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Judges: A Study Outline

Old Testament Digest, Volume 2

From the *Old Testament Digest* of William MacDonald

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Judges

A study outline from William MacDonald's *Old Testament Digest, Volume 2* · online: kee-ministry-library.netlify.app/.../outline/judges

Overview of Judges

Judges takes up Israel's history after Joshua's generation had died, when the people had failed to drive out the Canaanites, mingled with them and turned to their idols. MacDonald traces a repeated cycle of sin, servitude, supplication and salvation through twelve judges, military deliverers raised up by God over about 325 years, and closes with an appendix showing how low Israel sank when "every man did that which was right in his own eyes." Tradition names Samuel as the author, and the book is not strictly chronological, since some judges probably ruled at the same time in different parts of the land.

Key themes

- The fourfold cycle: sin, servitude, supplication, salvation (rebellion, retribution, repentance, rest)
- The desperate wickedness of the human heart and the persistent grace of God
- Partial obedience is disobedience
- God choosing weak and despised things to shame the strong (1 Corinthians 1:27–29)
- The neglect of the fathers leading to the apostasy of the sons
- Loss of separation leading to loss of power, as in Samson
- "No king in Israel": religious, moral and political confusion (Judges 17:6)

Christ in Judges. The Angel of the Lord who comes up from Gilgal to Bochim, who calls Gideon, and who tells Manoah His name is Wonderful is, for MacDonald, the Lord Jesus Himself. Jephthah, born under a shadow and rejected by his brothers, yet called on as savior when they were in bondage and insisting on being their lord as well, reminds him of Christ. Gideon's broken pitchers letting the light shine out are explained by 2 Corinthians 4:7, and the hammer of Jael speaks of the Word of God.

Read Judges in the NET Bible: Judges 1 · MacDonald's full commentary: Judges in the Digest

MacDonald's Outline of Judges

I. Review and Preview (Judges 1:1–3:6)
- A. Retrospective view (Judges 1:1–2:10)
- B. Prospective view (Judges 2:11–3:6)

II. Times of the Judges (Judges 3:7–16:31)
- A. Othniel (Judges 3:7–11)
- B. Ehud (Judges 3:12–30)
- C. Shamgar (Judges 3:31)
- D. Deborah and Barak (Judges 4:1–5:31)
- E. Gideon (Judges 6:1–8:32)
- F. Usurpation of Abimelech (Judges 8:33–9:57)
- G. Tola and Jair (Judges 10:1–5)
- H. Jephthah (Judges 10:6–12:7)

III. Ibzan, Elon, and Abdon (Judges 12:8–15)
- A. Samson (Judges 13:1–16:31)

IV. Religious, Moral, and Political Decay (Judges 17–21)
- A. Micah and the Danites (Judges 17:1–18:31)
- B. The Levite and his concubine (Judges 19)
- C. The war with Benjamin (Judges 20–21)

I · Incomplete Conquest

Judges 1

MacDonald shows Judah and the other tribes winning partial victories but failing to drive out the Canaanites, a failure that would cost them dearly.

I. Judah leads, weakly seeking Simeon's help — Judges 1:1–3

II. Adoni-bezek maimed instead of destroyed — Judges 1:4–7
- A. A foreshadowing: the heathen crippled, not crushed (Deuteronomy 7:24)
- B. Partial obedience is disobedience

III. Jerusalem burned Judges 1:8; the Jebusites remain (Judges 1:21)
- A. Not taken until David (2 Samuel 5:6–7)

IV. Hebron and Kirjath-sepher, looking back to Caleb and Othniel — Judges 1:9–15

V. The Kenites remain among Israel — Judges 1:16

VI. Judah fails before the chariots of iron — Judges 1:17–19

VII. Bethel taken, but a collaborator spared who builds another Luz — Judges 1:22–26

VIII. Seven tribes fail to drive out the Canaanites — Judges 1:27–36

CROSS REFERENCES

Deuteronomy 7:24 2 Samuel 5:6–7 Joshua 15:16–19 Joshua 12:16

LESSONS

- Unjudged sin survives and has to be met later.
- Unwillingness to persevere in difficult circumstances robs God's people of full victory.

