

# Note

## Judges – Part 1 and 2

Era	Characters	Chapters
In the beginning	God created the world.	<a href="#">Genesis 1</a>
Before 4000 BC	Adam & Eve	<a href="#">Gen 1~5</a>
Before 3000 BC	Cain Abel Seth	<a href="#">Gen 4~5</a>
Before 2500 BC	Noah	<a href="#">Gen 5~10</a>
About 2000 BC  <b>Era of Patriarchs</b>	Abraham Isaac & Ishmael Jacob & Esau Joseph	<a href="#">Gen 11~50</a>
About 1500 BC~1000 BC  <b>Era of prophets</b>	Moses Aaron Joshua	<a href="#">Exodus</a> <a href="#">Leviticus</a> <a href="#">Numbers</a> <a href="#">Deuteronomy</a>
	Joshua	<a href="#">Joshua</a>
	Othniel Ehud Shamgar Deborah Gideon Tola Jair Jephthah Ibzan Elon Abdon Samson Abimelech	<a href="#">Judges</a> <a href="#">?</a>

# Summary

## **Judges - Part 1 of 2..... 4**

Judges is a narrative about the afflictions of a life without Yahweh and about His divine interventions for His people who neglected and disobeyed him repeatedly. These resulted in a recurring cycle of sin, punishment, repentance and rescue by the judges-leaders annointed by God.

Lessons from the book:

1. You need godly leaders and spiritual leadership to lead you accurately with God.

The people of Israel drifted away from God after the death of their leaders, Moses & Joshua.

2. One needs to have a personal relationship with God.

The 2nd generation of Israelites did not know the greatness of the God of their fathers.

3. Marry a person who shares the same faith and love as you have for God.

The Israelites took Canaanite women as wives and eventually they were seduced into idolatry.

4. Be careful not to put your faith on things which are visible (eg. job, money, idols). These in turn can lead us away from God.

The Israelites were seduced by what they saw, the Canaanites and their idols and they started taking part in their sinful practices.

## **Judges - Part 2 of 2..... 7**

In the book of Judges we see that Israel had come one big circle.

- Upon entering the promised land, they were supposed to chase out the Canaanites and cleanse the land of the filthiness of idolatry, immorality, and injustice. However, they end up becoming like the Canaanites.

- The disobedience to kill all the Canaanites when they inherited the promised land, costed the Israelites to lose their identity and relationship with the true living God.
- The Israelites seeked 'Baal' and the idolatory rituals and lifestyle as what they saw became the choice of norm to them.
- Even the men God had used to rescue His people were influenced by the idolatry and immorality which surrounded them and suffered great implications because of their sins. (eg. Samson, Jephthah)

Lessons we can learn;

- a. God hates sin, but he loves us.
- b. He will deal strongly with sin, but he will deal patiently with us.
- c. Only through a Messiah and a changed heart can God's people be delivered from sin.

The next book, 'Ruth' brings the message of hope. We will see that Ruth is an ancestor of Jesus and we will learn more about her in the next book.

# Transcript

## Judges – Part 1 of 2

Let's first do a quick review of the book of Joshua. And I hope you have gone through Joshua. If you were to use the audio Bible, you will probably finish listening to the book of Joshua in just over an hour if you skip the chapters about the dividing of the land -from Joshua chapters 13 to 22, it's all about the dividing of the land. There is too much detail, unless you are an Israelite, and you are going to occupy that land and you want to know your boundaries. But for you and me, unless you are doing some in-depth study for this survey, you can skip chapters 13 to 22. In one hour, you can cover Joshua quite easily.

Now, Joshua ended on a very promising note, not perfect, but promising. Joshua had done a good job. And he had believed the promise of God. He had been of good courage and gone in and conquered the cities as God told him he should do. So, let me just read a summary of Joshua before we move into the book of Judges.

Joshua 21:43-45 reads like this - And the Lord gave unto Israel all the land which he had sworn to give unto their fathers, and they possessed it, and dwelt therein. And the Lord gave them rest round about, according to all that he swore unto their fathers, and there stood not a man of all the enemies before them; the Lord delivered all the enemies into their hand. There failed not ought of any good thing which the Lord had spoken unto the house of Israel; all came to pass.

