

Class Schedule

Class: Joshua, Judges, Ruth
Day & Time: Wednesdays from 7:00pm to 7:45pm
Beginning: January 5th 2022
Ending: June 29th 2022

<u>Date</u>	<u>Week</u>	<u>Chapters</u>
Jan 5,12	1-2	Joshua Introduction & Chapters 1-3: Preparation for war
Jan 19,26	3-4	Joshua Chapters 4-8: Sanctification & Beginning the Battle
Feb 2,9	5-6	Joshua Chapters 9-19: Conquering the Nations & Dividing the Land
Feb 16,23	7-8	Joshua Chapters 20-22: Cities of refuge & altar of witness
Mar 2,9	9-10	Joshua Chapters 23-24: Joshua's last days
Mar 16,23	11-12	Judges Chapters 1 - 3: The reason for & beginning of the Judges
Mar 30, Apr 6	13-14	Judges Chapters 4 - 8: Deborah & Gideon
Apr 13,20	15-16	Judges Chapters 9 - 12: Abimelech & Jephthah
Apr 27, May 4	17-18	Judges Chapters 13 - 16: Samson
May 11,18	19-20	Judges Chapters 17 - 18: Micah's priests & Danite migration
May 25, Jun 1	21-22	Judges Chapters 19 - 21: War against Benjamin
Jun 8,15	23-24	Ruth Introduction & Chapters 1-2: Return to Bethlehem
Jun 22,29	25-26	Ruth Chapters 3-4: The kinsman redeemer

The Book of Joshua

Joshua, the first of the twelve historical books (Joshua—Esther), forges a link between the Pentateuch and the remainder of Israel's history. Through three major military campaigns, the people of Israel learn a crucial lesson under Joshua's capable leadership: victory comes through faith in God and obedience to His word, rather than through numerical or military superiority.

This theme is underscored by the name of the book itself. Joshua's name, which means "Yahweh is Salvation," is symbolic of the fact that although he is the leader of Israel during the conquest, the Lord is the Conqueror.

Author

Jewish tradition assigns authorship of this book to Joshua himself, and there is little doubt that portions of the book are to be ascribed to him (24:26). Possibly some narratives were added later, however, such as Othniel's capture of Kirjath Sepher (15:13–19), Dan's migration to the north (19:47), and the account of Joshua's death and burial (24:29–33). In addition, the recurring phrase "to this day" (5:9; 13:13; 15:63) indicates a time of writing later than the events themselves.

Date

While a precise date for the composition of Joshua is uncertain, the events described take place between the beginning of the Conquest (1405 B.C.) and the death of Joshua (c. 1390 B.C.). If the later date of the Exodus is accepted (see Exodus), however, the beginning of the Conquest would date to c. 1250–1200 B.C.

Themes and Literary Structure

The book of Joshua divides neatly into two principal sections: chapters 1–12 record the Conquest; chapters 13–24 describe the assignment of tribal territories and the dispersal of the tribes throughout the Land of Promise.

The theme of conquest and occupation pervades the book of Joshua. The setting of the first five chapters begins east of the Jordan River as Joshua replaces Moses, and Israel crosses the Jordan on dry land and prepares for war. Like a wise general, Joshua utilizes a divide-and-conquer strategy. His campaign begins in central Canaan (chs. 6–8), thus preventing a massive Canaanite alliance against Israel. Then Joshua moves to southern Canaan (chs. 9, 10), and finally to northern Canaan (chs. 11, 12).

Though there are no direct messianic prophecies in the book, Joshua is clearly a type of Christ. His name *Yeshua* ("Yahweh is Salvation") is the Hebrew equivalent of the name "Jesus." In his role of triumphantly leading the people into their possessions, he foreshadows the One who will bring "many Sons to glory" (Heb. 2:10).

The scarlet cord, which provided safety for Rahab and her house (Josh. 2:17–21), portrays safety through the blood of Jesus (Heb. 9:19–22). Amazingly, this gentile woman is found in the genealogy of Jesus Christ (Matt. 1:5).¹

¹Thomas Nelson, Inc., *Nelson's complete book of Bible maps and charts: Old and New Testament [computer file], electronic ed., Logos Library System*, (Nashville: Thomas Nelson) 1997, c1996.

Outline of Joshua

1:1-9 Joshua's commission

- 1:1,2 The continuity of the task
- 1:3-9 Promise and Command

1:10 - 5:12 The entry into Canaan

- 1:10-18 Mobilization
- 2:1-24 The mission of the spies
- 3:1-13 Preparations for a holy war
- 3:14 - 4:18 The crossing of the Jordan
- 4:19 - 5:12 Encampment at Gilgal

5:13 - 12:24 The Conquest of Canaan

- 5:13-15 The Divine Commander
- 6:1 - 8:35 The first stage in the campaign: Jericho & Ai
- 9:1 - 10:43 The second stage: the campaign in the south
- 11:1-23 The third stage: the campaign in the north
- 12:1-24 List of conquered Canaanite kings

13:1 - 22:34 The Division of the land

- 13:1 - 19:51 Allocations to the tribes
- 20:1 - 21:45 Cities of refuge and cities of Levites appointed
- 22:1-34 Return of the eastern tribes and setting up of the altar of witness

