

DELIVERED

Living Free in Days of Oppression

A Flexible Inductive Study of Judges

Pam Gillaspie

Dedicated to . . .

the Ladies of New Hope Christian Community Church.
Since you liked the 1 John style, let's make some more!

Acknowledgements

Thanks to my husband Dave for always encouraging me to follow
God's call on my life even when the road is hard!

Thanks also to Rick Purdy and Pete DeLacy whose editing always
makes me look smarter than I am.

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DELIVERED

Living Free in Days of Oppression

Life happens. Whether it's family or church, job or kids, sickness or health, busyness or loneliness, life is filled with unpredictable elements, with variables that lift us up one day only to come crashing down like waves over a ship's bow the next. Life happens.

In the midst of life's happenings, even the best intentions can run aground. Optimism says "Not me!" but we live in a broken world that both theologians and actuaries can tell you will eventually disappoint even the glass-is-half-fulls among us.

Flexible inductive studies are designed with hopeful reality in mind! The main portion of the study offers flexibility enough to bend to each week's demands (and surprises!) and the *Extras!* section at the end of each lesson invites those with different learning styles—and the occasional gift of more time!—to try some new ways of remembering the lesson.

When life happens, don't drop your Bible . . . hold it more tightly and flex!

Enjoy!

HOW TO USE THIS STUDY

Flexible Inductive Studies meet you where you are and take you as far as you want to go.

- 1. WEEKLY STUDY:** The main text guides you through the complete topic of study for the week.
- 2. FYI boxes:** For Your Information boxes provide bite-sized material to shed additional light on the topic.
- 3. ONE STEP FURTHER and other sidebar boxes:** Sidebar boxes give you the option to push yourself a little further. If you have extra time or are looking for an extra challenge, you can try one, all, or any number in between! These boxes give you the ultimate in flexibility.
- 4. DIGGING DEEPER boxes:** If you're looking to go further, Digging Deeper sections will help you sharpen your skills as you continue to mine the truths of Scripture for yourself.

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LESSON ONE

Previously in . . . The Bible

The Backstory and the Method

In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth.

—Genesis 1:1

Why start a study on the book of Judges in Genesis? Great question! Here's the short answer: in order to understand the message of Judges, we need to understand its context—what comes before it, what comes after it, who it was written for and why. We need to pay attention to context whenever we read the Bible (or anything else for that matter!) or we run the risk of misunderstanding and misapplying. That's the short answer.

Here's the longer answer that's been the burden of my heart for over 25 years now. Studying any individual portion of the Bible in isolation without having at least a general understanding of the whole often leads to frustration and failure. As long as I can remember, this has been a problem for people who are seeking to know the Word of God. Until you reach a tipping point of knowledge where the people and events start to connect, the Bible study road can be long and hard.

FYI:

If You're in a Class

Work on **Week One** together on your first day of class. This will be a great way to start getting to know each other!

For those who have come to know the accounts of the Bible throughout their childhood, the dots connect much more quickly. For those who sit under regular expositional teaching of God's Word, the base of truth builds.

In recent years, though, simple biblical literacy (think Adam, Eve, Noah, Moses) has declined and the path to basic understanding has become increasingly difficult to find.

So, yes, we will be studying Judges inductively, but instead of starting off there, we are going to take some time to consider what precedes the book of Judges in the Bible as well as look at some "spoilers" to come, specifically how the deliverers in Judges point to mankind's need for an ultimate Deliverer!

Don't Be Overwhelmed!

Take this as an imperative! I'm not much into mandatory—nobody is really—but please, please, please take this instruction seriously. Don't let this study overwhelm you. Occasionally it may "whelm" you. A little whelmed is okay from time to time. A little whelmed challenges us to engage and grow and be strengthened. Overwhelmed though? Overwhelmed almost always paralyzes. Short of paralyzing it sucks joy out of the room. So don't go there. Do what you can and if you feel yourself going under, either slow the pace or reach out to a classmate or friend who can help!

USING AN INDUCTIVE APPROACH

As we study together, we'll use an inductive approach toward the Bible in order to learn to discover truth for ourselves.

Inductive study has three main components that we'll walk through step-by-step: *observation*, *interpretation*, and *application*.

Observation asks: *What does the text say?*

Interpretation asks: *What does the text mean?*

Application asks: *How can I apply this truth in my life?*

Together they lead to transformation by the Spirit through the Word.

MARKING the text of Scripture is one tool that will help us to observe the text well. We'll identify key words by reading carefully, then we'll mark them. Key words are typically repeated and critical to understanding the meaning of the text. When we identify key words, we're beginning to see what is going on in the text, what the author's main point is. As we mark

key words, we ASK the 5W and H questions (*Who? What? When? Where? Why? and How?*).