So, whatever God had promised the children of Israel, that the land is yours, but you have to possess it, and if you by faith, go in and take the cities, you will get them. That's a promise. Joshua took the word of God and did exactly that and he just conquered one city after another. You can list fortified cities that he captured.

You must remember the children of Israel were not trained soldiers, they were slaves who never learned to fight. They didn't have sophisticated equipment and yet they could conquer 31 cities. You just go and look at Google and see the archaeology of the cities of Israel, the promised land. In those days they were massive cities made of huge rocks, high walls, and yet Joshua just conquered one after another. That was the promise God gave.

And if you remember what we said at the last lesson, the promised land is the place of rest for the Christian. You know, right now, you've got to come to the place of rest. You found peace, you found joy but still you have sins in your life that you need to overcome by simple faith, one by one. In the past, if you're not born again, you couldn't overcome these sins. You just didn't have the strength to do it. But after you're saved, any sin you want to conquer, you can, by the grace of God and the power of the Holy Spirit. You can forsake the sin, you can ask forgiveness. You ask the power of God to help you overcome that sin and you will. That's the promise of God to us. So, our promised land is not a geography. Our promise land is the peace and joy in our heart and the victory over sins that disturb us, sins that trouble our peace and joy. So we parallel the promised land with the rest we Christians have when we are in the will of God when we are overcoming one sin after another in our lives. That's a promise given to us. And Joshua, did it, he conquered 31 cities. How many sins of yours, fortified sins, are hard to overcome? You almost feel you can't overcome them. How many of those have you fought? Have you come and believed that by the grace of God, and the indwelling power of the Holy Spirit, you can overcome those sins? You have been given the power already. Will you claim it? Joshua was given the power to conquer. He claimed it, but he didn't finish the job. He got old. It says, and yet there was much land, yet many cities, yet not conquered.

Now, we come to the book of Judges - what do we see, we see a lot of case studies of people. It's an endless book of wonderful case studies. You can learn from the lives of Gideon and Deborah and Samson. But we're not going to do that because this is an overview to see the connection, to see the beauty of the whole book.

So, as we look at this as a survey, let me encourage you - listen to it. Listen to the audio Bible. I know it's a struggle for many of you, because you are so used to reading. You feel guilty because you are not reading the Word of God. But this is not meant to be an in-depth study. This is meant for you to be on a helicopter, surveying the land, surveying the whole landscape of this beautiful Bible. So, I would suggest you listen to it.

Now the word Judges sounds like a very distinguished person in a court judging a case like a High Court judge. This is not what it means. They are basically what you and I would call 'troubleshooters'. Whenever Israel pleaded with God for help, God sent troubleshooters. They fixed the problem. You could also say in another sense, they were tribal chiefs, or regional chiefs. So, in other words, they were sent by God to solve a problem.

You will see that there are 12 Judges in this book. Number 12 is quite interesting. Normally, in the Bible when it comes to governing, the number 12 signifies governing, like the 12 Patriarch fathers, Jacob's 12 sons became the 12 tribes, in the New Testament, we have the 12 Apostles. Here we have the 12 Judges. But of the 12 Judges, six of them have a story written about them. The other six, we call the minor Judges. So, we can divide them into the major Judges, the six with the story, and the six who have short mentions, we can call them minor Judges. So basically when we're going to study the case study, we're going to see the six major Judges.

Now, they were not national leaders in the sense that everybody in Israel knew them. They were regional. For example, Gideon basically helped the northern part of Israel. Samson basically helped the southern part where the Philistines were. So actually, in a sense, they did not impact the whole country, they impacted a part of the country.

Secondly, some of their ministry sort-of overlapped a little bit over each other because if they solve the problem in the South, maybe the North is having a problem and somebody else came to the North and solve that problem in the North. So, this kind of overlap in time. So, if you add the number of years you get 300 maybe. I did not do it, but it's 300 over years if you add over time. But actually, it's probably about 200 years. Some overlap because someone is working here, and some are working in a different part of Israel, the promised land. So, that's the word, Judges.