23:1 - 24:33 Joshua's last days

- 23:1-16 First address
- 24:1-28 Second address and renewal of the covenant
- 24:29-33 Joshua's death and burial



Joshua Chapters 1-3

Explore It

1. What promise did the Lord give to Joshua? (1:5)
2. Who had been promised to inherit the land, according to the Lord? (1:6)
3. What specific steps did the Lord instruct Joshua to take in order to be successful? (1:7)
4. What did God say meditation on the Book of the Law would accomplish? (1:8)
5. How did the Israelite leaders respond to Joshua's instruction? (1:16)
6. Why was there fear in the hearts of the Canaanites? (2:9-11)
7. What did Rahab know about the God of Israel? (2:11)
8. What were the conditions of the deal between Rahab and the spies? (2:14-20)
9. Why was it necessary for the Israelite people to consecrate themselves? (3:5)
10. What happened when the priests who were carrying the ark reached the Jordan River? (3:15-16)

Get It

1. Why is it necessary to "be strong and courageous" when following God's way?
2. Why do you think God reminded Joshua of the relationship the Lord had with Moses?
3. What does it mean to meditate on God's Word?
4. Why do you think Rahab believed the God of Israel was God of heaven and earth?

Apply It

1. How can you meditate on God's word everyday this week?
2. What are some t\memorable things that remind you of what God has done for you?

Joshua Chapters 4-8

Explore It

1. Why were stones taken from the Jordan river bed? (4:6-7)
2. How did the people of Israel respond to the miracle God performed on their behalf? (4:14)
3. What memorial teaching did Joshua instruct the Israelites to teach their children? (4:21-22)
4. What reaction did the foreign kings have toward the news about Israel and their God? (5:1)
5. Why was it necessary to circumcise the Israelites? (5:4-7)
6. When did the manna stop appearing daily for the Israelites? (5:12)
7. Whom did Joshua meet outside of Jericho? (5:13-14)
8. What instructions did the Lord give to Joshua about defeating Jericho? (6:2-5)
9. What did the Israelites do differently on the seventh day of their siege of Jericho? (6:15)
10. What were the Israelites supposed to do with all of the wealth of Jericho? (6:19)
11. How did the Israelites trespass against God? (7:1)
12. Why were the spies confident of their ability to overcome the city of Ai? (7:3)
13. Why had the Lord allowed Israel to lose the battle with Ai? (7:10-12)
14. How did the Israelites repent of their sin before the Lord? (7:22-26)
15. What did Joshua do following Israel's victory over the city of Ai? (8:30-35)

Get It

1. Why was Rahab's life and family spared? How does this reflect God's providence?
2. What principle does the devotion of Jericho and its wealth follow?
3. Why did God allow so many to die because of Achan's sin?

Apply It

1. What promises of God are significant to you?
2. In what ways do people allow greed to creep into their lives?

Joshua Chapters 9-19

Explore It

1. How did the people of Canaan react when they heard about the defeat of Jericho and Ai? (9:1-2)
2. How was the Gibeonites reaction different from the rest of their neighbors? (9:3-4)
3. What mistake did the leaders of Israel make in dealing with the Gibeonites? (9:14)
4. How did Israel respond to when they discovered the Gibeonites deception? (9:16-18)
5. What did the Gibeonites do when the Amorites attacked them? (10:6)
6. What did Joshua do when he heard the five Amorite kings were hiding in a cave? (10:18-19)
7. Why was Joshua able to conquer the whole region in one campaign? (10:42)
8. What instructions did the Lord give about the land remaining to be conquered? (13:1-7)
9. How did Joshua know how to divide the land between the tribes of Israel? (14:1-5)
10. Why did Caleb and people of Judah approach Joshua at Gilgal? (14:6-15)
11. How long did Caleb have to wait before God fulfilled His promise to him? (14:10)
12. What was Joshua's response to the tribe of Joseph's request for more land? (17:17-18)
13. Of what did Joshua instruct the rest of the Israelites? (18:2-6)
14. Who gave Gad, Reuben, and half the tribe of Manasseh their inheritance of land? (18:7)
15. When did Joshua receive his inheritance in relation to the rest of Israel? (19:49)

Get It

1. Why do we sometimes rely on ourselves instead of seeking God's wisdom?
2. Why did God want them to hamstring the horses and burn the chariots?
3. Why couldn't Judah and Ephraim drive out the Jebusites and Canaanites respectively?
4. Why do you think the Israelites were slow to divide the land they had conquered?

Apply It

1. What is one characteristic of Joshua that you would like to have in your own life?

Joshua Chapters 20-22

Explore It

1. Why did the Lord tell the Israelites to designate cities of refuge? (20:2-3)
2. What role did elders play in a city of refuge? (20:4)
3. How long would a fleeing person remain in a city of refuge? (20:6)
4. Why did the heads of the Levites approach Eleazar, Joshua, and the heads of the other Israelite tribes? (21:2)
5. What specific promise did the Lord fulfill to Israel? (21:43)
6. What did the eastern tribes receive from Joshua before he sent them on their way? (22:5-6)
7. Why did the Israelites plan to go to war against the eastern tribes? (22:11-12)
8. What were the intentions of the eastern tribes when they built the altar on the Jordan River? (22:24-28)

Get It

1. Why were the cities given to the Levites not considered an inheritance?
2. Why was it important to establish places of refuge in Israel?
3. Where are the places of refuge for Christians today?

