



WELCOME TO BIBLE HOUSE OF GRACE

If you think items presented on this site to be in error, please let me know and I will gladly reconsider the content.

Overview of the Book of Judges (2020)

Bible House of Grace contains an easy to read New and Old Testament commentary full of spiritual treasures and pearls, complete with an insightful resource guide illuminating God's love and grace.



Although I believe my aim is pure and God's will perfect this document is still the product of a human man, as to such I neither claim perfect knowledge or perfect understanding.

Overview of the Book of Judges.

INTRODUCTION TO THE BOOK

The book of Judges describes the deeds of various leaders of Israel called judges, but not judges as we think of judges today or preachers of righteousness but rather military leaders and fighters, that led Israel to triumph over their enemies and delivered them from their idolatry and sinful behaviour.

THE HEBREW MEANING OF THE WORD, JUDGE

The Hebrew word shofet, is translated into English as judge, however, the meaning of shofet is closer to ruler, as a type of military leader or deliverer from potential or actual defeat, rather than how we think of a judge today.

AUTHOR OF THE BOOK

Due to the expression, "and Samuel told the people," occurring throughout the book, common Jewish tradition says Samuel wrote the book of Judges, but the author is actually unknown. It is possible that Samuel assembled some of the accounts from the period of the judges, however, the following verse shows that it is also very likely that prophets such as Nathan and Gad, who were both associated with David's court, also had a hand in writing and editing the book.

- Now the acts of King David, from first to last, are written in the Chronicles of Samuel the seer, and in the Chronicles of Nathan the prophet, and in the Chronicles of Gad the seer (1 Chron. 29:29).

And the following verse speaks of a time when the northern tribes of Israel had been conquered by Assyria.

- And the people of Dan set up the carved image for themselves, and Jonathan the son of Gershom, son of Moses, and his sons were priests to the tribe of the Danites until the day of the captivity of the land. (Judges 18:30).

This was a much later time (around 721 B.C.), which suggests that the author or authors lived long after the time of Samuel.

WHEN THE BOOK WAS WRITTEN

It is unknown when the book was written for the following reasons,

1. Four times in the Book of Judges we are told that "there was no king in Israel in those days" (Judges 17:6) (Judges 18:1) (Judges 19:1) (Judges 21:25), which indicate that the book was written prior to the establishment of Israel's kings
2. The first chapter of Judges shows the Jebusites still controlled Jerusalem (Judges 1:21) and (2 Sam. 5:6-10), this shows that prior to taking the city of Jerusalem King David had to drive out the Jebusites, which indicates that the book of Judges was written sometime before King David's capture of the city of Jerusalem.
3. Various events spoken of in Judges chapter seventeen to twenty-one suggest a time after David's kingdom had been established.

Due to these facts and those mentioned in the title, "Author of the Book" (above), it is far more likely that Samuel (the last judge) wrote some parts of the book, while other parts were written at a later time by someone of his generation or a later generation.

OVERVIEW OF THE CHAPTERS

JUDGES 1-2

Many of the tribes of Israel failed to remove all the inhabitants of Canaan from their lands. The Israelites forgot the LORD, and worshipped false gods, so the LORD removed His protection and blessings from them, which resulted in Israel being oppressed by their enemies and crying to the LORD for deliverance. In answer to their prayer the LORD raises up judges to deliver them.

JUDGES 3-16

The Lord calls twelve judges to help deliver the Israelite tribes from the consequences of their unfaithfulness to Him. Among them are Deborah, who delivers Israel from Canaanite oppression, and Gideon, who destroys the altar of Baal and delivers Israel from the Midianites. One of the judges, Samson, fights the Philistines but is captured as a result of his poor choices. He dies by causing a building to collapse on himself which also kills, at least three thousand Philistines in the rubble.

JUDGES 17-21

Micah and the Danites create sanctuaries dedicated to idol worship, and a Levite concubine is abused and killed. Eleven Israelite tribes unite to fight against the tribe of Benjamin and almost completely destroy them.

SNAPSHOTS

The book of Judges depicts the life of Israel in the promised land from the death of Joshua to the rise of the monarchy, it has the following themes:

1. God's sovereignty is above all other gods, kings, monarchs, emperors and dynasties etc.
2. The judges were charismatic leaders who delivered Israel from a succession of foreign dominations after their conquest of Canaan, the Promised Land.
3. The authority of the judges does not come through man's appointment, nor through elections or appointments of kings, but by the Spirit of God.
4. Many of the covenant promises God had made to their fathers were fulfilled, when Joshua led Israel to victory in the Promised Land. (Josh. 21:43-45).
5. To establish the kingdom of God on earth after Joshua had defeated the strong enemies of Israel, all that remained was for Israel to displace the Canaanites and cleanse the land from all practises of idolatry and paganism
6. Israel was conquered and afflicted by their enemies, because they rejected God's kingship and again and again failed to remove wicked

influences from the Promised Land, by which they not only became entangled in sin, but also turned to the gods of Canaan and embraced their pagan religious beliefs and practices.

