Survey of God's Program with Israel

Judges to I Samuel 16 — The 1st Course of Punishment

A 10-Lesson Study by Keith Blades | Enjoy the Bible Ministries®

Study Overview & Lesson Summaries

About This Series

This 10-lesson study is the fourth part of the Survey of God's Program with Israel. It covers the 1st course of punishment stage — the book of Judges, the book of Ruth and the first 15 chapters of I Samuel — the fourth stage in the history of God's dealings with the nation Israel. The five courses of curses in Leviticus 26 frame the study: the 1st course begins to unfold on Israel in Judges, and Judges through II Kings details Israel's history from the commencement of the 1st course to the commencement of the 5th. The generation following Joshua made leagues with the nations and spurned the Lord's gracious offer to change their mind; yet out of His mercy and grace — not because the contract called for it — God raised up judges and extended the 1st course for about 450 years. Israel's overall response was negative — a downhill rollercoaster ride — and under Samuel it reaches climactic rebelliousness: "Make us a king to judge us like all the nations," which puts Israel in a position of deserving the 2nd course. Instead of the 2nd course, I Samuel 16 ushers in an interlude of mercy and grace under David and Solomon; the book of Ruth sets the stage for it, teaching what Israel needs: redemption.

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Lesson Summaries

L1

The Commencement of the 1st Course of Punishment *Joshua 23–24; the Courses Laid Out from Judges to II Kings; Judges 1:1 – 2:19*

The 1st Course of Punishment Stage

- Judges is the fourth stage in the history of God's dealings with Israel — the 1st course of punishment stage: Judges, Ruth and the first 15 chapters of I Samuel
- Leviticus 26 sets forth five courses of curses; the 1st course, described from verse 14, begins to unfold upon Israel in Judges
- Before he died Joshua exposed that the seeds of rebelliousness were sown among Israel and starting to germinate; their hearts were inclined toward false gods and the way of the nations
- Unless they nipped it in the bud, the courses of punishment were coming; things went well as long as the elders who outlived Joshua were there

The Lay of the Land: Judges to II Kings

- The outline: the 1st course, Judges 1 through I Samuel 15; the 2nd, I Kings 12 to the end of I Kings; the 3rd, II Kings 1:1 – 10:31; the 4th, II Kings 10:32 – 16:20; the 5th, II Kings 17:1 – 25:30
- From I Samuel 16 God gives Israel an interlude of grace, when David and Solomon reign — not anything the law contract said she would get if she performed
- Israel had not responded to the 1st course and deserved a 2nd; God gave the interlude for purposes of His own that come out in the Davidic covenant
- Israel is still under the 5th course and won't come out of it until the end of the tribulation period; its five installments take her from the Assyrian and Babylonian captivities through to the tribulation period
- I and II Chronicles are a second record — a divine chronicling of what God was doing behind the scenes — from the commencement of the interlude of grace through the 2nd to 5th courses

The Threefold Outline of Judges

- Chapters 1–2, the commencement of the 1st course, give in advance a synopsis of the whole period; 3:1 – 16:31 and 17:1 – 21:25 follow

Judges 1: Leagues Instead of Driving Them Out

- As the tribes went up to claim their inheritance, they refused to drive out the nations and preferred to make leagues with them — explicitly against what God told them
- Judges 1:19 is the first manifestation of the distrust of the generation following Joshua; they couldn't drive out the inhabitants because of Judah's attitude — the Lord had no problem with chariots of iron

Bochim and the Arrival of the 1st Course (Judges 2)

- God gives them an opportunity to change their mind before the 1st course comes; the weeping at Bochim was superficial — they just put on a show
- That generation spurned the Lord's gracious offer, and Judges 2:14–15 declares that God brought the 1st course upon them
- From Judges 2:16 God did something the course didn't call for — He raised up judges, giving Israel a chance to recognize she was coming into the 1st course for her own disobedience
- For about 450 years: Israel comes under the 1st course, God raises up a judge, she is blessed for a time, then responds negatively — a downhill rollercoaster ride

L2

From Gilgal to Bochim: The 1st Course Arrives *Judges 2:1–15; Joshua 4–5; Leviticus 26:14–17*

