

The Judges

Judge	Oppressing Nation	Years of Oppression	Years of Peace	Tribes Involved
Othniel	Mesopotamia	8	40	Judah
Ehud	Moab	18	80	Benjamin
Shamgar	Philistines	Unknown	Unknown	Unknown
Gideon	Midian	7	40	Manasseh
Tola	Unknown	Unknown	23	Issachar/
Jair	Unknown	Unknown	22	Manasseh
Jephthah	Ammon	18	6	Judah, Benjamin, Ephraim,
Ibzan	Unknown	Unknown	7	Judah
Elon	Unknown	Unknown	10	Zebulun
Abdon	Unknown	Unknown	8	Ephraim
Samson	Philistia	40	20	Dan, Judah

As You Read:

1. Try to determine the major themes of Judges. Why was this book written? What lessons does it teach us today?
2. As you read the stories of various judges, try to determine what their strengths were, and also where they failed. What traits are worth imitating? What pitfalls are there to avoid?
3. Research to see what else is said about the various judges throughout the rest of the Bible.



“That You May Grow Thereby...”

A weekly Bible reading plan



Judges 1-16

A Dark Age of Heroes

Overview

The book of Joshua was one of tremendous success. Joshua's strong leadership and the faithful obedience of the Israelites led to a golden age of Hebrew history. But if the conquest era of Joshua was a golden age, then the period of the judges can rightly be called the dark ages of Hebrew history. A generation after Joshua's death, the people began turning away from God, and so began a cycle that would define Israel for generations. The people would rebel, then find themselves oppressed by foreign nations. They would repent and return to God, Who would raise up a judge to deliver them. These judges were not judicial overseers, but military deliverers that threw off the yoke of oppression. For a time there would be peace, until once again the people turned to sin, rebellion, and idolatry, starting the cycle anew. Seven cycles and thirteen judges are told of in the book of Judges. While there are amazing and interesting stories of heroic deeds and impressive battles, the overall tenor of Judges is one of disappointment. Many of the judges themselves proved to be less than ideal examples to follow, and the book highlights the disastrous result of mankind doing what is right in his own eyes (Jg. 21:25)

Suggested Reading Schedule

Monday: Judges 1-3

Tuesday: Judges 4-5

Wednesday: Judges 6-8

Thursday: Judges 9-12

Friday: Judges 13-16

Book Outline

I. Introduction to the Judges (1:1—3:4)

II. The Rule of the Judges (5:5—16:31)

III. The Condition of the Nation (17-21)

Cycle of the Judges



Who Wrote Judges?

The book of Judges does not claim an author, so we cannot know definitively. Jewish tradition has long held that Samuel wrote the book, and he seems to be the most likely candidate. Based on what is written, the book appears to have been written during the kingdom era, but before David made Jerusalem his capital. At least four times in Judges it says, “*In those days there was no king in Israel,*” indicating the book was written when there was a king. Judges 1:21 records, “...*the Jebusites dwell in Jerusalem to this day.*” David drove the Jebusites out of Jerusalem during the eighth year of his reign. So it seems the book was written either during Saul's reign or the first seven years of David's. Since Samuel is the only prophet we know much about from this time period (and since he was a prominent writer) it seems likely that he wrote Judges.

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