This book was probably written by Samuel, so people believe. Now, if you look at this book, it's very well summarized in chapter 2. I would suggest you read chapter 2 and the rest you can actually listen. In chapter 2, it tells you the summary of the entire book of Judges. It tells you there are cycles that the Israelites went through.

Basically, the cycle was like this - they fell into sin. The most common sin was idolatry. They worshiped a very seductive god called Baal, the most popular god of the Canaanites. Actually, we always say Baal, but if you pronounce that, it is Ba-al, it's two sounds. Baal was actually named after several kinds of gods - the fertility god, god of the weather and fertility of the soil. And it was often related to sexual immorality; was often related to fornication, to prostitution in the temples. It was a very awful god to have but the children of Israel often fell into worshipping Baal, simply because it's a seductive god. I mean, a god that allows you to have your cake and eat it, you know what I mean? A carnal man would just go for that.

So they fell into sin, number one of which was idolatry with Baal. Then God will send an oppressor. The Philistines or Moabites would come and attack the land. And so, oppression is the second part of the cycle.

Then when they were oppressed and they cannot take it anymore, they repent. They go to God, "please God, sorry, help us". I am not sure they knew that they had sinned, but they asked for help. And then God would send a judge, and then the trouble shooter would overcome the oppressor and they would have peace for a period of time. Then after a while, they fell back again into sin. So, you see the five steps - sin, oppression, crying

out to God, deliverance, peace and then start again - sin again, cycle after cycle. So, chapter two gives you this summary of basically the entire book of Judges.

The Judges - who were these people? Were they great men? No, most of them were very flawed personalities, quite terrible personalities. The classic case is Samson. Samson was promiscuous, violent, arrogant, unreliable. And yet God used these men. How did God use them? Every time a judge was raised up, God gave them the Spirit of God. They were anointed with the Spirit- not indwelling, but anointed.

You see for us, when we received Jesus, we have the indwelling of the Holy Spirit -“Know ye not that ye are the temple of God, and that the Spirit of God dwelleth in you?” But for them, when God wanted to use a deliverer, a judge, He would give the Holy Spirit to that judge temporarily. In the Old Testament, the Holy Spirit was not something that they had as a norm. In fact, only these few judges had the power of the Holy Spirit out of millions of them.

Secondly, even when they had the Holy Spirit, it was a temporary anointing and empowering of the Holy Spirit. Why did God use these flawed men? Because that was all he had, everybody there was so corrupt. I think, if we want to be arrogant, we can say “why did God use them?” You know, I can ask myself the same question. Why does God use me to serve Him? I’m a flawed man too... so....the mercy of God - He still uses flawed men. But the fact is that, though he empowers someone like Samson, it does not mean He endorses what Samson does. It is two different things. Just because some people have the power of the Holy Spirit, it doesn't mean everything they do is blessed by God or endorsed by God. No, in spite of our failures, God empowers us. So, please don't get confused how come they got the power of God and their lives are like that? Look at ourselves and we get the answer.



So, basically, this is what happened. Cycle after cycle going down, spiraling downwards, and ultimately a total failure. I hope you see the picture. They did not chase out all these Canaanites. They were supposed to, God said remove them - if you leave them they will trouble you. They will seduce you with their sexy religions and you will fall. You will marry their women who are highly immoral, much more seductive than your Israelite women. Get rid of them. God had a reason for this. But they didn't; they left some towns, some cities where the Canaanites continued to live. And because they continued to live what happened? They seduced them and married them. And then they fell into the seductive, tempting religions around them.

They were first surrounded by this Canaanite culture. And by the time the story ends, they were exactly like the Canaanites. The spiral had gone right down and now you cannot tell the Israelites from the Canaanites. Their behavior you see towards the end of the book of Judges - all the sins, immorality, injustice, killing people for no good reason, idolatrous - so they became exactly like the Canaanites. And that's why God told them to remove them.

What lessons can be learned from this book, from the big picture?

