



## Pastor's Bible Study

### Becoming Disciples Through Bible Study

Week Twenty-One - Judges

#### Review

Literary Period Covered: 1394 - 1100 B.C.E.

The priests own real-estate!! Compromise has entered as we move into Judges

#### Lecture Segment

#### Judges

The Book of Judges begins on a positive note. The death of Joshua about 1387 [B.C.E.] triggered a renewed interest in driving the Canaanites from the land. The Israelites, however, were hesitant to begin the program without some direction from the Lord. So, the “*sons of Israel*” in the person of their leaders assembled to “*inquire of the Lord.*” They wished to know which tribe should initiate the hostilities with the Canaanites. Doubtless they approached Eleazar the high priest. Through the priestly oracle—the Urim and Thummim—Eleazar would have been able to answer their question. So far as the record goes this is the first time the Israelites asked advice from the Lord in this way.<sup>1</sup>

**The Function of the Judges.** The Hebrew word *šōpēṭ* (“judge, deliverer”) has a wider connotation than the English word “judge.” It was a general term for leadership combining the executive (including military) and judicial aspects of governing. Thus the judges of Israel were primarily military and civil leaders, with strictly judicial functions included as appropriate (cf. 4:5).

**Purpose and Theme.** The purpose of the Book of Judges was to demonstrate divine judgment on Israel’s apostasy [(the act of abandoning God)]. More particularly the book recorded Israel’s disobedience to Yahweh’s kingship as mediated through her sovereignly appointed and Spirit-empowered leaders, and the subsequent need for a centralized hereditary kingship as the means through which Yahweh would continue to exercise His kingship over the nation Israel. Israel’s disobedience to Yahweh and her worship of Canaanite gods resulted in her failure to experience divine blessing and the full conquest of her enemies (cf. 3:1–6). The Canaanite influence in moral and social areas led to Israelite apostasy and anarchy, demonstrating the need for a centralized hereditary monarchy in Israel.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Smith, J. E. (1995). [The Books of History](#) (pp. 119–120). College Press.

<sup>2</sup> Lindsey, F. D. (1985). [Judges](#). In J. F. Walvoord & R. B. Zuck (Eds.), *The Bible Knowledge Commentary: An Exposition of the Scriptures* (Vol. 1, pp. 374–375). Victor Books.

