

# Bristol Conference 1976-12 Studies in the Judges

by Bob Clark

*The book of Judges shows the failure of God's people to possess their spiritual inheritance and the consequences of their failure, highlighting the importance of trusting God and relying on His strength.*

**Duration:** 36:33

**Scripture:** Judges 2:1-2, Judges 2:14-19, Judges 4:1-5, Judges 5:1 - 6:16, Romans 7:18

**Topics:** "Bible Conference"

## Description

The video is a sermon on the Book of Judges in the Bible. It discusses the unique period in the nation's history that is covered in chapters 4 and 5 of the book. These chapters depict a time after the resurrection of the Church, where people are singing in a similar fashion to the time of Moses and Miriam. The sermon also highlights the three basic movements in the Book of Judges, which include an introduction, the historical account of the Judges, and a closing annexation and appendix. The purpose of studying this book is to learn spiritual lessons and apply them to our own lives.

## Transcript

■ ■Amazing Grace■ ■Shall always be■ ■My song of praise■ ■For thy divinity■ ■I do not know why he gave■ ■To love me so■ ■He looked beyond■ ■My hope and for my need■ ■I shall always■ ■My life without a need■ ■To view that cross■ ■Where Jesus died for me■ ■How marvelous■ ■The grace that brought■ ■All the world■ ■He looked beyond my hope■ ■And for my need■ ■ ■I sing today■ ■It stands today■ ■To you my friend■ ■For Christ alone■ ■My divinity■ ■No more to call■ ■Before the day■ ■Of great ascension■ ■He stands with hope■ ■And time■ ■To give to me■ ■I shall forever■ ■Live my life■ ■In Calvary■ ■To view that cross■ ■Where Jesus died for me■ ■How marvelous■ ■My holy Lord■ ■He looked beyond my hope■ ■And for my need■ Paul Lee and Brother Robert Plotkin Thank you, it's a real pleasure for me to be here and I trust that something from the word of God to bring a spiritual blessing and refreshment to your soul.

My God is a great God who controls nations and empires and powers and the nation of Israel seemed deeply aware that even though they were having a history yet it was a profound history and under the control and influence of God.

I am given to understand that Hebrew scholars include the book of Judges in their prophetic books because they seem to perceive that more than just historical actions going on in the Old Testament the nation's history was something of spiritual value had content and importance to it and I would like to direct your attention to this particular effect in the nation's history it's called the book of Judges and actually it covers a period of time just a little bit longer than the book itself so won't you turn to the book of Judges please in chapter 1 the book of Judges is the history of failure failure because of compromise with the enemies of God and God's people and just as far as the actual text is concerned there are three simple divisions to the book of Judges the first two chapters

constitute an introduction we might say or a prologue chapter 3 through 16 gives us the body of the historical account itself and the history of these men called the Judges and then chapter 17 through 21 gives us a little annexation, an appendix if you would a closing to the book that's rather unique and special the nation of Israel had a very sad history their history was carefully chronicled for you and me in order that we might have some spiritual lessons to glean and then apply them by the grace of God to our own hearts and this is my desire that I might share with you some thoughts that would provoke you we're going to seek to cover the entirety of this book and if the Lord allows, have something for us, for each of our souls but maybe just a little introduction to this very

important period in the nation's history the little prologue to the book of Judges, chapters 1 and 2 is really divided into two sections and the closing epilogue has got two sections as well the fact that it's called the book of Judges is rather interesting the very word Judges is really the same word that is used in most oral ways through the Old Testament for the discerning between two situations the priests were to discern or pass a judgment between right and wrong and assist people in their scrutiny and their discerning of laws and rules but when we come to a period of time in the nation's history, the word takes on a different meaning it starts with a man named Othniel and it finishes up with a man named Samuel and these fourteen persons in between constitute the Judges even though

they all do not appear in the book of Judges the fact that it is a period of time is important rather than just a book you find a number of references, as we shall see shortly, in this book to the Judges meaning a period of time rather than individual persons and it's from this period of time that we want to see a rather dark ages in the nation of Israel's history and from this dark ages and the error and the failure and the weakness and the inconsistency of God's people I pray that there should be applied to your life and mine a tender conscience and an exercise of soul to perceive that God has allowed his people of old to go through some very difficult, grueling expose of themselves and thus create for you and me a deepening in our own personal faith and trust in God the nation of

