

JUDGES

LEADERS IN TIMES OF CRISIS

1. Historical Background.

Period between wilderness and monarchy. Covering about 280-350 years of history. Period of no real world power.

"The main purpose of the book of Judges in the form in which it has been preserved in the O.T., is not to record Israel's past for its own sake, or to place the writer's contemporaries a historical narrative of the achievements of their great men and rulers - but to use these events and the national experience of adversity as a text from which to deduce religious warning and instruction." (Geden, ISBE, p 1775)

2. Outline of Book

- I. The **Reasons** for the Judges (1:1-3:6)
 - 1. Israel's disobedience. (1:1-2:5)
 - 2. Israel's idolatry. (2:6-19)
 - 3. Israel's intermarriage with heathen. (2:20-3:6)
- II The **Record** of the Judges (3:7-16:31)
- III The **Results** of the Judges (17-21)
 - 1. Religious apostasy. (17-18)
 - 2. Moral collapse (19)
 - 3. Political anarchy (20-21)

3. Interesting Facts in the Book.

JUDGE	TRIBE	Reference	Enemy	Background	Spiritual	Method of war	Other
Othniel	Judah	3:9	Cushan - Double wickedness	Military, Nephew of Caleb	Spirit of the Lord came upon him	Military Manoeuvres	Victory over Cushan-Rishatnaim
Ehud	Benjamin	3:15	Eglon - A man, who's muscles had turned to fat	Noble, Left handed		Undercover espionage	Eglon of Moab
Shamgar	Non-Israelite proselyte	3:31	Philistines	Farming		Guerrilla warfare	Weapon - oxgoad – Cattle prod
Deborah	Ephraim	4:4-6	Jabin king of Canaan and Sisera	Prophetess		God's intervention & Human deception	
Barak - General	Naphtali	Under Deborah		Lost opportunity to be leader of Israel			
Gideon	Manneseh	6:11	Midianites & Amalekites	Thought of himself as being insignificant	Questioned Gods guidance and leadership	How to do the most with the least	
Tola	Issachar	10:1					Crimson Worm
Jair	Gilead	10:3					May God Shine
Jephthah	Gilead	11:11	Ammonites				
Ibzan	Bethlehem	12:8					Splendid, Linked to Boaz
Elon	Zebulun	12:11					Oak - Strength
Abdon	Ephraim	12:13					Service - Worship
Samson	Dan	15:20	Philistines	Simple Family, Parents may have been lepers. Zorah = Leprosy	Drifts between strong faith and worldliness.	Personal Strength used by God	

4. Spiritual Lessons from Book

1. When we drift from God's ideal for our lives, we are on a slippery road of destruction. (1-2:6)
2. God's very often uses "small" people to do "great" tasks. (All the Minor Judges)
3. Women form an integral part of God's plan in "His-story." (4-5) (Deborah)
4. God's will can be known but must be carried out once his will is made known. (6) (Gideon)
5. God's ways are often "Upside-down." When we are weak, then we are strong. (7-8) (Gideon)
6. Lessons from the life of Samson. (16) (Samson)
 - a. Everyone who commits sin is a slave to sin. Rom 6:16
Romans 6:16 Don't you know that when you offer yourselves to someone to obey him as slaves, you are slaves to the one whom you obey--whether you are slaves to sin, which leads to death, or to obedience, which leads to righteousness?
 - b. God will not use you if you continue in sin. Heb 10:26-31
Hebrews 10:26-31 If we deliberately keep on sinning after we have received the knowledge of the truth, no sacrifice for sins is left, v27 but only a fearful expectation of judgment and of raging fire that will consume the enemies of God. v28 Anyone who rejected the law of Moses died without mercy on the testimony of two or three witnesses. v29 How much more severely do you think a man deserves to be punished who has trampled the Son of God under foot, who has treated as an unholy thing the blood of the covenant that sanctified him, and who has insulted the Spirit of grace? v30 For we know him who said, "It is mine to avenge; I will repay," and again, "The Lord will judge his people." v31 It is a dreadful thing to fall into the hands of the living God.
 - c. Where sin abounds, grace abounds even more. "BUT" 16:22
Judges 16:22 But the hair on his head began to grow again after it had been shaved.
 - d. God's strength is made perfect in weakness. 16:23-30
Judges 16:23-30 Now the rulers of the Philistines assembled to offer a great sacrifice to Dagon their god and to celebrate, saying, "Our god has delivered Samson, our enemy, into our hands." v24 When the people saw him, they praised their god, saying, "Our god has delivered our enemy into our hands, the one who laid waste our land and multiplied our slain." v25 While they were in high spirits, they shouted, "Bring out Samson to entertain us." So they called Samson out of the prison, and he performed for them. When they stood him among the pillars, v26 Samson said to the servant who held his hand, "Put me where I can feel the pillars that support the temple, so that I may lean against them." v27 Now the temple was crowded with men and women; all the rulers of the Philistines were there, and on the roof were about three thousand men and women watching Samson perform. v28 Then Samson prayed to the LORD, "O Sovereign LORD, remember me. O God, please strengthen me just once more, and let me with one blow get revenge on the Philistines for my two eyes." v29 Then Samson reached toward the two central pillars on which the temple stood. Bracing himself against them, his right hand on the one and his left hand on the other, v30 Samson said, "Let me die with the Philistines!" Then he pushed with all his might, and down came the temple on the rulers and all the people in it. Thus he killed many more when he died than while he lived.
7. When God rule stops, society soon begins to fail. (17-18)
 - a. Man becomes the standard of measure. (17:6)
 - b. The family is broken. (17:1-2)
 - c. Vows are not kept. (17:3-4)
 - d. Religious syncretism becomes the order of the day. (idols)
 - e. Spiritual leadership is corrupted. (17:7-13)