

DAILY BIBLE READING PLAN

03-26-2023 // WEEK 12 NOTES

This past week, you've finished **Judges 3 - 21**. Here are a few highlights:

- **Judges Chapter 3:** The **first judge** was Othniel, Caleb's younger brother. Then Ehud (his story is fraught with intrigue). Then Shamgar, about whom we know little.
- **Chapters 4 - 5:** Deborah is raised as a judge, an office given to a woman. She is a prophet, judge, and "mother of Israel." A powerful figure. Along with Barak and Jael, Israel is delivered. A great story and fun read.
- **Chapter 6-8:** God raises up **Gideon** against the Midianites. Notice how cowardly he is, yet **God sees him as a "mighty warrior."** He starts with 32,000 men and God whittles down the army to 300. God never needs numbers to accomplish his will. Gideon becomes stronger and stronger but ultimately pride takes over his life (as is so often the case) and he ends poorly.
- **Chapter 9:** Abimelech, Gideon's son, not chosen as a judge. But the story is told to **emphasize once again Israel's sins** and how evil the entire culture had become.
- **Chapter 10:** God raises up Tola and Jair. We don't know much about them, but they were used as God's agents of deliverance for Israel in their sin. Then the chapter concludes with further evil from Israel and more oppression.
- **Chapter 11 - 12:** God raises up **Jephthah**, the son of a prostitute, who was excluded from his own family and raises up an army to follow him. **Take note of his tragic, rash vow.** It was either stupid and he followed through with it with his daughter, or she was condemned to perpetual virginity. Either way, it makes little sense – especially in light of his knowledge of the Law and Israel's history (as is seen in the early parts of the chapter). The chapter ends with Jephthah's clash with Ephraim and the "Shibboleth" (a word used even today to determine if you are a part of a certain crowd or not).
- **Chapter 13:** The birth of **Samson**. A miraculous birth, another evidence of how a barren woman cries out to God for a child and he grants her the desires of her heart.

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- **Chapter 14: Samson's marriage to a Canaanite woman.** He had a proclivity for many women. And many other godless virtues.
- **Chapter 15:** Samson defeats the Philistines as a deliverer. **Samson is almost a picture of Israel itself** – God using a very flawed man (nation) for his purposes – as he does us all!! One of the reasons I love God's Word (and a key difference from other religion's holy scripts) is that **it shows the flaws, sins, and decadence of its major characters.** God never hides their sin. But he always shows how he is using it (and us) for his purposes.
- **Chapter 16: Samson and Delilah.** A very famous story. Yet another example of Samson's flaws for women, how easily he was manipulated by them, and how dastardly they were with him. Samson lost his strength and eyes through Delilah's trickery. But he had the last word in the temple of Dagon. Samson is used as God's instrument of judgment on the evil, wicked, and godless Philistines.
- **Chapter 17 - 18: Micah and the Levite.** This chapter shows yet another example of Israel's degradation. A wealthy man named Micah made his own gods, hired his own priests, and did his own worship (in his way). **It was contrary to God's Law!**

Also in these chapters is **the story of the tribe from which Dan** that didn't drive out the Canaanites and went to find another land of unsuspecting, weak people to steal theirs. They do so and take Micah's "priest" (who used to be a Levite, therefore he couldn't be a priest!) with them. Yet another example of breaking God's law and falling into a moral abyss. Infidelity, theft, murder, disobedience, etc all consuming God's chosen. Again revealing human nature: first abhor, then endure, and finally embrace sin.

The rest of the book of Judges is more of the same. It sets the stage for the need of a moral authority, a king, even though God had made it clear in his law that he never wanted an earthly king but for him to be King over them all.

This next week you'll move from Judges to the last chosen judge by God: **Samuel**. He comes to the center stage as God's chosen who will usher in the first king: Saul.

So, if you've lost the storyline, here it is again: Abraham to Isaac to Jacob to Joseph to Moses to Joshua

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to the Judges to Samuel.

Do you see it? It's salvation history culminated in the coming of Jesus. That's what the Bible is all about. I hope you're enjoying it. And, more importantly, that it is now becoming alive for you in every way.

Much Grace,
David