Apply It

1. How does the Lord provide protection for you now?

Joshua Chapters 23-24

Explore It

1. When did the events of this passage take place? (23:1)
2. Whom did Joshua credit for Israel's success in subduing their enemies? (23:3)
3. Of what promise did Joshua remind the Israelites? (23:4-5)
4. Why was it important for Israel to be courageous? (23:6-8)
5. What did Joshua say would happen to Israel if they turned away from the Lord? (23:12-13)
6. Why did Joshua remind Israel about the reliability of God's promises? (23:14-16)
7. Why did Joshua assemble all of the tribes of Israel at Shechem? (24:1-2)
8. What did the Lord give to Israel, and what did He ask in return? (24:13-14)
9. What choice did Joshua present before the Israelites? (24:15)
10. How did the Israelites respond to Joshua's challenge? (24:16-18)
11. What did Joshua do to help the Israelites remember their promise to the Lord? (24:25)
12. How would the stone that Joshua set up be a witness for or against Israel? (24:27)

Get It

1. Why do you think Joshua thought it was necessary to give Israel such a harsh warning?
2. How could Joshua speak for his entire household?
3. Why did Joshua say that the people of Israel were not able to serve the Lord?
4. When is it most helpful to be reminded of God's faithfulness?

Apply It

1. How do the exhortations of Joshua apply to our lives?
2. When did you make the decision to serve the Lord? Have you ever needed a reminder?

THE BOOK OF JUDGES

The book of Judges stands in stark contrast to Joshua. In Joshua an obedient people conquered the land through trust in the power of God. In Judges, however, a disobedient and idolatrous people are repeatedly oppressed by their enemies.

The Hebrew title of the book is *Shophetim*, meaning “judges.” The word not only carries the idea of maintaining justice and settling disputes but can also have the meaning “liberate” and “deliver.” First the judges deliver the people, then they rule and administer justice.

Author

The author of Judges is anonymous, but Samuel or one of his prophetic students may have written it. Jewish tradition contained in the Talmud attributes Judges to Samuel, and certainly he was the crucial link between the period of the judges and the period of the kings. It is likely that Samuel or one of his contemporaries compiled the book from oral and written sources.

Date

The approximate date of composition may be fixed by a number of statements in the book itself. The passages 18:31 and 20:27 show that Judges was written after the ark of the covenant was removed from Shiloh (cf. 1 Sam. 4:3–11). The repeated phrase “In those days there was no king in Israel” (17:6; 18:1; 19:1; 21:25) indicates that Judges was written after the commencement of the monarchy. The fact that the Jebusites were dwelling in Jerusalem “to this day” (1:21) means that it was written before 1004 B.C. when David took control of the city (2 Sam. 5:5–9).

The events covered in Judges range from c. 1380 B.C. to 1045 B.C. Evidently, the rulerships of some of the judges overlap because not all of them ruled over the entire land. Judges describes cycles of apostasy, oppression, and deliverance in the southern region (3:7–31), the central region (6:1–10:5), the eastern region (10:6–12:15), and the western region (13:1–16:31).

Themes and Literary Structure

The book of Judges is organized primarily along thematic rather than chronological lines. The book opens with a description of Israel’s deterioration, continues with seven cycles of oppression and deliverance, and concludes with two vivid examples of Israel’s depravity.

The theme of deterioration is highlighted as Judges begins with short-lived military successes after the death of Joshua but quickly turns to the repeated failure of the people to drive out their enemies. The primary reasons for their failure are a lack of faith and a lack of obedience to God (2:1–3).

Repeated deliverances by God are described in the middle section of the book (3:5–16:31) which presents seven cycles of apostasy, oppression, cry for deliverance, salvation, and rest. Israel vacillates between obedience and apostasy as the people continually fail to learn from their mistakes. Nevertheless, the times of rest and peace are longer than the times of bondage, and the monotony of Israel’s sins can be contrasted with the creativity of God’s methods of deliverance.

The depravity characteristic of the time of the judges is illustrated in chapters 17–21 with vivid examples of personal and tribal idolatry and immorality. The book as a whole illustrates the sad results of Israel’s disobedience as summarized in 21:25: “In those days *there was* no king in Israel; everyone did *what was* right in his own eyes.”

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²Thomas Nelson Publishers, *Nelson's Complete Book of Bible Maps & Charts : Old and New Testaments.*, Rev. and updated ed. (Nashville, Tenn.: Thomas Nelson, 1996).