RELATED READING

- *Meditations on the Book of Judges* (H. L. Rossier) — Rossier on Judges 1:1–16
- *Meditations on the Book of Judges* (H. L. Rossier) — Rossier on Judges 1:17–36

ALSO DISCUSSED IN THE LIBRARY

- *Confirming Accuracy* (Jean Gibson)
- *Jerusalem* (Gordon Franz)
- *Bible Commentary on Joshua* (H. L. Rossier)

Read MacDonald on Chapter 1 →

2 · From Gilgal to Bochim

Judges 2

MacDonald explains the Lord's rebuke at Bochim and gives a preview of the whole book's cycle of sin, servitude, supplication and salvation.

I. The Angel of the Lord comes from Gilgal to Bochim — Judges 2:1–5
   A. From the place of victory to the place of weeping
   B. God will no longer drive out the nations; they will harass Israel

II. A generation that did not know the Lord — Judges 2:6–10
   A. The fathers had not taught their children (Deuteronomy 6)

III. The fourfold cycle previewed — Judges 2:11–19
   A. Sin Judges 2:11–13, servitude Judges 2:14–15, supplication, salvation — Judges 2:16–18
   B. Human wickedness and God's long-suffering in sharp contrast

IV. God's choice of weak things (1 Corinthians 1:27–29)
   A. Ehud's left hand, Shamgar's ox-goad, Deborah and Jael, Gideon's 300, Samson's jawbone

V. The nations left to chastise, test and train Israel — Judges 2:20–23

CROSS REFERENCES

Deuteronomy 6 1 Corinthians 1:27–29 Judges 3:1–4

LESSONS

- A lack of spiritual leadership results in a corresponding lack of obedience among God's people.
- God allows trials to test whether His people will keep His way.

RELATED READING

- *Meditations on the Book of Judges* (H. L. Rossier) — Rossier on Judges 2:1–5
- *Meditations on the Book of Judges* (H. L. Rossier) — Rossier on Judges 2:6–3:4

ALSO DISCUSSED IN THE LIBRARY

- *The Life and Times of Samuel the Prophet* (Christopher Knapp)
- *Through the Scriptures: Sunday School Lesson Outlines* (Alfred P. Gibbs)
- *Bible Gems: Gospel Light* (Milton Haack)

Read MacDonald on Chapter 2 →

3 · Othniel, Ehud and Shamgar

Judges 3

MacDonald follows the first three deliverers, with the meanings of the oppressors' and judges' names as pictures of spiritual warfare.

I. The nations left as a test — Judges 3:1–4

II. Othniel and Chushan-rishathaim — Judges 3:5–11
- A. Intermarriage led to idolatry (Deuteronomy 7:3–6)
- B. Othniel, "lion of God," turned the city of the book into a living oracle
- C. Forty years of rest

III. Ehud and Eglon of Moab — Judges 3:12–30
- A. A left-handed Benjamite with a two-edged dagger
- B. Eighteen years of servitude, eighty years of rest
- C. Praise wielding the two-edged sword, the Word, against the world ruler

IV. Shamgar and the ox-goad — Judges 3:31
- A. 600 Philistines slain with a despised weapon
- B. A pilgrim wielding the Word (Ecclesiastes 12:11)

V. MacDonald's table of oppressors and judges, with meanings and years

CROSS REFERENCES

Deuteronomy 7:3–6 Ecclesiastes 12:11

LESSONS

- God can use the great tribe or the small one, since the power is His; men are only the agents of deliverance.
- MacDonald warns against strained or fanciful interpretations of names and types.

RELATED READING

- *Meditations on the Book of Judges* (H. L. Rossier) — Rossier on Othniel
- *Meditations on the Book of Judges* (H. L. Rossier) — Rossier on Ehud
- *Meditations on the Book of Judges* (H. L. Rossier) — Rossier on Shamgar

ALSO DISCUSSED IN THE LIBRARY

- *Through the Scriptures: Sunday School Lesson Outlines* (Alfred P. Gibbs)
- *Papers on the Pentateuch* (William Kelly)
- *Intermediate Christian Training* (Jean Gibson)

Read MacDonald on Chapter 3 →

4 · Deborah, Barak and Jael

Judges 4

MacDonald describes how God raised up a prophetess in a time of decline and gave victory over Sisera's chariots through Barak and Jael.

