



Hebrews 4:12 "For the word of God is living and effective and sharper than any double-edged sword, penetrating as far as the separation of soul and spirit, joints and marrow. It is able to judge the ideas and thoughts of the heart."

Course Text: Judges

The book of Judges covers the period of time from the death of Joshua until the birth of Samuel the prophet. That is about 250 years from approximately 1375 to 1125 B.C. What you will see as you read, is the Israelites gradually get worse and worse, from a time when one tribe assisted another, and they all worshiped God, to a point when one tribe has to go to war with another just to punish a criminal act, and a tribe sets up an idol of silver and calls it God.

The Hebrew word used here for "judges" is *shaphat*. And although it does mean someone who holds trials and determines guilt or innocence, it meant something different back then. A judge in this time period was a leader. Sometimes he would lead just a small group of people, sometimes a tribe, or several tribes. They called them judges because they led by wisdom, by example, and by convincing others to follow. They had no governmental authority other than what their personal influence allowed them to have.



Suggested methodology:

1. Let the students have a copy of the lesson well before the class meets. (Perhaps the previous meeting)
2. The students read the Bible book and answer the questions in this lesson before the group meets.
3. At the class meeting allow time for greetings and fellowship. (Save most of this for the end)
4. Take prayer requests (Try to keep it from becoming a competition to see who has the most or the worst.)
5. Pray (The idea here is to leave our troubles with God so we can give His word our attention with a clear mind.)
6. Discuss the questions on the page 9. Let those who prefer to listen, listen. My answers, when provided, are just one opinion; you may have a better answer. It might be good to establish the norm that only those who have actually read the book should discuss it aloud.
7. Discuss whatever other questions people have on their mind about the Judges.
8. Close in prayer (It is best to call on others to pray, but try to get their permission ahead of time.)
9. Fellowship (Leave this as open ended as possible for the time and place you meet.)

Depending on the number of people, this class is expected to take about two hours.

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JUDGES Chapters 1 to 7

Introduction - Read Chapters 1 to 3 of Judges and answer the following questions.

[1A] Did the Benjaminites drive the Jebusites out of Jerusalem?

[1B] Did Mannasseh drive out the Canaanites?

[1C] Did Ephraim drive out the Canaanites?

The Back Pew - Jeff Larson



After King Adoni-Bezek was captured his big toes and thumbs were cut off leaving him to reflect on his new life. **Ju 1:5**

[2A] According to the God's angel or messenger, what commandment did the Israelites break?

[2B] After Joshua died, and the people who knew him died, what did the people do?

[2C] When the Israelites got into trouble and called on God for help who did He raise up? _____

[3A] How did Ehud kill Eglon, King of Moab? _____

[3B] How did Shamgar kill six hundred Philistines? _____

Deborah - Read Judges 4 and 5 and answer the following questions.

[4A] Who was Deborah? _____

[4B] What was Sisera doing when Jael killed him? _____

[5A] Is chapter 5 of Judges as historical account, song, poem or essay? _____

Gideon - Read Judges 6 through 7 and answer the following questions.

[6A] What happened when the angel's staff touched Gideon's offering? _____

[6B] What did Gideon do to the altar of Baal? _____

[6C] What name did they give Gideon after this? _____

[7A] How did he decide which ones to send in the first group.

[7B] How did he decide which ones to send in the second group.

JUDGES Chapters 1 to 7

[1A] Did the Benjaminites drive the Jebusites out of Jerusalem? No. Judges 1:21

[1B] Did Mannasseh drive out the Canaanites? No. Judges 1:27-28

[1C] Did Ephraim drive out the Canaanites? No. Judges 1:29

[2A] According to the God's angel or messenger, what commandment did the Israelites break?

To not make a league, alliance, covenant or agreement with the people of the land. Judges 2:2

[2B] After Joshua died, and the people who knew him died, what did the people do?

Forsaking God they did evil, worshiping the god's of the Canaanites. Judges 2:11-13

[2C] When the Israelites got into trouble and called on God for help who did He raise up?

Judges. Judges 2:16.