The Period of the Judges

Events and Judges	Years
Israel serves Cushan-Rishathaim (3:7, 8)	8
Peace following Othniel's deliverance (3:7-11)	40
Israel serves Moab (3:12)	18
Peace follows Ehud's deliverance (3:12-30)	80
Shamgar delivers Israel from Philistines (3:31)	1
Israel serves Canaan (4:1-3)	20
Peace following deliverance by Deborah and Barak (4:1-5:31)	40
Israel serves Midian (6:1-6)	7
Peace following Gideon's deliverance (6:1-8:35)	40
Abimelech, king of Israel (9:1-57)	3
Tola's career (10:1, 2)	23
Jair's career (10:3-5)	22
Israel serves Ammon and Philistia (10:6-10)	18
Jephthah's career (10:6-12:7)	6
Ibzan's career (12:8-10)	7
Elon's career (12:11, 12)	10
Abdon's career (12:13-15)	8
Israel serves Philistia (13:1)	40
Samson's career (12:1-16:31)	20

OUTLINE OF JUDGES

Part One: The Deterioration of Israel and the Incomplete the Conquest of Canaan (1:1-3:4)

- I. The Failure of Israel to Complete the Conquest 1:1-36
 - A. Failure of Judah 1:1-20
 - B. Failure of Benjamin 1:21
 - C. Failure of Tribes of Joseph 1:22-29
 - D. Failure of Zebulun 1:30
 - E. Failure of Asher 1:31, 32
 - F. Failure of Naphtali 1:33
 - G. Failure of Dan 1:34-36
- II. The Judgment of God for Not Completing the Conquest 2:1-3:4
 - A. Angel Announces Judgment 2:1-5
 - B. Godly Generation Dies 2:6-10
 - C. Judgment of God Is Described 2:11-19
 - D. Enemy Is Left as a Test 2:20-3:4

Part Two: The Deliverance of Israel During the Seven Cycles (3:5-16:31)

- I. The Southern Campaign 3:5-31
 - A. The Judge Othniel 3:5-11

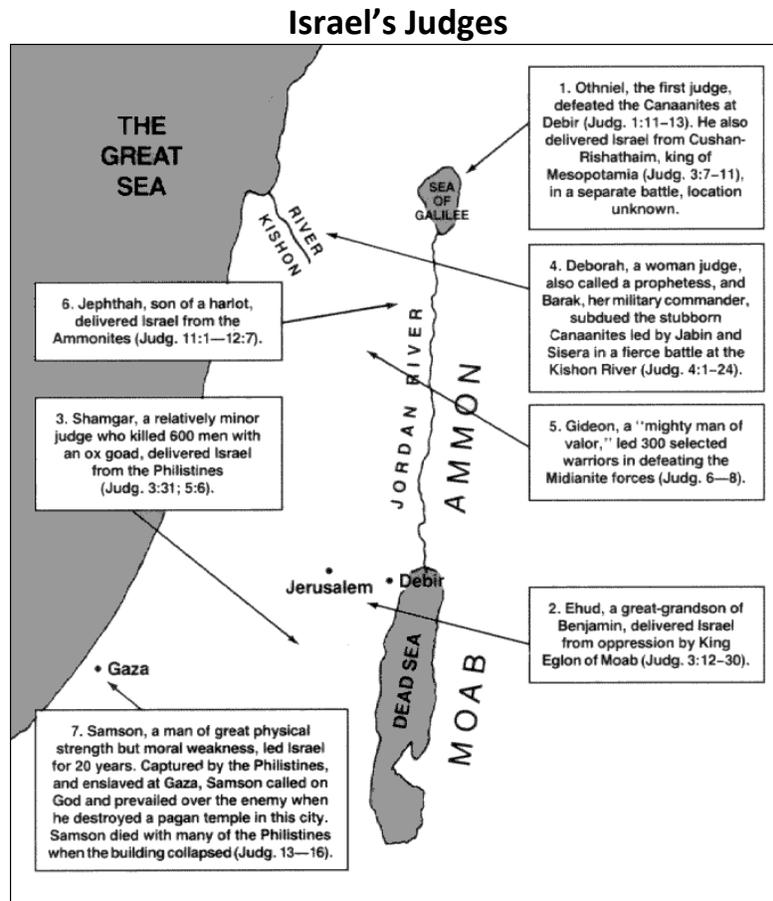
- B. The Judge Ehud 3:12–30
- C. The Judge Shamgar 3:31
- II. The Northern Campaign: The Judges Deborah and Barak 4:1–5:31
 - A. Deborah and Barak Are Called 4:1–11
 - B. Canaanites Are Defeated 4:12–24
 - C. Song of Deborah and Barak 5:1–31
- III. The Central Campaign 6:1–10:5
 - A. The Judge Gideon 6:1–8:32
 - B. The Judge Abimelech 8:33–9:57
 - C. The Judge Tola 10:1, 2
 - D. The Judge Jair 10:3–5
- IV. The Eastern Campaign: The Judge Jephthah 10:6–12:7
 - A. Israel Sins 10:6–18
 - B. Salvation: Jephthah 11:1–12:6
- V. The Second Northern Campaign 12:8–15
 - A. The Judge Ibzan 12:8–10
 - B. The Judge Elon 12:11, 12
 - C. The Judge Abdon 12:13–15
- VI. The Western Campaign: The Judge Samson 13:1–16:31
 - A. Miraculous Birth of Samson 13:1–25
 - B. Sinful Marriage of Samson 14:1–20
 - C. Judgeship of Samson 15:1–20
 - D. Failure of Samson 16:1–31

