

# The Period of Judges

Keep these ideas in mind as you study *Chapter 17*.

❖ The Israelites constantly struggled in the Promised Land. After years as slaves and as travelers, they had to adjust to their new lives. When the people cried out to God for help in the Promised Land, he sent judges to guide and lead them. The judges were gifted with a special power called charism. Charism helped the judges protect the people and defeat Israel's enemies.

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❖ Deborah advised people from under a palm tree. She told Barak to march on Mount Tabor because she knew that God would guide him to defeat the Canaanite general. Deborah served God and the people by helping build a healthy society. She set an example by trusting in God and being a good leader.

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❖ Gideon was called to save the Israelites from the Midianites. God performed a miracle with Gideon's fleece to prove that he would give Gideon the power he needed to defeat the Midianites.

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❖ Samson had great physical strength, which came from an oath his parents made to God that he would abstain from wine, unclean meat, and cutting or shaving his hair. As long as he upheld the oath, he would have the power to defeat the Philistines. Samson lost his strength when Delilah cut his hair, which broke the final part of the oath. It was only through humility that he was able to regain his strength and defeat the Philistines.

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❖ Ruth lived during the time of judges, but she was not a judge herself. She is, however, an example of someone with great faith and love. Ruth showed great loyalty by staying with her mother-in-law, Naomi. As a foreigner, she could have been treated very badly by Naomi's people. Ruth eventually married an Israelite named Boaz. Boaz showed both Ruth and Naomi great love and care when they were in need. They are ancestors of King David and Jesus.

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❖ Like the judges, some people in the media are good leaders, while others are flawed. We must think carefully about what we see and hear in the media.

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