

The Bible Story In A Year

Week 14

The time of the judges was a tumultuous time in Israel's history after the time of great victory in the days of Joshua. Their disobedience led them to turning to other gods and angering Jehovah God, which then led to God punishing them. Then, whenever they would repent and cry out to God for deliverance, God would raise up a judge who would conquer their enemies. Now, we continue to observe some events that happened during this period and the transition to the next.

1) Ruth and Boaz. The book of Ruth introduces itself as recording events that transpired during the time of the judges (Ruth 1:1). At this time, an Israelite man (Elimelech) left Bethlehem to go to the territory of Moab during a time of famine along with his wife (Naomi) and his two sons (Mahlon and Chilion, 1:1-2). Sometime after this, Elimelech died and Naomi was left with her two sons (1:3). These sons each took wives from Moabite women (Orpah married Chilion and Ruth married Mahlon, 1:4; 4:10). Yet, both women lost their husbands and were left childless (1:5). After the death of her husband and sons, Naomi set out to return to her home and gave her daughters-in-law her blessing to stay in their homeland and remarry (1:6-13). Orpah listened and went back, but Ruth clung closely to Naomi (1:14-17). When they returned, Ruth proved to be a diligent worker to provide for herself and Naomi by gathering what was left in the grain fields that belonged to Boaz (a relative of Elimelech, 2:1-3). Boaz took notice of her and had learned of her kindness and sacrifice for Naomi (2:11-12). He made special provisions for Ruth and Ruth continued working (2:13-23). Later, Naomi told Ruth to approach Boaz in a very specific way that would essentially express her desire to be redeemed by Boaz (i.e. it was the responsibility of brothers to continue the family name for a childless widow; yet Ruth's husband had no remaining brothers, Deuteronomy 25:5-10). Whenever one kinsman refused to redeem

Ruth and property from Naomi, Boaz agreed and married Ruth (4:9-10). The people at the city gate prayed a blessing for Ruth (4:11-12). Later, Ruth conceived and gave birth to a son, named Obed (4:13-17). Therefore, this story is historically significant as this is in the family line the Bible will continue to trace concerning the Seed promise (4:18-22).

2) Eli and Samuel. Eli (who was a priest) was the next in the line of Israel's judges. During this time, a man named Elkanah (who had two wives, Peninnah and Hannah) went every year to worship and sacrifice to God at Shiloh (where the tabernacle was located at the time, 1 Samuel 1:1-3). Hannah was deeply hurt due to being childless and was taunted by her husband's other wife (who had children, 1:4-8). On one occasion, Hannah prayed to the Lord at the tabernacle, vowing that she would give her son to the Lord if He would bless her with a son (1:9-11). Later, God did bless her with a son, who she named Samuel (1:19-20). When this son grew to the point of not needing her, she took him to Eli and left him in Eli's care to fulfill her vow (1:23-28). Now, Eli's sons were wicked men and God was angry with them and intended to kill them (2:12, 22-25, 27-36), while Samuel grew in favor with God and people (2:26). One day, God called to Samuel and revealed the devastation that would happen to Eli and his family (3:1-18) and fulfilled everything Samuel prophesied (3:19-21).

3) Israel and the Philistines. Perhaps the evil deeds present in Eli's sons (who were priests) indicate the wickedness that was present in Israel during this time. So, as Israel went out to meet the Philistines in battle, they were defeated (1 Samuel 4:1-2). Then, they tried again and were defeated even more – 30,000 soldiers, including Eli's sons. The ark of God was also captured (presumably as they had tried to force God to help them rather than repenting and crying out to Him, 4:10-11). When all this was reported to Eli, he died (4:18). The Philistines, however, experienced great consequences for

possessing the ark of God. This included the idol of their god Dagon being broken as it fell facedown before the ark and devastation on the people in various places (5:1-12). This resulted in the people sending the ark back to the Israelites on a cart pulled by cows (6:1-7:1). After twenty years, Samuel urged the people to get rid of their foreign idols and set their hearts only on Jehovah (7:2-4). Then, God provided the victory for Israel over the Philistines (7:9-14).

4) Israel demands a king. Samuel judged Israel throughout his life (1 Samuel 7:15). When he grew old, he appointed his sons as judges (though they were not righteous men, 8:1-3). Then, all the elders of Israel gathered to Samuel and demanded that he appoint a king to lead and deliver them just like all the other nations had (8:4-5). After this, Samuel considered their demand wrong and prayed to the Lord (8:6). The Lord told Samuel that they had not rejected him but had rejected God as their King – and to let them have their king, though warning them (8:7-9). Samuel then told them of what having a king would require of them (8:10-18; Deuteronomy 17:14-20). They still refused to be swayed and demanded a king. So, the Lord instructed Samuel to let them have what they asked for and appoint a king (8:19-22).

The Israelites have been repeatedly rebellious against God. Now, even though God has continued to provide for and deliver them, they have rejected God as their Deliverer. Instead, they have opted to be like the rest of the nations. We will watch how this unfolds for them.

Discipleship Questions

(2 Timothy 3:16-17)

Teaching: What did you learn from this lesson?

Rebuking: What are some ways this lesson challenges you to live differently?

Correcting: How does this lesson help you make positive changes for Christ?

Training & Equipping: How can you apply this lesson to be trained and equipped in God's service?