

LENT SCRIPTURE READING GUIDE

THE BOOK OF JUDGES

“OUR MESS, GOD’S MERCY”

During this season of Lent, we will be looking at the book of Judges—an Old Testament book that details the ongoing cycle of God’s wayward people. Over and over God’s people: 1) disobey God, 2) suffer the consequences of their disobedience, 3) cry out to God in their distress, and 4) are delivered from their suffering by a judge raised up by God. We will conclude the readings with two chapters from John’s Gospel that tell of the one God ultimately provides to end the cycle of humanity’s separation from God, Jesus Christ.

Week 1: March 2-6

- Day 1: Judges 1:1—2:5 Q: Are there areas in your life where you are compromising with the world instead of fully devoting yourself to God?
- Day 2: Judges 2:6—3:6 Q: In what ways are we raising up the next generation so that they will know the Lord and his salvation and serve him? (see 2:10-13)
- Day 3: Judges 3:7-31 Q: Where in your life do you need to know that the Lord hears the cries of his people and takes action to save them, even though they have been disobedient? (see 3:7-9)
- Day 4: Judges 4 Q: Where do you experience apprehension or fear when God has called you to trust and follow him? Where is this happening in our church? (see 4:6-9)
- Day 5: Judges 5 Q: Where have you seen, or where do you need to see, the Lord’s deliverance from an enemy? (see 5:31)

Week 2: March 9-13

- Day 1: Judges 6:1-32 Q: Are there people we don’t think the Lord could use because we see them as being “weak” or the “least”? (see 6:14-16)
- Day 2: Judges 6:33-40 Q: What “signs” have we been given that assure us that the Lord is true to his word?
- Day 3: Judges 7 Q: Where are we depending more on our own resources than on God’s power?
- Day 4: Judges 8:1-21 Q: How do you tend to respond to people when you’re “criticized sharply”?
- Day 5: Judges 8:22-35 Q: What can we do to actively remember the Lord’s goodness and mercy to us? (see 8:34)

Week 3: March 16-20

- Day 1: Judges 9:1-21 Q: Compare the kingship of Christ with that of Abimelech.
- Day 2: Judges 9:22-57 Q: What areas of our lives are we suffering because of sinful and wicked choices we’ve made? (see 9:56-57)
- Day 3: Judges 10 Q: Israel’s repentance consisted of confessing their sin to God, getting rid of their idols, and serving the Lord. Is your repentance serious? (see 10:15-16)
- Day 4: Judges 11:1-11 Q: How does this portion of Jephthah’s life point us to Israel’s continued backslide?
- Day 5: Judges 11:12-40 Q: How does this story differ from Gen. 22? Are there areas in our life where we try to manipulate circumstances to our own advantage? (see 11:30-31)

Week 4: March 23-27

- Day 1: Judges 12 Q: As the story of the judges continues, there is less and less peace in the land because people turn from the Lord (compare 12:7 with 3:11). Are there any areas in our life, or in the church, where we need to repent and change our direction?
- Day 2: Judges 13 Q: How does the story of—the deliverer—Samson’s birth compare to the story of—the deliver—Jesus’ birth? (see 13:1, 5)
- Day 3: Judges 14:1-9 Q: How do we make sense of God’s intervention that seems to go against God’s earlier laws? (see 14:4)
- Day 4: Judges 14:10-20 Q: Where are some examples from your life where you can look back and say that God’s love was “sweeter than honey and stronger than a lion?”
- Day 5: Judges 15 Q: How does God’s continued provision and work in Samson’s life mirror God’s relationship with Israel, and ultimately with us? (see 15:18-19)

Week 5: March 30 – April 3

- Day 1: Judges 16:1-22 Q: A large part of Samson’s downfall was turning from the Lord, and turning to his own pleasures. In what areas of our life do we do the same?
- Day 2: Judge 16:23-31 Q: What was Samson’s reason for dying? (see 16:28) What was Jesus’ reason for dying? (see Mark 10:45)
- Day 3: Judges 17 Q: Are there any areas in our personal life or church life where we’ve fooled ourselves into thinking we’re serving God, when in reality it’s a self-serving religious act? (see 17:13)
- Day 4: Judges 18 Q: As a church, are there any initiatives that we’re trying to undertake that have not been sanctioned by the Lord? (18:27-28)
- Day 5: Judges 19:1a Q: Read this verse several times and sit with it. What does life look like when we are our own “king” or “judge”?

Week 6: April 6-10

- Day 1: Judges 19:1b-30 Q: Who are some people in the world or in our community that are disrespected, abused, and endure unjust suffering?
- Day 2: Judges 20 Q: Take some time to reflect on the condition of your life and the world we live in. Where do you see human sin, brokenness, or chaos? Where do we need God to intervene?
- Day 3: Judges 21 Q: The 12 tribes of Israel are preserved because God promised to keep his covenant with the people. We are preserved only because God saved us in Jesus. How have you experienced God’s saving hand in your life? (see 2:1)
- Day 4: John 18 Q: Unlike the Israelites who had no king, in Jesus we are given a king to rule, guide, and lead us. What evidence is there from your life that you have surrendered to this king? (see John 18:37)
- Day 5: John 19 Q: After the death of any of Israel’s judges, the nation went back to following their own sinful ways. (Judges 2:18-19) How does the death of Jesus, the ultimate Judge, King, and Savior, change this cycle for us? (see John 19:30)