

## Study No.10 In Those Days Israel Had No King

### Timeframe of events:

Between 200-450 years, depending on how the chronology of the book of Judges is calculated. Period ends c.1050 B.C.



**Summary:** The book of Judges, its companion the book of Ruth, and the first eight chapters of 1 Samuel cover the period after Joshua's death up until the time of the prophet Samuel. It is a common misconception that the judges of Israel were national rulers (like kings, but with a different title), but this is not the case. Although most judges had some leadership role, it was more often regional and temporary. From time to time, God raised up people who were judges to deliver various Israelite tribes from foreign oppression, as they fought to cling onto their newly found homeland. This was a very volatile and unstable period characterised by battles, bloodshed, tribal rivalry and idolatry. Adherence to God's law was spasmodic and often ignored or quite misunderstood by the people. In the midst of this turbulent setting, we read of Ruth, a tale of sadness, heartfelt devotion and redemption.

### Main Reading / Listening



Read and/or listen to the following passages at least once. Twice is better for taking it all in!  
**As a minimum, please read or listen to:** Judges 2:11-23  
**To read or listen to the entire Bible systematically, this week's passages are:** The books of Judges & Ruth, plus 1 Samuel 1 to 8 (33 chapters in total).

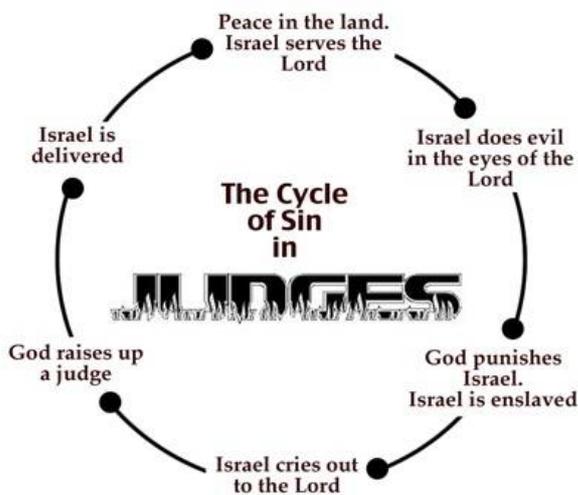
Relevant Charts:



# The Book of Judges

Focus	Deterioration		Deliverance								Depravity	
Divisions	Introduction to the Judges		First Five Judges		Gideon, the Hesitant Hero		Gideon's Son & Six Judges		Samson the Carnal Champion		The Example of National Degradation	
	1	2	3	5	6	8	9	12	13	16	17	21
Topics	Situation		Sin, Servitude & Salvation								Shocking Decline	
	Religious Laxity		Political Uncertainty								Moral Anarchy	
Place	Canaan & Transjordan											
Time	About 350 Years											
Author	Probably the Prophet Samuel											

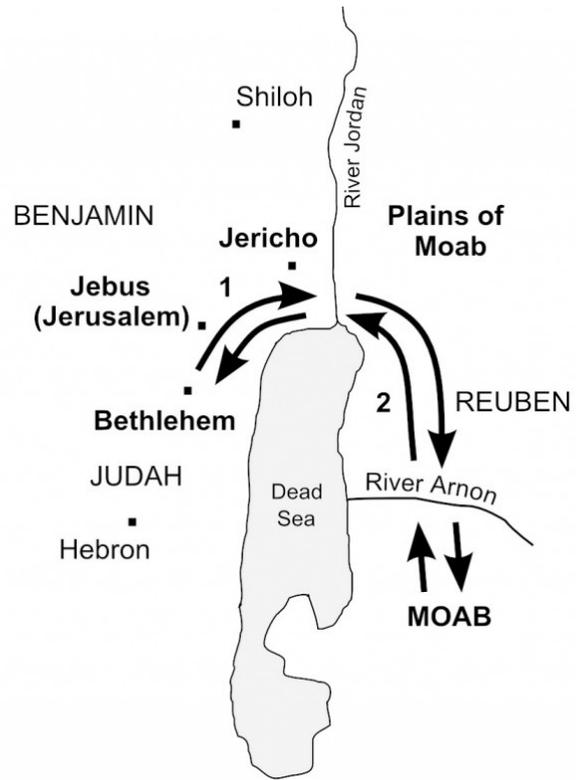
The red boxes highlight the three main sections of the book of Judges.  
 Chart adapted from [www.preceptaustin.org](http://www.preceptaustin.org)



### Examples of the common structures in The Book of Judges

<u>Othniel</u>		<u>Ehud</u>
3:7	people did evil	3:12
3:8	oppressed by others	3:12-14
3:9a	cried out	3:15a
3:9b	Lord raised up a judge	3:15b
3:10	rescue	3:16-29
3:11	rest	3:30





The two colour "Judges" maps in this worksheet have been sourced from "The Historical Atlas of the Bible".