A Thumbnail Sketch of the 1st Course

- About 450 years are covered by the 1st course; about 400 of them are recorded in Judges
- Everything Judges sets forth is given in a thumbnail sketch in the first two chapters — why they are the most important thing to focus on
- Israel's response to the 1st course was a negative response

The Significance of Gilgal (Joshua 4–5)

- The conquest started with Israel's encampment in Gilgal, where the Lord rolled away the reproach of Egypt — almost as if to say, "I've wiped the slate clean. Your past is past now"
- Israel acknowledged themselves God's military machine; their only capacity to conquer the land was casting themselves upon the Lord and Him fighting the battles for them

The Rebuke: "from Gilgal to Bochim"

- Before the Lord says a word, the very place He comes from is a rebuke; it is almost as if between every campaign they should have been going back to Gilgal
- All through God's dealings with Israel you see His mercy rejoicing against judgment; if God simply went by the contract, Israel would have been wiped out long ago
- The Lord said He would never break His covenant, and He hasn't; the problem is Israel has. Asking "why have ye done this?" provokes self-examination

Bochim: The Sorrow of the World

- The weeping at Bochim was short-lived; it did not cause them to put away the gods operating in their hearts

- Keith likens it to Paul's two types of sorrow in II Corinthians 7: this was more like the sorrow of the world — they just didn't like the rebuke

A Generation Which "knew not the LORD"

- At verse 6 the Holy Spirit pauses and goes back to Joshua 24: the seeds of rebelliousness never did get put away, and they bore the fruit
- "Knew not the LORD" does not mean no knowledge of Him: they were not desirous of learning about Him, being enamored by the nations around them

Leviticus 26:14–17 Brought to Pass

- The evil of Judges 2:15 is evil "as the LORD had said, and as the LORD had sworn" — sworn because the law was a covenant
- The 1st course has two forms: physical diseases and ailments, and the Gentile nations around them gaining an ascendancy over them
- "Sow your seed in vain" means border raids at harvest time; "they that hate you shall reign over you" is a tributary type reigning, unlike the 5th course's total captivity out of the land
- The Lord's design in their distress was to get them to change their mind and be reformed

L3

God's Merciful Response Under the 1st Course *Judges 2:16–23; Exodus 32–34; the Book of Ruth Previewed*

The Shape of the Period

- Chapters 1–2 give the arrival of the 1st course and an overall synopsis; 3:1 to the end of 16 is the actual historical account; 17–21 amplify the depth of corruption and set the stage for I Samuel 1–15
- Verses 16–19 are a synopsis of the whole period, including the book of Ruth, which is in the days of the judges
- Eli and Samuel are like an appendix to the period — the last of the series of judges God raises up
- Judges takes about 400 years and I Samuel 1–15 about 50 — about 450 years; the proof God got out of the period was that Israel needed a 2nd course

"Nevertheless the LORD raised up judges"

- Leviticus 26 said nothing about judges; raising them up is not a violation of the contract but God acting out of mercy and grace in the midst of the course
- Without that mercy Israel would have come under the 5th course probably about 1,000 years earlier than she did
- The judges were designed to convict Israel of what she had done — to get her to work with the chastisement and be reformed
- These are courses of punishment, not courses of retributive anger; God desired to see Israel reproved and wanted to aid that reproof

Exodus 32–34: "merciful and gracious"

- The golden calf was not the only time Israel turned aside quickly; the Lord's wrath waxing hot in Exodus 32:10 is the expression met in Judges 2
- In effect God told Moses to stand aside: He would wipe them out and start the nation over with Moses, just as He began with Abraham
- God is merciful and gracious — merciful meaning full of mercy — and Israel's salvation in all of God's dealings with her depends on that

- Unto the third and fourth generation: instead of making the first generation bear the whole thing, God spreads the punishment over, also giving time for them to be reformed

The Downhill Rollercoaster Ride

- Israel's overall response to the 1st course was negative: there were repeals of aspects of the course, but when the judge died they did worse and started the cycle over

