

The Book of Judges

7

Morning Devotions

Select a passage in God's Word. Talk with the Lord as you read the passage, then go back and find one or two verses which the Lord has impressed on your heart and meditate on them.

Morning Study

This morning we complete our study of the book of **Judges**. In this segment of the book, we read the stories of Tola (**10:1-2**), Jair (**10:3-5**), Jephthah (**10:6-12:7**), Izban (**12:8-10**), Elon (**12:11-12**), Abdon (**12:13-15**) and Samson (**13:1-18:31**). As you will see from the space devoted to each story, the accounts of two men – Jephthah and Samson – make up the bulk of the second half of **Judges**.

As you read **Judges**, you will find many stories that seem cruel and even outright immoral. Remember that the Bible doesn't condone the evil acts it records. It simply narrates them as they happened.

One case in point is Jephthah's vow in **11:30-40**. Did Jephthah actually sacrifice his daughter as a human sacrifice, as the context indicates, or was it that she merely became "devoted" to the Lord and never married, much in the same way that a modern nun enters a convent? The context (particularly **11:39-40**) is that she was indeed sacrificed.

Human sacrifice was expressly forbidden in the Law (**Deuteronomy 12:31**), but right throughout the account of **Judges** we find Israel following Canaanite practices, and human sacrifice was a common practice among the peoples of Canaan.

We also find Samson acting immorally, yet the Lord's strength still came on him when he fought the Philistines. We need to remember that God still abided by the covenant he made with Samson's parents, even when Samson sinned. According to **Numbers 6:2-8**, Samson's Nazirite vow in fact involved not just the rule prohibiting the cutting of his hair, but also the rules prohibiting the drinking of wine and the touching of a dead body. Samson broke both these rules, but it was only when his hair was cut that the Nazirite covenant he had with God was recinded.

Let's now pull up a comfortable chair and read the second half of **Judges** – **chapters 10-21**. Note particularly **17:6** and **21:25**, which explain the anarchy we find throughout the book of **Judges**.

Memory Verse

For since the creation of the world God's invisible qualities – his eternal power and divine nature – have been clearly seen, being understood from what has been made, so that men are without excuse.

Romans 1:20

Here are a few suggestions that may help you to memorize your memory verse:

- ➡ Ask the Lord to help you remember his Word (see [John 14:26](#)).
- ➡ Use the version of the Bible you are most familiar with. What you normally read in your Bible is what you need to be memorizing.
- ➡ Don't just memorize the contents of the verse; memorize its "address" (the verse reference) as well. You can do this by following this pattern: Step 1: **reference**; Step 2: **verse content**; Step 3: **reference**. Then repeat steps 1-3. Note that you are quoting the reference twice as many times as you quote the actual verse content. This gives the verse a clear "reference tag."
- ➡ After you have read your memory verse out aloud several times, try going through your memory verse *without* reading your computer screen.
- ➡ Look up your memory verse in your Bible. Look at its immediate context and read the verses that come before and after your memory verse.
- ➡ Print out your memory verse or jot it down on a piece of paper. Take this paper with you when you go to work or do other daily activities. Meditate on the meaning of the verse throughout the day.
- ➡ During your noon appointment with the Lord, take out your memory verse and go over it again. Talk to the Lord about what this verse means to you personally.
- ➡ In the evening (at either your evening study or your evening devotions), see if you can quote your memory verse from memory. Then, without looking at the memory verse itself, see if you can find it in your Bible.
- ➡ The next day, before you begin committing a new verse to memory, rehearse your previous day's memory verse and see if you can remember it (without cheating!).
- ➡ Finally, at the end of the week (possibly on the Sunday), collect all your week's memory verses, rehearse them and see if you can recall them without reading them. Spend a little extra time on any verses you have difficulty recalling.
- ➡ Remember: Don't just memorize a verse. Put it into practice ([James 1:22](#)). It is not being able to quote a verse from memory that counts. It is His Word *abiding* in your heart that counts ([John 15:7](#)). When you actually apply a verse consistently to your daily life, that is when you *truly* know that verse!