I. Jabin of Hazor and Sisera's 900 chariots — Judges 4:1–3

II. Deborah the prophetess — Judges 4:4–5
- A. An exception in a day of decline, not a pattern for the church

III. Barak's hesitation — Judges 4:6–9
- A. The honor will go to a woman
- B. Yet Barak is commended for faith (Hebrews 11:32)

IV. The battle by the Kishon — Judges 4:10–16

A. Footmen against chariots; rain turned the plain to mire (Judges 5:4)

V. Jael and the tent-pin — Judges 4:17–24

A. The hammer speaks of the Word (Jeremiah 23:29)

CROSS REFERENCES

Hebrews 11:32 Judges 5:4 Judges 5:20–21 Jeremiah 23:29

LESSONS

- God used His Word (Deborah) to cast down human reason (Jabin) when it exalted itself against the knowledge of God.

RELATED READING

- *Meditations on the Book of Judges* (H. L. Rossier) — Rossier on Judges 4

ALSO DISCUSSED IN THE LIBRARY

- *Everyone Has a Psalm* (R. Edward Harlow)
- *Confirming Accuracy* (Jean Gibson)
- *The Continual Burnt Offering* (H. A. Ironside)

Read MacDonald on Chapter 4 →

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5 · The Song of Deborah

Judges 5

MacDonald walks through Deborah's song of praise, which honors those who fought and shames those who stood by.

I. Praise for the Lord's triumphant march — Judges 5:1–5

II. Conditions before Deborah arose — Judges 5:6–8

A. Deserted highways; idolatry brought war and no weapons

III. Those who came to help — Judges 5:9–15

A. Ephraim, Benjamin, Machir, Zebulun and Issachar

IV. Those who stayed away — Judges 5:16–17

A. Reuben by the sheepfolds, Gilead, Dan in ships, Asher by the shore

V. Zebulun and Naphtali risked their lives; nature fought for them — Judges 5:18–22

VI. Meroz cursed, Jael blessed — Judges 5:23–27

VII. Sisera's mother waiting in vain — Judges 5:28–31

CROSS REFERENCES

1 Corinthians 3:10–15 Luke 1:42

LESSONS

- The Lord knows who is actively confronting the world and the devil and who is only watching; there is reward coming, and loss.

RELATED READING

- *Meditations on the Book of Judges* (H. L. Rossier) — Rossier on Judges 5

ALSO DISCUSSED IN THE LIBRARY

- *Confirming Accuracy* (Jean Gibson)
- *Dr. Ironside's Bible* (H. A. Ironside)
- *Archaeology and the Bible* (Gordon Franz)

Read MacDonald on Chapter 5 →

6 · Gideon Called

Judges 6

MacDonald shows the Midianite oppression and the Lord calling fearful Gideon, who tears down Baal's altar and seeks confirmation through the fleece.

I. Midian strips the land like locusts — Judges 6:1–6
   A. Backsliding brings poverty, slavery and fear

II. A prophet reminds Israel of its idolatry — Judges 6:7–10

III. The Angel of the Lord calls Gideon — Judges 6:11–16
   A. Threshing wheat secretly in a winepress

IV. The offering consumed; Jehovah-shalom — Judges 6:17–24

V. Baal's altar torn down by night — Judges 6:25–32
   A. Fear did not stop his obedience
   B. Named Jerubbaal: "Let Baal plead for himself"

VI. The Spirit comes upon Gideon; the army gathers — Judges 6:33–35

VII. The fleece — Judges 6:36–40
   A. Not for guidance but for confirmation of what God had already said
   B. A supernatural sign, not a natural one

LESSONS

- Fear in itself is not wrong; it becomes sin when it keeps us from obeying the Lord.
- "Putting out a fleece" to find God's will misapplies this passage.

