



FIRST BAPTIST CHURCH

CHRIST-CENTERED, KINGDOM-FOCUSED HOMES



Bible Reading Plan Journal

June 2022

Why we have a church-wide Bible reading plan: God speaks to people through His Word. It is what He uses to transform our lives by revealing truth to us and aligning our heart toward what He loves. The aim of this reading plan is not to merely check a box off a list, but to encourage our church body to spend time hearing from God. Reading the Bible is critical to a Christian's growth. But it is especially powerful to read the Bible with others. This reading plan is the basis for all of our D-Groups, and we hope it fosters deeper spiritual conversations in our families and between our members.

How you can use this booklet: Each day has a passage of Scripture for you to read. There are one to two questions to prompt your study of the passage. We encourage the H.E.A.R. method for reading Scripture, especially if it is a new discipline for you. First, highlight a verse or verses that speak to you from the passage. Then, explain what those verses mean in relation to the broader context and how they support the main idea the author is trying to communicate. Next, apply this verse to your everyday life. What does this passage teach us about God? How does this passage point you to your need for Jesus? How do your thoughts, emotions, or actions need to change in light of this passage? Application should always be done in a spirit of prayer, as you are asking God to reveal to you how it applies. Finally, respond. This may be a specific action God is leading you to do. Very often it will be a prayer, either of thanksgiving, of confession of sin, or of petition asking for God's help.

Each new section in the biblical book is preceded by an introduction to help you focus on some key ideas of that book. There is also a general outline to that section to help you keep the overall context in mind as you read each day. This is important for every book of Scripture, but it is especially important for the larger books in the Bible.

Memory Verse: Because Scripture is God's Word, it is important that a Christian spend regular time memorizing God's Word so that he or she can always find encouragement and guidance from God. This month's memory passage is provided on the next page in the ESV, NIV, and NLT.

Psalm 23:1-4**ESV**

1 The LORD is my shepherd; I shall not want.

2 He makes me lie down in green pastures.

He leads me beside still waters.

3 He restores my soul.

He leads me in paths of righteousness for his name's sake.

4 Even though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death,

I will fear no evil, for you are with me;

your rod and your staff, they comfort me.

NIV

1 The LORD is my shepherd, I lack nothing.

2 He makes me lie down in green pastures,

he leads me beside quiet waters,

3 he refreshes my soul.

He guides me along the right paths for his name's sake.

4 Even though I walk through the darkest valley,

I will fear no evil, for you are with me;

your rod and your staff, they comfort me.

NLT

1 The LORD is my shepherd; I have all that I need.

2 He lets me rest in green meadows;

he leads me beside peaceful streams.

3 He renews my strength.

He guides me along right paths,

bringing honor to his name.

4 Even when I walk through the darkest valley,

I will not be afraid, for you are close beside me.

Your rod and your staff protect and comfort me.

Joshua: Stories of the Conquest

Day 1 | **Joshua 6-7**

Explain:

The defeat of Jericho is Israel's first victory in the land God promised to Israel. What does this victory show about how God could potentially work as Israel travels further into the land?

What does Achan's sin potentially show about how Israel will respond to God's commands once in the land?

Day 1 | Joshua 6-7

Apply:

What does the comparison and contrast between the victory at Jericho and the defeat at Ai reveal about God and his people? How does that apply to your life today?

Respond:

Explain:

Israel defeated Jericho through God's miraculous provision, and Israel defeated Ai through good military tactics. How does the story show that God is at work in both of these victories?

V. 33 refers to Deuteronomy 27:12-13. This generation now recommits to the covenant within the land. How have the blessings and curses of the covenant been partially fulfilled even by this point in Joshua?

Day 2 | **Joshua 8**

Apply:

Respond:

Joshua: Stories of the Conquest

Day 3 | **Joshua 9-10:28**

Explain:

If defeating the pagan people living in the land was so important, why couldn't Israel simply go back on the oath they swore?

Why does the king of Jerusalem start a battle with Gibeon? How is Israel dragged into this, and what happens as a result?

Day 3 | **Joshua 9-10:28**

Apply:

“The Lord fought for Israel” (10:14) but also Gibeon. How do these chapters apply to your life?

