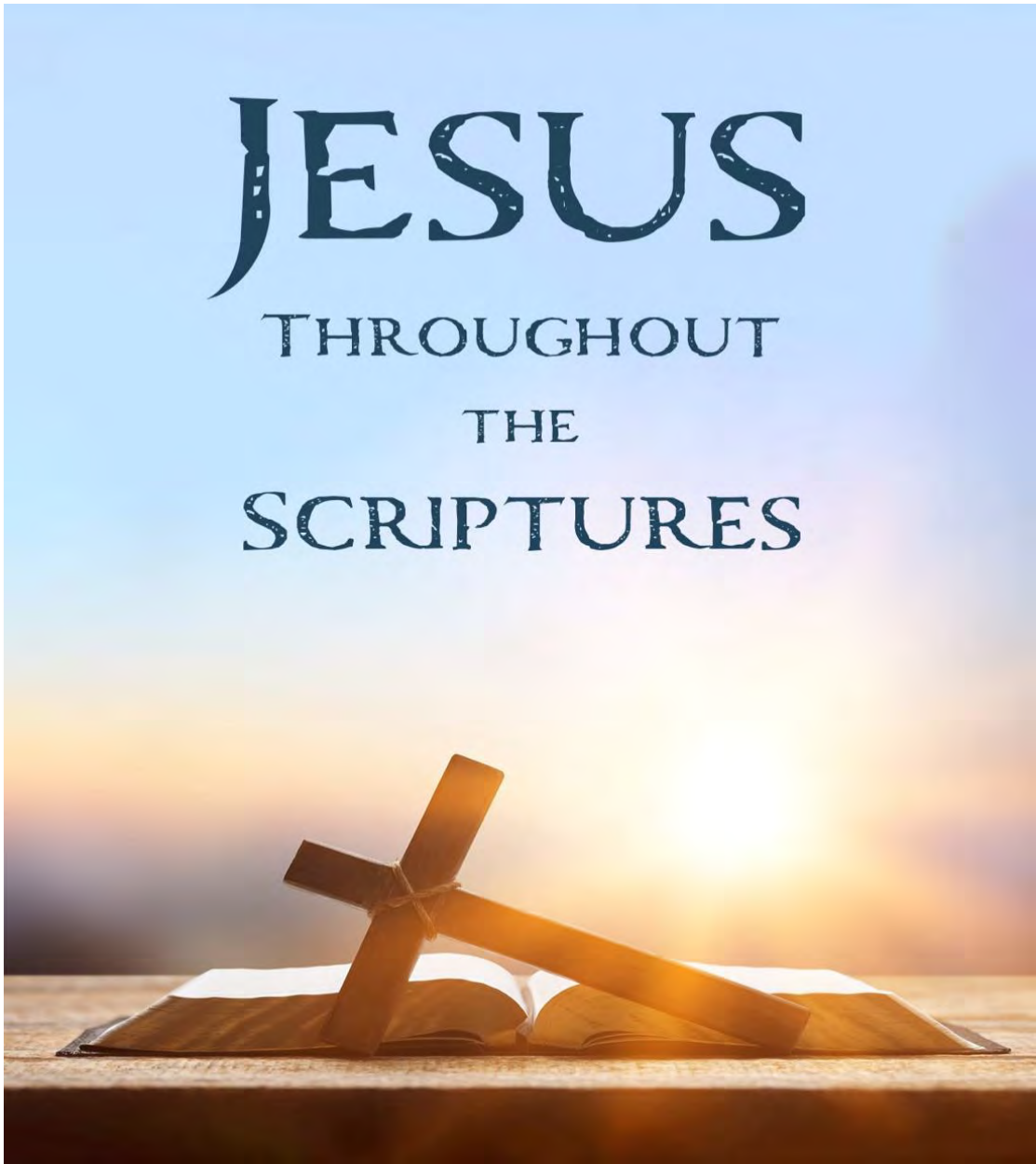


JESUS

THROUGHOUT
THE
SCRIPTURES



Part 5: Joshua, Judges, Ruth

T. M. and Susie Moore

A Scriptorium Study from The Fellowship of Ailbe

Jesus throughout the Scriptures
Part 5: Joshua, Judges, Ruth
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Jesus throughout the Scriptures: Joshua, Judges, Ruth—Introduction

With Joshua and Ruth, it's pretty easy to pick out the Christ-figures and symbols pointing to our Lord.

But Judges?

As in all the rest of the Old Testament, pointers to Jesus are spread through the period covered by these three books. We need to keep the Lord's perspective as He continues to unfold His plan of redemption through these years. For He is always pointing His people backwards and forwards at the same time—backwards to His promises and works, and forward to the coming of His Kingdom.

Let's take a closer look.

We are pleased to offer this resource at no charge to readers, but we encourage to pray and seek the Lord whether He might have you join in supporting the work of The Fellowship of Ailbe. You can use the contribute button at our website to give online, or you may send a check to The Fellowship of Ailbe, P. O. Box 8213, Essex, VT 05451.

We hope you find these studies helpful so that you grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ to increase in love for God and your neighbors.

T. M. Moore
Principal

1 He Delivers

Pray Psalm 105.44, 45.

He gave them the lands of the Gentiles,
And they inherited the labor of the nations,
That they might observe His statutes
And keep His laws.
Praise the LORD!

Sing Psalm 105.44, 45.

(Warrington: *Give to Our God Immortal Praise*)

To them He granted the promised land, the portion of His gracious hand.
Though they were few, and wandered far, He kept them close within His heart.

So let us all in our Savior confide, and in His holy Law abide.
Let us observe His glorious Word, and praise our sovereign, faithful LORD!

Read Joshua 1.1-9; meditate on verse 8.

Preparation

1. What did God expect Joshua to do?
2. What promise did He attach to this?

Meditation

By the time of Moses, the promises God made to Abraham (Gen. 12.1-3) had become concentrated, at least for the short term, in the land of Canaan. God had promised this land to Israel, to bless them in it as they obeyed His Word. We have also seen that those promises—including the promised land—were a type of Christ and pointed forward to Him (2 Cor. 1.20).