Part Three: The Depravity of Israel in Sinning Like the Canaanites (17:1–21:25)

- I. The Failure of Israel Through Idolatry 17:1–18:31
 - A. Example of Personal Idolatry 17:1–13
 - B. Example of Tribal Idolatry 18:1–31
- II. The Failure of Israel Through Immorality 19:1–30
 - A. Example of Personal Immorality 19:1–10
 - B. Example of Tribal Immorality 19:11–30
- III. The Failure of Israel Through the War Between the Tribes 20:1–21:25
 - A. War Between Israel and Dan 20:1–48
 - B. Failure of Israel After the War 21:1–25

Israel's Judges

After the death of Joshua, the nation of Israel was ruled by judges, or heroic military deliverers, for about 300 years until the united monarchy was established by God under King Saul. The era of the judges was a time of instability and moral depravity, a dark period when “everyone did *what was* right in his own eyes” (17:6). The judges tried to rally the people against their enemies, but many of the judges were morally weak and the people often turned to idolatry. Along with the well-known judges, there were several minor judges whose battles are not recorded in the Bible: Abimelech, Tola, Jair, Ibzan, Elon, and Abdon.



Judges Chapters 1-3

EXPLORE IT

1. What happened when Judah attacked the Canaanites? (1:4-7)
2. Why did the Lord withdraw His help from the Israelites? (1:27-2:5)
3. How was the generation that followed Joshua and the elders under him described? (2:10)
4. What happened to Israel because of their unfaithfulness to the Lord? (2:14)
5. How did the Lord show His mercy toward Israel even when they were unfaithful? (2:16)
6. How did the Israelites respond to the judges God raised to save them from their enemies? (2:17)
7. What did the Israelites do after a judge had saved them from their enemies? (2:19)
8. How were Israel's enemies used by the Lord? (2:22)
9. Why did the Lord want this generation of Israelites to learn warfare? (3:2)
10. How was Othniel able to bring Israel peace? (3:7-11)
11. Why did Eglon gain power over Israel? (3:12)
12. How is Ehud described? (3:15)
13. How did Ehud defeat the Moabites? (3:15-28)
14. How was Ehud able to escape after he had killed Eglon, the king of Moab? (3:23-26)
15. To whom did Ehud give credit for Israel's victory over Moab? (3:28)

GET IT

1. Why were the men of Judah unable to drive their enemies from the plains?
2. How would you describe the repeating periods during the times of the judges?

APPLY IT

1. How can we stop repeating the same sin over and over in our lives?

Judges Chapters 4-8

EXPLORE IT

1. Why did the Lord sell Israel into the hands of Jabin, a Canaanite king? (4:1-2)
2. Why did the Israelites cry to the Lord for help? (4:3)
3. What does this passage tell us about Deborah? (4:4-5)
4. Of what message, from the Lord, did Deborah remind Barak? (4:6-7)
5. How did Barak respond to the message that Deborah gave him? (4:8-9)
6. What happened when Barak led Israel against their enemy? (4:15)
7. What happened to Sisera when he went to Jael's tent to escape Israel's troops? (4:18-21)
8. What is the message of Deborah's song? (5:1-31)
9. What message did the prophet bring to Israel from the Lord? (6:8-10)
10. Why did the angel of the Lord appear to Gideon? (6:11-14)
11. What miracle did the angel of the Lord perform for Gideon and why? (6:17-21)
12. What was Gideon told to do by the angel of the Lord? Did he do it?(6:22-24)
13. What further tests did Gideon put before the Lord and why? (6:36-40)
14. What did the Lord tell Gideon to do? (7:2-3)
15. What did the Lord do to encourage Gideon? (7:9-15)
16. How did Gideon defeat the Midianite army? (7:16-21)
17. What did Israel ask of Gideon and what was his response? (8:22-28)

GET IT

1. How does the story of Deborah fit with 1Timothy 2:11-12?
2. Why do you think Gideon needed so much reassurance before he would obey God?
3. Why did God say that Gideon had too many fighting men?

APPLY IT

1. If you wrote a song about God's work in your life, what would be its message?
2. How can we prevent ourselves from being overcome by success?