[3A] How did Ehud kill Eglon , King of Moab? Stabbed him in the belly with a dagger. Judges 3:21-22.

Because Ehud was left handed, the dagger was on the wrong thigh where apparently the guards did not search for weapons.

[3B] How did Shamgar kill six hundred Philistines? With and ox goad or farming tool. Judges 3:31

[4A] Who was Deborah? a prophetess, wife of

Lapidoth, a judge of Israel Judges 4:4

[4B] What was Sisera doing when Jael killed him?

Sleeping Judges 4:21

[5A] Is chapter 5 of Judges as historical account, song, poem or essay? Song Judge 5:1

[6A] What happened when the angel's staff touched Gideon's offering? It was burned up. Judges 6:21.

[6B] What did Gideon do to the altar of Baal? He destroyed it. Judges 6:25-27

[6C] What name did they give Gideon after this? Jerubbaal Judges 6:32

[7A] How did he decide which ones to send in the first group.

He told them if they were afraid to go home. Judges 7:3

[7B] How did he decide which ones to send in the second group.

The ones who knelt down to drink he sent home. Judges 7:6-7



JUDGES Chapters 8 to 14

Gideon Continued - Read Judges 8 through 9 and answer the following questions.

[8A] When the men of Ephraim complained about not being included in Gideon's army how did Gideon satisfy them? _____

[8B] When they tried to make Gideon the ruler of Israel, what did he do?

[9A] When Gideon's son, Abimelech, tried to kill all his brothers, how did Jotham escape? _____

[9B] How did Abimelech die? _____

Jephthah - Read Judges chapters 10 through 12 and answer the following questions.

[10A] When Israel cried for help what did God tell them to do?

[11A] Why did Jephthah's brothers throw him out of the house? _____

[12A] How is Jephthah's answer in Judges 12:1-4 different than Gideon's answer to the same accusation in Judges 8:1-3? _____

Samson - Read Judges chapters 13 through 14 and answer the following questions:

[13A] When the angel predicted Samson's birth what did he say about a razor?

[13B] What caused Samson to move from place to place? _____

[14A] How did Samson kill the lion? _____

[14B] How did Samson's wife get him to tell the answer to the riddle? _____



----- ANSWERS -----

JUDGES Chapters 8 to 14

[8A] When the men of Ephraim complained about not being included in Gideon's army how did Gideon satisfy them? He flattered them. Judges 8:1-3

[8B] When they tried to make Gideon the ruler of Israel, what did he do?
He turned them down and told them the Lord would rule over them. Judges 8:22-23

[9A] When Gideon's son, Abimelech, tried to kill all his brothers, how did Jotham escape?
He hid. Judges 9:5

[9B] How did Abimelech die?
A woman dropped a rock on his head, so he committed suicide Judges 9:53-57

[10A] When Israel cried for help what did God tell them to do?
Ask the false gods they had been worshipping for help. Judges 10:14

[11A] Why did Jephthah's brothers throw him out of the house?
Because he was the son of a harlot or prostitute. Judges 11:1-3

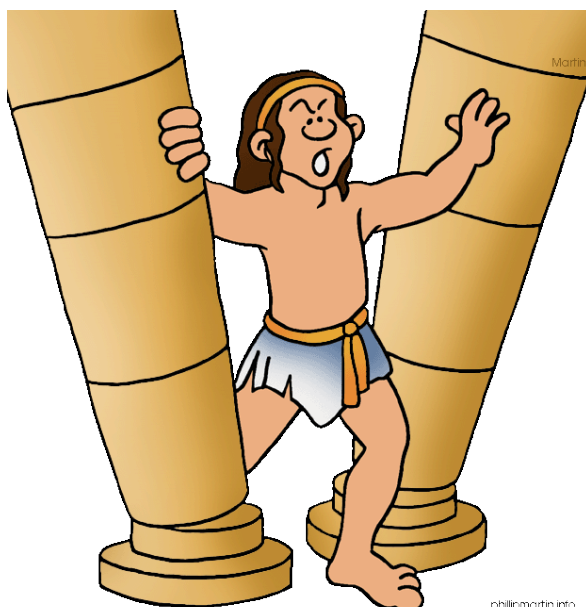
[12A] How is Jephthah's answer in Judges 12:1-4 different than Gideon's answer to the same accusation in Judges 8:1-3?
Gideon flattered, Jephthah attacked.

[13A] When the angel predicted Samson's birth what did he say about a razor?
It was not to touch his head. Judges 13:5 In other words he was not to have his hair cut, ever.

[13B] What caused Samson to move from place to place? The Spirit of the Lord Judges 13:25.

[14A] How did Samson kill the lion? With his bare hands. Judges 14:6

[14B] How did Samson's wife get him to tell the answer to the riddle?
She cried seven days. Judges 14:16-17



JUDGES Chapters 15 to 21

Samson Continued - Read Judges chapters 15 through 16 and answer the following questions:

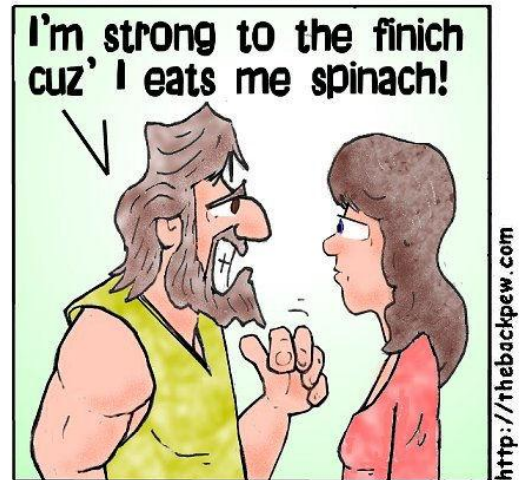
[15A] When Samson came back for his wife and she was already married to someone else what did her father offer in her place? _____

[15B] What did Samson use to kill a thousand Philistines? _____

[16A] Who cut Samson's hair right before the Spirit left Samson? _____

[16B] How did Samson cause the building to collapse on the Philistines?

THE BACK PEW - Jeff LARSON



Samson and Delilah **Judges 16:5-21**

The Idol of Dan - Read Judges Chapters 17-18 and answer the following questions:

[17A] What did Micah's mother have made out of some of the silver? _____

[17B] What made Micah think God would be good to him? _____

[18A] What happened to Micah's image? _____

[18B] What happened to Micah's personal priest? _____

Benjamin Almost Destroyed - Read Judges Chapters 19-21 and answer the following questions:

[19A] What was the man doing when his wife was kidnapped. _____

[19B] What did the man do when he found his wife raped to death?

[20A] What did Israel do about it? _____

[20B] What happened to the tribe of Benjamin when they refused? _____

[21A] How did they find 400 wives for the surviving Benjamites?

[21B] How did they get wives for the remaining Benjamites? (Over the 400 above)

JUDGES Chapters 15 to 21

[15A] When Samson came back for his wife and she was already married to someone else what did her father offer in her place? Her little sister Judges 15:2

[15B] What did Samson use to kill a thousand Philistines? the jaw bone of an ass Judges 15:15

[16A] Who cut Samson's hair right before the Spirit left Samson? a man Delilah called Judges 16:19.

[16B] How did Samson cause the building to collapse on the Philistines?

He knocked down the two pillars or posts in the middle with his bare hands. Judges 16:28-30.

[17A] What did Micah's mother have made out of some of the silver? an image, idol, or false god. Judges 17:4

[17B] What made Micah think God would be good to him? He hired his own personal priest. Judges 17:9-13

[18A] What happened to Micah's image? It was stolen and set up in Dan. Judges 18:18-31

[18B] What happened to Micah's personal priest? He left when he got a better offer. Judges 18:18-21

[19A] What was the man doing when his wife was kidnapped.

Celebrating (probably getting drunk) Judges 19:22-25

[19B] What did the man do when he found his wife raped to death?

He cut her in twelve pieces and sent the pieces to the leaders of the tribes of Israel Judges 19:29-30

A concubine in this context is a wife whose children will not inherit anything from their father.

She had the rights of a wife, such as they were, but her children had no standing in the family.

[20A] What did Israel do about it? They told the tribe of Benjamin to give up the men who had killed the woman. Jdg 20:13

[20B] What happened to the tribe of Benjamin when they refused? The were almost wiped out. Judges 20:20-48

[21A] How did they find 400 wives for the surviving Benjamites?

They destroyed a city of people who had not participated in the earlier battles and saved 400 young unmarried women for the Benjamites Jdgs 21:8-12

[21B] How did they get wives for the remaining Benjamites?

They gave them permission to kidnap them at a festival celebration. Judges 21:19-23



(1) What are the differences between Judges chapter 4 and Judges chapter 5? It tells the same story in both chapters. Why are they different?

Think & Pray _____

(2) In Judges 6:33-40 Gideon puts out a fleece to test the Lord. Do you think we should do this kind of thing today? Why or why not?

Think & Pray _____

(3) In Judges 11:29-40 Jephthah apparently killed and burned his daughter as a sacrifice to God. Some people say that this is just a figure of speech. That he really just took his daughter to the priests to be a servant to them, the same way Hannah took Samuel to Eli in I Samuel 1:24-28. Others say, no, it literally happened and is an indication of how wicked the Israelites were becoming. Which do you think and why?

Think & Pray _____

(5) How would you describe Judges to someone who has not read it?

Think & Pray _____

(6) What verse or passage from Judges would you recommend be memorized?

Think & Pray _____

(7) What questions do you have for your classmates?

Think & Pray _____

(Question 1) **STORY & SONG** Chapter 4 is the account of the unnamed chronicler who wrote that part of Judges. It gives the historical account of the victory they had. Chapter 5, except for the last sentence in the last verse, is a song that Deborah and Barak sang at the time of the victory. Chapter 4 is historical narrative. Chapter 5 is poetry. They include slightly different details of the same event. This is something that happens more than most people notice in the Old Testament. Just like we have four different accounts of the Gospel in the New Testament, the people in the Old Testament included the written accounts of more than one witness. Sometimes it is in the same book, as in this case. Sometimes the parallel accounts will be in two different books. We'll point some of these out in later lessons.

(2) **GODLY GUIDANCE?** I am not ready to say do not do this ever, but if it is done at all, it should be done with extreme caution. There is a lot more to this story, than just flipping a coin. Gideon was asking the impossible, or at least the nearly impossible. It is as if you flip a coin and say God if you want me to do this you will make it land on the edge. Gideon was dealing with some very serious issues that involved not only risking his life, but the lives of many others. He had a willing heart but was just uncertain. Most of us want to try this kind of guidance, not because we are uncertain, but because we are reluctant. Almost all of the times the Scriptures are clear enough, we are just being cowardly.

(3) **DEDICATION OR MURDER?** The way I usually resolve something like this is look at it through the lens of 1st Corinthians 10:6 "Now these things happened as examples for us, so that we would not crave evil things as they also craved." The things that are reported about people in the Old Testament are told to teach the reader a lesson. So if there is more than one way to understand something in the Old Testament, I just ask myself which one teaches us a Godly lesson? Which one teaches us something that Jesus teaches? Certainly with either interpretation the lesson is the same as the one in the Sermon on the Mount that we are not to be hasty about making vows. Understanding the story to mean he really sacrificed her would teach us that God's people were becoming more wicked. This would agree with my understanding of the book as a whole, and teach us that cultures, tribes and nations, like people, become more wicked over time, if they are not submitted to God. I can not find any lesson to be learned with the interpretation that she was simply taken to serve in the temple. I could be wrong.

(4) **JUDGES SUMMARY** The book of Judges covers the period of time from the death of Joshua until the birth of Samuel the prophet. That is about 250 years from approximately 1375 to 1125 B.C. What we saw as we read, is the Israelites gradually got worse and worse, from a time when one tribe assisted another, and they all worshiped God, to a point when one tribe has to go to war with another just to punish a criminal act, and a tribe sets up an idol of silver and calls it God.

(5) **A REMEMBRANCE** I selected Judges 5:31 "Thus let all Your enemies perish, O LORD; But let those who love Him be like the rising of the sun in its might." Eventually Satan will be destroyed.