Bottoming Out Under Samuel

- Under Samuel Israel asks for a king like the other nations — her greatest act of forsaking the Lord; God said they had rejected Him
- God does not bring the 2nd course then, but gives an interlude of grace and kingdom blessings under David and Solomon, setting forth the Davidic covenant
- Ruth sets the stage for the interlude of mercy and grace, teaching what Israel needs: redemption

L4

Continued Negative Response; the 1st Course Intensified *A*

Running Survey of Judges 3–16; Judges 17–21 Introduced

The 1st Course of Punishment Stage

- Judges, Ruth and the first 15 chapters of I Samuel deal with the 1st course stage; at the end of Judges Israel is on the brink of the 2nd course
- Judges 3:1 to the end of chapter 16 covers the judges God raised up during the 400-year period; thirteen judges are spoken of as functioning then
- Eli and Samuel function in a judge-like capacity under the 1st course, in connection with Israel's readiness to come under the 2nd course

Two Things to Note (Judges 2:18–19)

- Keith notes Israel's continued negative response under the judges, and that God continued to bring the details of the 1st course upon them
- With each judge there was a repeal, or easement, of the 1st course; "they returned" means returning to their original apostasy, not to a place
- Israel's only hope was not her performance of the law contract but God dealing with her by His mercy and grace
- God mercifully extends the 1st course about 450 years: about 400 up to Samson, and about 50 with Eli and Samuel

Israel Did Evil Again

- The repeated statement through chapters 3–16 that Israel did evil again confirms Judges 2:19
- As Israel returns and gets worse than their fathers, the 1st course gets more intense — but with no positive effect upon them
- By Judges 10:6 all the nations round about influence the entire nation; as far as Judges is concerned, Israel's negative response reaches its zenith with Samson — its actual zenith is in I Samuel 1–15

The Details of the 1st Course

- The 1st course calls for tributary rule by the border nations and sowing seed in vain as enemies raid and plunder; the heaven as iron and earth as brass is what the 2nd course calls for
- God starts the 1st course in a rather mild way; the years of servitude increase

until the Philistines are over them 40 years in Samson's time

- Gideon threshed wheat by the winepress because the 1st course said they would sow their seed in vain and their enemies would eat it

Judges 17–21: No King in Israel

- The last section covers the whole period and sets forth three examples of the depth of corruption and apostasy: the Levites (17), the tribe of Dan (18), and the whole fabric of the nation (19–21)
- "Every man did *that which was* right in his own eyes" is the exact opposite of Deuteronomy 12:8; they could care less that the tabernacle was set up in Shiloh
- There was not supposed to be a king at this time anyway: God had established a theocratic kingdom, with Himself as king

L5

No One Did What Phinehas Did *Judges 17–21 through Psalm 106; Numbers 25; Deuteronomy 12, 13 and 17; Leviticus 20*

The Third Section of Judges

- Chapters 17–21 underscore the depth of depravity, degradation and apostasy while the 1st course was being experienced, and that the nation did not respond positively to it
- At the end of Judges the nation is on the brink of the 2nd course; I Samuel 1–15 sets forth the capstone issue — the straw that broke the camel's back

Psalm 106: Looking Back from the 5th Course

- Psalm 106 is written when the 5th course has come and Israel has been taken out of the land; from verse 6 it traces her history as a sinful history
- What is seen in Judges 17–21 is the foundation of Israel's corruption by which she proceeded on to courses two, three, four and five
- The psalmist understands that Israel's only hope is God's Jehovahness and grace

Phinehas: The Righteous Act

- Phinehas took the response the law sets forth when idolatry or apostasy appears in the nation; God considered it righteous action
- He was zealous for God; the rest did not want to fulfil the command
- In Judges 17–21 no one did what Phinehas did: those who brought in idolatry were tolerated, and some were even exalted

"mingled among the heathen"

- "They did not destroy the nations" (Psalm 106:34) is Judges 1 and 2
- To mingle is to put something of one and another together: in Judges 17–21 there is a mixture of Baal worship and Jehovah worship

Every Man Right in His Own Eyes

- The expression tells you Deuteronomy 12 was being violated: the whole educational system God designed, with the priests as educators, was being ignored
- Because that system was ignored, people like Micah were not killed as they should have been

