

## A Long Time Ago . . .

### Scripture Reading — Deuteronomy 28:1-24

*In the days when the judges ruled, there was a famine in the land. — Ruth 1:1*

“In those days . . . everyone did as they saw fit” (Judges 21:25). During the time of the judges in Israel’s history, a famine ravaged the land. But God’s people had no right to complain, for they were only reaping what their unfaithfulness had sown.

Reaping an abundant harvest didn’t come naturally. God’s people knew that good crops and abundant harvests were in his hands. The Lord had taught that if they obeyed his commands, rains would come to water their fields, and abundant harvests would follow. The opposite was also true; disobedience to God’s commands would be punished. In the period of the judges, that happened often (see Judges 2). God’s people failed to listen to his voice. They forgot him and worshiped other gods, and the rains did not come.

Good soil, a wonderful gift from God, can provide abundant harvests. Careless management of good soil, however, and getting in the way of its God-given fertility—well, that’s foolish. Who would do such a thing?

James tells us that it’s not enough to hear the Word of God, we must do what it says (James 1:22-25). Not doing as the Word says is like a farmer doing all he can to destroy good soil, assuring a terrible harvest, and then complaining against God. That’s how it was in the time of the judges, in Ruth’s day, when “everyone did as they saw fit.”

### Prayer

*Lord, may my heart be good soil, that your Word may be fruitful in my life and benefit my neighbor, for Jesus’ sake. Amen.*

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