Number one - the importance of leaders. You need good leaders. When Joshua was still around, they were okay. When a judge was still around, they were okay. And then after the judge went, they went down. Leadership is so important. Spiritual leadership is so important. You remember the book of, I think it was Numbers when at the end of it all, they were to give out the land to the Israelites and they were told, 48 Levites were to be given 48 cities. They were not to live in one chunk. Every tribe had a chunk of land but the Levites were asked to be scattered throughout in 48 cities. What's the purpose? So that the Levites would be their spiritual leaders. But we do not hear a word about the Levites in the book of Judges. They actually do not even appear until the end of the book. And they appeared not for good reasons, but for the worst reasons. So, in other words, their spiritual leadership did not exist.

God had actually made a plan that they would be scattered everywhere, and they would sort of help the tribes not to fall into the sins that they fell into; but they did not do their job. And that is the lesson we have to learn.

Spiritual leaders today are not doing their job. They keep quiet. They do the nice things, the “churchy” things, but they do not do the hard and necessary things. Preaching is always about lifting up, you know... motivating, encouraging, comforting. What about the warnings? The Bible is always a balance between God's judgment and God's mercy. And if we do not understand, and that is why we see in the Old Testament, there is a lot of “do this; if you don't, kill them”. Wow, you say, “this is not even Christian”. It is the same God! It is the same God, and the hard part of our faith. Christianity is not choosing the books we like; the nice books, the comforting psalms that we like, and rejecting other kind of stories. You know, in Judges, if you listen to the Sunday school version of Judges, it's so sanitized. The real version of it is terrible. So much blood, it's violent right? But at Sunday school you will probably hear two or three stories - Gideon, you know that hero, Samson the dumbo but strong guy. But all the bloody scenes about conquering one city after another, killing all the animals, and killing all the humans, not a word. That is not Christian. I thought the same God hates evil. That is how we must react. But no, today's Christianity is totally different. Silent! Warnings do not come out. Nice words come out. Leadership is important.

Second lesson we can learn from Judges. The second generation did not know God, did not see the great crossing of the Jordan River, the amazing fall of Jericho - all forgotten, they had no personal experience with God. And so, they fell away slowly.

It is the same with second generation Christians. Often, first generation Christians have a personal experience with God and are excited about their faith. They have seen how God changed their life from a super messed-up life, messed-up marriage, and how God turned it around. But the second generation had no experiences and then fall away quickly. So, another lesson - the second generation, the third generation start to fall away. But when Joshua was there, they were ok.

Third lesson we have to learn is making an alliance with those they were not supposed to. In the case of the Israelites, they got married to the women of Canaan. They were not supposed to. The women were seductive and they married them. And when a person from a godly stock marries a person from an ungodly stock, what do you think usually happens? Does the godly stock help the ungodly stock, or the ungodly stock drag down the godly stock? Generally speaking, it is easier to fall into sin than to rise up to righteousness, right? It's like gravity. Physically, it's easy to fall down than to jump up. So it's the same, spiritually. When a saved person marries an unsaved person, who do you think influences who? Generally, the unsaved person will drag down the saved person. There are exceptions of the other way around.

So, fourth lesson we can learn from this about idolatry is how idolatry is so seductive. We want to see something all the time, we want to build something - someone like Gideon built an ephod. I don't think he meant it to drag people into idolatry. But you know what happened when he built that ephod? Everybody went to worship it. You see, what we can see, we tend to focus our eyes on it and forget the God behind it who can't be seen. I'll give you an example - when we have a job, we think our job is the one that provides our needs. We see the job and say, if I lose this job, I'm a dead duck. We don't say, if I lose my relationship with God, I'm in trouble. No, it's the job because it's visible. You see, you put a pill in your mouth. You look at that like it is a little health god. You forgot, it's God who blesses these pills, who makes you healthy. So, idolatry is something very seductive to us. Be very careful not to put our faith in the visible things around us.

The structure of this book is very simple. Chapters 1 and 2 set the stage to tell us the summary. Then the whole hunk of it in the middle, Chapters 3 to 16, is about the lives of these Judges and watching them go down the spiral slowly. And then the last few chapters 17 to 21, show how they already become like the Canaanites. So, it begins with chapter one and two - neither did they remove such and such a city, they just left them there - compromise. They were supposed to remove those people from the cities,

remove all the temptations -compromise. And then, chapters 3 to 16 speak of their conduct - how they slowly behave more and more like the Canaanites.