THE QUICK START SUMMARY

Instead of giving you a summary of the first part of the Bible in my words, let's have God's Word itself bring you up to speed. We'll start with Hebrews 11 which provides a concise one-chapter summary of the Old Testament and points forward to the final, completed work of Jesus! It doesn't mention everyone, but the framework of the whole Bible is in there and so immeasurably helpful! For our purposes today, we'll look just at the first seven verses.

Hebrews 11:1-7

- 1 *Now faith is the assurance of things hoped for, the conviction of things not seen.*
- 2 *For by it the men of old gained approval.*
- 3 *By faith we understand that the worlds were prepared by the word of God, so that what is seen was not made out of things which are visible.*
- 4 *By faith Abel offered to God a better sacrifice than Cain, through which he obtained the testimony that he was righteous, God testifying about his gifts, and through faith, though he is dead, he still speaks.*
- 5 *By faith Enoch was taken up so that he would not see death; AND HE WAS NOT FOUND BECAUSE GOD TOOK HIM UP; for he obtained the witness that before his being taken up he was pleasing to God.*
- 6 *And without faith it is impossible to please Him, for he who comes to God must believe that He is and that He is a rewarder of those who seek Him.*

FOR FUTURE STUDY:

A Big-Picture Guide to the Bible

If you're looking for a more comprehensive yet still speedy way to grasp the Bible's main story-line, check out *Sweeter than Chocolate! Hebrews 11: A Big-Picture Guide to the Bible*.

7 By faith Noah, being warned by God about things not yet seen, in reverence prepared an ark for the salvation of his household, by which he condemned the world, and became an heir of the righteousness which is according to faith.

DISCUSS with your GROUP or PONDER on your own . . .

What time period does Hebrews 11:1-7 cover?

How did people gain God's approval?

According to Hebrews 11, how can a person please God? How does this compare with common cultural thinking?

Do you try to please God? If so, how are you going about it? How does it line up with Hebrews 11?

How does the author of Hebrews define faith? What can we learn from the examples of faith he provides?

What examples of faith have you seen firsthand? How have they affected your thinking and behavior?

The Need for a Deliverer . . .

From its earliest chapters, the Bible showcases mankind's need for a deliverer and God's mission to provide. After the first created people—Adam and Eve—rebel against God and fall into sin, God promises a deliverer who will crush the head of the serpent who had deceived Eve.

Eve may have thought the son she bore was that deliverer (see Genesis 4:1), but the actual fulfillment looked much further into the future. Throughout the pages of the Old Testament God delivers His people over and over using men (and an occasional woman!) that He raises up, temporal saviors who point to someone greater to come.

Moses, who God raises up to deliver Israel from slavery in Egypt, bluntly tells this people to watch for and listen to the one God will send: *"The LORD your God will raise up for you a prophet like me from among you, from your countrymen, you shall listen to him"* (Deuteronomy 18:15). Remember, Moses was no ordinary prophet. God spoke to him face-to-face as one speaks to a friend (Exodus 33:11).

ONE STEP FURTHER:

Word Study: Deliver

Take some time this week to explore the Hebrew word translated "deliver" in Judges. Start by using an online concordance such as blueletterbible.org to identify how the word is used in Judges and elsewhere in the Bible. Note other ways the word is translated into English and see if you can figure out what biblical names stem from the same root! Record what you discover below.

Now in the Promised Land after 40 years of wandering in the wilderness after their deliverance from Egypt, the people once again find themselves in need of deliverers *over and over again*, but none—as we will see—is able to provide ultimate deliverance . . . yet!

Before we jump into Judges, let's look at Joshua 24 for some near context.

OBSERVE the TEXT of SCRIPTURE

Some of the people Joshua addresses in these verses had witnessed the Exodus as children and had seen for themselves the mighty acts of God throughout their lifetimes.

As you read Joshua 24:1-13, note how it sets the stage by reviewing God's work for and through the nation of Israel beginning with the call of Abraham. Let's let the text speak for itself.

READ Joshua 24:1-13 and **MARK** every reference to the *fathers*.

Joshua 24:1-13

- 1 *Then Joshua gathered all the tribes of Israel to Shechem, and called for the elders of Israel and for their heads and their judges and their officers; and they presented themselves before God.*
- 2 *Joshua said to all the people, "Thus says the LORD, the God of Israel, 'From ancient times your fathers lived beyond the River, namely, Terah, the father of Abraham and the father of Nahor, and they served other gods.*
- 3 *'Then I took your father Abraham from beyond the River, and led him through all the land of Canaan, and multiplied his descendants and gave him Isaac.*
- 4 *'To Isaac I gave Jacob and Esau, and to Esau I gave Mount Seir to possess it; but Jacob and his sons went down to Egypt.*
- 5 *'Then I sent Moses and Aaron, and I plagued Egypt by what I did in its midst; and afterward I brought you out.*
- 6 *'I brought your fathers out of Egypt, and you came to the sea; and Egypt pursued your fathers with chariots and horsemen to the Red Sea.*
- 7 *'But when they cried out to the LORD, He put darkness between you and the Egyptians, and brought the sea upon them and covered them; and your own eyes saw what I did in Egypt. And you lived in the wilderness for a long time.*

- 8 *'Then I brought you into the land of the Amorites who lived beyond the Jordan, and they fought with you; and I gave them into your hand, and you took possession of their land when I destroyed them before you.*
- 9 *'Then Balak the son of Zippor, king of Moab, arose and fought against Israel, and he sent and summoned Balaam the son of Beor to curse you.*
- 10 *'But I was not willing to listen to Balaam. So he had to bless you, and I delivered you from his hand.*
- 11 *'You crossed the Jordan and came to Jericho; and the citizens of Jericho fought against you, and the Amorite and the Perizzite and the Canaanite and the Hittite and the Girgashite, the Hivite and the Jebusite. Thus I gave them into your hand.*
- 12 *'Then I sent the hornet before you and it drove out the two kings of the Amorites from before you, but not by your sword or your bow.*
- 13 *'I gave you a land on which you had not labored, and cities which you had not built, and you have lived in them; you are eating of vineyards and olive groves which you did not plant.'*

DISCUSS with your GROUP or PONDER on your own . . .

Who does Joshua gather to Shechem and for what purpose?

Who is the main speaker in verses 2-13? Whose message is being delivered?

Where did Israel's "fathers" come from? What kind of people were they?

Do you think the “fathers” should have had knowledge of the One true God? Why/why not? Explain.

Who were the main characters mentioned in Israel's history and what are they known for?

Think for a moment about how familiar or unfamiliar you are with people and events from your parents' and grandparents' generations. Can you understand how easy it is for knowledge to stall between generations? Explain.

INDUCTIVE FOCUS:

Application—The Difference Between What Stands and Falls

As we study God's Word we can't stop at knowing what it says and what it means . . . we need to act on what we know! Jesus tells us plainly in Matthew 7:24-27 the difference that application makes:

“Therefore everyone who hears these words of Mine and acts on them, may be compared to a wise man who built his house on the rock. And the rain fell, and the floods came, and the winds blew and slammed against that house; and yet it did not fall, for it had been founded on the rock. Everyone who hears these words of Mine and does not act on them, will be like a foolish man who built his house on the sand. The rain fell, and the floods came, and the winds blew and slammed against that house; and it fell—and great was its fall.”

If you are not an eyewitness to an event, what do you need in order to know history?

How are you doing at listening to the generation that came before you?
How about at passing information on to the generation that is coming after you?

What truths about God do your kids, nieces, nephews, and other younger people in your life need to know? How can you help equip them to know God?

How *are you* doing at this?

What had the Exodus generation learned firsthand about God?

How had God responded to their cries for help?

How did He act on Israel's behalf? Who were some of the enemies God defeated?

What did God give the people of Israel? Why?

INDUCTIVE FOCUS:

Asking Questions of Everything!

One of the most effective ways to understand the Bible is to read slowly and carefully and then ask the basic investigative questions: *Who? What? When? Where? Why?* and *How?* The hardest part of Bible study for most people today is simply slowing down. Remember: Bible study is not a race!

OBSERVE the TEXT of SCRIPTURE

Let's move on to the second half of Joshua 24.

READ Joshua 24:14-33 and **MARK** every occurrence of *serve(d)*.

Joshua 24:14-33

14 *"Now, therefore, fear the LORD and serve Him in sincerity and truth; and put away the gods which your fathers served beyond the River and in Egypt, and serve the LORD.*

