



JUDGES & RUTH

APRIL 2017

Read on your own or with others,
which ever you prefer.

This leaflet is just a brief overview of the 'big picture' of these books. If you have been reading the Bible for some time you will be aware there is much more to them than you'll find here.

If you are new to reading the Bible don't worry too much if there are details you do not quite get at the moment - focus on the 'big picture'.

JUDGES – INTRODUCTION

God has saved the Israelites from slavery in Egypt and brought them across the Red Sea, through the desert and into the land of Canaan. The battles have been fought and cities and towns have been built. Surely now there will be a time of peace and prosperity as God's people enjoy what God has given them worshipping him as their God and deliverer. However, that's not what happens...

OUTLINE

CHAPTERS 1 AND 2: THE PROBLEM

Judges 2:1-2 is a very important verse in helping us to understand the book of Judges. Although Israel has obeyed God in conquering the land of Canaan, their obedience is only partial. Many of the peoples, and with them their sinful practices, remain in the land.

In chapter 2 we see a cycle that repeats itself through the whole book.

- Israel will turn away from God and worship idols.
- God will judge them and hand them over to their enemies.
- The people will cry out for God's help.
- God will raise up a deliverer, a judge who will lead them and bring salvation.
- In the next generation – Israel will turn away from God and worship idols...

CHAPTERS 3 TO 16: THE JUDGES

In these chapters we meet a number of different judges. They are all very different people. Some are heroes that we can look up to; others are strange and puzzling characters. Some we are told a great deal about; others only get a passing mention.

They are clearly flawed characters who do not always get things right and often get things very wrong. This can make for painful reading, but it is also an encouraging reminder that God can use imperfect people like you and me.

The thing that binds each of them together is that they all point forward to the Lord Jesus Christ because they, like him, were raised up by God to rescue his people. Yet they, unlike him, were imperfect and therefore could not be the ultimate saviour.

CHAPTERS 17–21: THE NATION IN CHAOS

In these chapters we are told four times that Israel had no king. The result is that everyone does what they want without reference to God. What we find here is a nation in total moral chaos. The result is horrific and shocking; that's the point.

The book ends with a longing for a king. Not a king like other nations had, but an eternal king who could fulfil the terms of God's covenant and deliver the people from their greatest enemies – sin, death and Satan. This is our need today.

RUTH – INTRODUCTION

The events of this book occurred during the time of the judges. There is a contrast here between the bloodshed of Judges and the heart-warming romance of Ruth. Yet, both leave us looking forward to the coming king and ultimately the Lord Jesus Christ.

CHAPTER 1: COMMITMENT AND FAITH

Here we see how Ruth, a Moabite, ends up living in Bethlehem in Israel. Ruth's decision in vv 16-17 is massive. Humanly speaking she was leaving home, family and any hope of provision. However, it is a choice fuelled by her faith that Naomi's God will care for her.

CHAPTERS 2: GOD PROVIDES

In this chapter we find Ruth as one of the poor people in the land following the harvesters through the field and picking up the parts of the crops that they hadn't harvested. The farmer is a kind and generous man called Boaz and Ruth comes under his protection (Ruth 2:8).

CHAPTERS 3–4: GOD RESCUES

Boaz is not just any farmer; he is a close relative who later marries Ruth. By doing this he redeems both Ruth and Naomi, securing their inheritance and providing for them. As a redeemer Boaz is a picture of Jesus who rescues us and secures our inheritance in eternity.

At the end of the book a son is born to Ruth. The significance of this child is given to us in the final verses. He is the grandfather of David, later king of Israel, from whose line would come Jesus, the eternal king.

ASKING THE QUESTIONS THE BIBLE WANTS YOU TO ASK

What does this book teach you about Jesus? (Luke 24:45-47)

What does this book teach you about yourself? (James 1:23 & 2 Tim 3:16-17)

How were you encouraged? (2 Tim 3:16-17)

How were you corrected? (Romans 15:4)

What difference do the truths of this book make in your life (Matthew 7:24-27)