Moses—whose name means “drawn out”—was appointed the task of defeating, by the Word of the Lord, the tyrant who held His people captive, to draw them out of their captivity into the very Presence of the Lord. We have also considered how each of these “drawings” foreshadowed the work of Jesus: overthrowing and plundering Satan’s realm and drawing people to the Father through Himself (Jn. 14.6).

Now here is Joshua, whose name means “He delivers” or even “He saves” and which is the exact Hebrew equivalent of the name, Jesus. He was so named because He would save (“deliver”) His people from their sins (Matt. 1.21). Of course, the people of Israel in Joshua’s day would not have understood the whole significance of his name or his work. But God was building a case for His Son Who would fulfill all these Old Testament types, shadows, and pointers by His coming among us. Joshua’s calling was to deliver the people of Israel into the promises. Jesus’ calling is to deliver the people of God into Himself! He was strong and very courageous. He fulfilled all the Law of God. He crossed the Jordan that separates time from eternity and has begun the conquest that must result in disciples of Jesus from all nations (Matt. 28.18-20).

And we who know Him are in this struggle. Beginning in ourselves, working out into our Personal Mission Field, and doing what we can to spread the Good News to all the world, we who have come into the Promised One and are increasing in Him must follow Him daily as He rides forth conquering and to conquer (Rev. 6.1, 2; cf. Ps. 45.3-5). Be strong, my friend, and very courageous. For He is with you always.

Treasure Old and New: Matthew 13.52; Psalm 119.162

“...I was with Moses, so I will be with you.
I will not leave you nor forsake you.
Be strong and of good courage...
Only be strong and very courageous...” (Josh. 1.5-7).

Only be strong and very courageous to fight off the Hittites?
Only be strong and very courageous to take down entire cities?
Only be strong and very courageous to fight against giants?
No, none of those things was what God was encouraging him to be strong and courageous about.

“Only be strong and very courageous,
that you may observe to do according to all the law which Moses My servant commanded you;
do not turn from it to the right hand or to the left, that you may prosper wherever you go” (Josh. 1.7).

That was the key to all of Moses’ victories, and that would be the key to all of Joshua’s.
There was, frankly, nothing more important to their success as conquerors—nor to ours.

“This Book of the Law shall not depart from your mouth,
but you shall meditate *on* it day and night,
so that you may be careful *to do* according to all this is written *in* it.
For *then* you will make your way prosperous,
and *then* you will have good success” (Josh. 1.8 ESV).
Meditate on it and do what is in it. With strength and courage.

“In the day when I cried out, You answered me,
and made me bold with strength in my soul” (Ps. 138.3).

“For God has not given us a spirit of fear, but of power and of love and of a sound mind” (2 Tim. 1.7).
“The wicked flee when no one pursues, but the righteous are bold as a lion” (Prov. 28.1).

We are to be bold to follow the Lord Jesus Christ, courageous to keep steadfast on the Jesus Path, regardless of the circumstances, and to love and obey Him come what may; and what comes may be nothing, but it may be everything. “Yet in all these things we are more than conquerors through Him who loved us” (Rom. 8.37).

Hear this overwhelming Promise from God:
“Come near to Me, hear this:
I have not spoken in secret from the beginning;
from the time that it was,
I was there.
And now the Lord GOD and His Spirit
Has sent Me” (Is. 48.16) —Jesus—Yahweh Is Salvation.

To gain this through grace and faith, and to hold it close through being strong and very courageous, is the passion of each believer’s heart—following Him daily as “He rides forth conquering and to conquer”—into our Personal Mission Field to meditate on His Law and do what’s in it.

Reflection

1. Why does it take strength and courage to obey the Word of God? How can we have that strength and courage?

2. Does that mean that, when you are courageously obeying God's Word, everyone will like you? Or applaud your efforts? Explain.

3. Whom will you encourage today to be strong and courageous in the Word of God?

When we are in the way of duty, we have reason to be strong and very bold. Our Lord Jesus, as Joshua here, was born up under his sufferings by a regard to the will of God, and the commandment from his Father. Matthew Henry (1662-1714), Commentary on Joshua 1.5-9

Pray Psalm 105.11.

Give thanks to God for exceeding great and precious promises (Gen. 12.1-3) and for Jesus, in whom all those promises are Yes! and Amen! (2 Cor. 1.20) Call on Him to give you strength and courage to walk the Jesus Path today, loving and serving others as He would.

Sing Psalm 105.1-11.

(Warrington: Give to Our God Immortal Praise)

Give thanks unto the LORD Most High; call on His Name, before Him cry!
Make known His deeds in every land; sing praise for all the works of His hand.

Glory in God, rejoice in heart, all you who seek His holy part.
Him and His strength and Presence seek; His works proclaim, His judgments speak.

You holy children of Abraham, you chosen ones of Jacob, stand!
He is our LORD, of wondrous worth; His judgments are in all the earth.

He will His covenant faithfully guard—His oath, the promise of His Word.
That which He to our fathers swore, He will perform forevermore!

2 Remember the Works of the Lord

Pray Psalm 78.1-5

Give ear, O my people, *to* my law;
Incline your ears to the words of my mouth.
I will open my mouth in a parable;
I will utter dark sayings of old,
Which we have heard and known,
And our fathers have told us.
We will not hide *them* from their children,
Telling to the generation to come the praises of the LORD,
And His strength and His wonderful works that He has done.
For He established a testimony in Jacob,
And appointed a law in Israel,
Which He commanded our fathers,
That they should make them known to their children...

Sing Psalm 78.1-5.

(Foundation: *How Firm a Foundation*)

Give ear, O my people, attend to my word,
dark sayings and parables sent from the LORD,
things we have before by our Fathers been told,
which we would not dare from our children withhold.