7. When Israel cried to the LORD for help, He sent judges to deliver them from their enemies, but they soon returned to their sins. This is a repeated cycle throughout the book. (Judges 2:11-19).
8. Israel's sovereign and supreme judge and deliverer was God, for it was Him who permitted the oppressions and raised up deliverers.

The Judges primary purpose is best articulated in the following verse:

- The LORD raised up judges, who saved them out of the hand of those who plundered them. (Judges 2:16).

The very last verse closes the book with the following words:

- In those days there was no king in Israel. Everyone did what was right in his own eyes. (Judges 21:25).

THE 12 JUDGES

During the time prior to the kings there was no central government overseeing the nation, but only tribal leaders. Every so often God would raise up one of these tribal leaders (called, judges) to lead the people out of bondage and to victory over their enemies and to repentance and prayer. There were twelve in all and each ruled with various degrees of effectiveness. Following are the twelve judges God raised up:

1. Othniel
2. Ehud
3. Shamgar
4. Deborah
5. Gideon
6. Tola
7. Jair
8. Jephthah
9. Ibzan
10. Elon
11. Abdon
12. Samson

RENOWNED JUDGES

OTHNIEL

Othniel (ben Kenaz) was the first judge. The meaning of his name is uncertain, but may mean, "He (God) is my strength" or "God has helped me".

EHUD

When the Israelites' continued to worship the gods of the Canaanites, it led to the nation of Moab invading the them, after which, God sent Ehud a left-handed man to be Israel's deliverer. Sometime later Israel returned to their wicked ways and was invaded by a mighty army from the north. God in His faithfulness raised up Deborah as Israel's new judge

DEBORAH

Deborah was unique judge of Israel considering the patriarchal society in which she served. (Judges chapter four to five).

GIDEON

Gideon, like many who are called and chosen by the LORD, felt he was an unlikely leader, so much so he said to the LORD, "Please, LORD, how can I save Israel? Behold, my clan is the weakest in Manasseh, and I am the least in my father's house." (Judges 6:15). However, he was able to lead three hundred soldiers to victory over an immense Midianite army, because the Israelites trusted in the LORD. (Judges chapter seven to eight).

SAMSON

Judges chapter thirteen verse two introduces Manoah's wife as a barren woman. The unique events leading up to Samson's birth parallels the accounts of Moses, Samuel, John and Jesus, whose births are most likely recorded to give emphasis to the divine involvement in their births and highlight the significance of their life's mission. The angel of the LORD appears to Manoah's wife and tells her she will have a son, sometime later she gives birth to Samson. Despite Samson's promising beginning and the great physical strength the LORD had given him, he failed, during his lifetime to turn the Israelites to the LORD and forsake their sins, however, his death brought about the death of three thousand Philistines, which included their chief rulers, which inspired Israel to rise up against their enemies. (Judges chapter thirteen to sixteen).

SAMUEL

Samuel was the last and greatest judge of Israel. He heard God calling him in the night as a boy, and anointed Saul as the first king. Eli the priest taught Samuel, but did not raise his own sons Hophni and Phinehas well.

FOUR HIGHLIGHTS OF THE BOOK OF JUDGES

God gave birth to Israel as a nation, they were His treasured possession, but they constantly broke their covenant with Him. The book of Judges shines a light upon the sovereign ways that God uses to save Israel for their eternal inheritance and fulfil the promises He made to Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. The story throughout Judges highlights the following five things:

1. God's sovereign use of foreign nations to bring the covenant curses spoken of in (Lev. 26:14-45) and Deut. 28:15-16) upon Israel to chasten them each time they turned to foreign gods and apostasy.
2. Israel humbling themselves and crying out to God during their times of crisis, and God raising up deliverers (i.e., Judges) to save them and His Kingdom from utter extinction.
3. The LORD allows His people to suffer the consequences of unfaithfulness to Him, but is at all times willing to deliver them as often as they repent of their sins.
4. God's sovereignty and lordship over His people Israel and Israel's ultimate acceptance of His rule.
5. God's faithfulness to His covenant, and His amazing patience and long-suffering with His people.

As the founder of Bible House of Grace, I would like to thank the many Christian scholars, commentators and theologians who have gone before me, and the many today, who have freely made available their works to enhance the knowledge of the Bible to all people worldwide. It is only with the help of these faithful writers that much of Bible House of Grace exists as it does today.

Bible House of Grace