

# Contemporary Lessons from the Book of Judges

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## INTRODUCTION:

### A. Key Texts:

1. Read: **Judges – 2:20 – 3:5**
2. **Judges 2:16** – “Nevertheless, the LORD raised up judges who delivered them out of the hand of those who plundered them.”
3. **Judges 21:25** – “In those days there was no king in Israel; everyone did what was right in his own eyes.”

B. The Book of Judges is written primarily on a thematic rather than a chronological basis. Chapters 16-21 actually preceded chapters 3-15.

C. Judges 2 is a miniature for the whole book as it records:

- a. The transition of the godly to the ungodly generation.
- b. The format of the cycles.
- c. The purpose of God in not destroying the Canaanites.

D. The cycle of Judges appears to be:

- a. Rebellion → Sin
- b. Retribution → Servitude
- c. Repentance → Supplication
- d. Restoration → Salvation
- e. Rest → Silence

E. In the Book of Judges, the oppressors of Israel include:

- |                  |               |
|------------------|---------------|
| a. Mesopotamians | d. Canaanites |
| b. Moabites      | e. Midianites |
| c. Philistines   | f. Ammonites  |

F. Including Samuel, there were seventeen judges. Among them are:

- |                         |             |
|-------------------------|-------------|
| a. Othinel              | i. Jephthah |
| b. Ehud                 | j. Ibzan    |
| c. Shamgar              | k. Elon     |
| d. Deborah (with Barak) | l. Abdon    |
| e. Gideon               | J. Samson   |
| f. Abimelech            | k. Eli      |
| g. Tola                 | l. Samuel   |
| h. Jair                 |             |

G. Some six or seven periods of servitude.

- a. 1st period of servitude was to Mesopotamia. Judges 3:5-9
  - The Judge was Othinel (Ath-ni-el).
- b. 2nd period of servitude was to Moab. Judges 3:5-9

- The Judges were Ehud and Shamgar.
- c. 3rd period of servitude was to Jaban and Sisera. Judges 4:1-13
  - The Judge was Deborah, assisted by Barak.
- d. 4th period of servitude was to Midian. Judges 6-7
  - The Judge was Gideon
- e. 5th period of servitude was to the Philistines and Ammon. Judges 10-12
  - The Judges were Jephthah, Ibzan, Elon, and Abdon.
- f. 6th period of servitude was to the Philistines. Judges 13-16
  - The Judge was Samson

Note: Abimelech, Tola, and Jair were Judges during the period of civil war.

H. Of the thirteen judges named in the Book of Judges, only the victories of Othinel, Ehud, Shamgar, Deborah, Gideon, Jephthah, and Samson are described in any detail.

## **THE DETERIORATION OF ISRAEL AND FAILURE TO COMPLETE THE CONQUEST OF CANAAN.**

### **A. Failure of Israel to Complete the Conquest. 1:1-36**

1. Failure of Judah. 1:1-20
2. Failure of Benjamin. 1:21
3. Failure of the tribes of Joseph. 1:22-29
4. Failure of Zebulun. 1:31-32
5. Failure of Naphtali. 1:33
6. Failure of Dan. 1:34-36

### **B. The Judgment of God for Not Completing the Conquest. 2:1 – 3:4**

1. Angel announces judgment. 2:1-5
2. Godly generation dies. 2:6-10
3. The judgment of God is described. 2:11-19
4. Enemy is left as a test. 2:20 – 3:4

## **THE DELIVERANCE OF ISRAEL DURING THE SEVEN CYCLES. 3:5 – 16:31**

### **A. The Southern Campaign. 3:5-31**

1. The Judge is **OTHINEL** (Ath-ni-el). 3:5-11
  - Oppressor: Mesopotamians led by Cu-shan-rish-thai-im.
  - Length of Oppression: 8 years
  - The Judge: Othinel, son of Kenaz, Caleb’s younger brother.
  - Period of rest: 40 years
  - Durations: The 40 year period of rest lasted 32 years longer than the 8 years of oppression
2. The Judge is **EHUD**. 3:12-30

- Oppressor: Moab led by the overweight king, Eglon.
- Length of Oppression: 18 years
- The Judge: Edud, son of Gera.
- Period of rest: 80 years
- Durations: The 80 year period of rest lasted 62 years longer than the 18 years of oppression

3. The Judge is **SHAMGAR**. 3:31

- Oppressor: Philistia
- The Judge: Shamgar, son of Anath.

**B. The 1<sup>st</sup> Northern Campaign: Deborah & Barak.** 4:1 – 5:31

- Oppressor: Canaan led by Jabin and Sisera.
- Length of Oppression: 20 years
- The Judge: **DEBORAH**, the wife of Lapidoth (Lap-i-daht). Assisted by **BARAK**, the son of Abinoam
- Period of rest: 40 years
- Durations: The 40 year period of rest lasted 20 years longer than the 20 years of oppression

1. Deborah and Barak are called. 4:1-11

2. Sisera and the Canaanites are defeated. 4:12-24

3. Song of Deborah. 5:1-31

**C. The Central Campaign.** 6:1 – 10:5

- Oppressor: Midian and some Amalekites.
- Length of Oppression: 7 years
- The Judge: **GIDEON**, son of Joash
- Period of rest: 40 years
- Durations: The 40 year period of rest lasted 33 years longer than the 7 years of oppression