Respond:

Joshua: Stories of the Conquest

Day 4 | **Joshua 10:29-11**

Explain:

These chapters detail the land and cities conquered by Israel. What is the general impression given by these chapters?

Day 4 | **Joshua 10:29-11**

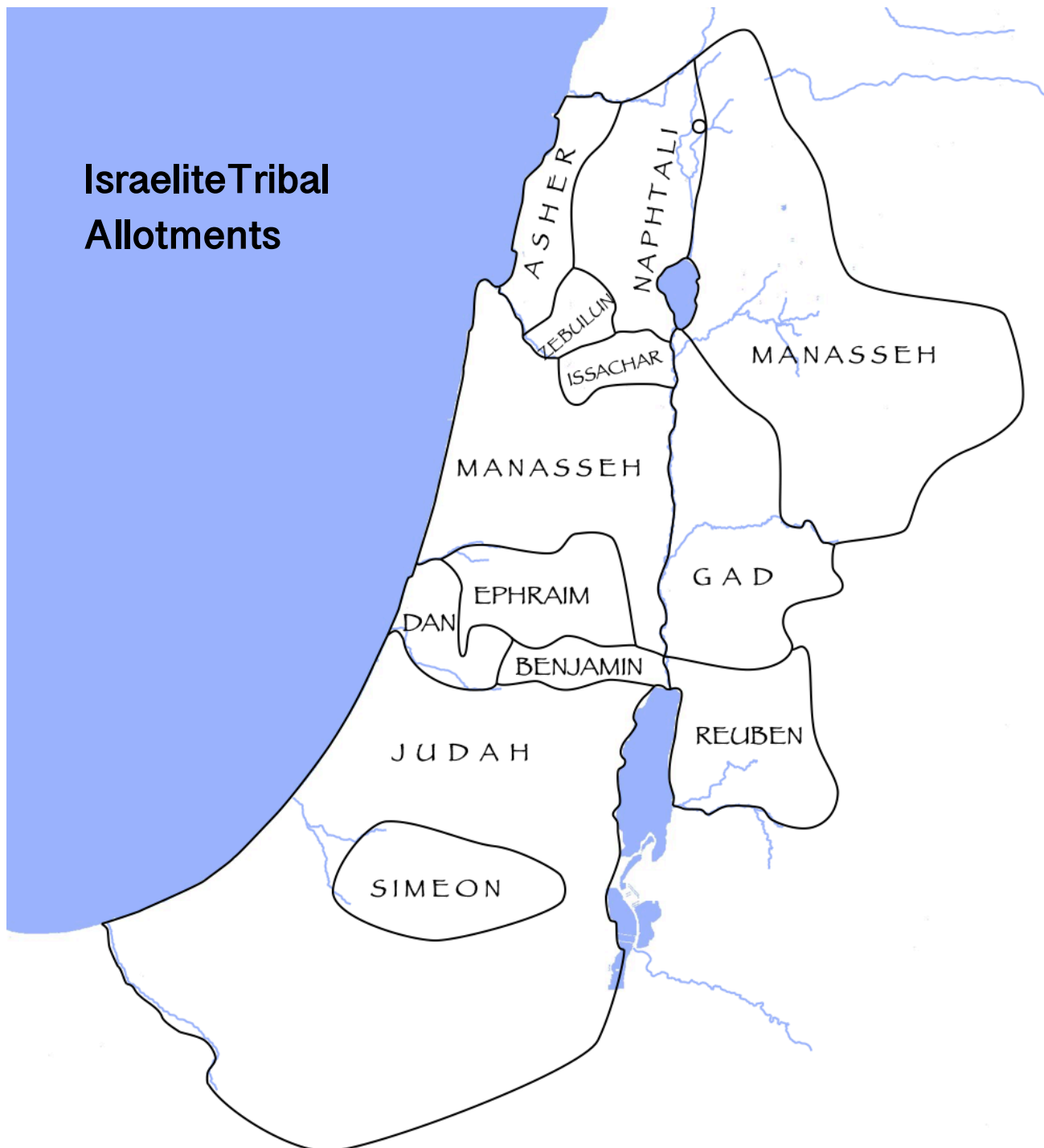
Apply:

How is God at work in these chapters?