The glorious deeds of our God in His might,
and all of the works He has done in our sight,
together with all of the words of His Law,
would we on ourselves and our children bestow.

Read Joshua 4.1-9; meditation on verses 6, 7.

Preparation

1. What did God command His people to do?
2. Why were they to do this?

Meditation

This is my favorite story in the book of Joshua. To help the people remember His great work on their behalf, the LORD instructed them to create a work of art. Abstract art. Concept art. Community art. But He didn't leave them guessing about what that artwork meant; He gave them the interpretation.

The purpose of this stone sculpture was to help the people remember the great work God had done on their behalf. Travelers would have seen it. Perhaps, for a time, parents would take their children on pilgrimage to see the heap of stones and tell them the story of it (vv. 6-8).

But notice that Joshua set up two heaps of stone, one on the west bank of the Jordan and one in the middle of the dry river bed (v. 9). Once the waters returned to their proper place, the one in the river would disappear. No one would see it then—except God. God never forgets His promises or His works. Nor should we.

And here's where the foreshadowing of Jesus comes in: Jesus instituted a work of abstract art and drama to help us remember what He had done for us. The Lord's Supper is, next to His Word and Spirit, Jesus' most precious gift to us. And He is present in it each time we take it, though only by His Spirit. The Supper is a work of abstract art and drama and \community art, in that we all participate in it. It has power to refresh our soul, renew our commitment, and strengthen the bonds that unite us in Jesus.

Let us never allow the Supper to be neglected or trivialized. For by it we remember the great and gracious work of Jesus, and we are nurtured by our participation in Him.

Treasure Old and New: Matthew 13.52; Psalm 119.162.

Those two sets of twelve stones are indeed, both beautiful works of art, for our edification and for the edification of others. The set I find most precious is the work that Joshua created all on his own. It was for him to ponder and for him to rejoice in. His treasure to cherish. To meditate on. To bring him a smile. His relationship of deep fellowship with his Savior.

We, too, have two piles of stones—our outward ministry of good words and works, and our inner relationship of joy and rejoicing with our Savior in His Word, in prayer, and in remembering Him through His Supper.

“Your Word I have hidden in my heart, that I might not sin against You” (Ps. 119.11).

“Do not let your adornment be merely outward...rather let it be the hidden person of the heart, with the incorruptible beauty of a gentle and quiet spirit, which is very precious in the sight of God” (1 Pet. 3.3, 4).

“Take, eat; this is My body which is broken for you; do this in remembrance of Me.
This cup is the covenant in My blood. This do, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of Me” (1 Cor. 11.24, 25).

“If then you were raised with Christ,
seek those things which are above, where Christ is,
sitting at the right hand of God.
Set your mind on things above,
not on things on the earth.
For you died,
and your life is hidden with Christ in God.
When Christ who is our life appears,
then you also will appear with Him in glory...
And let the peace of God rule in your hearts...
let the Word of Christ dwell in you richly...
And whatever you do in word or deed,
do all in the Name of the Lord Jesus,
giving thanks to God the Father through Him” (Col. 3.1-4, 15-17).

Cherish both works of art—both piles of stones—
“For it is God who works in you both to will and to do for His good pleasure” (Phil. 2.13).

Both call us to remember and rejoice in the works of the LORD—inwardly and outwardly—but embracing and pondering the wonder that “His secret counsel is with the upright” (Prov. 3.32). Our very own hidden pile of stones.

Reflection

1. What are the primary works of God that you need to remember? How will you remember them?

2. In what sense should your life be a “memorial stone” for the Lord?
3. Does art have a place in the life of faith? What can we learn from today’s study about this?

The works of the Lord are so worthy of remembrance, and the heart of man is so prone to forget them, that various methods are needful to refresh our memories, for the glory of God, our advantage, and that of our children. God gave orders for preparing this memorial. Matthew Henry (1642-1714), *Commentary on Joshua 4.1-9*

Pray Psalm 78.56-72.

Prayer should be a time for remembering the works of the Lord in our lives. What will you remember of His grace to you today? Of His kindness? His long-suffering love? His extraordinary generosity?

Sing Psalm 78.56-72.

(Foundation: *How Firm a Foundation*)

Yet over and over they turned from His love
and scorned Him Who ruled them from heaven above.
His glory departed, they fell to their foes
and suffered His wrath in uncountable woes.

While they were still suffering, He rose in His strength
and fought for His people and saved them at length.
From Judah a king He set for Israel,
a temple He built with His people to dwell.

Now Jesus, God’s servant, is King evermore,
and we are His people, and He is our Lord.
His heart is upright as He leads by His hand
and causes us ever before Him to stand.

3 Commander of the Host

Pray Psalm 45.3-5.

Gird Your sword upon Your thigh, O Mighty One,
With Your glory and Your majesty.
And in Your majesty ride prosperously because of truth, humility, *and* righteousness;
And Your right hand shall teach You awesome things.
Your arrows *are* sharp in the heart of the King's enemies;
The peoples fall under You.

Sing Psalm 45.3-5.

(Manoah: *When All Thy Mercies, O My God*)
Your sword gird on Your thigh, O LORD, in splendid majesty;
ride out, resplendent in Your Word, to glorious victory.

For meekness and for righteousness Your Right Hand shall prevail.
Your foes shall come to deep distress when You their souls assail.

Read and meditate on Joshua 5.13-15.

Preparation

1. Whom did Joshua encounter?
2. What did He tell Joshua?

Meditation

The technical term for what Joshua experienced here is theophany: a manifestation (-phany) of God (theo). That is, Joshua saw God, Who presented Himself in a visible form, and this itself points forward to the incarnation of our Lord Jesus Christ.

But what did Joshua see? A mighty warrior Who identified Himself as “Commander of the army of the LORD”. As such, He was “for” only the good and glorious will of God. All Who embrace that will and devote their lives to it will know His leading, strength, and defense. Any who step outside that will or think they can improve on it will know His opposition.