Judges Chapters 9-12

EXPLORE IT

1. Who was Abimelech, and what did he want and how did he get it? (9:1-6)
2. What is the meaning of Jotham's story? (9:8-21)
3. What advice did Zebul give to Abimelech about how to deal with Gaal? (9:30-33)
4. What was the outcome of Abimelech's battle with Shechem? (9:42-45)
5. What happened to Abimelech when he attacked the tower of Thebez? (9:52-55)
6. What was God's purpose in all of this war and death? (9:56-57)
7. How were the Philistines and Ammonites able to abuse Israel? (10:6-8)
8. Why did the Lord not save Israel when He had forgiven and delivered them so often in the past? (10:11-14)
9. Why did God relent and send Jephthah? (10:15-16)
10. Why was Jephthah driven out of his family? (11:2-3)
11. Why did the elders of Gilead get Jephthah? (11:4-6)
12. What did the elders promise Jephthah if he would help them? (11:8-10)
13. What reason did the king of the Ammonites give for attacking Israel? (11:13)
14. What message did Jephthah send to the Ammonite king? (11:14-27)
15. What vow did Jephthah make to the Lord? Why? (11:30-31)
16. What happened as a result of Jephthah's vow to the Lord? (11:30-39)
17. Why did Jephthah have to fight the men of Ephraim? (12:1-4)

GET IT

1. How is the story of Abimelech different from most of the others in Judges?
2. How does the story of Abimelech teach us about the period of the judges?
3. What caused Israel to recognize and repent of their sin?
4. Why would Jephthah make such a strange vow, to sacrifice whatever came out?

APPLY IT

1. How can we guard against the temptation of bitterness or lust for power?

Judges Chapters 13-16

EXPLORE IT

1. What instructions and promise did the angel of the Lord give to Manoah's wife? (13:2-5)
2. What amazed Manoah and his wife? (13:19-20)
3. What resulted from Samson's visit to Timnah? (14:1-2)
4. How did the Lord plan to use Samson's desires to fulfill God's purposes? (14:4)
5. What happened to Samson on the way to Timnah? (14:5-6)
6. What happened to Samson on his second trip to Timnah? (14:8-9)
7. What did Samson's companions do when they could not solve the riddle? (14:15)
8. What reasoning did Samson's wife use on him to discover the answer to the riddle? (14:16)
9. What did Samson do when the men solved his riddle? (14:18-20)
10. What happened when Samson went to visit his wife? (15:1-2)
11. What did Samson do to the Philistines to get revenge? (15:4-5)
12. What had the Philistines done that made Samson attack them so viciously? (15:6-7)
13. Why did the Israelites turn Samson over to the Philistines? (15:9-13)
14. What happened when Samson was turned over to the Philistines? (15:14-17)
15. What weakness of Samson did the Philistines use against him? (16:1-5)
16. How did Delilah convince Samson to reveal the secret of his strength? (16:15-16)
17. What was the source of Samson's strength, and why did he lose it? (16:17-20)
18. How was Samson victorious even in his own death? (16:28-30)

GET IT

1. Why did Manoah think he and his wife would die?
2. Why is it mentioned that Samson did not tell his parents what happened to him with the lion on his two trips?
3. What caused Samson's downfall?

APPLY IT

1. What are some ways we can resist temptation?
2. What should we learn from Samson about our weaknesses?

Judges Chapters 17-18

EXPLORE IT

1. Why did the mother bless the son when he returned the money? (17:1-3)
2. In what way were both Micah and his mother disobedient to God? (17:3-5)
3. How did the author of this story describe Israel at this point? (17:6)
4. How did Micah attempt to rationalize his shrine and gain God's favor? (17:12-13)
5. What was the situation of the Danites at this point? (18:1-2)
6. What did the Danite spies request of the Levite priest? (18:5)
7. What recommendation did the spies give when they returned from exploring the land? (18:8-10)
8. How did the five spies convince the priest to go with them? (18:19)
9. How did the Danites protect themselves against attack? (18:21)
10. What did Micah do when he realized his priest and idols were gone? (18:22-23)
11. What do Micah's words reveal about his faith? (18:24)
12. What kind of relationship did the Danites have with the Lord? (18:29-31)

GET IT

1. How would you characterize Micah and Dan?
2. What is the point of "everyone did what was right in his own eyes"?

APPLY IT

1. How can we protect ourselves against false religious practices?

Judges Chapters 19-21

EXPLORE IT

1. From what tribe was the wife of the Levite? (19:1)
2. What did the wife do? (19:2)
3. How did the woman's father respond to the Levite? (19:3-4)
4. What happened when the Levite man went to the city of Gibeah? (19:15-20)
5. Why did the old man from Ephraim advise the Levite not to spend the night in the town square? (19:20-22)
6. What did the wicked men of the city want when they surrounded the house where the Levite was staying? (19:22)
7. How did the owner of the house respond to the demands of the wicked men? (19:23-24)
8. What happened to the Levite's concubine? (19:25-28)
9. How did the Levite react to what the men of Gibeah had done? (19:29-30)
10. Why did the Israelites assemble at Mizpah? (20:1-3)
11. What did the Israelites decide to do about the sin of the men of Gibeah? (20:8-10)
12. What happened in the battle between the Benjamites and the Israelites? (20:14-48)
13. Where did the Israelites get their direction and strength in battle? (20:18, 23, 26, 35)
14. With whom did the Lord side in this situation? Why? (20:23)
15. What two oaths did the Israelites take? (21:1-5)
16. What did the Israelites do to prevent the tribe of Benjamin from becoming extinct? (21:5-25)

GET IT

1. How could the man from Ephraim and the Levite be so callous to the woman around them?
2. What lessons can we learn from the battle between Israelites and the Benjamites?
3. Why is the author telling us that there was no king in these times?