RELATED READING

- *Meditations on the Book of Judges* (H. L. Rossier) — Rossier on Judges 6:11–40
- *The Collected Writings of J. N. Darby, Volume 19 (Expository 1)* (John Nelson Darby) — Darby, "Gideon, God's Mighty Man of Valour"
- *Miscellaneous Writings, Volume 1* (C. H. Mackintosh) — Mackintosh, "Gideon and His Companions"

ALSO DISCUSSED IN THE LIBRARY

- *Through the Scriptures: Sunday School Lesson Outlines* (Alfred P. Gibbs)
- *The Holy Spirit* (Dan Snaddon)
- *Articles by Alfred P. Gibbs* (Alfred P. Gibbs)

Read MacDonald on Chapter 6 →

7 · Gideon's Three Hundred

Judges 7

MacDonald describes the army reduced from 32,000 to 300 and the victory won with trumpets, pitchers and torches.

I. The army reduced so the victory would be clearly God's — Judges 7:1–8
   A. The fearful sent home (Deuteronomy 20:8)
   B. Those who drank quickly kept: 300

II. The Midianite's dream of the barley cake — Judges 7:9–14
   A. Gideon first worshiped, then warred — Judges 7:15

III. Trumpets, pitchers and torches — Judges 7:16–20

A. "The sword of the Lord and of Gideon"

B. The broken earthen vessels: — 2 Corinthians 4:7

IV. Midian routed; Oreb and Zeeb slain by Ephraim — Judges 7:21–25

CROSS REFERENCES

Deuteronomy 20:8 2 Corinthians 4:7

LESSONS

- Only as we are delivered to death for Jesus' sake does the light of the knowledge of God's glory shine out to others.
- A leader must be a worshiper first, lead by example, and give God the credit.

RELATED READING

- *Meditations on the Book of Judges* (H. L. Rossier) — Rossier on Judges 7:1–14
- *Meditations on the Book of Judges* (H. L. Rossier) — Rossier on Judges 7:15–25

ALSO DISCUSSED IN THE LIBRARY

- *Truths to Live By: One Day at a Time* (William MacDonald)
- *Advanced Christian Training* (Jean Gibson)
- *Living Discipleship Principles* (Jean Gibson)

Read MacDonald on Chapter 7 →

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8 · Gideon's Victory and His Snare

Judges 8

MacDonald shows Gideon calming Ephraim, finishing the war, refusing the crown, and then making an ephod that became a snare.

I. A soft answer to Ephraim — Judges 8:1–3

II. Succoth and Penuel punished for refusing bread — Judges 8:4–17

A. Proverbs 15:1 illustrated both ways

III. Zebah and Zalmunna slain — Judges 8:18–21

IV. Gideon refuses the kingship: the Lord shall rule — Judges 8:22–23

V. The golden ephod at Ophrah — Judges 8:24–27

A. "He refused the kingship but wanted the priesthood"

B. It drew Israel from Shiloh into idolatry

VI. Forty years of rest, then back to Baal — Judges 8:28–35

CROSS REFERENCES

Proverbs 15:1 Philippians 3:12–14 Genesis 14:21–24

LESSONS

- After resisting one temptation we can fall into another.
- Earthly reward for spiritual service can become a snare to us and to others.

RELATED READING

- *Meditations on the Book of Judges* (H. L. Rossier) — Rossier on Judges 8:1–23
- *Meditations on the Book of Judges* (H. L. Rossier) — Rossier on Judges 8:24–35

ALSO DISCUSSED IN THE LIBRARY

- *Facts and Theories as to a Future State* (F. W. Grant)
- *Proverbs* (H. A. Ironside)
- *Truths to Live By: One Day at a Time* (William MacDonald)

Read MacDonald on Chapter 8 →

9 · Abimelech the Usurper

Judges 9

MacDonald tells of Gideon's son who murdered his brothers to rule, Jotham's parable of the bramble, and the bloody end it predicted.

I. Abimelech seizes power through Shechem — Judges 9:1–6

II. Jotham's parable of the trees — Judges 9:7–15

A. Olive, fig and vine refuse to leave their places; the bramble accepts

III. Jotham's curse — Judges 9:16–21

IV. God sends an evil spirit between Abimelech and Shechem — Judges 9:22–33

A. God permits evil and uses it to judge evil men

V. Gaal's revolt crushed; Shechem sown with salt — Judges 9:34–49

VI. Abimelech killed by a millstone at Thebez — Judges 9:50–57

CROSS REFERENCES

1 Samuel 16:14 1 Kings 22:19–23

LESSONS

- Justice suits the punishment to the crime: he slew his brothers on a stone, and a stone crushed his head.
- Those who live by violence will die by it.