Joshua immediately recognized the Man as the LORD Himself; he “fell on his face to the earth and worshiped” and addressed Him as “Lord” (here, not Yahweh but Adonai). The LORD affirmed Joshua’s response and spoke the words He spoke to Moses from the burning bush—“Take your sandal off your foot, for the place where you stand *is* holy”—thus confirming His identity as Yahweh.

This is the clearest manifestation of the Word of the Lord—the second Person of the divine Trinity—Who would assume the Person of Jesus Christ. This is a strong signal of God’s power to take on visible form, to reveal unmistakable details about the purpose of His manifesting Himself, and to command obedience from all those who recognize Him for Who He is.

Which is precisely what Jesus did when God manifested Himself in Him. He was a Man—that, anyone could see—but He was also God—which He demonstrated by His zeal for God’s will and ability to fulfill it completely and perfectly.

Treasure Old and New: Matthew 13.52; Psalm 119.162

Life in God's Kingdom is not like life on the earth. It runs by a different set of rules, under different Leadership, and by a different standard of reality.

Joshua was living on the earth when he asked the Commander, "Are You here for us or for our adversary?"

The Commander answered, "No, but as Commander of the army of the LORD I have now come" (Josh. 5.13, 14). God answered in a way that informed Joshua he had asked the wrong question altogether.

The disciples had a somewhat similar conversation with Jesus as they were setting out on a boat trip across the lake.

"Now the disciples had forgotten to take bread, and they did not have more than one loaf with them in the boat. Then He charged them, saying, 'Take heed, beware of the leaven of the Pharisees and the leaven of Herod.' And they reasoned among themselves, saying, 'It is because we have no bread.' But Jesus, being aware of it, said to them, 'Why do you reason because you have no bread? Do you not yet perceive nor understand? Is your heart still hardened? Having eyes, do you not see? And having ears, do you not hear? And do you not remember? When I broke the five loaves for the five thousand, how many baskets full of fragments did you take up?' They said to Him, 'Twelve.' 'Also, when I broke the seven for the four thousand, how many large baskets full of fragments did you take up?' And they said, 'Seven.' So He said to them, 'How is it you do not understand?'" (Mk. 8.14-21).

Jesus was trying to teach them something about life in His Kingdom whilst living on earth, and all they could do was come up with a false assumption, "We're getting this lecture because we have no bread."

Joshua too, had a false assumption. This "Man", he thought, was approaching to talk with him about the impending battle with Jericho. Both Joshua and the disciples had their vision aimed on their circumstances, and both needed to change their focus. So do we.

Yes, it is true, we live in the here and now. But it is also true that we should be focused on how our here and now transcends into the there and then—here and now.

God met with Moses to call, engage, and encourage him in the bush that did not burn. And He said to him, "Take your sandals off your feet, for the place where you stand is holy ground" (Ex. 3.3-5).

God met with Joshua to let him know that He was with him, just as He had been with Moses. "Take your sandal off your foot, for the place where you stand is holy" (Josh. 5.15).

God met with His disciples to call, encourage, and send them. "All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth. Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all things that I have commanded you; and lo, I AM with you always, even to the end of the age" (Matt. 28.18-20).

"When they saw Him, they worshiped Him; but some doubted" (Matt. 28.17).

God meets with us to call, engage, and encourage us. We must not respond with false assumptions or eyes focused on the wrong things. We dare not ask, "Are You for us or our adversaries?" Or "Are you teaching me this because I forgot bread?" For those questioners, I fear, will be the ones who doubt Him.

When they saw Him, they worshiped Him—The Man, The Commander of the army of the LORD—Jesus. "For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ, for it is the power of God to salvation for everyone who believes..." (Rom. 1.16). Focused directly on Him and His Kingdom, now; and not on battles or bread.

*Turn your eyes upon Jesus,
Look full in His wonderful face;*

*And the things of earth will grow strangely dim
In the light of His glory and grace.
(Helen H. Lemmel, 1922)*

Reflection

1. Sometimes we do ask the wrong questions of the Lord. Such as?
2. Who is the “army of the LORD” over which Jesus is Commander? What are their weapons?
3. So we’re in a war? Why kind of war? How should you prepare for battle each day?

*[Joshua] recognized not only something from God but that which is God; for certainly he would not have worshiped unless he had recognized God. For who else is chief of the army of the powers of God except our Lord Jesus Christ? For every heavenly army, whether angels or archangels, whether powers or “dominions or principalities or authorities,” all these that were made through him, wage war under the chief himself, who is the chief of chiefs and who distributes sovereignty to the sovereigns. Origen (185-254), *Homilies on Joshua* 6.2*

Pray Psalm 45.6-8, 16, 17.

Call on the Lord to help you grow in Jesus, to become more like Him, better equipped to serve Him each day, bolder and more courageous in working your Personal Mission Field, and clearer in your vision of His heavenly glory.

Sing Psalm 45.6-8, 16, 17.

(Manoah: When All Thy Mercies, O My God)

Your throne, O God, is evermore, and upright is Your reign;
though wicked men Your Name abhor, Your righteousness must gain.

Your God has thus anointed You with oil of gladness great.
Your robes are rich with sweet perfume; sweet music gilds Your gate.

When we at last Your palace gain, and others take our place,
then let our children with You reign, a legacy of grace!

4 Who Shall Be First?

Pray Psalm 28.8, 9.

The LORD *is* their strength,
And He *is* the saving refuge of His anointed.
Save Your people,
And bless Your inheritance;
Shepherd them also,
And bear them up forever.

Sing Psalm 28.8, 9.

(Angel's Story: O Jesus, I Have Promised)

Our strength are You, O Savior, our strong defense and sure.
Anointed with Your favor, we rest in You secure.
Save us, and bless us, Jesus, upon us turn Your face.
With shepherd's care, LORD, keep us forever in Your grace.

Read Judges 1.1-20; meditate on verse 2.