**Ruth's journeys.**  
Map sourced from [thebiblejourney.org](http://thebiblejourney.org)

History:

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Creation</li> <li>• No special nations</li> </ul> <p>Genesis 1-11</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Israel formed</li> <li>• Law given</li> </ul> <p>Genesis 12-50 Exodus Leviticus Numbers Deuteronomy</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Israel enter promised land</li> <li>• ruled by judges <b>judged</b></li> </ul> <p>Joshua Judges Ruth 1 Samuel 1-8</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Israel ruled by kings</li> </ul> <p>Kingdom united   Kingdom divided - Nth &amp; Sth</p> <p>1 Samuel 9-31 2 Samuel 1 Kings 2 Kings 1 Chronicles 2 Chronicles</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Israelites in Exile</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• After exile</li> </ul> <p>Ezra Nehemiah Esther</p>
4000BC	2000BC	1400BC	1000BC	600BC	530BC 450BC

### For much deeper study:

- Read or listen to these other Bible passages that relate to the content of this week's readings:  
     Nehemiah 9:23-31.  
     Acts 13:20;  
     Hebrews 11:32-34



- For a comment on the 93 years of oppression and servitude during the book of Judges, see an article titled "Lo-Ammi", by Charles Welch in The Alphabetical Analysis Part 2.

### Consider and discuss the following questions:



*The questions in this first section refer to the book of Judges.  
(Questions on Ruth and 1 Samuel 1 to 8 are further down)*

- (1) 1:1 records the Israelites asking, "Who shall be first to go up for us against the Canaanites to fight against them?" What exactly did this question mean?
- (2) Why is the "death of Joshua" in 1:1 then followed by events that took place while he was alive?
- (3) Why is Joshua mentioned in 2:6 as though being alive, but then his death mentioned again in 2:8,9?
- (4) 1:8 tells us that Jerusalem was set on fire, but v.21 says that the tribe of Benjamin wasn't able to drive the Jebusites out from there. Was the city destroyed in this process? Give reasons for your answer.
- (5) 1:21 says, "the Jebusites dwell with the children of Benjamin to this day". When must this statement have been written?
- (6) In 2:10, we are told another generation arose that didn't know Jehovah or what He had done for Israel. How could this have been?

(7) 2:16 is the first mention of judges in this book. What was a judge in this era - a deliverer, or one who first had another role but was given the added role of delivering people from oppressors?

(8) Where do we first encounter "judges" in the Bible?

(9) Could there be more than one judge in existence at a time during this period? Give reasons for your answer.

(10) What does it mean that "the Lord raised up judges" (2:18)? i.e. did the judges themselves have any say in the matter, or were they being faithful to a call from God?

(11) Over what group of people did a judge exercise his/her authority?

(12) What does "nor did He deliver [the remaining Canaanite nations] into the hand of Joshua" (2:23) mean, when Joshua had already died some time earlier (1:1; 2:8)?

(13) Why did the Lord leave several nations unconquered (3:1-4)?

(14) Why was it important that the Israelites be taught warfare (3:2)?

(15) What tribe did Othniel (3:9) belong to?

(16) Prior to 3:7-11, where in the Bible do we first encounter Othniel?

(17) In 3:10, what is meant by (a) "the spirit of the LORD came upon him"?

(18) How did Othniel "judge" Israel? (3:10)

(19) Note the sequence of events in 3:10 - The spirit came upon Othniel; he judged Israel; he then went out to war. Which task/s were aided by God's spirit?

(20) By what name was the City of Palms better known? (3:13; see Deut 34:3)

(21) From what tribe was Ehud? (3:15)

(22) Why did Ehud bring King Eglon a tribute? (3:17,18)

(23) Ehud killed King Eglon via an act of deception (3:20,21). Was this the will of God?

