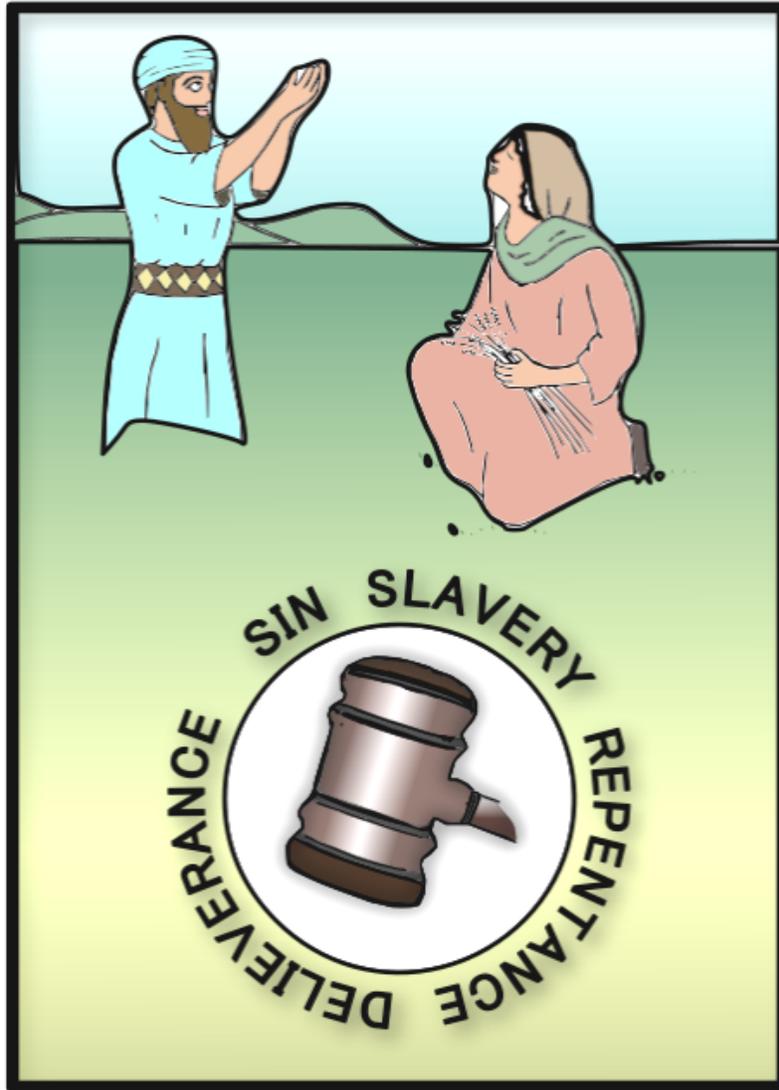


The Era of the Judges

The Dark Ages of the Nation



Judges & Ruth

Lesson 12: The Era of the Judges

The Dark Ages of the Nation

BIBLE

Book	Author	Date
Judges	Anonymous	1050 - 1000 B.C
Ruth	Uncertain (Samuel is suggested by some)	1000 B.C

SUMMARY

The book of Judges tells of Israel's repeated cycle of disobedience, oppression, and rescue by leaders called judges, during a time when "everyone did what was right in his own eyes." Ruth, set in this same period, tells the story of a Moabite woman whose loyalty and faith lead to her becoming the great-grandmother of King David.

NOTES

Dark time in Israel's History

- Many tribes failed to fully conquer the land - Judges 1-3
- Angel declares these nations would end up become a "thorns in your side" - Judges 2:3
- Joshua dies - Afterwards another generation arose who "did not know the Lord and what he did" - Judges 2:7
- The nation falls in the evil practices - serving Idols

Cycle of Sin

- The book of Judges records a cycle of Sin and repentance - Judges 2:11-19
 - *Sin* - Nation falls into state of sin
 - *Slavery* - The other nations rise up and oppress the Israelites
 - *Repentance* - The Israelites repent and cry out to God
 - *Judge* - God raises up a Judge to lead the people back to himself
 - *Deliverance* - The people are delivered from their *enemies*

Main Judges

Deborah - Judges 4-5	Gideon - Judges 6-8
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A prophetess and judge who led Israel with wisdom and courage - Judges 4:4-5 • Called Barak to battle; he insisted she go with him - Judges 4:6-9 • Celebrated victory with a song of praise to God - Judges 5:1-31 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Called by God while afraid and hiding; God called him a "mighty warrior" - Judges 6:11-12 • Defeated the Midianites with just 300 men to show God's power - Judges 7:7 • Later led Israel into idolatry by making a golden ephod - Judges 8:27
Jephthah - Judges 11-12	Samson - Judges 13-16
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A rejected outcast who became Israel's leader in crisis - Judges 11:1-11 • Defeated the Ammonites after attempting peaceful negotiations - Judges 11:12-33 • Made a tragic vow that cost him his daughter - Judges 11:30-39 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A Nazirite from birth with supernatural strength - Judges 13:3-5 • Frequently gave in to temptation and personal revenge - Judges 14-16 • Died defeating the Philistines by pulling down their temple - Judges 16:28-30

Civil War and Moral Decline

Israel falls into religious confusion and moral decline, with Micah creating a private shrine and the tribe of Dan adopting false worship (Judges 17-18).

A horrific crime in Gibeah leads to civil war against Benjamin, and after heavy losses, Israel seeks wives for the surviving Benjamites to preserve the tribe (Judges 19-21).

Story of Ruth

- Ruth shows faithfulness to her mother-in-law Naomi, choosing to stay with her and follow Israel's God - Ruth 1:16-17
- Ruth humbly works in the fields and is shown kindness by Boaz, a relative who becomes her kinsman-redeemer - Ruth 2-3
- Ruth marries Boaz and becomes the great-grandmother of King David - Ruth 4:13-17

KEY POINTS

1. The phrase "*everyone did what was right in their own eyes*" - is repeated many times, and is what ultimately caused moral decline.
2. God was merciful when his people repeatedly failed and fell into sin.
3. Even in evil times there is hope, God can raise up people to draw people to himself - he can even use flawed people.