Preparation

1. What did the people of Israel need?
2. How did God answer their need?

Meditation

This is now the third time that God has put the spotlight on Judah and the tribe that descended from him. We recall that Judah 'saved' Joseph's life (Gen. 37.26) and offered himself as "surety" for the life of Benjamin (Gen 44.32-34)—the guarantee of his safety—and a substitute in his place. And in Genesis 49.8-11, Israel prophesied of a dynasty of kings descending from Judah, a dynasty that would come to its end when "Shiloh" ascended the throne.

And all these pointed forward to Jesus, Who would descend through Mary from the tribe of Judah. Now here, after Joshua's death, the people seek the Lord concerning who of the tribes should be first to continue to lead Israel into the land of promise. Comes the answer from God: "Judah". Judah is the largest tribe and the most capable in battle. Conquests are realized and more of the promised land is gained under Judah's leadership. But it does not last, and the people will soon begin to languish, waiting for a king.

The tribe of Judah is a type of Christ and foreshadows His coming. As Judah was first, so Jesus is first, the forerunner of our salvation. As Judah led Israel into more of God's promised land, so Jesus leads us ever deeper into the exceeding great and precious promises of God, of which He Himself is the fulfillment.

But unlike the victories Jesus attained and the victories He leads us into day by day, the victories of the tribe of Judah were short-lived. Israel needed to learn a difficult lesson, as the book of Judges unfolds for us; but, as we shall see, even while Israel experienced faithlessness and trials, Judah would fulfill the role of a shelter and the continuation of God's promises to a new generation.

Treasure Old and New: Matthew 13.52; Psalm 119.162

"The scepter shall not depart from Judah, nor a lawgiver from between his feet,
Until Shiloh comes; and to Him shall be the obedience of the people" (Gen. 49.10).

“Behold! My Servant Whom I uphold, My Elect One in Whom My soul delights!” (Is. 42.1; Matt. 12.18).

“You are My beloved Son, in Whom I AM well pleased” (Mk. 1.11).

“The LORD possessed Me at the beginning of His way, before His works of old.
I have been established from everlasting, from the beginning, before there was ever an earth.
When there were no depths I was brought forth,
when there were no fountains abounding with water.
Before the mountains were settled, before the hills, I was brought forth;
while as yet He had not made the earth or the fields, or the primal dust of the world.
When He prepared the heavens, I was there,
when He drew a circle on the face of the deep,
when He established the clouds above,
when He strengthened the fountains of the deep,
when He assigned to the sea its limit, so that the waters would not transgress His command,
when He marked out the foundations of the earth, then I was beside Him as a master craftsman;
and I was daily His delight, rejoicing always before Him, rejoicing in His inhabited world,
and My delight was with the sons of men” (Prov. 8.22-31).

“But when the fullness of time had come, God sent forth His Son, born of a woman, born under the law, to redeem those who were under the law, that we might receive the adoption as sons. And because you are sons, God has sent forth the Spirit of His Son into your hearts, crying out, ‘Abba, Father!’” (Gal. 4.4-6).

“The book of the genealogy of Jesus Christ, the Son of David, the Son of Abraham; Abraham begot Isaac, Isaac begot Jacob, and Jacob begot Judah and his brothers...begot Joseph the husband of Mary, of whom was born Jesus Who is called Christ” (Matt. 1.1, 2, 16).

“Behold, the Lion of the tribe of Judah, the Root of David, has prevailed...
Worthy is the Lamb Who was slain
to receive power and riches and wisdom, and strength and honor and glory and blessing!” (Rev. 5.5, 12).

Jesus. There He is—throughout all the Scriptures—before time and beyond into eternity.
“I AM the Alpha and the Omega, the Beginning and the End, the First and the Last” (Rev. 22.13).

Reflection

1. Why is it important that we be able to recognize Jesus in some form throughout all the Scriptures?
2. How does knowing that Jesus is giving us glimpses of Himself throughout the Scriptures affect the way you read and study the Bible?
3. How does knowing this affect your prayer life?

The choice of Judah was the first hint that Jacob’s prediction for Judah (Gen. 49:8–12) was coming to pass. The prophecy would come to fruition with the establishment of the monarchy under David and his descendants; David was from the tribe of Judah.
Earl Radmacher (1933-2014), *NKJV Study Bible Not on Judges 1.1-4*

Pray Psalm 28.1-7.

Jesus is the Captain of our faith. Pray for the day ahead and the opportunities for working your Personal Mission Field. Pray that you will keep Jesus first in all you do. Be specific in your prayers.

Sing Psalm 28.1-7.

(Angel’s Story: *O Jesus, I Have Promised*)

I cry to You, our Savior, O, be not deaf to me!
LORD, speak to me with favor, lest I should dying be.
Hear now my supplications when for Your help I cry.
Receive these, my oblations, before Your throne on high.

LORD, count me not among those who walk in sinful ways.
With words of peace their tongue glows while evil fills their days.
Your works they disregard, LORD, while evil fills their hands.
Destroy them by Your Word, LORD, and let them no more stand.

Blessed be the Name of Jesus, for He will hear our prayer.
His strength protects and shields us with mercy and with care.
In You our heart rejoices; You help us by Your Word.
To You we raise our voices to praise and thank You, LORD.

5 A Better and Final Judge

Pray Psalm 139.23, 24.

Search me, O God, and know my heart;
Try me, and know my anxieties;
And see if there is any wicked way in me,
And lead me in the way everlasting.

Sing Psalm 139.23, 24.

(Ripley: *Hallelujah, Praise Jehovah, O My Soul*)

Search my heart, O LORD, and know me, as You only, LORD, can do.
Test my thoughts and contemplations, whether they be vain or true.
Let there be no sin in me, LORD, nothing that Your Spirit grieves.
Lead me in the righteous way, LORD, unto everlasting peace!

Read Judges 2.7-19; meditate on verse 18.