(24) Shamgar killed 600 Philistine with an "ox goad" (3:31). What was this implement?

(25) Broadly speaking, in which part of the land did Deborah (chs. 4 & 5) have an influence?

(26) Deborah is one of only a handful of women in the Bible called a "prophetess" (4:4 NKJV). (a) Who are some of the others? (b) Was it right for a woman to have this role? (c) What did she prophesy?

(27) Deborah is the only female judge mentioned in the Bible (4:4,5). Why don't we read of any others?

(28) 4:5 tells us that the Israelites came to Deborah for judgement. (a) What did she pass judgement about? (b) Was she the only judge at the time?

(29) Most of the judges in this book delivered the Israelites from an enemy in some form of battle or physical conflict. Did Deborah do this? Give reasons for your answer.

(30) What was Barak's role in Deborah's story?

(31) Why is Barak (and not Deborah) mentioned amongst the list of faithful judges in Hebrews 11:32-34?

(32) What was the subject of Deborah's song? (ch.5)

(33) What was the point of placing the content of chapter 5 in song, as opposed to plain narration?

(34) Which of the 12 tribes were involved in the conflict of chapter 4, and which were not? (see also chapter 5)

(35) From which part of the world did (a) the Midianites and (b) the Amalekites originate? (6:1-10)

(36) Under what circumstances had the Israelites encountered these two peoples previously?

(37) Who was the prophet of 6:8?

(38) Who exactly was the Angel of the LORD that appeared to Gideon? (6:11-22)

- (39) Under what circumstances did the Angel of the LORD (6:11) appear in previous times?
- (40) From what tribe was Gideon (6:15)?
- (41) Did Gideon see God (6:22)?
- (42) Why did the Spirit of the LORD come upon Gideon at Jezreel? (6:34)
- (43) From which other tribes did Gideon seek assistance? (6:35) In which part of the land were they living?
- (44) Was Gideon right to put God to the test? (6:36-40)
- (45) Why did God seek to reduce the number of Israelites involved in the battle against the Midianites? (7:2-7)
- (46) Why did Gideon's men break the jars/pitchers in their hands? (7:19,20)
- (47) When the Ephraimites objected to being left out of the battle, what was the gist of Gideon's reply? (8:2,3)
- (48) Gideon is never called a judge in this book. Was he a judge or not? Give reasons for your answer.
- (49) Was Gideon Israel's ruler? (8:22,23) Give reasons for your answer.
- (50) After battle, Gideon made an ephod (8:24-27). (a) What is an ephod? (b) What was its intended purpose? (c) How did it become a problem?
- (51) Gideon had many wives and a concubine (8:30,31), yet is numbered among the faithful of Hebrews 11 (v.32-34). Explain this.
- (52) How is Gideon's story related to Abimelech's story in chapter 9?
- (53) Was Abimelech one of the judges?
- (54) Was Abimelech king over all of Israel or just the city of Shechem (compare 9:18 with v.22)?
- (55) What part did God play in the life of Abimelech? (9:56)
- (56) From which tribe did Tola come? (10:1)
- (57) From which tribe did Jair come? (10:3 cp Numbers 32:41)

(58) Was this the same Jair mentioned in Deuteronomy 3:14? If so, why does Judges 10:3 call him a Gileadite?

(59) In what part of the land were most of Jephthah's exploits (ch. 11 & 12) carried out ?

(60) What similarities and differences may be seen by comparing the lives of Jephthah and Abimelech?

(61) Battles with the Philistines feature heavily in the book of Judges, but not at all in the story of Jephthah. Why might this be?

(62) Why did the spirit of the LORD come upon Jephthah (11:29)?

(63) Was Jephthah's vow (11:30,31) a reasonable one to make?

(64) Did Jephthah carry out his vow and offer a human sacrifice on an altar? (11:39)? If so, was he being obedient to the Law? Cp Leviticus 20:2-5; Numbers 15:1-5; 30:1,2. Give reasons for your answer.

(65) Jephthah's army killed 42,000 fellow Israelites (i.e. Ephraimites), but it is also said that he "judged Israel" (12:6,7). Was all of this God's will?

(66) What is the Bible's commentary about Jephthah in Hebrews 11:32-34?

(67) Ibzan, Elon or Abdon are each said to have judged Israel, but none of them seem to have battled foreign powers or delivered the Israelites from oppressors (12:8-15). Were they judges in the Biblical sense?