Respond:

Explain:

How would you summarize the overall point of these chapters?



Day 5 | **Joshua 12-14**

Apply:

Respond:

Joshua: Tribal Allotments of the Land

Day 1 | **Joshua 15-16**

Explain:

In what tribal territory is Jerusalem?

What hints are there that the conquest was not total?

Day 1 | **Joshua 15-16**

Apply:

Respond:

Explain:

Based on the order of the tribes and the size of their land allotments, can you guess which tribes will be the most significant through the rest of Israel's history?

Bethel has already been a significant place and will continue to be one throughout the rest of the Old Testament. In which tribal allotment is Bethel?

Day 2 | Joshua 17-18

Apply:

Respond:

Explain:

Although these geographic locations are unfamiliar to us, what is the significance of this details distribution of the land to the various tribes?

Day 3 | **Joshua 19-20**

Apply:

Respond:

Explain:

21:43-45 are typically viewed as the purpose statement of the book.

What are these verses saying and how is this supported by the rest of the book?

“The Lord gave all their enemies into their hands” (21:44), and yet some of their enemies remained in the land (as mentioned throughout the chapters of the tribal allotments). How do you reconcile these differences?

Day 4 | **Joshua 21-22**

Apply:

Respond:

Joshua: The Covenant is Renewed

Day 5 | **Joshua 23**

Explain:

According to Joshua, what should be Israel's greatest concern?

Day 5 | **Joshua 23**

Apply:

How do Joshua's words challenge us to be faithful to God today?

Respond:

Introduction to the book of Judges

If Joshua is about Israel finding rest, Judges is about Israel experiencing unrest, complete moral and spiritual decline. But this is exactly what God warned would happen if his people abandoned him and worshiped other gods. This is in fact the central theological cycle that structures the whole book of Judges. Judges teaches that God is faithful to the covenant curses outlined in Deuteronomy. If Israel's disobedience is remarkable coming so quickly after the death of each judge, what is even more remarkable throughout this book is that God still preserves his people despite their sin and rebellion.

There are two things that are important for interpreting Judges. First of all, the terminology of "judge:" It is clear that these "judges" were raised up by God to deliver Israel from their enemies. Deliverance thus means military victory. But other than that, the details about them are very different. They come to power in different ways, bring deliverance in different ways against different enemies, and lead in different areas of Israel. They should not be confused with the way that we use the term judge today. They are better understood as "deliverers" or "saviors."

Second, the overall purpose of the book must be used to interpret the individual judges. The book details the complete moral and spiritual decline of Israel. The judges should not necessarily be understood as shining beacons of spirituality and morality during an otherwise dark period of Israel history. Their fear, folly, doubt, and arrogance often illustrate just how bad things were in Israel. They serve then to show to what great lengths God goes to save his people.

Book Outline: Judges

I. Introduction (1:1-3:6)

A. The Incomplete Conquest (1:1-2:6)

B. The Pattern of Rebellion (2:7-3:6)

1. Israel does evil in the eyes of the Lord by worshiping other gods
2. The Lord gives them into the hands of enemies
3. Israel serves the oppressor for a number of years
4. Israel cries out to the Lord
5. The Lord raises up a deliverer
6. The land has “rest” for a number of years

II. Patterns of Rebellion (3:7-16:31)

A. Othniel, Ehud, and Shamgar (3:7-31)

B. Deborah and Barak (4:1-5:31)

C. Gideon and Abimelek (6:1-9:57)

D. Tola and Jair (10:1-5)

E. Jephthah (10:6-12:7)

F. Ibzan, Elon, and Abdon (12:8-15)

G. Samson (13:1-16:31)

III. Conclusion: “Everyone did what was right in his own eyes” (17:1-21:25)

A. Idolatrous Worship of the Tribe of Dan (17:1-18:31)

B. Civil War: Israel against Benjamin (19:1-21:25)

Explain:

In what ways does Joshua's final speech repeat themes that we have seen so far from Genesis through Joshua?

According to Judges, how successful were the tribes of Israel in conquering the people who lived in the land?