Israel has four basic periods of time they have a family period which would start at Abraham and go to the death of Joseph and it was approximately 400 years in rough figures and then there was a tribal period which started with Joseph and went through the period of the Exodus where God dealt with the tribes and that was approximately 400 years and then there was a theocratic period where God ruled the people directly as a whole nation and that started with the book of Exodus and goes on to the King Saul and it's in this particular time that the book of Judges falls and what makes it more significant and more grieving, I'm sure, to God was it was under his direct rule that the nation hit the spiritual low the book of Judges can easily be a rather depressing volume of scripture to study

you don't want it to be that but it can be such unless we gather from it the lessons and the marked failure of God's people of all in a very special way, the book of Judges is applicable to you and me today because

it's a time of darkness, of declension, of failure and it immediately precedes the monarchical period for the nation of Israel we are waiting for the coming of our blessed King, our Lord and Savior and I am trusting, prayerfully, that each of you are looking forward to that time of which we sang but the nation of Israel looked forward to a King as well they chose a Roman in Saul and then they became God's chosen King and that entered a period of about 400 years it finished up with Zedekiah, the last of the Kings so God is divided into sisters then you can see, if you would,

just from those four divisions of approximately 400 years each the nation of Israel has recorded in the book of Judges almost one quarter and possibly one third of the nation's history now, many people know about the Patriarch and many people know about the King and most of God's people know very little about the Judges and it's this particular volume that we want to put up before our thoughts Joshua might even be more familiar to us Joshua and Judges are to be contrasted the book of Joshua has an upward thrust in it and the book of Judges is a downward, constant, declining spiritual graph the nation is going downward in all of their experience the book of Judges has one man prominent a dynamic God-chosen leader the book of Judges has a multiplicity of God-chosen leaders no one man is

prominent and everyone is increasingly marked with failure, weakness, and carnality the book of Joshua is a book of victory while it's failure and defeat in the book of Judges the book of Joshua puts before us the fidelity of God's people and in Judges we have apostasy now, I'd like you to turn, if you would, to chapter 2 and verse 14 and we'll read a few verses which I will suggest are the key verses to this book and interpret the book, or at least make an application for us give us an insight into the book itself the book of Judges, chapter 2 and verse 14 the anger of the Lord was taught against Israel and he delivered them into the hands of spoilers that spoiled them and he sold them into the hands of their enemies round about so that they could not any longer stand before their

enemies with this, however, they went out, the hand of the Lord was against them for evil as the Lord had said, and as the Lord had sworn unto them and they were greatly distressed nevertheless, the Lord raised up Judges which delivered them out of the hand of those that spoiled them now, there's a biblical definition of the Judge he is not somebody that passes or enforces the law he is a person raised up by the Lord to deliver the land or the God's people out of the hand of those that are their spoilers, their enemies and yet they would not hearken unto their Judges but they went a-whoring after other Gods bowed themselves unto them and they turned quickly out of the way which their fathers walked in, obeying the commandment of the Lord but they did not so when the Lord raised them up,

Judges then the Lord was with the Judge and delivered them out of the hand of their enemies all the days of the Judge for it repented the Lord because of their gloating by reason of them that oppressed them and wretched them and it came to pass when the Judge was dead that they returned and corrupted themselves more than their fathers and following other Gods to serve them and to bow down unto them they ceased not from their own doings nor from their stubborn ways here is a concise picture chapter 2, 14-19 of a panoramic view of the book of Judges and it ends the introduction, really now in chapter 3 we'll get into the body of the letter itself they did evil in the sight of the Lord that phrase appears 14 times in the book they did evil in the sight of the Lord and 22 times we read of the

Judges men raised up to deliver God's people now, if there was ever a time in the history of God's people it is imperative that we recognize now, today God is still looking for men and women to be raised up who through the exercise of their God-given gifts the faithfulness to the word of God and the purposes of God and in submission to God's holy purposes that we become leadership amongst God's own by example, by

criteria, by the ministry of the word God is still looking for men and women to be concerned enough for His people to be willing to step to the fore and surrender themselves being useful to God and thus be a tool to deliver God's people from the oppressiveness of the world and the devil that surrounds us today he would intensify his attack and you and I need more than anything

else good example, exercises of souls and I know of no better place to draw from the fellowship of God's people you'd set yourself aside, taking vacation time some of you, maybe at no little sacrifice to be a friend of God's people looking for fellowship, looking for encouragement but looking for something from the word of God and I know that the servants of God that are here amongst you are seeking to present His word with this singularly special work in mind that your heart and soul would be fed your spirit served and your lives find an unclear direction from spiritual infamy to move forward and grow in grace and in the knowledge of our blessed Lord Beloved Christian friends many of us have never met and it's quite possible by the time the week is finished we shall not see each other

