

JUDGES: Introduction

After reading about the victory and success of God's people in the book of Joshua, Judges will likely feel very different.

Although God has led His people into the Promised Land to conquer and settle it, they fail to fully obey His commands. Instead of ridding the land of enemies and idols, God's people repeatedly fail to keep the covenant.

But God is faithful. He sends a series of judges to lead and deliver His people. (It's important to note that these judges were more like tribal/military leaders than our common understanding of the word, and they led only portions of Israel rather than the entire nation.)

Judges tells the story of Israel's downward spiral into sin and chaos. In a series of cyclical stories, God's people **(1)** disobey and rebel, **(2)** are oppressed by an enemy, **(3)** cry out to God for help, and then **(4)** are sent a judge to lead and deliver them into a **(5)** time of rest. Bookended with an introduction and an epilogue, this pattern plays out over and over throughout the book:

Judges 1:1–3:6 — Introduction

Judges 3:7–16:31 — Israel in the time of the judges

Judges 17–21 — Epilogue

Get the most out of your reading of Judges by remembering these ideas:

- As you read Judges, you will likely find yourself wondering how Israel could possibly be so sinful after all God had done for them. Let **Israel's descent into sin** lead you to think about the nature of sin in your own life and in the world.
- Although the judges were sent by God to deliver Israel, they are far from perfect. Try to avoid reading their stories as examples to follow, but let the stories of Israel's judges lead you to worship **the only true Hero of the Bible**, Jesus!
- One of the purposes of Judges is to **set the scene for the coming kingdom of Israel**. Notice how the book draws attention to Israel's need for godly leadership and a True King.