We will study that in the next part of this study on Judges. And lastly, it ends in chapters 17 to 21 - total corruption, exactly like the Canaanites. I hope this gives you a good overview of the book of Judges.

## Judges – Part 2 of 2

We continue on our study of the book of Judges by looking at the lives of the major judges, and you will see that downward spiral of them.

Judges 3-In the first part of chapter three, there is a judge called Othniel, not terribly well known. And he was raised up to overcome the oppression by the Mesopotamian King. Now, not much is said of his life, but obviously it appears that he did a good job, and we would write him as a pretty good judge.

Then, the second part of chapter three, you have another interesting character called Ehud. Ehud was raised up when Israel went through terrible oppression from the king of Moab. Now they had taxed the children of Israel so much that they couldn't bear it anymore. Ehud pretended to bring the tribute of taxes to the king. He was a left hander. He strapped his sword on his right thigh. He was a left hander but he put it on his right thigh. Normally you would not be threatened when a guy's left hand is moving because most people are right-handed. The king saw Ehud move his left hand and thought maybe he's taking out the tribute, but he took his sword out. And the king was caught unawares and got stabbed. So Ehud delivered Israel from the Moabites. Okay, pretty good judge, no bad things about him.

Judges 4-5. Deborah - she was called a prophetess. She delivered Israel with a general. Now, the interesting thing about Deborah is that she wrote a very long song. She is called a prophetess. Interestingly enough, a prophetess is quite a common title among the Israelites. Women who could bring forth truth but not foretell about the future.

The other one we remember quite clearly was Miriam, the sister of Moses, when they crossed the Red Sea. She wrote a beautiful song about the

victory over the Egyptian army. As for Deborah, she wrote about a victory over their enemies. So, they taught by song and it is a beautiful way to teach truth.

I was in the Middle East last year, and I realized that a lot of their doctrines are learned through songs. For us, doctrine is very scholarly. We take notes but they knew a lot of doctrine. This person I was talking to knew a lot about the Bible. I asked, Did you study this? No, no, we learned this as a child, in songs. I heard that a Children's Sunday School was going on in this church in the Middle East, and why... they were singing songs all the time, and the kids were learning. So, one way to bring forth truth and tell the truth is through song. Deborah could write a beautiful song. Miriam could write a beautiful song. So sometimes you always think studying the Bible is, you know, brain power and all that but through simple things like hearing the word, singing it out, hearing a song, we can also learn a lot of truth.

Judges 6 -9. Now, the next judge is Gideon. Now you see, the first three were pretty good. Then Gideon, we know his story, how he lacked faith but God used him in spite of his lack of faith. His father was a great worshipper of Baal. God used him with just 300 men to conquer a vast army. And Gideon did a great job. We know the story, no need to tell. Every Sunday school kid knows this story. But what he did after his victory was, he made an ephod. It says in Judges, chapters 6 to 9, he ended up making an ephod.

What is an ephod? An ephod is part of the elaborate and embroidered robes of the high priests. I think he meant it as something good, commemorating the victory. But it ended up being a huge idol to the Israelites. Something they could see, and they would go there and worship the ephod.

I am afraid that this happens very commonly today. We make idols of things we can see. For some people it is their pastor. Wow... it is like everything the pastor says is okay. The Bible is not their final authority, the pastor is their final authority. For some, it is their denomination. Some, it is their

church building - something that is harmless. It is not wrong to have a building, it is not wrong to have a good pastor, it is not wrong to have a strong organization, but we cannot look up to that because it is visible. So, Gideon probably did not realize how this would really destroy the faith of the Israelites. Instead of seeing the unseen God, they saw the ephod. So Gideon started this so-called downward trend.

