

# Judges & Ruth


God's *Faithfulness* Remains

women's | BIBLE STUDY

*Scripture quotations are taken from The Holy Bible: English Standard Version. Wheaton, IL: Crossway Publishers, 2016.  
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*"If we are faithless, He remains faithful -  
for He cannot deny Himself."*

**2 TIMOTHY 2:13**

# Judges & Ruth

## God's *Faithfulness* Remains

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Welcome! We are so glad you have joined us this year for our study of Judges and Ruth. As you dig into God's Word, we hope it will come alive in ways you may have never expected. Scripture is living and active, able to transform hearts and minds, and God uses it to powerfully change our eternity and the days leading up to it.

As you participate in the disciplined study of the Old Testament, God will graciously reveal Himself to you. As you get to know Him in a more intimate way, you will walk in greater confidence, having been strengthened in your relationship with the almighty God.

Each week, engaging teachers will bring the passage you have studied to life and help you see how you can apply God's Word to your current circumstances. During time with your small group, God will use women of different ages and stages of life to spur you on and help you grow in your relationship with Him.

Our mission in Women's Bible Study is "to become fully devoted followers of Christ through the study of God's Word and its application to our lives." Our prayer is that **Judges and Ruth: God's Faithfulness Remains** will be life-changing and heart transforming. Above all, we pray you will come to better know the all-consuming love of our heavenly Father. We are overjoyed to study God's Word with you as we grow in our devotion to Christ together.

*~Watermark Women's Equipping Team~*

# Tips for Success

## HOW TO USE THIS STUDY:

This curriculum was written using the English Standard Version (ESV) of the Bible. If you are using another translation, some words may be slightly different. You can access the free ESV translation at [ESV.org](http://ESV.org).

Use this study to guide you through God's Word. The questions will help you observe, interpret, and then apply what you are learning to your life.

To begin, **observation questions** will help you see the facts of the Bible passage and ask the question, "*What does it say?*" This initial step utilizes who, what, when, where, and why questions.

**Interpretation questions** will ask, "*What does it mean?*" This step will help you discover principles that are universally true for all people, at all times, in all places. Look for biblical truth that remains true today, thousands of years after originally written. The interpretation questions will ask what you learned about God, His commands or promises, man, the sins of humanity, examples to follow or not follow, etc.

Finally, **application questions** will lead you to apply God's Word by asking, "*How do I integrate what I have learned into my life?*" We don't study the Bible to become smarter sinners, but to help us become more like Christ. This life change only occurs when you apply what you learn from God's Word to your current circumstances, thoughts, relationships, and decisions.

Each lesson ends with a "Big Idea" section. This is a place for you to ask yourself, "*What was the main idea God taught me in this passage?*"

In the margins of this study book we have included information such as Bible study tips, historical references, background information, definitions, and quotes. This material is provided to enhance your study and help you better understand the passages. We *highly recommend* you read the material in the margins as you work through the study.

At the end of each lesson you will find a blank page to use for notes during the weekly teaching time. All you will need to bring each week are this booklet, a pen, and your Bible.

## LESSON PREPARATION:

- Always pray as you open God's Word. Ask Him to help you understand and apply what He is saying to you as you study.
- Remember: we study The Word of God to know the God of The Word. The goal is not to complete each lesson or get the "right answer," but to better know God and live differently in light of the Bible.

- Important: Read each week's Scripture passage in its entirety before answering the questions. As you answer each study question, note what you learn about God. Ask Him to show you how the verses impact what's going on in your life this week. Look for God to guide, refocus, correct, and transform your life through the Scriptures.

- Some helpful resources to aid your study throughout the week are:

**net.bible.org:** an online Bible with a commentary written by Dr. Thomas Constable

**gotquestions.org:** a wealth of information answering questions about God, the Bible, and theology

**bible.org:** a great source of articles from various authors

**biblegateway.org:** an online Bible with many different translations available

- There is an appendix in the back of this study that includes key doctrines and central truths revealed throughout Judges and Ruth. To best utilize this tool, look for questions that say: "See Appendix."