- 15 *"If it is disagreeable in your sight to serve the LORD, choose for yourselves today whom you will serve: whether the gods which your fathers served which were beyond the River, or the gods of the Amorites in whose land you are living; but as for me and my house, we will serve the LORD."*
- 16 *The people answered and said, "Far be it from us that we should forsake the LORD to serve other gods;*
- 17 *for the LORD our God is He who brought us and our fathers up out of the land of Egypt, from the house of bondage, and who did these great signs in our sight and preserved us through all the way in which we went and among all the peoples through whose midst we passed.*
- 18 *"The LORD drove out from before us all the peoples, even the Amorites who lived in the land. We also will serve the LORD, for He is our God."*
- 19 *Then Joshua said to the people, "You will not be able to serve the LORD, for He is a holy God. He is a jealous God; He will not forgive your transgression or your sins.*
- 20 *"If you forsake the LORD and serve foreign gods, then He will turn and do you harm and consume you after He has done good to you."*
- 21 *The people said to Joshua, "No, but we will serve the LORD."*
- 22 *Joshua said to the people, "You are witnesses against yourselves that you have chosen for yourselves the LORD, to serve Him." And they said, "We are witnesses."*
- 23 *"Now therefore, put away the foreign gods which are in your midst, and incline your hearts to the LORD, the God of Israel."*
- 24 *The people said to Joshua, "We will serve the LORD our God and we will obey His voice."*
- 25 *So Joshua made a covenant with the people that day, and made for them a statute and an ordinance in Shechem.*
- 26 *And Joshua wrote these words in the book of the law of God; and he took a large stone and set it up there under the oak that was by the sanctuary of the LORD.*

- 27 *Joshua said to all the people, "Behold, this stone shall be for a witness against us, for it has heard all the words of the LORD which He spoke to us; thus it shall be for a witness against you, so that you do not deny your God."*
- 28 *Then Joshua dismissed the people, each to his inheritance.*
- 29 *It came about after these things that Joshua the son of Nun, the servant of the LORD, died, being one hundred and ten years old.*
- 30 *And they buried him in the territory of his inheritance in Timnath-serah, which is in the hill country of Ephraim, on the north of Mount Gaash.*
- 31 *Israel served the LORD all the days of Joshua and all the days of the elders who survived Joshua, and had known all the deeds of the LORD which He had done for Israel.*
- 32 *Now they buried the bones of Joseph, which the sons of Israel brought up from Egypt, at Shechem, in the piece of ground which Jacob had bought from the sons of Hamor the father of Shechem for one hundred pieces of money; and they became the inheritance of Joseph's sons.*
- 33 *And Eleazar the son of Aaron died; and they buried him at Gibeah of Phinehas his son, which was given him in the hill country of Ephraim.*

DISCUSS with your GROUP or PONDER on your own . . .

What does Joshua shift his message to in verse 14?

What choice do the people face? What should be their reasonable response? Why?

What similar choices do you face? How does your life reflect who you serve?

What do the people covenant to do? How do they do and for how long? Why?

While the people pledge “We will serve the LORD” (v. 21) against Joshua’s “You will not be able to serve the LORD, for He is a holy God,” (v. 19), the book of Judges records Israel’s downfall after Joshua and the elders who survive him die.

Victory characterizes the book of Joshua, but together we’ll witness ongoing defeat during the entire period of the Judges.

@THE END OF THE DAY . . .

Take a few minutes to jot down your biggest application point from this week of study as well as your biggest remaining questions so far.

EXTRA

MEMORIZE | TWEET | POST | DRAW | HASHTAG | ENCODE | REMEMBER

As we study the Bible together inductively, we'll always be observing, interpreting, and applying the text because these key components help us to accurately handle the Word of Truth. Using this basic approach, though, doesn't mean we all have to learn in the exact same way. We can use different tools and practices to help us learn and remember the timeless truths of God's Word.

Memorizing is a great tool for me because it causes me to see more closely how a writer is framing an argument. When I'm focusing on recall, I'm more apt to see repeated words and patterns—it's just how my brain works!

You may recall a text best by making a simple outline of it . . . or sketching what you saw in it. If you have extra time this week, do what you need to so that you'll remember the basic content of Lesson 1. Here are some ideas:

Memorize Key Verses

Hebrews 11:6

And without faith it is impossible to please Him, for he who comes to God must believe that He is and that He is a rewarder of those who seek Him.

Joshua 24:23-24

"Now therefore, put away the foreign gods which are in your midst, and incline your hearts to the LORD, the God of Israel."

The people said to Joshua, "We will serve the LORD our God and we will obey His voice."

Joshua 24:31

Israel served the LORD all the days of Joshua and all the days of the elders who survived Joshua, and had known all the deeds of the LORD which He had done for Israel.

Got another one? Write it down!

Create a Simple Outline

Hebrews 11 talks about . . .

Joshua 24:1-13 talks about . . .

Joshua 24:14-33 talks about . . .

“Tweet” It

Brevity can make us think more accurately. See if you can summarize the message of Joshua 24 in 140 characters or less.

#Hashtag It

Write a hashtag for Hebrews 11.

#

Write a hashtag for Joshua 24.

#

Sketch It

More of a visual learner? Use the space below to sketch out your takeaway points from Hebrews 11 and/or Joshua 24.

If you're thinking about memorizing any verses or passages, check out **www.Biblememory.com** (formerly Scripture typer.com). I highly recommend this software that helps you memorize and keeps you honest by testing you on an ongoing basis!