Judges 11-12. Then you have Jephthah. Jephthah is more like a gangster, he is like a mafia chief, a tough guy. He was an amazing military guy. He won amazing victories. But what did he do? He vowed to give a human sacrifice if he won. And in the end, he had to offer up his only child, his only daughter. You see, his mind now had become so immersed in the Canaanite idea of child sacrifice, human sacrifice. If they wanted anything from God, they offered a human sacrifice. And he offered; except it was his daughter he had to give up.

So, it reached a stage where the judges had no idea of the character of their God. Who is Jehovah God? Is he like Baal, wanting a sacrifice? See this downward spiral.

Judges 13-16. And then we come to the last of the judges -Samson. Every kid knows his story but not the sex and violence part. That is sanitized in Sunday school. But he was a super promiscuous guy. I told you the three sins of the Canaanites -immorality was number one, then injustice and idolatry. And Samson was just as immoral as the Canaanites. For him, he was always looking for women. And then his violent injustice using his strength, just doing whatever he wants, and then his arrogance. And we know the story. I do not need to tell you the Samson story. You heard it many, many times. But God still used him.

In fact, in the last five minutes of his life, he probably did more than the rest of his life -how he brought down the leaders on the balcony of this big building and 3000 Philistines died. Probably the elite, the top class, the rulers of the Philistines, he killed them all.

So we see these six judges slowly going down, a bit of idolatry from Gideon, Jephthah thinks human sacrifice will please God, and then Samson behaves just like a Canaanite. It was the best that Israel had at that time. After you get immersed with such people, after a while, the filthiness becomes normal. Then you thought that is the end of the story. No, no.... Samson's just the introduction.

Judges 17-18. We see another deterioration. It tells of a person called Micah. He builds an idol in his house with money he stole from his mother. And then a Levite comes by. This is the first time a Levite pops up. There is no mention about the Levites. They just went to sleep. You know they just earn their keep; they were career Levites. They got all the benefits of being a Levite without doing the job. So, this Levite comes by, and then he is tempted by Micah to be a priest because Micah promised to give him 10 shekels of silver a year and a nice set of clothing. So, he is a career Levite... it is like a lot of people today, making money from religion.

The tribe of Dan had no land yet. After such a long time, like 200-300 years after Joshua went in, they still did not have land, they had not conquered. You see the Israelites basically conquered the hills. The lowlands were still inhabited by the Canaanites. Reason - the human reason was the Canaanites were a more sophisticated culture. They had chariots, and on the plains, chariots could function much better. Israelites up till today are very good in ambushes and speed war. And so, they could take the hills because there were no chariots on the hills. So, they took the hill lands, the lowlands they did not. So, Dan never really got much land. And, at this point of history, Dan said, "we need to look for more land, we don't have land." So, they sent a survey party to look for land. And they found this place called Laish, which was full of beautiful land and few people.

Now the people of Laish as far as I can see were Sidonians in the Bible. Sidonians were not part of the seven nations of Canaan that were supposed to be destroyed. So technically, the Danites, the people from Dan should not go and take that land because they were not Canaanites.



They were not supposed to destroy them. But when they saw the land, they said, this land is good, let us kill these people, then we can get their land. And nobody will help them because they are secluded.

And so, they sent an advance party. And they passed by the house of Micah and they saw this Levite, and they asked this Levite, what are you doing here?" He said, Oh, I am a priest of this house. "They gave me money, so I became the priest in this house." And then the Danites said, "come on... Why be a priest for one family... be a priest for the Danites." Better to be a priest of a bigger group to get more money and more prestige. So, the Levite straightaway decided, why not? I mean, for him money was the reason why he served God, so to speak. So, he joined them.

And the Bible tells us that the Danites totally annihilated the people of Laish. Now, was that right? I do not think so, because they were not Canaanites, you are not supposed to destroy them. Why did you kill them? This is ethnic cleansing. This is not evil cleansing – right? So, the Bible shows us how the tribe of Dan committed idolatry. They wanted this priest to bring this idol from Micah's house. Now they said, we have an idol, we have a priest, we will have a victory. So, they have idolatry and injustice, killing these innocent people living peacefully by themselves in the hills of the city of Laish. Now the tribe of Dan today is eradicated from the record. If you look at Revelation, the names of the tribes of Israel, Dan is not there just as Judas is not there in the names of the 12 apostles. Of the 12 tribes, Dan is missing. Now, I hope you will begin to see now the violence, and the idolatry, and nothing about praying to God. Give me a Levite, give me an idol, and we will win the war.