Micah, the Danites and Gibeah

- Micah's mother mixed Philistine idolatry with Jehovah worship — the eleven hundred pieces of silver being, it seems, the yearly gift to their idol god;

Micah mimicked the priesthood with an ephod; under Deuteronomy 17:2–7 neither would be alive

- The Levite from Bethlehemjudah, instead of being zealous in the name of the Lord, became Micah's household priest; the Danites weren't zealous either
- The sons of Belial at Gibeah were to be brought out and killed under Deuteronomy 13, and they were not
- Leviticus 20: if Israel hides its eyes from known wickedness, the Lord Himself cuts them off; this, it appears, is why God gave Benjamin the victory the first two times

L6

Naomi's Predicament and the Kinsman Redeemer *The Book of Ruth in the 1st Course of Punishment Stage*

Ruth in the 1st Course Stage

- The book of Ruth isn't stuck here for no reason: it is part of the 1st course stage, which does not end just because Judges ends at 21:25
- Its events took place sometime in the period of Judges 3–16; we are not told exactly when
- Ruth is a real historical account, not just a sentimental love story; its issue is substitutionary redemption

Naomi's Predicament (Ruth 1)

- Under the 1st course there were famine conditions — produced not by the ground being cursed, but by sowing their seed in vain
- Naomi is left destitute, in a predicament she has no personal means of getting out of — she can't even be a blessing to her daughters-in-law
- The hand of the Lord had gone out against Israel because the contract called for that
- Her predicament is like a mini picture of the predicament the entire nation Israel is in

"call me Mara"

- Naomi acknowledges she deserves the name Mara — being in bitterness — and confesses the very thing the remnant is going to confess
- With the resumption of God's program with Israel, the remnant will come out casting itself upon God's Jehovahness and grace, doing what Daniel did in Daniel 9
- Jeremiah calls that time the time of Jacob's trouble; the nation will have to learn what their father Jacob had to learn

A Kinsman Who "hath not left off his kindness"

- In chapters 2 and 3 the focus is a kinsman redeemer who, out of love, mercy and grace, delivers Naomi from her predicament
- Israel's only deliverance is a kinsman redeemer who doesn't leave off His grace; the biggest manifestation of God's grace to Israel was the Lord Jesus Christ dying upon the cross
- Grace means you get exactly what you don't deserve; it operates on the character and integrity of the one who possesses it

Rest for the Gentile; the Line of David (Ruth 3–4)

- Naomi seeks rest for her Gentile daughter-in-law; God seeks Israel's rest so that she can give rest to the Gentiles

- Obed is the father of Jesse, the father of David, who comes in the interlude of mercy and grace, not under the 2nd course
- God covenants to enflesh Himself in David's line to be Israel's Redeemer, Deliverer, Avenger, King and Blesser — performing what Ruth illustrated Israel needed

L7

Satan's Own Men in Charge at Shiloh *I Samuel 1–2: Eli and His Sons, the Sons of Belial*

Still in the 1st Course Stage

- The big thing to remember: the opening chapters of I Samuel still deal with the 1st course of punishment stage
- Under Samuel's ministry Israel is on the brink of the 2nd course; in David and Solomon God will give a mini picture of the blessings of the kingdom
- The first three chapters show the corruption and apostasy even worse than in Judges

Samuel: One More Judge

- Samuel is one more judge; Eli judged Israel 40 years. Thirteen judges are mentioned in Judges but there are actually fifteen — Eli and Samuel are not mentioned there
- Samuel will be the last of the judges, and is raised up also as a prophet, prophesying to Israel of the 2nd course they richly deserve

"sons of Belial; they knew not the LORD"

- I Samuel 2:12 tells you that Satan's own men were in charge of the tabernacle in Shiloh
- Eli's sons had not responded to the testimony of the law and were not justified, yet functioned in the highest position of authority in the theocratic kingdom
- A son of Belial is more than an unjustified man: one engaged in the satanic policy of evil against Israel
- The place designed for propagating God's word to Israel has been turned into a promoter of the satanic policy of evil

"men abhorred the offering of the LORD"

- Verses 13–16 might not seem terribly wrong until verse 17 says it was a sin in the Lord's eyes; the terminology has intensified from the days of Judges
- The main impact: the people abhorred the offering of the Lord, their hearts turned from the tabernacle to the policy of evil against Israel
- They turned the door of the tabernacle into a place of fornication as part of the worship; Eli is grieved but ends up condoning the whole thing

The Law Called for Their Death Three Times

- The law called for their death three times, and it was not invoked by the nation, the tribe, or Eli; the truth is Eli should have done it

Against a Bleak and Black Background

- This is one of the blackest stages in Israel's history; Israel deserved the 2nd course, if not total annihilation
- Against it God one more time raises up a judge: every judge was God in mercy and grace dealing with His people when they deserved the exact opposite

- Because of how bad Shiloh is and Eli's disobedience, God deals with Samuel himself; through him Shiloh is going to be turned around

L8

The Significance of Samuel *I Samuel 1–3; Leviticus 10:8–11; II Chronicles 35; Psalm 99*

One More Judge

- Samuel is one more judge God raises up in the face of Israel's depth of apostasy — one more chance to be reformed by the things of the 1st course
- By His mercy and grace through Samuel, God puts Shiloh back in the position it was supposed to have been in
- Samuel runs a circuit every year among three places, so that the network of Shiloh can function throughout the land

A Positive Response, Then Chapter 8

- Under Samuel there is a genuine and general positive response, and the Lord delivers them from the Philistines, the instrument of the 1st course at this time
- From chapter 8 on Israel's response is climactic rebelliousness; one of Samuel's last acts is to declare that they deserve the 2nd course
- Instead God gives Israel an interlude of grace and mercy beyond compare, beyond anything they had experienced

Not There to Fill Up the Page

- The details given concerning Samuel are not just there to fill up the page: abundant detail focusing on one person is designed to make you do what God is doing — Samuel is to be a very significant man
- He is the last judge and also functions as a prophet; the way he judges is by turning this mess around

Hannah, and What Shiloh Was Designed to Be

- God raises up this final judge out of a couple faithful to the things of the Lord in Shiloh and to the contract; Hannah's name means graciousness
- Hannah's attitude is the attitude Israel needed as a nation but did not produce
- From Leviticus 10:10–11 Shiloh is designed to be an educational institution; God designed the priests to be educators of the nation, not just receivers of gifts and sacrifices

"the word of the LORD was precious"

- The word of the Lord was precious — precious and few — because Shiloh wasn't functioning as it was supposed to; God hadn't left the land, but He left that place
- Samuel "did let none of his words fall to the ground," in contrast to Israel's history; the Lord's reappearance at Shiloh with Samuel there is the main thing that made all Israel know he was established a prophet

Standing in the Breach

- II Chronicles 35 compares Josiah's Passover to the days of Samuel: the only restoration like it before was the one under Samuel
- In Samuel's days Israel was in the best position for a positive response since Joshua — why going negative in chapter 8 is the last straw
- Psalm 99 links Samuel with Moses and Aaron in calling upon the Lord's name; Samuel stands in the breach and manifests God's Jehovahness and

grace

L9

Israel's Response to Samuel's Judgeship *I Samuel 4–8: the Ark Taken, Ichabod, Ebenezer, the Request for a King*

The Final Aspect of the 1st Course Stage

- God mercifully raises up one more judge, Samuel; under him Israel is in a better position to be reformed than at any time under the 1st course
- The nature of Israel's rebellion under Samuel is climactic rebelliousness; by it, in I Samuel 8 and following, she deserves the 2nd course
- God then intervenes with an interlude of mercy and grace and blessing — a kingdom and reign for about 80 years under David and Solomon
- The first 15 chapters of I Samuel divide in two parts: chapters 4–7, and chapters 8–15

The Ark Taken (I Samuel 4)

- Israel is smitten before the Philistines because of what the 1st course calls for; responding positively, they should have gone running to Samuel
- Instead they took matters into their own hands and handled the ark as a superstitious, magical thing — though it was to move only when God said
- The Lord is there in Shiloh because Samuel is there; the Philistines had a better perception of what was going on than Israel had