RELATED READING

- *Meditations on the Book of Judges* (H. L. Rossier) — Rossier on Judges 9

ALSO DISCUSSED IN THE LIBRARY

- *Proverbs* (H. A. Ironside)
- *Isaiah* (F. C. Jennings)
- *Jeremiah and Lamentations* (H. A. Ironside)

Read MacDonald on Chapter 9 →

10 · Tola, Jair and Renewed Idolatry

Judges 10

MacDonald notes two quiet judges and then Israel's worst idolatry yet, met by God's tender pity when they repented.

I. Tola of Issachar, 23 years — Judges 10:1–2

II. Jair the Gileadite, 22 years, with 30 sons — Judges 10:3–5

III. Idolatry again; Philistines and Ammonites oppress Israel — Judges 10:6–9

A. Serving idols brought slavery to idolaters

IV. God at first refuses their cry — Judges 10:10–14

V. True repentance; idols put away — Judges 10:15–16

A. "His soul was grieved for the misery of Israel" — Judges 10:16

VI. Ammon gathers in Gilead — Judges 10:17–18

LESSONS

- Like a father, God is moved by the plight of His wayward children; their misery calls forth His mercy.

RELATED READING

- *Meditations on the Book of Judges* (H. L. Rossier) — Rossier on Judges 10:1–5
- *Meditations on the Book of Judges* (H. L. Rossier) — Rossier on Judges 10:6–18

ALSO DISCUSSED IN THE LIBRARY

- *Facts and Theories as to a Future State* (F. W. Grant)
- *Daniel in the Critics' Den* (Sir Robert Anderson)
- *The Kings of Judah and Israel* (Christopher Knapp)

Read MacDonald on Chapter 10 →

11 · Jephthah and His Vow

Judges 11

MacDonald presents the rejected son who became Israel's deliverer, his reasoned answer to Ammon, and his rash vow.

I. Jephthah: son of a harlot, rejected, a leader of outlaws — Judges 11:1–3

II. Called back as head and deliverer — Judges 11:4–11

  A. A reminder of Christ: rejected, then called on as Savior and Lord

III. The case against Ammon's claim — Judges 11:12–27

  A. Israel had taken the land from Sihon, not from Ammon (Deuteronomy 2:19)

IV. The rash vow and the victory — Judges 11:28–33

V. His daughter — Judges 11:34–40

  A. Two views: burnt offering, or perpetual virginity in the Lord's service

  B. Human sacrifice was never approved by God (Deuteronomy 18:9–14)

VI. The Ammonites: rationalism and false doctrine; Jephthah, "he will open"

CROSS REFERENCES

Deuteronomy 2:19 Deuteronomy 18:9–14 Exodus 13:12–13 Leviticus 27:1–8

LESSONS

- We should not make rash promises.

RELATED READING

- *Meditations on the Book of Judges* (H. L. Rossier) — Rossier on Judges 11

ALSO DISCUSSED IN THE LIBRARY

- *Intermediate Christian Training* (Jean Gibson)
- *Proverbs* (H. A. Ironside)

Read MacDonald on Chapter 11 →

12 · Shibboleth; Ibzan, Elon and Abdon

Judges 12

MacDonald describes the civil war with jealous Ephraim and lists three minor judges.

I. Ephraim's jealousy and taunts — Judges 12:1–4

  A. They had quarreled with Gideon too

II. "Shibboleth" at the fords of the Jordan — Judges 12:5–6

  A. 42,000 Ephraimites slain: a frightful slaughter of his own people

III. Jephthah dies after six years — Judges 12:7

  A. Named with the faithful in — Hebrews 11:32

IV. Ibzan of Bethlehem, seven years — Judges 12:8–10

V. Elon of Zebulun, ten years — Judges 12:11–12

VI. Abdon of Pirathon, eight years — Judges 12:13–15

CROSS REFERENCES

Judges 8:1–3 Hebrews 11:32

LESSONS

- Those who overthrow error are sometimes the very ones who then cross swords with their brethren over things that are not vital.