(68) From whereabouts in the land did each one of these three come, and did they rule over Israel?

(69) From what tribe was Samson (chs. 13-16)?

(70) For what purpose was he singled out? (13:5)

(71) What was a Nazirite (13:5,7 cp Numbers 6)?

(72) Did Manoah and his wife see God? (13:3-23)

(73) What does it mean to say that "the spirit of the LORD began to move upon" Samson (13:25)?

(74) In which part of the land were Samson's exploits carried out?

(75) In 14:1-4 we read of Samson seeking a Philistine wife. Was this instigated by God? Did this act contravene Deuteronomy 7:1-4 and 21:10-14?

(76) What is the point of including the story of the lion, the honey and the garments in 14:5-20? Do you think this event really took place or is it an illustrative story?

(77) Likewise, what is the point of including the story of the foxes in 15:1-8a? Do you think this event really took place or is it an illustrative story?

(78) Why did men of Judah wish to hand over a fellow Israelite, Samson, to Israel's enemies, the Philistines (15:10-13)? What does this incident suggest about Judah at that time?

(79) 15:14 tells us that the spirit of the LORD came upon Samson and he performed a mighty deed of strength. Was God's spirit with Samson at all times, or only on occasions?

(80) In what way did Samson judge Israel? (15:20; 16:31)

(81) After clearly trying to betray Samson to the Philistines three times previously, why did he eventually tell Delilah about his hair? (16:4-21)

(82) What was the secret of Samson's strength (16:16,17)?

(83) Did Samson's death (16:30) achieve the goal set out previously in 13:5?

(84) Compare Samson's feats of strength via God's spirit with what is written in Ephesians 3:16,20 & 1:19,20 about the spirit at work in us. What similarities and differences may be observed?

(85) From what we read in chapters 13 to 16, how would you describe Samson's personality?

(86) What is the Bible's commentary about Samson in Hebrews 11:32-34?

(87) Of the 12 tribes, Judah, Ephraim, Dan and Benjamin are mentioned in the book of Judges much more than the other tribes. Why might this be?

(88) Judges ch.17 & 18 tells of Micah. Was he a judge?

(89) Is there a significance to the eleven hundred shekels of silver in the lives of both Delilah (16:5) and Micah (17:2)? Give reasons for your answer.

(90) Judges 17:6 is a telling verse: "In those days there was no king in Israel; everyone did what was right in his own eyes". How is this relevant to Micah's story in chs. 17 & 18?

(91) Did the priest speak the words of God in 18:6?

(92) Should the Danites have relocated to Laish? (18:1,2,27 cp. Joshua 19:40-48)

(93) Chapters 19, 20 & 21 details one continuous story. In a sentence or two, briefly summarize the events.

(94) What was the terrible event (19:30) the like of which had not been seen since Israel left Egypt many years before?

(95) Why did the Lord allow the Israelite armies to be defeated twice by Benjamin (20:18-21 and 20:23-25), even though they had consulted Him? What did they do differently before the third time (20:26-35), and why might this have made a difference?

(96) 21:16-23 essentially describes an organised kidnapping. Do you think this was approved of by God? Give reasons for your answer.

(97) Why do you think there are so many details given about battles in the book of Judges?

(98) Are the blood-filled events described in the book of Judges typical of barbaric and less civilised times? Have things changed since then? Give reasons for your answers.

*References in the following section refer to the book of Ruth.*

(99) In several Bible versions, Ruth 1:1 reads "when the judges *ruled*", but this translation is not quite accurate. What does the Hebrew of this verse actually say that the judges did at that time?

(100) The events in the book of Ruth take place within the time frame covered by the book of Judges (Ruth 1:1). How would you compare the tone of the book of Ruth compared with that of the book of Judges?

(101) What must have been happening in the land of Judah for there to have been a famine? (Ruth 1:1; cp Deuteronomy 28:1,2,8,11,38-40)

(102) Regarding 1:15-17, what did the two daughters-in-law choose to do when Naomi returned to Judah? What did their decision mean in terms of their relationship to Jehovah the God of Israel?

(103) Had God indeed dealt harshly with Naomi (1:20,21)?

(104) How was Boaz related to Ruth? (2:1)

(105) How is a law regarding Pentecost in Leviticus 23:22 related to Ruth's request in Ruth 2:2?