again in fact it's highly likely you might not want to see me again but there shall be left in your hearts thoughts planted and surrounded and watered by prayer that I believe can be that which can be used by the spirit of God to give us guidance and direction bear with us tune your heart to His word and learn these things were written for our learning they are carefully chronicled for you and me great massive excerpts of God's history brought out to the pages of Holy Writ that you might see the movements of soul in other men and women and grow in a better understanding of what God desires for you the book of Judges affords for us a picture of failure failure because of compromise failure because of an unwillingness on the part of God's people to sacrificially believe what God has for

them now the land of Canaan was a place of promised blessing for God's people we know this I'm sure that most of us are thoroughly familiar with the thought but we want to put just a little chart up here for us to look at maybe draw a parallel for our souls now the significance of the book of Judges is that the purposes of God for His people are being thwarted and we need to see where the failure was the little picture at the top is a very brief basic picture on the left you have the great sea the Mediterranean the sea of Tenerife at the top the river Jordan down to the Dead Sea in that immediate area is the promised land and this is at least what the nation of Israel laid hold of now there's some parallels between Canaan and the heavenly places and in order that we might comprehend where

the nation of Israel failed it would be good for us to see and be reminded for many of us a simple thought the thought is that what God has promised for you and me in what is called in the New Testament the heavenly places spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ Jesus we have been blessed with all of this and we might notice that each both Israel and us have been presented by God to inherit Israel to inherit Canaan God predetermined that this should be so and us God's people to inherit spiritual blessings the heavenly places we each have this openness God uses Joshua a divinely appointed and selected one to bring God's people into a place of blessing faith failed under his immediate leadership even as the church under the apostolic leadership was able to possess and bless and

grow but the moment the immediate leadership of Joshua and the apostle passed away God's people became a downward trend in much of their relationship with God each Canaan and the heavenly places was a gift of grace received by faith they had nothing to do with it they distilled nothing there they had no appropriateness to it there was nothing for them except to walk in and possess Canaan it was necessary that they believe God this was a revelation even as spiritual blessings are a revelation to us it is important that you know beloved child of God that you have been blessed with every spiritual blessing in Christ

Jesus God has chosen you in Christ before the foundation of the world and these blessings are yours every one of them everything that Christ has provided for his people are yours

there is no such thing as a second or a later blessing the moment you were saved you were brought into your Canaan or your heavenly places and all spiritual blessings are yours but we must lay hold of them by faith and in fact we must by conflict make them ours it means self-sacrifice it means a struggle it means some form of discipline or exercise of soul now the nation of Israel failed let me just make a few more basically that's where they present under the leadership of Joshua they took over and conquered those particular areas in the north by Dan on the eastern side of the river Jordan a small area towards the northeast and then a larger area not quite reaching the Mediterranean and then they began to have their difficulties we'll put just an initial and draw this to your attention

on the left hand side between the great sea and the Mediterranean and in their possession were the Canaanites down to the left the Philistines under the letter of Eve the Moabites down on the lower right hand side in the upper right the Mesopotamians and as a result they were being constrained and held in, drawn in, limited and immediately they have opposition but God promises us spiritual blessings and the blessing of the fullness of God's spirit is available to us if we lay hold of it judges give us a more clear picture of the failure of God's people why they did not why the inequity, why the misbalance why the constant failure in their history as it fits together with all the promised land they lay hold of and we shall see the reasons why in the book of Judges now, in Ruth chapter 1

the book is stated by saying in the period of the day of Judges as late as Josiah, about 400 years later, there is a statement of the period of the Judges I'm talking about a Passover which has not been bettered since the days of the Judges the period of the day of the Judges is one that's looked at by the Jewish authors at this time starting with Uphiel, ending with Samuel a day of decline until the time of a coming end we want to be able to lay hold of it and take a view of it now, you'll notice in chapter 1 of the book of Judges in verse 1 after the death of Joshua it came to pass that the children of Israel asked the Lord, saying who shall go up first against the Canaanites first, to fight against them God's people still have access to God, even after Joshua's death God's people still