#### **ATTENDANCE:**

- Make attendance at Bible Study a priority. Your commitment will have an impact on you and those in your small group. If you need to miss a week, please let your Small Group Leader know.
- If you have a difficult week and do not complete the lesson, please come to Bible Study anyway. We trust God will teach you something as you listen and learn from other women in your group.
- We have an enemy who does not want our relationship with God to grow (John 10:10). Therefore, expect distractions every week. Knowing this, ask God to help you persevere; it is worth it!

#### **GROUP DISCUSSION:**

- The main purpose of our study is to spend time in God's Word and apply it to our lives. We want small groups to be a safe place to openly discuss what we learn in the Bible and authentically process how it affects our lives.
- Remember that God put your group together. He will use the women in your group to bless you and use you to bless them.
- Encourage others by listening thoughtfully and respectfully to every woman's answer. What someone in your group says may be the most important thing God wants you to hear that week. Conversely, what you say may be the most important thing God wants someone else to hear!
- There may be a time when you feel a person has answered incorrectly. If you have a different perspective, express it graciously.
- Are you tempted to talk too much? Ahead of time, mark the questions you most want to discuss. Are you quiet in a group setting? Pick one question that is important to you and plan to answer that one. This will give you more confidence to participate.

#### **PRAYER REQUESTS:**

- You will have the privilege of praying for the women in your group and having them pray for you. As you pray, God will show you that He is a God who hears and answers prayer.
- Please limit your requests to you and your immediate family. Make sure you have permission to share any request that is not about yourself.
- Please remember prayer requests are to be kept within the group.

# INTRODUCTION TO *Judges and Ruth*

The book of Judges records one of the most difficult times in the history of God's people. While it begins on the tail end of great success, it ends in total and utter failure. This period was defined by corruption, turmoil, and blatant disregard for God. It might leave you asking, "How did things get so bad?" The answer is only found when we back up to the beginning of Israel's story.

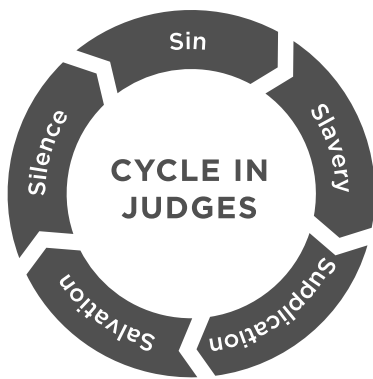
## *The Story*

God, the creator of the heavens and earth, breathed all that you know and see into existence. He created man and woman, Adam and Eve, in His image. They were in perfect relationship with their creator. However, deceived by Satan, Adam and Eve disobeyed God, and from that point forward everything changed. Sin entered the world separating sinful humanity from their holy God. Then, rather than desiring a relationship with their creator they chose to hide from Him. Adam and Eve rebelled against Him. They needed a rescuer to restore the broken relationship, so God's plan of redemption was set into motion. God began to choose people to work through. First, He chose Abraham. God promised Abraham many descendants, the land of Canaan, and that through his family, all the nations of the world would be blessed. Abraham's descendants became known as the nation of Israel. Several hundred years later, God chose Moses.

After using Moses to rescue God's chosen people, Israel, from slavery in Egypt, God made a covenant with them. If they would follow His law, they would be blessed and be a witness of God to the surrounding nations. If they disobeyed, they would be cursed. God brought Israel back to the Promised Land, the land of Canaan, and gave them specific instructions: totally destroy the people living within the land, the Canaanites. If they didn't, the Canaanites worldly influence would be Israel's demise. These foreigners would sway Israel's heart away from the One True God to the foreign gods they worshiped. God wanted to protect them. However, in the book of Judges, we see Israel disobey. They did not listen to God's instructions. Despite their former success in conquering the nations (in the book of Joshua), they turned their faces away from God. The book of Judges recounts the ripple effect of Israel's disobedience. Yet, God's redemptive plan was still at work. In contrast, Ruth, written during the time of the judges, gives readers an example of kindness and obedience despite a wayward, crumbling nation. No matter the book, God remained faithful in the midst of it all.