Judges 19-21 -last two chapters. If you read this you will not even make a movie out of it because it will not pass the censor board. It is like Sodom all over again. It tells in chapter 19 to 21 a Levite goes out to find his concubine. Finally, the concubine goes to a city called Gibeah and when they go to the city of Gibeah, the men insist on having sex with the Levite. They shout and tell the owner of the house, bring out the Levite that they

may have relations with him. And the owner of the house said “no, no, no.... Don't do that.” And finally, they take the concubine of the Levite and they rape her to death. The next morning, she is found dead at the door of the house and the Levite takes the body of his concubine and brings it to his place and cuts the body up into 12 pieces. I mean, how do you teach that in Sunday school? This is sodomy and rape to death. And then this guy takes the body of his concubine and chops her up into 12 piece, and he sends the 12 parts to the 12 tribes of Israel. Then the 12 tribes in anger came up and said, “this cannot happen, this is too much” . Even conscience cannot accept that you can rape somebody to death.

So the Israelites wanted to go to war against the tribe of Benjamin because this sin was committed in the city of Benjamin. Israel almost totally annihilates whole tribe leaving a handful of people. And that is why we realized that when we say 10 lost tribes. Remember the 10 lost tribes of Israel? The Assyrians took 10, should be 2 left right, but the two left are called Jews, because it is Judah. Benjamin is so tiny, that it almost does not feature at all. So, the two tribes are called Jews today, not

Jew Bens-Judah and Benjamin; no, because Benjamin became such a tiny tribe. The story is here.

You will begin to see how they lived among people who took sex as normal, sodomy as normal, taking advantage of weak people and foreigners coming by. You could rape a man because he is from another town. All this was normal in the land of Canaan and now it became normal for the Israelites. So, I hope you understand when you talk about ethnic cleansing. You see the Benjamites in Gibeah behaving just like the Canaanites. The history is not about the Canaanites. You do not see much about the Canaanites. This Bible is a history of the Israelites but we see Israelites behaving in a way which was a mirror image of the Canaanites.

We see now Israel had come one big circle. They were supposed to chase out the Canaanites and cleanse the land of the filthiness of idolatry, immorality, and injustice. They now have become like the Canaanites. So

how is God going to deliver them? You cannot deliver them. He has to deliver them from themselves. And so, the next book is very interesting,

Ruth - What's Ruth got to do with Judges? We will look at the life of Ruth, a Moabite. She is an ancestor of David, who is an ancestor of Jesus Christ. Who is going to deliver them? Who is going to deliver the Israelites from themselves? You could deliver them from Egypt. Now, what do you deliver them from? Themselves. How can you do it? Except through a Messiah and a changed heart.

I hope you see why after the book of Judges comes this story, how is it linked up? In fact, in the Jewish Bible (Old Testament), the two books are one book. Judges and Ruth is actually one book. Kind of funny, right? After this gory, gory detail, comes about Naomi, and Ruth, and harvest, it's like, oh, after these bloody scenes, but that's what the Bible is - one beautiful book.

Judges end with these words (21:25): In those days, there was no king in Israel. And every man did that which was right in his own eyes. No king, but through Ruth, there will be a king, who will deliver us from ourselves. So, as you look at this book of Judges, what do you see about the character of God?

I see patience, amazing patience. How can this God tolerate this? People who carry His name doing all this nonsense for like, 300 years, and God has to work with them every time they cry out to Him, and in mercy He sends a deliverer. And even the deliverer is like, Samson - but you know, the mercy of God, and yet you also see the judgment of God - the balance.

That is the purpose of studying this book:

Know your God. He hates sin, but he loves us.

He will deal strongly with sin, but he will deal patiently with us. What a God!  
And so, we see the gospel thread, we see the character of God.

Studying Judges is not about studying the character of Samson and Gideon. But the focus is to see God. The next book is Ruth, quite a change, but still it's one connected, beautiful book. God bless you.