Day 1 | **Joshua 24; Judges 1**

Apply:

Joshua famously declares, “Choose this day whom you will serve.” In light of what we have seen so far in Scripture (and perhaps in light of what you may know about what follows), how often must this choice be made?

Respond:

Explain:

How does Judges 2:1-4 contrast the overall message found in Joshua?

Judges 2:10-23 explains a cycle that will repeat throughout the book. Summarize the key movements of that cycle.

Day 2 | **Judges 2-3**

Apply:

Because Israel was disobedient, God did not drive out the nations in the land so that they would be a “thorn” and “snare” to Israel (2:3). But these nations also provided a test of Israel’s faithfulness (3:4). Thus, they were both a curse because of disobedience and served as part of God’s purpose for Israel. How does this dynamic apply to how God works in your own life?

Respond:

Explain:

How would you characterize Barak based on vv. 1-10?

How does God save Israel in this chapter?

Day 3 | **Judges 4**

Apply:

Respond:

Explain:

How does Deborah's song compare with the narrative of these events in ch. 4?

Day 4 | **Judges 5**

Apply:

Why do you think God inspired not only a narrative description but also a poetic description of his salvation?

Respond:

Explain:

How does God answer Gideon's question in 6:13? How has the book of Judges as a whole so far instructed us as readers to answer Gideon's question?

Describe what sort of person Gideon was based on these chapters.

.....
: The story of Gideon is the source of the idea of “fleecing” God, that is, :
: setting up a sort of test to determine what God’s will is in a certain situation. :
: But when we look at the Gideon narrative as a whole, it is clear that God did :
: not give us this story to teach us how to make decisions. Gideon is :
: characterized by fear. When God sends him to deliver his people, he resists :
: (6:14-15). Then, he obeys God, but does so in a way to avoid being seen :
: (6:25-27). Then he tests God not once but twice with the fleece (6:36-40). Yes, :
: God does answer him in this way, but it is not at all meant to be exemplary. If :
: anything, it is an example of what not to do. Gideon should have trusted God’s :
: word to him. The test of the fleece in both cases is a display of a lack of faith. :
:

Day 5 | **Judges 6-7**

Apply:

Respond:

Judges: Patterns of Rebellion

Day 1 | **Judges 8**

Explain:

Was Gideon a good or a bad leader?

Day 1 | **Judges 8**

Apply:

What relevance does the Gideon story (chs. 6-8) have to your own life?

Respond:

Judges: Patterns of Rebellion

Day 2 | **Judges 9-10**

Explain:

Where does the narrator see God at work in this narrative in ch. 9?

Day 2 | **Judges 9-10**

Apply:

What does the “parable” in 9:7-15 imply about the sort of people who end up in positions of political power?

Respond:

Explain:

How would you describe Jephthah?

How does Jephthah refocus this land dispute as a theological dispute (i.e., a debate about who God/god is)?

Day 3 | **Judges 11**

Apply:

Respond:

Explain:

Against whom does Jephthah fight in 12:1-7? How does this fit in with the broader depiction of Israel during the time of the judges?

Based on the circumstances of the announcement of his birth, what sort of person does the reader expect Samson to be?

Day 4 | **Judges 12-14**

Apply:

Respond:

Explain:

How would you describe Samson?

.....
: Samson is the last judge mentioned in the book. Scholars point out an :
: important literary feature of the book at this point. The book began with a clear :
: explanation of the cycle of the judges in ch. 2. This cycle is echoed throughout :
: chs. 3-16. But the clear stages of this cycle become less and less clear until the :
: story of Samson, at which point this pattern is not made nearly as explicit. This :
: is a literary means by which the author explains that this period was not simply :
: a cycle of rebellion but a downward cycle of rebellion. During the time of each :
: successive judge, Israel is not simply repeating what it has done in the past; :
: things are actually getting worse than before. This also matches with the :
: characterization of Samson as perhaps the most morally sketchy judge in the :
: whole book. :
:

Day 5 | **Judges 15-16**

Apply:

It is obvious that Samson is not necessarily a moral character whom we are to imitate. What then does God mean to communicate to us through the story of Samson?

Respond: