34.)

4. Why do they want Micah's idols and priest?

5. What motivates the Levite?

6. How impressive are the Danites in battle?

7. How do you feel towards Micah by the end? What has become of his confidence (17:13)? Why?

8. What is the significance of Israel having no king (17:6, 18:1)?

What does this episode reveal about Israel's relationship with God?

Are we ever like Micah, thinking we can secure God's blessing through our own actions?

How are Christians guaranteed God's blessing? (See Ephesians 1:3-14)

None of us is likely to build a silver statue to worship, but what more subtle idols might get in the way of our worship of the Lord?

Study 9: The Terrible End

Read Judges 19

1. Why did the Levite choose Gibeah rather than the city of the Jebusites?
What assumption did he make?
2. What is your impression of the Levite by the end of the chapter?
3. Is there anything good here?

Read Judges 20

4. How does the account in 20:4-6 differ from the original? Why?
5. What is shocking about the tribe of Benjamin's response in v12-14?
6. Compare 20:18 with Judges 1:1. What's the difference?
7. Describe how Israel's approach to God changes (v18, 23, 26-28).
8. How do you feel about the outcome?

Read Judges 21

9. What problem does Israel now have?

10. How does Israel solve the problem?

11. What do you think of the solutions?

12. What is shown to be wrong when everyone does what is right in their own eyes?

What has the book of Judges revealed to be the core problem for Israel?

Why was the salvation brought by each of the judges only partial and temporary?

What did Israel really need?

How has God met that need for us?

Look back over the studies and share something you've learnt from the book of Judges.

Spend time thanking God for Jesus – our Saviour and Judge. Pray for his help to put into action the things you have learnt.