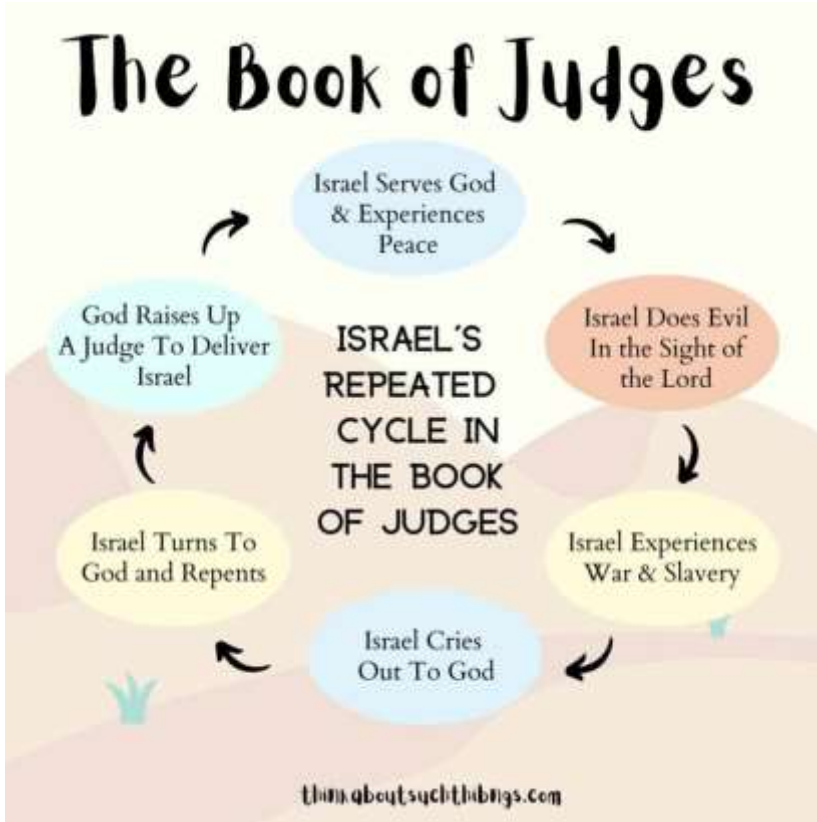
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<b>THE JUDGES OF ISRAEL</b> "THE CHILDREN OF ISRAEL DID EVIL IN THE SIGHT OF THE LORD" (Judg 2.11) "NEVERTHELESS THE LORD RAISED UP JUDGES, WHICH DELIVERED THEM" (Judg 2.16)								
JUDGE	TRIBE	CHAPTER	"DID EVIL IN THE SIGHT OF THE LORD" (2.11)	ENEMY	LENGTH OF SERVITUDE	TIMES WHICH FOLLOWED	DATE WHEN COMMENCED	STATED TO HAVE JUDGED <small>2.1-19 would indicate that they were all judges</small>
OTHNIEL	Judah; 1 Chr 4.13	3.7-11	3.7	Chushan-rishathaim King of Mesopotamia	8 years	40 years rest	1394	X
EHUD	Benjamin; Judg 3.15	3.12-30	3.12	Moab	18 years	80 years rest	1336	
SHAMGAR	?	3.31		Philistines	_____	_____	After 1336	
DEBORAH & BARAK	Ephraim/Naphtali	4.1-5.31	4.1	Jabin King of Canaan	20 years	40 years rest	1296	X
GIDEON	Manasseh	6.1-8.35	6.1	Midianites	7 years	40 years rest	1249	
ABIMELECH	Manasseh	9.1-9.57		_____	_____	_____	1209	
TOLA	Issachar	10.1-2		_____	_____	23 years as judge	1206	X
JAIR	Gileadite Manasseh	10.3-5		_____	_____	22 years as judge	1183	X
JEPHTHAH	Manasseh	10.6-12.7	10.6	Ammonites	_____	8 years as judge	1143	X
IBZAN	Judah or Zebulun	12.8-10		_____	_____	7 years as judge	1137	X
ELON	Zebulun	12.11-12		_____	_____	10 years as judge	1130	X
ABDON	Ephraim	12.13-15		_____	_____	8 years as judge	1120	X
SAMSON	Dan	13.1-16.31	13.1	Philistines	40 years	20 years as judge	1140	X

**The pattern of the period of the Judges.** A history of over three centuries is synthesized in these verses. The author directs attention to a recurring sequence of events in the period of the Judges (illustrated most clearly in the narrative about Othniel in 3:7–11): (a) the *sin* or rebellion of Israel through idolatry or apostasy (2:11–13, 17; 3:7, 12; 4:1; 6:1; 10:6; 13:1), (b) the *servitude* of Israel to foreign peoples due to retribution from the Lord (2:14–15; 3:8), (c) the *supplication* or repentance of Israel (3:9a; cf. 2:18), (d) the *salvation* (military deliverance) and restoration to favor by the Lord through a Spirit-empowered deliverer (judge; vv. 16–18; 3:9b–10), and (e) a period of *silence* when the people and the land had rest, that is, cessation of war (3:11). Before long, however, the pattern was repeated. Yet this was more than just a cycle; it was also a descending spiral (cf. 2:19).<sup>3</sup>

<sup>3</sup> Lindsey, F. D. (1985). [Judges](#). In J. F. Walvoord & R. B. Zuck (Eds.), *The Bible Knowledge Commentary: An Exposition of the Scriptures* (Vol. 1, pp. 382–383). Victor Books.