have the opportunity to lay hold of things spiritual they can still get into their inheritance, they still have access to God but the access and the fellowship to God doesn't seem to carry them far enough or give them enough desire and they back away and you'll find that in chapter 1 gradual progression until we come to the end of chapter 20 if you look at chapter 20 of the book of Judges verse 18 the children of Israel arose and went up to the house of God and asked counsel of God and said which of us shall go up first to battle against the children of Benjamin and the Lord said Judas shall go up first they start out against the Canaanites and they end up at the end of the book in civil war a violent civil war that killed thousands and thousands destroyed the nation almost completely

obliterated the men from the tribe of Benjamin so confused so marked by inconsistency and it's marked in chapter 1 the introduction, no doubt chapter 1 through chapter 2 verse 5 was written after the book was composed and put together and a later historian gave us this introduction it's a review of what has happened through the latter years of the man of Joshua God's people are interested in growing up and possessing the spiritual inheritance in chapter 1 and verse 1 Judas finds a companionship with Simeon they attack the enemy but by the time we come down to chapter 1 and verse 22 the house of Joseph went up against Bethel the Lord was different but they sent spies in to find out a way and find out from the enemy how they might attack verse 27 Jesus did not ask to drive out the

inhabitants of her town verse 29 Judas did not ask to drive out the Canaanites that dwelt in Gaza verse 30 Judas did not ask to drive out the inhabitants that dwelt among them and became tributaries so they began to figure out why should we drive these enemies out God said put the enemy out every single one of them the property is yours evict all of your enemies they began to reason why should we do that, we can use them as slaves we can use them as good workers they're good helpers to have around and they began their own human reasoning verse 31 neither did Asher drive out the inhabitants of Hezbon neither did Naphtali verse 33 drive out the inhabitants of Bethlehem verse 34 and the Amorites now the other way is around the enemy has been so allowed to stay in the land now they take

the initiative and force the children of Dan into the mountains so they could not suffer them to come down into the valley chapter 2 and verse 1 and the angel of the Lord came up from Gilgal to focus apparently God is still at Gilgal the place of self-judgment the place where God's people often under the leadership of Joshua were seated the place where the men were circumcised before they ventured into the lands of battle and conflict the place of self-judgment spiritual circumcision to us, identifying ourselves with the crucifixion of Christ and Joshua constantly repeated to that place before the battle and he would go back to Gilgal before the battle and he'd go back to Gilgal but it had been a long time since God's people had ever gone back to Gilgal and reappraised their life and saw

their own weakness and failure sentimentally many of us go back to Gilgal in songs and at the Lord's conference emotionally, many of us go back to Calvary and see the Lord's death and have warm, good feelings about the forgiveness of our sins but that's not what it means here Gilgal is a picture and an aspect of the death of Christ that's most distasteful to us God's people because at Gilgal the men needed to be circumcised they were totally incident for three days exposed to their enemy, trusting only God and it was there that they rolled away the shame of the flesh and the attachment of Israel and the wandering in the wilderness and it is our spiritual Gilgal when you and I get before God a genuine self-examination and realize that Calvary not only took care of sin in the flesh and not

only took care of you who are believers, your individual sins but it also is to take care of your old nature what you are essential naturally it's very hard for me to honestly accept that in Bob Clark there dwelleth no good thing I am sure that somewhere along the line there must be some little touch of Calvary in me and God says no the apostle recognized it and in Romans 7 he says in me that is in my flesh dwelleth no good thing God was at Gilgal and he comes up now to the city in which they are and he reminds them in verses one and two concerning his delivering power out of Egypt and the remarkable passion in which he could empower God's people and deliver God's people then he says I told you in verse three I will not drive an outman before you but they shall be as thorns in your side

and their God shall be a snare unto you and it came to pass when the angel of the Lord said these words unto the children of Israel that the people lift up their voice and wept now that's where a lot of us love to be just here feel good cry over my sin don't ask me to cut anything off don't ask me to sit in judgment on myself let me cry and be moved in some way there was such a weeping and such remorse and such sorrow they called it Bohemia the place of tears, the place of weeping but that wasn't what God was interested in he wanted genuine repentance active, aggressive cessation of their own woeful ways and a submission and a new business of themselves to God but they wept they called the name of the place Bohemia and they sacrificed there unto the Lord Joshua died the Lord becomes

disturbed and angry with them, the account is given in the next verse, verse 20 in the anger of the Lord was hot against Israel and he said because that this people have transgressed my covenant which I

commanded their fathers and have not hearkened unto my voice I also will not henceforth drive out any from before them of the nations which Joshua left when he died, that through them, now this is the purposes of God, that I may prove with a view of strengthening that I may prove Israel whether they will keep the way of the Lord to walk therein as their fathers did keep it or not therefore the Lord left those nations without driving them out hatefully, neither delivering them into the hand of Joshua now these are the nations which the Lord left to prove Israel by them, even as many of