(106) Ruth collected about an ephah of barley (2:17). In modern measurements, approximately how much is that equivalent to?

(107) Should the relative closer to Ruth (4:1-10) have taken her as his wife? cp. Deuteronomy 25:5-10.

(108) Why did the subject of inheritance cause the closest relative to change his mind? (4:1-10)

(109) Boaz is often referred to by theologians as a "kinsman redeemer".

(a) This term does not occur in Scripture, so from where in the book might this term have originated? (cp. KJV "kinsman" - 2:1; 3:9,12,13; 4:1,3,6,8,14)

(b) What does this term mean?

(110) How is Boaz, the close relative, a picture of Christ?

(111) Who were some of Ruth's more famous descendants? (4:18-22; Matthew 1:3-16)

*References in the following section refer to 1 Samuel chapters. 1 to 8.*

(112) How common was it for an Israelite man of this period to have two or more wives (1:2)? Are there any instances of an Israelite woman having two husbands?

(113) Why had the LORD closed Hannah's womb? (1:5)

(114) Why did Hannah not eat when she went to the temple (1:7)? Cp Leviticus 7:11-21. Why did she eat after hearing that her prayer and vow had been heard? (1:18)

(115) What were Eli's two main roles in Israel? (1:9; 4:8)

(116) What did Hannah mean by the words, "I will give him to the LORD all the days of his life, and no razor shall come upon his head." (1:11) cp. v.22,28; 2:11.

(117) What was special about the location of Shiloh at this time? (1:3,9,24. Cp. 3:21)

(118) What is the theme of Hannah's song in 2:1-10?

(119) In what ways did Eli's sons transgress God's laws? 2:12-17,22-25. Cp Leviticus 7:28-35)

(120) According to what is written, what was Eli's main shortcoming? 2:29,30; 3:13,14

(121) From what tribe was Samuel (1:1)?

(122) Why did the young Samuel wear an ephod? (2:18 cp.v.28)

(123) Why might the word of the LORD have been "rare in those days"? (3:1)

(124) In what ways was Samuel "ministering" (3:7) at this young age?

(125) How could Samuel be ministering in the sanctuary being an Ephraimite (1:1), and not a Levite? (cp. Numbers 3:5-10)

(126) If Samuel was ministering in the temple, how was it that he didn't yet know the LORD? 3:7

(127) What does the phrase "from Dan to Beersheba" mean? (3:20. cp 2 Samuel 17:11; 1 Kings 4:25; 2 Chronicles 30:5). Where were Dan and Beersheba?

(128) Why did the Philistine defeat the Israelites (4:2)?

(129) Why did the Israelites bring the ark out from the tabernacle and onto the battlefield 4:3?

(130) Why do you think the ark was captured? 4:11

(131) In what way did Eli judge? 4:18

(132) How had the "glory" departed from Israel? 4:21,22

(133) The ark was taken to a Philistine temple of Dagon. Where do we earlier read of such a temple? (Judges 16:23-31)

(134) What sort of havoc was heaped upon the Philistine whilst they held the ark? (Ch.5)

(135) In what way did the Philistines make a "trespass offering"? (6:3)

(136) Why did the Israelites of Beth Shemesh present sacrificial offerings? (6:15)

(137) Why were many of these same men struck down? (6:19)

(138) Why wasn't the ark returned to the tabernacle in Shilo? (7:2)

(139) In what way was Samuel a judge in Israel? (7:6,15-17).

(140) Was Samuel Israel's leader at this time?

(141) Of what relevance is the mentioning of the Amorites in 7:14?

(142) How would Samuel's sons be in a position to take bribes and pervert justice? (8:1-3)

(143) Why did the tribal elders approach Samuel about instituting a king? Why did they feel the need to consult Samuel? (8:4-6)

(144) What does the LORD's response tell us about the governmental system in Israel at that time? (8:6,7) i.e. what was happening at the time, and what should have been happening?

(145) How was their request a fulfillment of the prophecy of Deuteronomy 17:14?

(146) What does it say about Israel at the time that they wanted to be like all the other nations (8:5,20)? Cp Exodus 19:5,6; Deuteronomy 4:5-10

(147) Was Samuel a prophet, a priest and a judge simultaneously? Give reasons for your answer.

(148) Are the first eight chapters of 1 Samuel typical of the period dominated by the judges?