- Othniel
- Ehud
- Shamgar
- Deborah
- Gideon
- Tola
- Jair
- Jephthah
- Ibson
- Elon
- Abdon
- Samson

**Deborah**

The author of Judges appreciated godly women. Already he has given a cameo of Achsah, Caleb’s lovely and clever daughter (Judg 1:13–15). In the fourth deliverance account of Judges the author introduces two women totally different in personality and station, but equally committed to the kingdom of God.<sup>4</sup> The leadership of Deborah.

4:4–5. Deborah (whose name means “honeybee”) was both a prophetess and a judge (she was leading Israel). She first functioned as a judge in deciding disputes at her court, located about 8 or 10 miles north of Jerusalem between Ramah and Bethel in the hill country of Ephraim. She was apparently an Ephraimite though some have linked her with the tribe of Issachar (cf. 5:15). Nothing else is known about her<sup>5</sup>

<sup>4</sup> Smith, J. E. (1995). *The Books of History* (p. 140). College Press.

<sup>5</sup> Lindsey, F. D. (1985). *Judges*. In J. F. Walvoord & R. B. Zuck (Eds.), *The Bible Knowledge Commentary: An Exposition of the Scriptures* (Vol. 1, p. 388). Victor Books.



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#### Sampson

Samson judged Israel for twenty years *during* the Philistine oppression. He was not a military leader like Gideon or Jephthah. He used his own strength to inflict devastating blows upon the oppressors. Samson, however, was never able to free the land from the power of the Philistines. That remained for Samuel, the man of prayer, to accomplish.<sup>6</sup>

13:2–5. Samson's parents were from the clan of the Danites, perhaps implying that the bulk of the tribe of Dan had already made the move northward to the Huleh Valley (cf. chap. 18), so that only a clan or two remained in their original tribal inheritance. The childless wife of Manoah of Zorah was visited by the Angel of the LORD. Zorah, the highest point in the Shephelah, was on a high ridge north of the Sorek Valley and about 14 miles west of Jerusalem. Originally Zorah was a city of Judah (Josh. 15:20, 33), but later it was allotted to the tribe of Dan (Josh. 19:40–41). In this theophany (cf. comments on Jud. 2:1–2) the Lord foretold the birth of her son, Samson, and said that he was to be a Nazirite. A Nazirite (meaning “devoted” or “consecrated”) was a person whose vow of separation to God included abstaining from fermented drink, refraining from cutting his hair, and avoiding contact with dead bodies (Num. 6:2–6). Nazirite vows were normally for a limited period of time but Samson was to be a Nazirite of God all his life (Jud. 13:7). His mother was to share for a time in part of the Nazirite vow (vv. 4, 7, 14). Besides being set apart as a Nazirite, Samson was chosen by God to begin the deliverance of Israel from the hands of the Philistines. The completion of this task would be left to Samuel (1 Sam. 7:10–14) and David (2 Sam. 5:17–25).<sup>7</sup>

At the conclusion of chs. 14–15 Samson was at the point of death after the slaughter of the thousand. He cried out to Yahweh, and the Lord intervened with a miraculous supply of water. The climax of chapter 16 is likewise the prayer of Samson. He asked God for vindication and for death. Both requests were granted. Surely the author is stressing the principle that man's extremity is God's opportunity. Prayer is the key that brings to bear on desperate circumstances the powerful resources of heaven. One cannot escape the conclusion that if the Lord hears the prayers of a backslidden philanderer like Samson, he will surely hear the fervent prayer of a righteous man.<sup>8</sup>

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<sup>6</sup> Smith, J. E. (1995). [The Books of History](#) (p. 181). College Press.

<sup>7</sup> Lindsey, F. D. (1985). [Judges](#). In J. F. Walvoord & R. B. Zuck (Eds.), *The Bible Knowledge Commentary: An Exposition of the Scriptures* (Vol. 1, p. 404). Victor Books.

<sup>8</sup> Smith, J. E. (1995). [The Books of History](#) (p. 194). College Press.