Ichabod: "The glory is departed from Israel"

- God allowed the symbol of His presence to depart; He Himself did not, but stayed with Samuel. Israel deserved to be called Ichabod herself
- Psalm 78 runs quickly through all five courses but pauses at this event; the priests falling by the sword was part of the housecleaning
- The 1st course did not call for God to depart from the land or send Israel out of it; the 5th course does — as in Ezekiel's vision of Jehovah physically leaving the land

Mizpeh and Ebenezer (I Samuel 5–7)

- In the land of the Philistines God testifies that He is still Israel's God; the Philistines respond negatively, only wanting to get the ark out
- At Mizpeh Samuel recounted their sins and made them face up to them; they recognize his capacity to function as intercessor
- Samuel's Ebenezer stone is almost identical with what Joshua did; Israel's strength is not in performing under the law contract
- Because Israel responds positively, the Lord repeals the effects of the 1st course — the same principle as Judges 2

The Request for a King (I Samuel 8)

- The request doesn't sound terrible at first reading, but must be read in light of who Israel is in the Abrahamic covenant; it repudiates the whole system — the straw that breaks the camel's back
- Their sinfulness ought to have made them realize they need a redeemer — why the book of Ruth is placed here

L10

Climactic Rebelliousness: The 1st Course Concluded *I Samuel*

8–15: "make us a king to judge us like all the nations"

God's Mercy Through the 1st Course

- God raised up judges solely because of who He is — full of mercy, full of goodness — giving the nation a chance to change their mind and be reformed
- He extended the 1st course about 450 years on the basis of His mercy and grace; Leviticus 26 sets no time requirement for how long a course has to run

Ahead: The Interlude and the Davidic Covenant

- From I Samuel 16 comes an amazing interlude of grace and mercy: under David and Solomon Israel experiences neither the 1st nor the 2nd course
- The 1st course ought to make it obvious that Israel needs a Redeemer, Deliverer, Avenger, King and Blesser who is not any of themselves
- In the Davidic covenant God contracts to enflesh Himself as the seed of David and be all those things for Israel — what the Lord Jesus Christ is

"Make us a king": Repudiating the Theocracy

- A theocratic kingdom is God's plan and purpose with Israel; the elders' request for a king like all the nations is almost an outright repudiation of it
- God called Israel His peculiar people, not to conduct themselves like the nations; behind the request is a lack of appreciation for the Lord reigning over them
- In I Samuel 10:19 the italicized "*Nay*" is legitimately added: you've got this — no, we don't want that, we want this
- In saying "Nay; but a king shall reign over us," they repudiated God's Jehovahness and His grace; the Lord was their king

What Israel Should Have Done

- They should have confessed it was no use having the law contract operate on them, and cast themselves upon God as Jehovah to reign over them
- The next best thing would have been, "Give us another judge" — anything but a king like all the other nations

The Theocratic Kingdom in the Law

- Under the law contract the Lord covenanted to be Israel's military leader, lawgiver and supreme court; He delegated the execution of some of these but was the final say
- At the Red Sea God established in their minds that the battle is the Lord's; Moses recognizes "The LORD *is* a man of war"

Thunder at Wheat Harvest; Ready to Be Consumed

- Thunder and rain at wheat harvest — extremely rare there — was a sign underscoring that what they had done was wickedness
- The 1st course has run its course; I Samuel 13–15 record Saul's own disobedience, and Israel is ready to be consumed, but God holds off the 2nd course
- Chapter 16 ushers in that interlude of mercy and grace

Key Doctrinal Distinctions

The Interlude of Grace Is Not the Dispensation of Grace

The "interlude of grace" is in Israel's history: from I Samuel 16 David is raised up and David and Solomon reign, and it was not anything the law contract said Israel would get if she performed. Under David and Solomon Israel experiences neither the 1st nor the 2nd course of punishment. When the 5th course commenced there was no knowledge of this dispensation of grace that was going to intervene.

