

Introduction

This lesson covers an important chapter in the history of the nation of Israel as God continues to faithfully care for His people and fulfill His promises to them. The book of Judges highlights three things—Israel's unfaithfulness to God's covenant, which jeopardizes their national identity and purpose, God's continuing grace to them, and their need for a righteous king. The book of Ruth shows God's grace to a righteous family leading to the gift of a godly king.

This semester we are memorizing Isaiah 40. This week's verse is Isaiah 40:16–17...

“Even Lebanon is not enough to burn, nor its beasts enough for a burnt offering.

All the nations are as nothing before Him, they are regarded by Him as less than nothing and meaningless.”

Day One

Read *Judges 1:3–7*; ***The Downward Spiral of Judges, Part 1***

1. From your study last week, how does the book of Joshua relate to the Mosaic Covenant (Exodus 19–24), specifically, God's instruction to the people to be obedient to His law (Exodus 19:5), and their agreement (Exodus 19:8)?
 - a. Joshua ended with a warning to the people to put away their idols. How does that prepare the reader for what follows in the book of Judges?
2. According to Judges 1, was the continued conquest of Canaan successful? Explain your answer.
3. In Judges 2:1–5, how did Yahweh respond to the Israelites' disobedience and idolatry?
 - a. How did the people respond to this judgment? Do you think they were sincere?
4. From the following verses, identify different elements in Israel's cycle of sin.
 - a. Judges 2:11–13
 - b. Judges 2:14–15
 - c. Judges 2:16–18
 - d. Judges 2:19
 - e. Judges 3:9

5. From Judges 3:5–7, summarize the sin of the Israelites.

Day Two

Read Selected Scriptures; *The Downward Spiral of Judges, Part 2*

For each of the following texts from Judges, identify the particular judge and the details of that tenure.

Passage	Judge	Oppressor	Key Details of Deliverance	Was this Judge a positive or negative influence, and why?
3:7–11				
3:12–30				
4:1–5:31				
6:1–9:57				
10:6–12:7				
13:1–16:31				

Day Three

Read Selected Scriptures; *The Climax of Depravity*

1. From yesterday's study of selected judges, identify some reasons for this tragic and escalating downward spiral of sin in Israel.
 - a. How do believers today allow other things to take the place of preeminence that God desires for Himself?
 - b. What idols might there be in your life that take away your focus on God and devotion to Him?

2. From Judges 17:6, 18:1, 19:1, and 21:25, why do you think the author was emphasizing the lack of a king in Israel's life?
3. These texts illustrate Israel's abandonment of God's covenant and their lack of attention to Moses' instructions in Deuteronomy 28, which Joshua reiterated in his farewell address in Joshua 23:1-16. What had the people been taught about the blessings of obedience and the consequences of disobedience?
 - a. How does this reminder encourage or convict you about how you are living today?

Day Four

Read Selected Scriptures; Applying Judges

1. In Judges 21:25, what phrase closes out the book?
 - a. Why do you think the author was concerned with making this understanding clear?
 - b. Do you see evidence of this in the world or in the church today? What are some of the consequences?
 - c. How can believers guard themselves against this?
2. Judges chronicled Israel's moral failure as they disobeyed God's specific covenant instructions and turned away from Him to the idolatry of the Canaanites. What application is there for believers today in the book of Judges?
3. How can you respond to God's mercy and grace as you live among unbelievers?

Day Five

Read Ruth 1-4; The Redeemer

1. What is significant about when the book of Ruth takes place, and Ruth's nationality?
2. Using a dictionary or Bible resource, define the word "redeemer."
 - a. According to Leviticus 25:23-32, how did Boaz fulfill the requirements of being a kinsman redeemer?
3. Contrast the theme of a redeemer in Ruth with the cycle of disobedience, judgment, and grace in the book of Judges. How do both books reveal a message of hope for Israel?
4. How does the human example of Boaz and Ruth enrich your understanding of God as Redeemer?

- a. Using a concordance or other Bible resource, find two other verses where God identifies Himself as the Redeemer of His elect and of all creation. Why is redemption necessary?

5. In Ruth 4:18–22, what is the significance of the genealogy?

6. What would we lose if the book of Ruth were not included in the Bible?

7. Consider how you can follow Ruth's example of devotion to Yahweh and share with your group how you want to grow in your devotion to the Lord, along with specific steps to be more obedient to the Word.