Preparation

1. What did God provide for His people?
2. How did they respond to this grace of God?

Meditation

Reading the book of Judges can be frustrating. Israel never quite gets it, and the less they get it, the worse things get. Not even faithful judges can keep this people within the framework of God's Law where He can reach them with His love.

Every city and town and village in Israel was to appoint judges to shepherd their communities with the staff of God's Law. The judges raised from time to time in the book of Judges served on a larger, more national or semi-national scale, which itself is evidence that the system of judges was not working locally. The people thus paid little heed to God's Law, got themselves in all kinds of trouble, cried out to the Lord, and He delivered them. For a time.

This pattern points us forward once again. The people had no heart for the Lord, as we have seen. And their judges could not help them live within the gracious Law of God for very long. They needed better judges, but every generation of them and of God's people was merely better than the next.

Jesus came as the best and final Judge, to judge us by fulfilling the Law and giving us a new heart to learn and obey it. He judges us day by day by His indwelling Spirit (Jn. 16.8-11). And He guides and directs us by His Law and all His holy Word along the path He Himself walked (1 Jn. 2.1-6), the Jesus Path—the path along which we become more like Him and that ends up with our seeing Him and being like Him forever.

We submit daily to Jesus' judgment, looking to His Word, listening for His Spirit, and encouraging one another to walk the good walk of faith and obedience. For a day is coming when Jesus will come as the final Judge to judge the world and all its peoples and nations. And, at that time, we who submit to His daily judgment will find safe harbor from the storm of His wrath.

Submit to Jesus' judgment now, and you will not have to endure it later.

Treasure Old and New: Matthew 13.52; Psalm 119.162.

The horrific book of Judges should not be a surprising read for any of us who have been alive longer than 5

minutes. The changes that have taken place in our lifetimes are ripped directly from the headlines of Judges.

The slow drip of falling away from righteousness has happened right before our eyes...and we, as God's people, are culpable.

For when we peer into the abyss of what passes for "christianity" today, we see the people of the book of Judges front and center. People who have forsaken the God of our fathers, who follow other gods, and who do not obey the commandments of God, nor do we preach their importance. It's just all sort of "whatever"—a morality that suits the whims of the folks; "worship" that is not even close to real worship; and a "gospel" that must, by any means necessary, make me happy.

"They forsook the LORD..." (Jdgs. 2.13). Guilty as charged.

But it does not have to be this way.

We who love the Lord with all our heart, soul, mind, and strength can stand up for righteousness (Matt. 22.37-40).

We can follow God's Law (Ex. 20.1-17).

We can proclaim the importance of holiness (1 Pet. 1.16).

We are filled with the Holy Spirit (Acts 1.8), whereas the people of Judges were not.

We have "a great High Priest Who has passed through the heavens, Jesus the Son of God..."

"For we do not have a High Priest Who cannot sympathize with our weaknesses, but was in all points tempted as we are, yet without sin" (Heb. 4.14, 15).

It is telling, indeed, the words used to describe our perfect Savior. He can sympathize with us—feel sorrow over our humanness, our foibles, and misfortunes—but it was never said that He could empathize with us. Empathy would mean that He could share and understand our plight because He had experienced it Himself. He was without sin. His holy humanity allows Him only to sympathize but not empathize. A major difference. A saving difference.

Jesus calls us to a victorious life through Him and the power of His resurrection.

To do so, we need to embrace an attitude antithetical to the one we see on display in Judges.

Paul did, we can too: "I count all things loss for the excellence of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord, for Whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and count them as rubbish, that I may gain Christ and be found in Him, not having my own righteousness, which is from the law, but that which is through faith in Christ, the righteousness which is from God by faith; that I may know Him and the power of His resurrection, and the fellowship of His sufferings, being conformed to His death, if, by any means, I may attain to the resurrection from the dead" (Phil. 3.8-11).

When we have set our sights on living within the Kingdom of God here and now, and there and then, we rejoice to anticipate the fulfillment of God's Promises personally and for many in our Personal Mission Field:

Psalm 45.10-17 The Ailbe Psalter

(Manoah: *When All Your Mercies, O My God*)

Let none keep us from hearing You; desire our beauty, LORD!

We bow, submitting humbly to Your ever-faithful Word.

The Church in robes of woven gold assembles to the King.
With joy complete and gladness bold His praise she e'er shall sing.

When we at last Your palace gain, and others take our place,
Then let our children with Your reign, a legacy of grace!

Reflection

1. Why did people in the days of the judges find it so easy to turn from the Lord?
2. Each of us must judge the state of our own souls (Prov. 4.20-27). Why is this important, and how should we do this?
3. Meditate on John 16.8-11. How does the Holy Spirit work in us as our Judge? Why do we need this work?

We need to examine how matters stand with ourselves, and to pray without ceasing, that we may be rooted and grounded in love, and that Christ may dwell in our hearts by faith. Let us declare war against every sin, and follow after holiness all our days..
Matthew Henry (1662-1714), *Commentary on Judges 2.6-23*

Pray Psalm 139.11-18.

Remember that the Lord Jesus is our Judge, that He is with us always, sees us continuously, and is true and loving. Call on Him to judge you throughout this day, to shine the light of His Word into your soul and to cause His Spirit to revive and move you for good works of love.

Sing Psalm 139.11-18.

(Ripley: Hallelujah, Praise Jehovah, O My Soul)

Neither light nor dark conceals me; day as night is with You, LORD!
All my inward parts You fashioned by Your all-decreeing Word.
Praise the LORD, for You have made me; all Your wondrous works I'll tell!
All Your works declare Your glory, and my soul knows this full well!

All my unformed frame You witnessed when You destined all my days.
Precious to me, LORD, Your precepts; all Your wondrous Word I praise.
More than sand, Your thoughts to me, LORD, far too vast their sum for me!
When the morning breaks upon me, in Your Presence I shall be.

6 Bounty and Care

Pray Psalm 105.8-11, 45.