Time Past vs. This Dispensation of Grace

This study concerns God's time-past dealings with the nation Israel. The setting aside of the nation of Israel and the ushering in of this dispensation of grace date to the Lord raising up Saul of Tarsus in Acts 9. Thankfully, this dispensation of grace has neither the members of the body of Christ nor a nation or world government under the law. The dispensation of grace is separate from the resumption and fulfillment of God's program with Israel; after the dispensation of grace is over, God, out of His Jehovahness and grace, lifts Israel back up and gives her the thousand-year kingdom.

Courses of Punishment, Not Retributive Anger

The courses of punishment are courses of punishment, not courses of retributive anger; God's desire is that Israel respond positively to Him in their chastisements. God's desire in bringing any course was to get them to cease from their own doings and their stubborn way.

What the Contract Called For vs. God's Mercy and Grace

The contract did not call for God to raise up judges; if He simply went by what the contract calls for, Israel would have been wiped out long ago. Israel's only hope was not her performance of the law contract but God dealing with her by His mercy and grace.

The 1st Course vs. the 2nd and 5th Courses

The 1st course calls for tributary rule by the border nations and sowing seed in vain; the heaven as iron and the earth as brass is what the 2nd course calls for. First-course famine came from sowing seed in vain, not from the ground being cursed. Reigning under the 1st course is a tributary type reigning; reigning in the 5th course means being totally taken into captivity out of the land. The 1st course did not call for God to depart from the land or to send Israel out of it; the 5th course does.

A Theocracy vs. a King Like All the Nations

God established a theocratic kingdom with Himself as king, and called Israel His peculiar people, not to conduct themselves like the nations. The request "make us a king to judge us like all the nations" was almost an outright repudiation of the theocracy; God said they had rejected Him, that He should not reign over them.

Key Scripture References

Exodus 14–15	The Red Sea: the battle is the Lord's; "The LORD *is* a man of war"
Exodus 32–34	The golden calf; the Lord merciful and gracious; the punishment spread over to the third and fourth generation
Leviticus 10:8–11	The priests as educators; Shiloh designed to be an educational institution
Leviticus 26:14–17	The 1st course: diseases, enemies' ascendancy, sowing seed in vain, tributary reigning
Numbers 25	Phinehas takes the righteous action the law sets forth
Deuteronomy 12:8	The opposite of every man doing right in his own eyes
Deuteronomy 17:2–7	Had it been followed, neither Micah nor his mother would be alive
Joshua 5:9	Gilgal: the reproach of Egypt rolled away — a clean slate
Joshua 23–24	Joshua exposes the seeds of rebelliousness and refers to Leviticus 26
Judges 1	The tribes refuse to drive out the nations and make leagues with them
Judges 2:1–5	The rebuke from Gilgal to Bochim; superficial weeping
Judges 2:11–15	Evil as the Lord had sworn: the arrival of the 1st course
Judges 2:16–19	Judges raised up out of mercy; Israel's downhill rollercoaster ride
Judges 17:6; 21:25	"every man did *that which was* right in his own eyes"
Judges 17–21	Three examples: the Levites, the tribe of Dan, the whole nation
Ruth 1:19–21	"call me Mara": Naomi confesses what the remnant will confess
Ruth 4:17–22	Obed, Jesse, David: the line in which God covenants to enflesh Himself
I Samuel 2:12–25	Eli's sons, sons of Belial, in charge at Shiloh
I Samuel 3:19–21	Samuel's judgeship established; the Lord appears again in Shiloh
I Samuel 4	The ark taken; Ichabod
I Samuel 7:12–14	Ebenezer; the effects of the 1st course repealed
I Samuel 8:5–7	"make us a king to judge us like all the nations"; they rejected the Lord
I Samuel 12:16–19	Thunder and rain at wheat harvest: a sign of their wickedness
I Samuel 16	Ushers in the interlude of mercy and grace
II Chronicles 35:16–18	The only restoration like Josiah's was the one under Samuel
Psalm 78	Runs through all five courses, pausing at the taking of the ark
Psalm 99	Samuel linked with Moses and Aaron in calling upon the Lord's name
Psalm 106	Looks back from the 5th course; Phinehas; "mingled among the heathen"
Jeremiah 15:1	"cast *them* out of my sight" — the 5th course

Ezekiel 8–10	Jehovah physically leaving the land under the 5th course