APPLY IT

1. How does our culture influence us?
2. How can you depend on the Lord for strength and direction in your life?

THE BOOK OF RUTH

Ruth is a story of love, devotion, and redemption set in the distressing context of the period of the judges. It presents a Moabite woman who forsakes her pagan heritage in order to cling to the people of Israel and to the God of Israel. Because of her faithfulness in a time of national faithlessness, God rewards her by giving her a new husband, a son, and a privileged position in the ancestral line of David and Christ.

Author

The author of Ruth is not identified by the text. Jewish tradition attributes the work to Samuel, but this is unlikely since David appears in Ruth 4:17, 22, and Samuel died prior to David's coronation as king. The composition of the book probably dates to the early kingdom period. That David's son Solomon is not mentioned in the genealogy may indicate that Ruth was written during David's reign as king. The anonymity of the work should not, however, detract from its profound spiritual value and literary beauty.

Date

Though the date of composition is uncertain, the story of Ruth itself takes place in the latter part of the period of the judges (c. 1100 B.C.) and covers a time span of about twelve years. This period of Israel's history was generally a desert of rebellion and immorality, but the story of Ruth stands in contrast as an oasis of integrity and righteousness.

Themes and Literary Structure

The brief yet beautiful story of Ruth is crafted with care by its unknown author. As the chart "Ruth at a Glance" demonstrates, the narrative is symmetrical with a structure of parallel elements that meet in the middle of the book (the end of ch. 2).

This literary structure serves to highlight several important themes. Most prominent is the theme of redemption. The Hebrew word for kinsman (*goel*) appears thirteen times in Ruth and basically means "one who redeems." By buying back the land of Naomi, as well as marrying Ruth and fathering a son to keep the family line alive, Boaz acts as a redeemer. This temporal redemption by Boaz points to God's redeeming work, which reaches its climax in Christ's giving Himself "that He might redeem us from every lawless deed" (Titus 2:14).

Another key term in the story is "kindness," meaning covenant loyalty (1:8; 2:20; 3:10). Ruth and Boaz illustrate what covenant righteousness and loyalty are in an era when "everyone did *what was right in his own eyes*" (Judg. 21:25). This loyalty is expressed in the same terms as those describing God's covenant relationship with His people.

The providence of God is also highlighted. Although the book describes common people in common settings, they were being guided by the mysterious hand of God, who was using their uncommon faith to prepare the way for Israel's greatest king, David (4:22). The name of God occurs twenty-three times in the eighty-five verses of Ruth. No event in the life of God's people is insignificant, because He is constantly involved.

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³Thomas Nelson Publishers, *Nelson's Complete Book of Bible Maps & Charts: Old and New Testaments.*, Rev. and updated ed. (Nashville, Tenn.: Thomas Nelson, 1996).

OUTLINE OF RUTH

Part One: Ruth's Love Is Demonstrated (1:1–2:23)

- I. Ruth's Decision to Remain with Naomi 1:1–18
 - A. Ruth's Need to Remain with Naomi 1:1–5
 - B. Ruth's Opportunity to Leave Naomi 1:6–15
 - C. Ruth's Choice to Remain with Naomi 1:16–18
- II. Ruth's Devotion to Care for Naomi 1:19–2:23
 - A. Ruth and Naomi Return to Bethlehem 1:19–22
 - B. Ruth Gleans for Food 2:1–23

Part Two: Ruth's Love Is Rewarded (3:1–4:22)

- I. Ruth's Request for Redemption to Boaz 3:1–18
 - A. Naomi Seeks Redemption for Ruth 3:1–5
 - B. Ruth Obeys Naomi 3:6–9
 - C. Boaz Desires to Redeem Ruth 3:10–18
- II. Ruth's Reward of Redemption by Boaz 4:1–22
 - A. Boaz Marries Ruth 4:1–12
 - B. Ruth Bears a Son, Obed 4:13–15
 - C. Naomi Receives a New Family 4:16
 - D. Ruth Is the Great-Grandmother of David 4:17–22

From Outsider to Royal Ancestress

The book of Ruth begins in the land of Moab, a region east of the Dead Sea, where the family of Elimelech had moved to escape famine in their native Judah. The Moabites, descendants of Abraham's nephew Lot, worshiped Chemosh and other pagan gods. Scripture records a number of times when they fought against Israel (Judg. 3:12–30; 1 Sam. 14:47; 2 Sam. 8:11, 12; 2 Kin. 3:4–27). Ruth takes place about two centuries after the first war and about eighty years before the second.

With the death of Elimelech and his two sons, his widow Naomi and Ruth, the Moabite widow of one of the sons, returned to Judah to the ancestral home, Bethlehem. There they hoped to reclaim the family property.

Ruth—A Foreshadow of Redemption

Elimelech and Naomi were of the tribe of Judah and from the city of Bethlehem, where they had rights to ancestral property. But when Naomi's husband and sons died, she was unable to regain the property apart from two legal customs: "leviratic marriage" and "the redemption of the land." The "redemption of land" custom obligated the next of kin to buy back the property which had been sold due to foreclosure or poverty so as to keep it in the family (Lev. 25:25–28). The "leviratic marriage" custom required the nearest relative of a deceased man to marry his widow (Deut. 25:5–10). Any offspring from this union carried the name and inheritance of the former husband. Since Naomi was beyond childbearing years, her daughter-in-law Ruth became her substitute in marriage and bore a son to perpetuate the family name. Boaz accepted the obligations of both customs: as the redeemer (*goel*) he

legally cleared the land of all further claims and as a responsible male relative he married Ruth and fathered a son to continue the family name.