RELATED READING

- *Meditations on the Book of Judges* (H. L. Rossier) — Rossier on Judges 12:1–6
- *Meditations on the Book of Judges* (H. L. Rossier) — Rossier on Judges 12:7–15

ALSO DISCUSSED IN THE LIBRARY

- *Proverbs* (H. A. Ironside)
- *The Kings of Judah and Israel* (Christopher Knapp)

Read MacDonald on Chapter 12 →

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13 · Samson's Birth Foretold

Judges 13

MacDonald tells of the Angel of the Lord announcing a Nazarite son to Manoah's barren wife, and weighs Samson's strengths against his weaknesses.

I. Forty years under the Philistines — Judges 13:1

II. The Angel appears to Manoah's wife — Judges 13:2–5

- A. The barren womb, a starting place in God's purposes
- B. A Nazarite from birth to death (Numbers 6:2)

III. The Angel returns at Manoah's prayer — Judges 13:6–14

IV. His name is Wonderful — Judges 13:15–23

- A. He ascends in the flame of the altar (Isaiah 9:6)

V. Samson born; the Spirit begins to move him — Judges 13:24–25

VI. Samson's strengths and weaknesses surveyed

- A. Lion, Philistines, gates of Gaza, Dagon's temple
- B. Weakness for women, deceit, temper, a broken vow, prayer only in trouble

CROSS REFERENCES

Numbers 6:2 Isaiah 9:6 Hebrews 11:32

LESSONS

- Few men in the Bible show such a contrast of strength and weakness.

RELATED READING

- *Meditations on the Book of Judges* (H. L. Rossier) — Rossier, "Nazariteship"
- *Meditations on the Book of Judges* (H. L. Rossier) — Rossier on Judges 13
- *Articles by C. H. Mackintosh* (C. H. Mackintosh) — Mackintosh, "Being a Nazarite"

ALSO DISCUSSED IN THE LIBRARY

- *Articles by Andrew Borland* (Andrew Borland)
- *Proverbs* (H. A. Ironside)
- *Intermediate Christian Training* (Jean Gibson)

Read MacDonald on Chapter 13 →

14 · Samson's Philistine Bride

Judges 14

MacDonald shows Samson's self-will in marrying a Philistine, the lion and the honey, and the riddle that ended in bloodshed.

I. He insists on a Philistine wife — Judges 14:1–4
   A. God permitted it and overruled it, not approved it

II. The lion torn by the Spirit's power — Judges 14:5–6

III. Honey from the carcass — Judges 14:8–9
   A. Touching the dead broke his Nazarite vow

IV. The riddle at the wedding feast — Judges 14:10–14

V. The answer extracted through his bride — Judges 14:15–18

VI. Thirty Philistines of Ashkelon slain — Judges 14:19–20

LESSONS

- Willfulness that disobeys God and parents to get what pleases us leads into trouble.

RELATED READING

- *Meditations on the Book of Judges* (H. L. Rossier) — Rossier on Judges 14

ALSO DISCUSSED IN THE LIBRARY

- *Confirming Accuracy* (Jean Gibson)
- *The Holy Spirit* (Dan Snaddon)
- *Proverbs* (H. A. Ironside)

Read MacDonald on Chapter 14 →

15 · The Foxes and the Jawbone

Judges 15

MacDonald traces Samson's cycle of revenge and his great victory with the jawbone of an ass.

I. Foxes and firebrands in the grain — Judges 15:1–5

II. The Philistines burn his wife and her father — Judges 15:6

III. Samson strikes back and hides at Etam — Judges 15:7–8

IV. Judah binds him for the Philistines — Judges 15:9–13
   A. A vassal mentality: loyal to their oppressors

V. The jawbone and 1000 slain — Judges 15:14–17
   A. An unclean weapon showed the victory was God's

VI. Water from the hollow place: En-hakkore — Judges 15:18–19

VII. He judged Israel twenty years — Judges 15:20

LESSONS

- Violence triggers more violence.
- In extreme crisis God sometimes allows irregularities He would not ordinarily permit.