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#### Conclusion

What will become of the Israelites?

#### Chapter 3

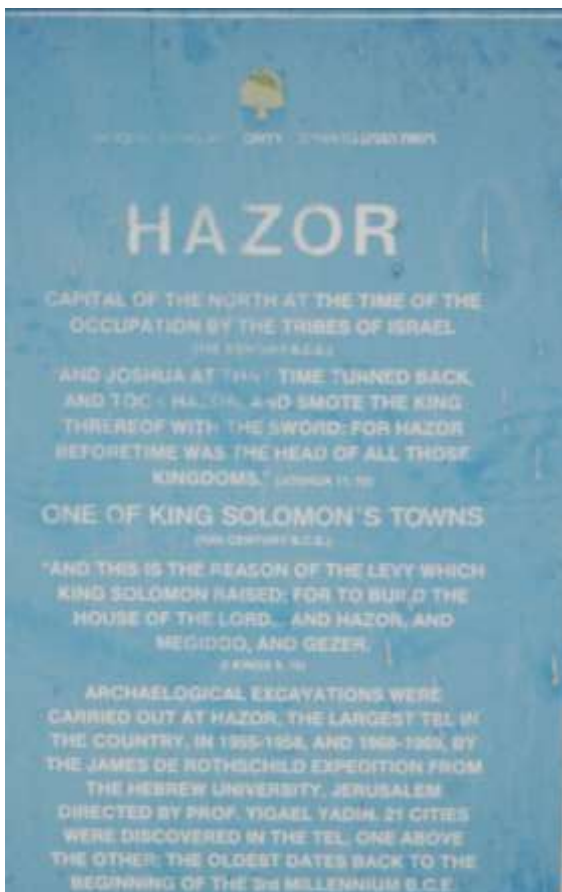
<sup>5</sup>The Israelites lived among the Canaanites, Hittites, Amorites, Perizzites, Hivites and Jebusites. <sup>6</sup>They took their daughters in marriage and gave their own daughters to their sons, and served their gods.