1. The Judge is Gideon. 6:1 – 8:32

a. Israel sins. 6:1-10

b. Gideon is called. 6:11-40

c. With his arm of 300 men, 135,000 Midianites are defeated. 7:1 – 8:21

d. Gideon judges the people. 8:22-32

2. The Judge is **ABIMELECH**. 8:33 – 9:57

a. Confusion after Gideon dies. 8:33-35

b. Deception of Abimelech. 9:1-6

c. Revelation of Jotham about the trees (Olive, Fig, Vine, Bramble). 9:7-21

d. Destruction of Shechem. 9:22-49

e. Death of Abimelech by a “certain woman.” 9:50-57

3. The Judge is **TOLA** who judged Israel for 23 years. 10:1-2

4. The Judge is **JAIR** (Jay-ur) who judged Israel for 22 years. 10:3-5

**D. The Eastern Campaign: The Judge is JEPHTHAH.** 10:6 – 12:7

1. Israel sins . . . again. 10:6-18
2. **Jephthah** is recalled and called. 11:1 – 12:6
  - a. Jephthah is called. 11:1-11
    - Oppressor: Philistia (Philistines) and Ammon.
    - Length of Oppression: 18 years
    - The Judge: Jephthah, son of Gilead judged Israel 6 years
  - b. Jephthah judges Israel. 11:22-28
  - c. Jephthah's rash vow. 11:29-40
  - d. Ephraim is conquered. 12:1-7
- E. **The 2<sup>nd</sup> Northern Campaign.** 12:8-15
  1. The Judge is **IBZAN** of Bethlehem who judges Israel for 7 years. 12:8-10
  2. The Judge is **ELON** of Zebulun, who judges Israel for 10 years. 12:11-12
  3. The Judge is **ABDON**, son of Hillel who judges Israel for 8 years. 12:13-15
- F. **The Western Campaign: The Judge is SAMSON.** 13:1 – 16:31
  - Oppressor: Philistia (Philistines)
  - Length of Oppression: 40 years
  - The Judge: Samson, son of Manoah, judged Israel for 20 years
  1. The birth of Samson. 13:1-25
  2. Sinful marriage of Samson. 14:1-20
  3. Judgeship of Samson. 15:1-20
  4. Failure of Samson. 16:1-31

## **THE DEPRAVITY OF ISRAEL IN SINNING LIKE THE CANAANITES.**

17:1 – 21:25

- A. **The Failure of Israel through Idolatry.** 17:1 – 18:31
  1. Example of personal idolatry. 17:1-13
  2. Example of tribal idolatry. 18:1-31
- B. **The Failure of Israel through Immorality.** 19:1-30
  1. Example of personal immorality. 19:1-10
  2. Example of tribal immorality. 19:11-30
- C. **The Failure of Israel through the Civil War between the Tribes.** 20:1 – 21:25
  1. War between Israel and Dan. 20:1-48
  2. Failure of Israel after the war. 21:1-25
    - a. Israel's foolish vow. 21:1-7
    - b. Men at Jabesh Gilead murdered. 21:8-15
    - c. Women of Shiloh kidnapped. 21:16-25

## **CONTEMPORARY LESSONS FROM THE BOOK OF JUDGES**

- A. In Judges 1:1-3 with Judah and Simeon we see the value of cooperation in joining together to fight the Canaanites.

- B. In the story of Adoni-Bezek (Judges 1:7) we see that we reap what we sow.  
(70 kings . . . Cut off thumbs and big toes)
- C. In Judges 2:1-3 we see that God’s covenant has two parts. (1) His (2) Man’s
- D. In Judges 2:3 we see that disobedience carries consequences.
- E. In Judges 2:10-13 we see that good people can change for the bad.
- F. In Judges 2:16-17 we see that some people can go down hill quicky.
- G. In Judges 3:6 we see that who you marry will affect many people. Also, the danger of being unequally yoked with the world.
- H. In Judges 7:2, we see that people often forget that God will fight for them.  
God’s strength and ability far exceeds ours.
- I. In Judges 10:7-16, God’s heart is touched by a contrite heart.
- J. No one is exempt from serving God.
- K. Man is dependent on God. Judges 1:2-5  
Man suffers when he forsakes God. Judges 2:6 – 16:31  
Man experiences anarchy when he puts self before God. Judges 17:12-21
- L. Three things sin will always do:  
1. Judges 16:4-20 . . . Sin will always take you farther than you wanted to go.  
2. Judges 16:2 . . . Sin will always keep you longer than you wanted to stay.  
3. Judges 16:30 . . . Sin will always cost you more than you were willing to pay.
- M. Man’s disobedience can anger God.  
1. **Judges 3:8** – “Therefore the anger of the LORD was hot against Israel. . .”  
2. **Hebrews 10:31** – “It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God.”
- N. Where there is a need for a deliverer . . . God has provided one. **Judges 2:16**  
– “Nevertheless, the LORD raised up judges who delivered them out of the hand of those who plundered them.”  
1. Ours is Jesus Christ.  
2. **Galatians 1:3-4** – “Grace to you and peace from God the Father and our Lord Jesus Christ,  
4 who gave Himself for our sins, that He might deliver us from this present evil age, according to the will of our God and Father.”  
3. **John 14:6** – “Jesus said to him, “I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through Me.”

## CONCLUSION:

- A. **Romans 15:4** – “For whatever things were written before were written for our learning, that we through the patience and comfort of the Scriptures might have hope.”
- B. **God’s Plan for Man’s Obedience**