He remembers His covenant forever,
The word *which* He commanded, for a thousand generations,
The covenant which He made with Abraham,
And His oath to Isaac,
And confirmed it to Jacob for a statute,
To Israel as an everlasting covenant,
Saying, “To you I will give the land of Canaan
As the allotment of your inheritance,”...
That they might observe His statutes
And keep His laws.
Praise the LORD!

Sing Psalm 105.8-11, 45.

(Warrington: *Give to Our God Immortal Praise*)

He will His covenant faithfully guard—His oath, the promise of His Word.
That which He to our fathers swore, He will perform forevermore!

So let us all in our Savior confide, and in His holy Law abide.
Let us observe His glorious Word, and praise our sovereign, faithful LORD!

Read Ruth 1.6, 7; 2.6-9; meditate on verses 1.6, 7.

Preparation

1. Where were people enjoying the blessings of God?
2. What did Boaz say to Ruth?

Meditation

Word reached Naomi, essentially homeless in Moab, that the famine had lifted which led her husband to take her out of their tribal land, the territory of Judah; the report was that God had “visited” His people and blessed them with food, just as He had promised. That word, “visited,” is significant, for it recalls the “numbering” of the people of Israel in the wilderness, when every tent was “visited”, and every inhabitant accounted for by name. As then, God is in the background, continuing to be faithful to His promises and to care for His faithful people. At the same time, He was present among the people of Judah, fulfilling His Word.

Note the role of Boaz as owner and caretaker: He admonished his young men not to trouble Ruth (2.9)—demonstrating his respect for the Law of God (cf. Deut. 10.17-19). And He cautioned her not to stray from his fields. He could not ensure her safety beyond the reach of his own authority. It was still the time of the judges, as we recall, and lawlessness rather than faithfulness was the manner of most. Boaz even went so far as to make his servants her servants, when he authorized her to drink of the water they drew for themselves.

God blessed faithful covenant-keeping people like Boaz. And He used him to give Ruth a “new birth” of care and love. The central role of Judah is emphasized here, along with the grace of Boaz for incorporating a “stranger” into his household. Bounty and care abounded in Judah through faithful people like Boaz. Both the territory of Judah and the man Boaz point forward to Jesus. And this is emphasized in the book of Ruth by the closing verses (4.18-22), where the genealogy given does two things: It connects Ruth with the

genealogy of God's faithful people in the past, and it points forward to the coming of David.

Treasure Old and New: Matthew 13.52; Psalm 119.162

“Then she arose with her daughters-in-law that she might return from the country of Moab, for she had heard in the country of Moab that the LORD had visited His people by giving them bread” (Ruth 1.6).

“If any of you are driven out to the farthest parts under heaven,
from there the LORD your God will gather you,
and from there He will bring you” (Deut. 30.4).

“Fear not, for I AM with you;
I will bring your descendants from the east, and gather you from the west;
I will say to the north, ‘Give them up!’ And to the south, ‘Do not keep them back!’
Bring My sons from afar, and My daughters from the ends of the earth—
everyone who is called by My Name, whom I have created for My glory;
I have formed him, yes, I have made him” (Is. 43.5-7).

And when we have been brought back into His care, we will do well not to wander away again.
“Stay always within the boundaries where God's love can reach and bless you” (Jude 1.21 TLB).

Here and now—there and then.

“Let not your heart be troubled; you believe in God, believe also in Me.
In My Father's house are many mansions; if it were not so, I would have told you.
I go to prepare a place for you.
And if I go and prepare a place for you,
I will come again and receive you to Myself;
that where I AM, there you may be also.
And where I go you know, and the way you know...
I AM the way, the truth, and the life.
No one comes to the Father except through Me” (Jn. 14.1-4, 6).

Jesus was the Way for Naomi, Ruth, and Boaz; and He is the Way for us.
The only Way.
Through Him is perfect direction, bounty, and care.

Reflection

1. All the promises of God are fulfilled in Jesus Christ (2 Cor. 1.20). What does that suggest about how you should start each day?
2. How do you experience the bounty and care of Jesus? How should you respond?
3. Whom will you encourage today to enjoy more of the bounty and care of Jesus?

It well becomes us all to think humbly of ourselves, esteeming others better than ourselves. And let us, in the kindness of Boaz to Ruth, note the kindness of the Lord Jesus Christ to poor sinners. Matthew Henry (1662-1714), Commentary on Ruth 2.4-17

Pray Psalm 105.1-7.

How has God “visited” you lately? What blessings will you praise Him for today? Pray that He will use you, like Boaz, as a source of comfort and encouragement to the people you meet today.

Sing Psalm 105.1-7.

(Warrington: *Give to Our God Immortal Praise*)

Give thanks unto the LORD Most High; call on His Name, before Him cry!
Make known His deeds in every land; sing praise for all the works of His hand.

Glory in God, rejoice in heart, all you who seek His holy part.
Him and His strength and Presence seek; His works proclaim, His judgments speak.

You holy children of Abraham, you chosen ones of Jacob, stand!
He is our LORD, of wondrous worth; His judgments are in all the earth.

7 Kinsman-Redeemer

Pray Psalm 119.57-60.

You are my portion, O LORD;
I have said that I would keep Your words.
I entreated Your favor with my whole heart;
Be merciful to me according to Your word.
I thought about my ways,
And turned my feet to Your testimonies.
I made haste, and did not delay
To keep Your commandments.

Sing Psalm 119.57-60.

(Leoni: *The God of Abraham Praise*)

I vow to keep Your Word; You are my portion, LORD.
Let favor fill my heart; have mercy by Your Word!
When I think on my way, I turn my feet to You;
to Your path I shall not delay, Your Word to do.

Read Deuteronomy 4.; meditate on verses 15-17.

Preparation

1. Why did Boaz gather the elders of the city?
2. What was the result of their decision?

Meditation

Boaz is referred to as a “kinsman-redeemer” in the book of Ruth, meaning that he was in the line of Naomi’s deceased husband and therefore in line to inherit his property. But this would also entail marrying the wife of Elimelech’s son, who had also died. And Boaz was prepared to do this.

