

Notes for Judges and Ruth

Chapter 1 – Israel’s *outward* failure: unable to finish the conquest.

- 1:2 – **Judah** is set apart as the leader of the 12 tribes
 - o Gen. 49:8-12 promises that kings will come from the line of Judah
 - o **David** is from the Tribe of Judah
 - o **Jesus** is also from the Tribe of Judah
 - **Rev. 5:5**
- In Joshua, the description of the unfinished conquest seemed hopeful as in a work still in progress. Here in Judges, it seems final. They will never fully conquer the land.

Chapter 2 – Israel’s *inward* failure:

- 2:1-5
- 2: 10-12, 15 Israel is distressed and in need.
- 2:16-19 God answers them by raising up judges
 - o The cycle of judges laid out.

See Chart on page 437

Shamgar (see study note on 3:31, page 444)

Deborah

- prophetess (v. 4)
- offered wisdom (v.5)
- Her consistent focus on God and steadfast faithfulness stand in stark contrast to the other main judges (Gideon, Samson, & Jephthah)
- 4:6-9, 14

Gideon

- 6:7-10 A prophet speaks out against Israel
- call of Gideon 6:11-15
 - o Compare Gideon’s assessment of Israel’s situation (v.13) with that of God (through the prophet) v. 8-10.
- Gideon breaks down the altar to Baal.
 - o notice how God destroyed the idols before destroying the oppressor.
- God delivers the Midianites into Gideon’s hand
- Gideon’s Ephod
 - o compare vv. 8:22-23 and 8:27

The Rise of a False King

- Abimelech “ruled” over Israel 9:22
 - o The other leaders that were chosen by God are said to have “judged” not ruled.
 - o This stands in contrast to how Gideon responded to the people’s cry for a king 8:22-23.
 - o The desire for a king wasn’t bad, it was the type of king they wanted.

Jephthah

- Mighty Warrior (11:1)
- Illegitimate son of a prostitute (11:1)
- Rejected by his brothers and exiled (11:2-3)
- Honored God (11:9 – 11)
- He had a proper perspective of God’s role in Israel’s past
 - o 11:21, 23-24
- v. 29 He is filled with the Spirit of God.

- Jephthah's vow (was it rash or righteous?)
 - o initial read of text seems to indicate that his daughter was killed and offered to God.
 - o However, there is an interpretation that sees this offering as fulfilled in her serving a celibate life of service in the Tabernacle
 - "burnt offering" is literally an offering of ascension or going up in smoke.
 - v.40 "Lament" literally means to "recount". Same word is used in song of Deborah (5:10) "tell of it"
 - there were women who served in these types of rolls who (it is conjectured) lived lives of celibacy (1 Sam. 2:22)
 - The fact that she specifically mourns her virginity lends weight to the idea that she wasn't going to die, but continue to live.
 - while dying is important to sacrifices (especially atonement sacrifices) it isn't the essence of all sacrifices.
 - The dedication of the first-born to God at Exodus was fulfilled in different ways
 - Egyptians to destruction
 - Israelites to the service of the Lord (redeemed by Levites)

Samson

- He is born into a lifelong Nazirite vow. He did not choose it.
 - o Stipulations:
 - Do not drink wine
 - Do not touch a corpse or a grave
 - Do not cut your hair
- He marries a Philistine
 - o v. 14:2-3
 - o v. 4 Despite the wicked intentions of Samson God was still sovereignly in control
 - o v. 7 "she was right in Samson's eyes"
 - o vv. 8-9 Breaks one of the stipulations of the vow
 - Display his utter disregard for his vow by giving to his parents
 - o v.10 The feast is literally a "drinking party" and would have primarily been about drinking wine. While it does not explicitly say, it can be assumed that Samson drank.
- Samson defeats the Philistines
 - o v. 18 Samson at least recognizes that God is behind his power
 - Echoes of the complaints of the Israelites in the wilderness.
- Delilah and the Death of Samson
 - o She tricks him into revealing the source of his power.
 - was his hair truly the source of his power?
 - o in cutting his hair, the last remaining stipulation of the vow is broken.
 - o In this final betrayal of God, Samson is handed over to his enemies.
 - o In his defeat, the Philistines exalt their false gods over Yahweh (16:23-24)
 - o Samson calls upon the Lord one last time
 - 16:28

Hebrews 11:32-34

- How do we make sense of the inclusion of Samson, Barak, Gideon, and Jephthah in this list?
- Hebrews 10:19-23

Ch. 17 – 21 form an epilogue assessing the state of the Israelites:

See chart on page 467

Ruth

Author: Unknown. Jewish tradition ascribes it to Samuel. However, this is unlikely due to the fact that Samuel died before David became king.

Date: Likely during or shortly after reign of David which began in 1010 BC.

This story complements Judges by providing a contrast, a refreshing oasis of righteousness amidst a desert of rebellion.

Where Judges focuses on epic “important” events and action, Ruth is a small, humble story.

Act 1

Introduced to the main characters: Naomi, Ruth

- It is a time of famine.
 - o Famine was a stated consequence of breaking the Sinaitic Covenant.
 - o Judges 21:25 “In those days there was no king in Israel. Everyone did what was right in his own eyes.”
 - We will see how this seeming humble story stands in stark contrast to this final condemning statement in Judges.
- 1:14-16 Orpah makes the seemingly smart choice (in worldly wisdom). However, verses 15 and 16 show that it was not wisdom, but folly. This was a theological matter as many choices are.
 - o Orpah seemed to love Naomi, but she did not trust God.
 - o Ruth, loved Naomi but also trusted the true God.
- It is interesting to note that Naomi and her family did what may have seemed “wise” in the eyes of the world in going to Moab to flee the famine, yet it ended in tragedy. However, God still uses this in his Sovereign command.
- We see the faithful choice of Ruth and the heartbrokenness of Naomi.
 - o 1:16
 - o Naomi - V. 19-21. Naomi - means “Pleasant” but she wants to change the name to Mara which means “Bitter”
 - Echoes of Job 1:21

- But act 1 ends with a hint of hope. 1: 22 “they came to Bethlehem at the beginning of the barley harvest”.
 - o Naomi left in famine and is returning at the time of the harvest.

Act 2

Introduction of Boaz 2:8-12

- We see Boaz’ kindness and mercy. He protects her and provides for her.
- 2:12 Boaz recognizes her faithfulness to God.
- 2:13 we see a picture of the inclusiveness of the Gospel.
 - o One who is not of the fold is brought in and shown mercy.
- 2:20 Boaz is her kinsman redeemer.
- 3:9 Parallel in Ez 16:8
- 3:13. The promise of redemption

Act 3 The redemption

- 4:5. Wise trickery
- Ruth is redeemed.
- Naomi is restored 4:14-17
 - o “A son has been born to Naomi” This marks a turnaround from Naomi’s despair in 1:20-21
- 4:18-22 set this seemingly smaller story into a much grander context. It goes beyond a quaint love story and actually turns into a remedy for the issues presented in the book of Judges.
- However, the impact of the story doesn’t just end with David.
 - o Gen. 3:15; 22:18, 2 Sam. 7:12-14, Is 9:67, Matt. 1:5