## Judges

The book of Judges is often characterized by a downward spiral. It was a time when “everyone did what was right in his own eyes” (Judges 21:25). The sin and rebellion are overwhelming: idolatry, sexual immorality, murder, and the list goes on. Over and over Israel repeated a cycle (sin, slavery, supplication, salvation, and silence) that left them in despair. First, Israel rebelled against God (sin), and, in response, God gave them over to their enemies (slavery). As they experienced God’s discipline through the oppression of foreign nations, they cried out to God (supplication). In response to their cries, God, in kindness and mercy, raised a judge who delivered the nation (salvation). Then, Israel ignored God once again (silence). This cycle marks the structure of the book.



Page after page, Israel’s spiritual brokenness resulted in a growing disregard for God’s law, conformity to the ways of the unbelievers who surrounded them, and the declining treatment of others (especially women). Ultimately, Israel’s spiritual rebellion was the cause of their failure both as individuals and as a nation.

Yet, even in the depth of all their sin, there was hope. Even in their brokenness, God’s faithfulness remained.

## Ruth

The opening sentence of the book of Ruth begins, “In the days when the judges ruled there was a famine in the land...” This short story about a faithful woman occurred within the backdrop of Israel’s total rebellion. In contrast

to the characters in Judges, the woman Ruth was a picture of love and loyalty. Though she was a foreigner who had been widowed, she was committed to God and her mother-in-law. Against all odds, God provided for Ruth, and, in the end, we see how her actions placed her in the lineage of Jesus, the Savior of the world. The book of Ruth reminds its readers of hope in seemingly hopeless situations. It provides a glimpse of the provision and faithfulness of God at a time when everyone was entirely opposed to following Him. Even so, God’s faithfulness remained.

Don’t you see? People today are no different from people then. We worship the same God. As you read, do not think of the people of Israel as outdated or irrelevant, but view them as a mirror. Put yourself in their shoes and learn from their mistakes. Watch how their sin jeopardized the life God had for them. Look for a deeper understanding of a loving God despite and in the midst of the devastating rebellion of His people. Be reminded of why we should obey God, but also His faithfulness when we fail. Discover a God who is sovereign over all things, working even when His people turn their faces away.

You are no different from sinful, rebellious Israel in the book of Judges. Maybe you too are in a hopeless situation, just like Ruth. But, unlike three thousand years ago, a Savior has come to rescue you. God sent His Son, Jesus Christ, into the world. Fully God and fully man, He lived a perfect life and died a death He didn’t deserve. However, Jesus did not remain in the grave. Three days later, He rose from the grave proving His victory over sin and death. In this act, Jesus took your place, experiencing God’s wrath so you could have a life with Him. You only need to believe. Believe that Jesus was God’s Son, the perfect sacrifice for your sin, and you will be saved (Romans 10:9-10). Through faith, you will be redeemed. God is faithful, and He has provided a rescuer. This is the gospel.

Though you may mess up, God still pursues you. Though you might rebel, God never leaves or forsakes you. He loves you deeply. He offers hope continually. He desires to redeem you. Be amazed by these truths as you study **Judges and Ruth: God’s Faithfulness Remains.**

**BEFORE STARTING THIS STUDY, REFLECT ON THE FOLLOWING:**

- On a scale of 1-10, how familiar are you with the books of Judges and Ruth? What makes you nervous or excited about studying these books?
- What do you hope to get out of this study? By the end of this study what do you want to see God do in your life?

- How would you describe your relationship with God? What do you like about it? What is challenging about it?
- What is difficult in your life right now? What things are you struggling with? What things are you praying for?
- Describe your biggest barriers to spending time in God’s Word. What about time in prayer? How will you address these barriers during this study?

	JUDGES								RUTH
<i>Date of Events</i>	BETWEEN THE DEATH OF JOSHUA AND THE RISE OF KING SAUL (~1350-1050 B.C.)								
<i>Author</i>	UNKNOWN								UNKNOWN
<i>Focus</i>	INTRO	OTHNIEL AND EHUD	DEBORAH AND BARAK	GIDEON	ABIMELECH	JEPHTHAH	SAMSON	EPILOGUE	GOD’S REDEMPTION
<i>Chapters</i>	1-2	3	4-5	6-8	9	10-12	13-16	17-21	1-4
<i>Key Verse</i>	JUDGES 21:25								RUTH 1:16-17



# Map of Israel