RELATED READING

- *Meditations on the Book of Judges* (H. L. Rossier) — Rossier on Judges 15

ALSO DISCUSSED IN THE LIBRARY

- *Notes on Judges* (William Kelly)
- *Through the Scriptures: Sunday School Lesson Outlines* (Alfred P. Gibbs)
- *Church Truths* (Dan Snaddon)

Read MacDonald on Chapter 15 →

16 · Delilah and the Death of Samson

Judges 16

MacDonald follows Samson from the harlot of Gaza to Delilah's lap, his blindness and grinding, and his death in Dagon's house.

I. The gates of Gaza — Judges 16:1–3

II. Delilah's three attempts — Judges 16:4–14

  A. Green cords, new ropes, the loom

III. The secret revealed; the hair cut; the Lord departed — Judges 16:15–20

  A. His strength was his relationship to the Lord, not his hair

IV. Binding, blinding, grinding — Judges 16:21

V. His hair grows; Dagon's feast — Judges 16:22–27

VI. His last prayer and death among the Philistines — Judges 16:28–31

  A. More slain at his death than in his life

LESSONS

- Loss of separation leads to loss of power and eventual ruin.
- To yield our members to sin is to pursue self-destruction.

RELATED READING

- *Meditations on the Book of Judges* (H. L. Rossier) — Rossier on Judges 16

ALSO DISCUSSED IN THE LIBRARY

- *Through the Scriptures: Sunday School Lesson Outlines* (Alfred P. Gibbs)
- *Articles by C. H. Mackintosh* (C. H. Mackintosh)
- *Isaiah* (F. C. Jennings)

Read MacDonald on Chapter 16 →

17 · Micah's Idols and Hired Priest

Judges 17

MacDonald opens the book's appendix with a picture of religious confusion: stolen silver, household idols and a Levite for hire.

I. The appendix: illustrations, not chronology

II. Micah's stolen silver made into idols — Judges 17:1–4

III. A private shrine, ephod and son as priest — Judges 17:5

IV. "Every man did that which was right in his own eyes" — Judges 17:6

V. A wandering Levite hired as priest — Judges 17:7–13

  A. He should have been supported by the tithes

  B. His salary sealed his lips

CROSS REFERENCES

Proverbs 14:12

LESSONS

- Confusion in worship springs from the heart of man when God's Word is ignored.

RELATED READING

- *Meditations on the Book of Judges* (H. L. Rossier) — Rossier on Judges 17

ALSO DISCUSSED IN THE LIBRARY

- *Current Issues* (Dan Snaddon)
- *Collected Messages of Dan Snaddon* (Dan Snaddon)

Read MacDonald on Chapter 17 →

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18 · The Danites Take Laish

Judges 18

MacDonald shows the tribe of Dan stealing Micah's idols and priest and setting up idolatry in their new city.

I. Dan seeks more territory — Judges 18:1
   A. Their portion was too small (Joshua 19:40–48)

II. The scouts consult Micah's Levite — Judges 18:2–6

III. Six hundred Danites take the idols and the priest — Judges 18:7–26

IV. Laish destroyed and renamed Dan — Judges 18:27–29

V. Jonathan, grandson of Moses, priest of the idols — Judges 18:30–31
   A. Dan later the site of Jeroboam's golden calf

CROSS REFERENCES

Joshua 19:40–48 1 Samuel 4:11 2 Kings 15:29

LESSONS

- "There is a way which seemeth right unto a man, but the end thereof are the ways of death."

RELATED READING

- *Meditations on the Book of Judges* (H. L. Rossier) — Rossier on Judges 18

ALSO DISCUSSED IN THE LIBRARY

- *Watch and Pray (1989–1993)* (Kevin L. Engle)
- *The Acts of the Apostles* (William Kelly)
- *The Collected Writings of J. N. Darby, Volume 4 (Ecclesiastical 2)* (John Nelson Darby)

Read MacDonald on Chapter 18 →

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19 · The Levite and His Concubine

Judges 19

MacDonald recounts the crime at Gibeah as a picture of the moral corruption of the times.