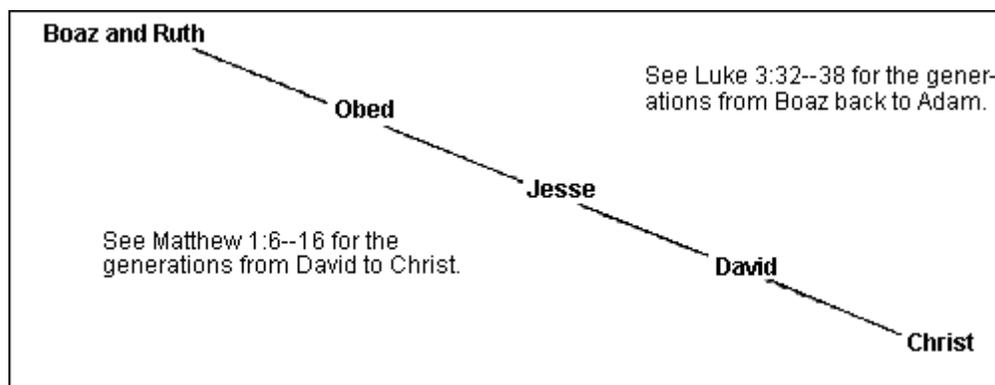
The concept of the kinsman-redeemer or *goel* is an important portrayal of the work of Christ. The *goel* must (1) be related by blood to those he redeems (Deut. 25:5, 7–10; John 1:14; Rom. 1:3; Phil. 2:5–8; Heb. 2:14, 15); (2) must be able to pay the price of redemption (Ruth 2:1; 1 Pet. 1:18, 19); and (3) must be willing to redeem (Ruth 3:11; Matt. 20:28; John 10:15, 18; Heb. 10:7).

Kinsman-Redeemer

O.T. Qualification	Christ's Fulfillment
1. Blood Relationship	Gal. 4:4, 5; Heb. 2:16; 17
2. Necessary Resources	1 Cor. 6:20; 1 Pet. 1:18, 19
3. Willingness to Buy	John 10:15-18; 1 John 3:16

A Distinguished Descendant

The book of Ruth concludes with a ten-name genealogy (4:18–22), which presents the royal ancestry of David. Thus, the book ends with a reminder of redemption by focusing on this vital link in which Jew and Gentile unite to share in the ancestry of King David, through whom came Jesus the Christ (1 Chron. 2:5–15; Matt. 1:1; Luke 3:31–33). Indeed, the setting of the book of Ruth in Bethlehem of Judah brings to mind the birth of Ruth's descendant, Jesus Christ, in that same city of Bethlehem (Luke 2:7).



Ruth Chapters 1-2

EXPLORE IT

1. Why did Naomi want to return to Judah? (1:1-6)
2. What blessing did Naomi give to her daughters-in-law? (1:8-9)
3. What reasons did Naomi give to her daughters-in-law to convince them to return to their home? (1:11-13)
4. Why did Ruth decide to stay with her mother-in-law, Naomi? (1:16)
5. Why did Naomi call herself Mara? (1:20-21)
6. How did Ruth provide for her mother-in-law? (2:2-3)
7. What instructions did Boaz give to Ruth, and how did she respond to him? (2:8-11)
8. What reason did Boaz give Ruth for his special attention to her? (2:11-12)
9. How did Naomi respond to Ruth's success? (2:19-20)

GET IT

1. What could Ruth expect for her future when she decided to go with Naomi to Judah?
2. How was divine providence evident in Ruth and Naomi's life?

APPLY IT

1. Have you seen God's providence at work in your life?

Ruth Chapters 3-4

EXPLORE IT

1. What motivated Naomi to tell Ruth to go to Boaz? (3:1-2)
2. How did Ruth respond to Naomi's unusual request? (3:5)
3. Why was Boaz willing to fulfill his obligation? (3:10-13)
4. What reputation did Ruth have in the town? (3:11)
5. In what way did Boaz show kindness to Ruth's mother-in-law? (3:15-17)
6. How did Naomi know how Boaz would handle the situation? (3:18)
7. Why did the nearest kinsman-redeemer decline to buy the land? (4:6)
8. What is significant about the elders' blessing on Boaz and Ruth's marriage? (4:11-12)
9. In what way could the child Obed renew Naomi's life and sustain her in her old age? (4:15)
10. How does the genealogy at the end of the chapter fulfill the elders' blessing? (4:17-22)

GET IT

1. What positive character traits stand out in this story?
2. What character traits did Boaz and Ruth display?

APPLY IT

1. Remember this takes place during the period of the judges, with that in mind how does God care for His people even in the midst of a perverse generation?