There was only one glitch. Another “kinsman-redeemer” was closer in line than Boaz. A judgment was required, as Boaz insisted on resolving this “by the Book”, so to speak. Their case—that of Boaz and the other kinsman—resembled elements of God’s Law, but not exactly (Lev. 25.25, 26). The elders of the city were charged with interpreting God’s intent at such times. The kinsman was willing to inherit the land, but not to marry Ruth. He forfeited his claim, and the elders approved Boaz to proceed with his plan.

Most important, God blessed this decision and Ruth’s marriage to Boaz. In a sense, both Boaz and Ruth point forward to Jesus. Boaz kept the Law and redeemed a bride; Ruth, the redeemed, opened the way for the ingrafting of Gentiles into the household of Israel. The story of Christ’s work of redemption is beautifully typified throughout the story of Ruth and Boaz. The genealogy added at the end of this chapter bridges the time from Judah (Perez was Judah’s son) to David, thus carrying the promises of God’s covenant forward to the beginning of the dynasty that led to Shiloh (Gen. 49.8-11)—Jesus.

Jesus is our Kinsman-Redeemer and our King, the first-born of our Father Who redeemed us from sin to life in Him and His Kingdom. Thanks be to God!

Treasure Old and New: Matthew 13.52; Psalm 119.162

And through this kinsman-redeemer we share the same blessing that was blessed upon Naomi: “And may he (her grandson, Obed) be to you a restorer of life and a nourisher of your old age...” (Ruth 4.15).

Jesus Christ, our Kinsman-Redeemer, has come specifically to bring that kind of life. “I have come that they may have life, and that they may have it more abundantly” (Jn. 10.10).

“Now also when I am old and grayheaded, O God, do not forsake me, until I declare Your strength to this generation, Your power to everyone who is to come” (Ps. 71.18).

“Even to your old age, I AM He, and even to gray hairs I will carry you! I have made, and I will bear; even I will carry, and will deliver you” (Is. 46.4).

And then there is a fulfillment of this promise at Jesus’ birth through the immense blessing bestowed upon Simeon and Anna. Two old faithful folk who saw with their own aged eyes, The Promise, The Son of God, The Messiah (Lk. 2.25-38).

As Christians, we have a life-long calling to serve The One Who came to save—The God With us—Immanuel. Regardless of how old we get, we are still called to trust, obey, and serve Him. Naomi did. Boaz and Ruth did. And we must also. God promises to enable us to do so until death. “Be faithful until death, and I will give you the crown of life” (Rev. 2.10).

As John Milton wrote in his beautiful sonnet *When I Consider How My Light is Spent* (aka *On His Blindness*):
When I consider how my light is spent,
Ere half my days, in this dark world and wide,
And that one Talent which is death to hide
Lodged with me useless, though my Soul more bent
To serve therewith my Maker, and present
My true account, lest he returning chide,
“Doth God exact day-labour, light denied?”
I fondly ask. But patience, to prevent
That murmur, soon replies, “God doth not need
Either man’s work or his own gifts; who best
Bear his mild yoke, they serve him best. His state
Is Kingly; thousands at his bidding speed,
And post o’er land and ocean without rest;
They also serve who only stand and wait.”

Stand and “Wait on the LORD; be of good courage, and He shall strengthen your heart;”
Stand and “Wait, I say, on the LORD!” (Ps. 27.14).

Jesus, our Kinsman-Redeemer restores and nourishes our lives until He takes us Home.
Serve Him well, for “Precious in the sight of the LORD is the death of His saints” (Ps. 116.15).

Reflection

1. In what ways will you serve as a “kinsman” to people today?

2. How will you share the message of our Redeemer's love?

3. Is your calling to serve the Lord expanding in any ways? Explain.

Ruth bore a son, through whom thousands and myriads were born to God; and in being the lineal ancestor of Christ, she was instrumental in the happiness of all that shall be saved by him; even of us Gentiles, as well as those of Jewish descent. She was a witness for God to the Gentile world, that he had not utterly forsaken them, but that in due time they should become one with his chosen people, and partake of his salvation. Matthew Henry (1662-1714), *Commentary on Ruth 4.13-22*

Pray Psalm 119.61-64.

Pray that the Lord will help you grow ever deeper into His Word, and that all your companions—family members, friends, and fellow church members—may know His grace and truth through you this day.

Sing Psalm 119.61-64.

(Leoni: *The God of Abraham Praise*)

Though wicked ways constrain and bind my hands in sin,
yet I recall Your Word and turn to You again.

By night I thank You, LORD; my voice to You I raise;
for all Your righteous, holy Word I give You praise.

All those who fear You, LORD, go with me on my way,
all those who keep Your holy Word from day to day.
Around us all the earth declares Your mercy, LORD.
That I might know Your glorious worth, teach me Your Word

Questions for Reflection or Discussion

1. The idea of deliverance is strong through this section of Scripture. How do these books use deliverance to point us forward to Jesus?
2. Especially in Judges, we are given a look at the depths of sin. Why is it important that we understand how bad sin can be? How does the awfulness of sin make the saving work of Jesus even more beautiful?
3. We also see the tribe of Judah arising to some prominence, especially in Judges and Ruth. How does this focus on Judah point back and forward? Keeping in mind the genealogy with which the book of Ruth ends, how does this looking back and looking ahead instruct us, who have come to know Jesus?
4. All three of these books emphasize the importance of keeping the commandments (Law) of God. How does this requirement relate to Jesus and His work?
5. What's the most important lesson you have learned from seeing Jesus in Joshua, Judges, and Ruth?

For Prayer:

For Prayer:

The Fellowship of Ailbe

The Fellowship of Ailbe is a spiritual fellowship in the Celtic Christian tradition. Our goal is to promote revival, renewal, and awakening, following the teaching of Scripture and the example and heritage of our forebears in the faith.

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Thank you.