I. The concubine's unfaithfulness and the father's hospitality — Judges 19:1–9

II. Passing Jebus by, lodging at Gibeah — Judges 19:10–21
   A. Better to have stayed with the heathen

III. The men of Gibeah, like Sodom — Judges 19:22–26
   A. Compare — Genesis 19

IV. The body divided and sent to the twelve tribes — Judges 19:27–30

CROSS REFERENCES

Genesis 19

LESSONS

- Sin mercilessly rewards its followers.

RELATED READING

- *Meditations on the Book of Judges* (H. L. Rossier) — Rossier on Judges 19

ALSO DISCUSSED IN THE LIBRARY

- *Jerusalem* (Gordon Franz)
- *Confirming Accuracy* (Jean Gibson)
- *Collected Messages of Dan Snaddon* (Dan Snaddon)

Read MacDonald on Chapter 19 →

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20 · War against Benjamin

Judges 20

MacDonald describes the civil war in which the tribes punished Gibeah and nearly wiped out Benjamin.

I. The tribes gather at Mizpeh — Judges 20:1–11

II. Benjamin refuses to give up the guilty — Judges 20:12–14

III. 26,700 against 400,000 — Judges 20:15–17

IV. Two defeats for Israel — Judges 20:18–25

  A. A just cause, but they were not walking close to the Lord

V. Humbling before the Lord at Bethel — Judges 20:26–28

  A. Phinehas still high priest: soon after Joshua

VI. Ambush and victory; 600 Benjamites escape to Rimmon — Judges 20:29–48

LESSONS

- Even a just cause needs humble dependence on the Lord.

RELATED READING

- *Meditations on the Book of Judges* (H. L. Rossier) — Rossier on Judges 20

ALSO DISCUSSED IN THE LIBRARY

- *The Life and Times of Samuel the Prophet* (Christopher Knapp)
- *Collected Messages of Dan Snaddon* (Dan Snaddon)
- *Proverbs* (H. A. Ironside)

Read MacDonald on Chapter 20 →

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21 · Wives for Benjamin

Judges 21

MacDonald closes Judges with the schemes used to save Benjamin from extinction and the book's sad refrain.

I. Regret over Benjamin and a rash oath — Judges 21:1–7

II. Jabesh-gilead destroyed; 400 virgins given — Judges 21:8–15

III. The daughters of Shiloh taken at the feast — Judges 21:16–24

IV. "No king in Israel" — Judges 21:25

V. Ruth set apart from this dark period

CROSS REFERENCES

Judges 17:6

LESSONS

- The fruit of apostasy should turn our hearts to seek the Lord and serve Him faithfully.

RELATED READING

- *Meditations on the Book of Judges* (H. L. Rossier) — Rossier on Judges 21

ALSO DISCUSSED IN THE LIBRARY

- *Jerusalem* (Gordon Franz)
- *Collected Messages of Dan Snaddon* (Dan Snaddon)
- *Bible Gems: Gospel Light* (Milton Haack)

Read MacDonald on Chapter 21 →

Further reading on Judges

In the Faithful Men Library

- *Meditations on the Book of Judges* (H. L. Rossier)
- *Notes on Judges* (William Kelly)
- *From the Editor's Notebook: The Historical Books* (W. Ross Rainey)
- *Synopsis of the Books of the Bible, Volume 1: Genesis to 2 Chronicles* (John Nelson Darby)
- *The Collected Writings of J. N. Darby, Volume 19 (Expository 1)* (John Nelson Darby)
- *Miscellaneous Writings, Volume 1* (C. H. Mackintosh)

On plymouthbrethren.org

- "Judges" (William Kelly, plymouthbrethren.org)
- "Judges" (John Nelson Darby, plymouthbrethren.org)
- "From the Editor's Notebook: Historical Books, Judges" (W. Ross Rainey, From the Editor's Notebook, plymouthbrethren.org)
- "Gideon and his companions" (C. H. Mackintosh, plymouthbrethren.org)
- "Gideon—God's Mighty Man Of Valour" (John Nelson Darby, plymouthbrethren.org)
- "Nazariteship" (H. L. Rossier, plymouthbrethren.org)
- "Being a Nazarite" (C. H. Mackintosh, plymouthbrethren.org)

Every library book that cites Judges: Scripture index — Judges

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