**Is there any hope for the plan of Salvation?**

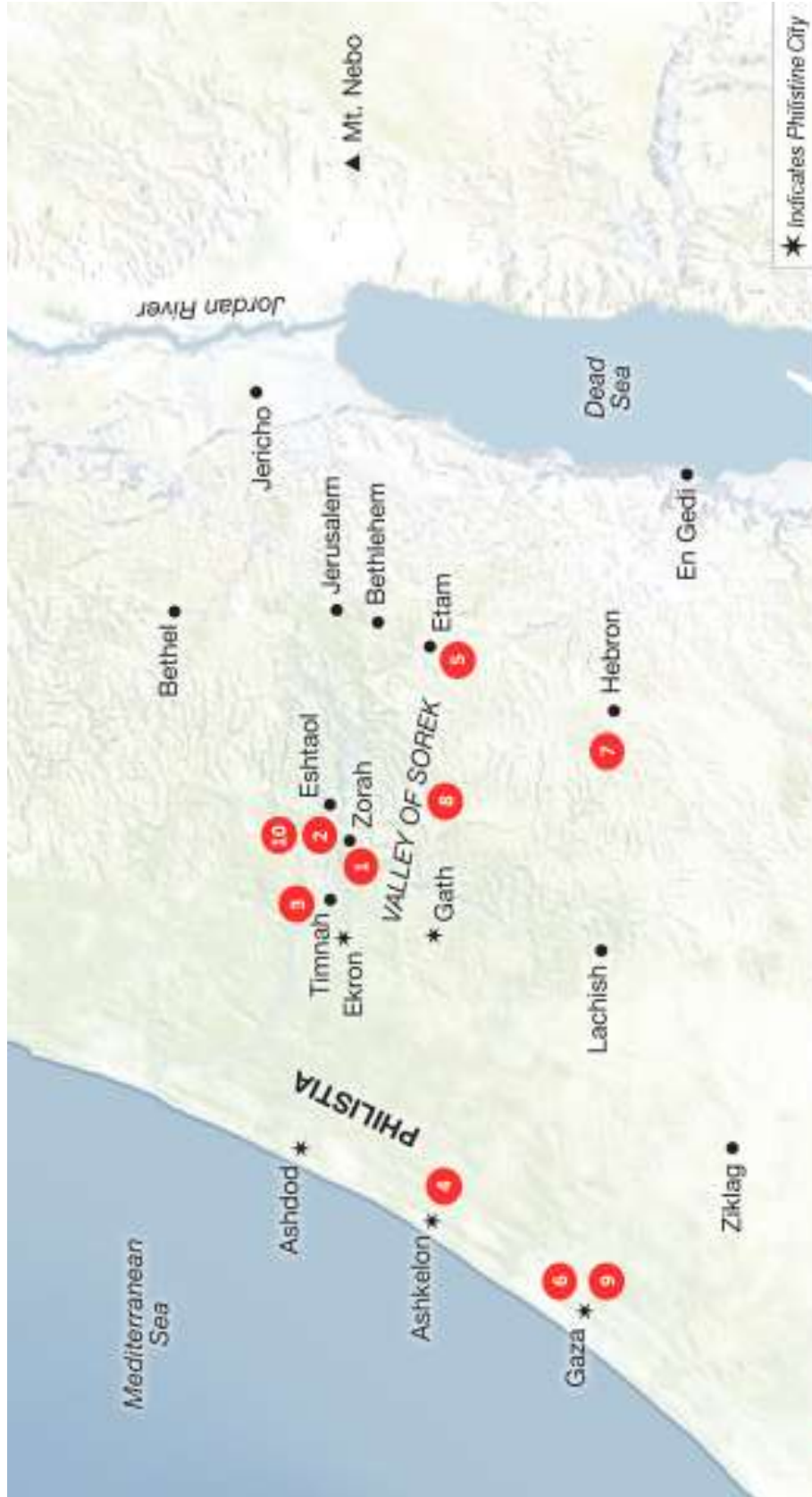
#### Scripture and Study

Enjoy a week of rest

Next week we will begin a visual journey through Israel and Jordan



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- 1 Samson is born in **Zorah**. Judges 13:2
- 2 The Spirit of the Lord stirs in Samson between **Zorah** and **Eshtaol**. 13:25
- 3 Samson marries a Philistine woman in **Timnah**. 14:1
- 4 Samson kills thirty Philistines in **Ashkelon**. 14:19
- 5 Samson hides from the Philistines in **Etam**. 15:8
- 6 Samson visits a prostitute in **Gaza**. 16:1
- 7 Samson carries the gates of Gaza to a hill facing **Hebron**. 16:3
- 8 Samson meets Delilah in the **valley of Sorek**. 16:4
- 9 Samson is taken prisoner and dies with the Philistines in **Gaza**. 16:21, 30
- 10 Samson is buried between **Zorah** and **Eshtaol**. 16:31

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**Locations of the Judges of Israel**

- 1 Othniel:** Debir Judg. 1:11–13
- 2 Ehud:** Gilgal Judg. 3:19
- 3 Shamgar:** Beth Anath Judg. 3:31
- 4 Deborah:** Bethel and Ramah Judg. 4:5
- 5 Gideon:** Ophrah Judg. 6:11
- 6 Tola:** Shamir (Samaria) Judg. 10:1
- 7 Jair:** Kamon Judg. 10:5
- 8 Jephthah:** Gilead Judg. 10:8; 11:1
- 9 Ibzan:** Bethlehem Judg. 12:8
- 10 Elon:** Zebulun Judg. 12:11–12
- 11 Abdon:** Pirathon Judg. 12:13
- 12 Samson:** Zorah Judg. 13:2
- 13 Eli:** Shiloh 1 Sam. 1:9
- 14 Samuel:** Ramah 1 Sam. 7:17