Israel as had not known all the wars of Canaan, only that the generations of the children of Israel might know to teach them to war at the least such as before knew nothing thereof the enemies, the five lords of the Philistines and all the Canaanites and the Thessalonians and the Hibbites that brought the Mount Lebanon and Mount Baal Hermon unto the entering in of Haman they were to prove Israel by them to know whether they would hearken unto the commandments of the Lord which he commanded their fathers by the hand of Moses and what was the end for the children of Israel the children of Israel dwelt among the Canaanites the Hittites, the Amorites the Perizzites the Hibbites, the Jebusites not only did they live with them, they took their daughters to be their wives and gave their

daughters to their sons and served their gods and the children of Israel did evil in the sight of the Lord and forgot the Lord their God and served Philem and the grove what is it that is so markedly active in our lives that rejects the loving tender overtures of God what is it that I have failed to see in my own experience what is it that I have rejected of the truth of God's words the holy scriptures make it clear they that are Christ have crucified the flesh they that are Christ have crucified themselves unto the world and the world unto themselves they have cast a judicial sentence have these oh no, these are profitable people they know how to fertilize and soil they know how to irrigate they can keep as many things, they have weaponry have lovely women, they tolerate all kind of

weird and exotic excuses in their religious activities let's identify ourselves with them we're still God's people, he's called us his own this apparently is a disposition, for God does not lead his people to their own sin and their own willful ways thou blessed God comes in and creates a cycle of activity now I'd like to suggest to you that we might look at this book in a particular fashion, and I'll put up a little picture up here the book of Judges is not only the history of the failure of the nation of Israel but I suggest to you just a few lines up on this graph that will not make too much sense at first but gradually we would like to divide the book of Judges in such a way that we might see suggested to us a prophetic history of the church as well now, if there is value to this

outline, and I believe there is and I've even moved through to be able to see, we've divided the book of Judges into three sections notice that there's little Roman numerals to the left, one, two, and three the first section is a movement all the way through.

There's an irregular line on the right hand side of the chart. That is going to suggest to us, as we see, the coming of the Lord. If the book of Judges is indeed a panoramic picture of what is going to happen in the church then we find that there is three basic movements the first little introduction is chapters one and two.

In chapter three, we're introduced to three of the judges their line if you will allow us to use that to adapt itself to the chart, their line goes all the way through. They have characteristic qualities, attributes that are the attributes of all godly people that are going to be useful of God. Chapter four and five is a unique period in the nation's history chapter five is the only psalm in the book of Judges, and the first psalm that the nation or anybody sings since they've been delivered through the Red Sea, and Moses and Miriam led

the nation of Israel in music.

This is the next time we find people singing in such a fashion, and a picture a future time after the rapture of the church. Now, with one complete movement, then we go back and from chapter six to fifteen we see the next judges we shall put their names in characterizing certain periods of time that have picked up very similarly that you might have in mind the seven letters that are written through the churches in the book of Revelation, or the seven parables that the Lord gives, or better the eight parables that he gives concerning his kingdom, as you can see them as suggestive of periods of time even so the men, the personalities and the women in this book suggest to us periods of time in the 1850s, and so for this reason we know that there is real value in studying this book. The challenge is, shall I, as a child of God respond to the life that has been lived, the experiences that have been gone through, and be able by the grace of God to learn and to grow, to be able to face up to the fact that I am not in the best position right now, there are exercises of soul that I need to go through ways of sitting in judgment upon myself, allowing the word of God to impact my life that I might keep in my hold and my grace on the heavenly places of spiritual blessing.

And as God allows, we should like to progress with our study to go through this book during this week.

---

Audio: <https://sermonindex1.b-cdn.net/9/SID9866.mp3>

Source: <https://sermonindex.net/speakers/bob-clark/bristol-conference-1976-12-studies-in-the-judges/>

# *Grow in Your Walk with Christ*

---

Listen and read messages that will stir your heart for Christ and point you to deeper repentance and devotion.

- 50,000+ Sermons from speakers past and present
- 3,900+ Classic Christian Books freely readable online
- 1,200+ Bible Translations and Commentaries
- Over 450k forum posts — Join our vibrant online Christian forum

**[www.sermonindex.net](http://www.sermonindex.net)**