

7 – Judges: Darkness in the Land

- **Loudest Message in Judges...**The disobedient, degenerate nature and dismal failure of people (all people!) who leave God and walk in their own “strength.” It didn’t take long for the young nation of Israel to do this.
- **Theme Verse:** *“In those days there was no king in Israel; everyone did what was right in his own eyes.”* (21:25)
Historical statement about Israel. (Prophetic warning to any nation) *Companion Verse:* **“Righteousness exalts a nation, but sin is a reproach to any people.”** (Pro.14:34)

7 Sin Cycles



Highlights:

Setting the Stage (1:1 to 3:7)	Period of the Judges (3:8 to 16:31)	Further Decline (17:1 to 21:25)
<p>Settling the land (1:1-36)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Judah, Simeon defeat Canaanites in territories, allowed enemies to remain in land ▪ House of Joseph (Manasseh/ Ephraim) settle central portion of land, but allow some of original inhabitants to remain ▪ Asher, Zebulun, and Nephtali settle northern portion of promised land, but allow some of captive people to remain <p>Spiritual condition of Israel (2:1 to 3:7)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Angel rebukes nation for not driving out enemies and breaking down idol altars. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Othniel - Caleb’s son-in-law, Spirit of LORD came upon him, went to war, defeated king of Mesopotamia, judged 40 years Ehud - left handed; killed a VERY fat man (Eglon, king of Moab, subdued Moabites), courageous, went to war (“blew a trumpet”), judged 80 years Shamgar - killed 600 Philistines with an ox goad, also delivered Israel, ruled during VERY treacherous times (<i>from song of Deborah, ch 5</i>) – length of ruling time unknown Deborah - Woman judge in patriarchal society (speaks of lack of leadership among men), prophetess and judge (probably Israel’s best), Barak - general of Army, WIMP!!, Sisera - captain of Jabin’s army, had 900 iron chariots, hid in wrong tent! Jael - another woman (Gentile!) heroine, killed Sisera; Chapter 5 Song of Deborah, Deborah God’s choice, no man to assume leadership, were some godly rulers, many tribes did not assist others (<i>Reuben and Dan too busy!</i>), Israel had some allies, judged 40 years Gideon - Unwilling and cynical, fought Midianites (<i>had moved into land due to famine</i>) Angel of the LORD appears calls Gideon “Mighty man of valor??” (<i>God has a sense of humor, also potential!</i>) Gideon had inferiority complex, skeptical, cynical, weak, fearful, cowardly... God uses our weaknesses to showcase His strengths! God’s patience, Gideon’s obedience in spite of fear (at every step), fleece incident, pitchers, lights, and trumpets, <u>The battle belongs to God</u>; People wanted Gideon to be king, judged for 40 years...what God wanted: <i>“But Gideon said to them, ‘I will not rule over you, nor shall my son rule over you; the LORD shall rule over you.’”</i> But... <i>“And it came to pass, as soon as Gideon was dead, that the children of Israel turned again, and went a-whoring...”</i> 8:32 (KJV) Abimelech – some don’t think he was a judge, son of Gideon (by prostitute), killed all 70 of his half-brothers, appointed self as king of Shechem, tried to exalt himself, not under God’s leading, rulership aborted by God, killed by woman who dropped a stone on his head Tola - In 23 years of Judging, apparently NOTHING noteworthy! Jair - had 30 sons who rode 30 donkeys and ruled over 30 cities, prosperous, ruled 22 years, nothing else noteworthy Elon - Judged Israel 10 years; nothing else of note! 	<p>Micah and Danites (17:1 - 18:31)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ The lazy, greedy Danites did not conquer neighbors ▪ Wanted more land ▪ Power hungry “priest” ▪ Routed Laish, made it their own ▪ Personal and national immorality <p>Levite and prostitute</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Travel hazards ▪ Depths of depravity, <i>“Bring out the man who came to your house, that we many know him carnally!”</i> 19:22b ▪ Horrible parcel post ▪ Call to action! ▪ Tribal infighting and slaughter ▪ Warning to tribe of Benjamin ▪ Benjamin declares war ▪ Slaughter within all tribes ▪ Tribe of Benjamin almost obliterated ▪ 600 Benjamite men survive, now tribe endangered species, no wives!

- People repent and weep
- God reminds the people of the things He did for them.
- Condition of tribes until passing of Joshua's generation
- 2nd generation did evil, idolatry
- God's anger against Israel
- Though angry with Israel, God raised up judges to deliver them
- Israel would not learn but continued to worship other gods
- Canaanites left in land to test Israel

10. Abdon - Had 40 sons, 30 nephews, rode 70 donkeys - outdid Jair, nothing else noteworthy

11. Jephthah - Son of harlot, tossed out by family, leader of band of desperados, Later recruited to save Israel (by half-brothers), letter explaining Israel's legitimate claim to land, made a very rash vow; did he really sacrifice his daughter? fights Ephraimites, Ruled 6 years

11. Ibzan - 30 sons and 30 daughters, sent daughters to marry foreigners, brought foreign women to marry sons

12. Samson - miraculous birth, Philistines Israel's worst enemy, great opportunities – failed! Nazarite – secret of success was God, not hair, spoiled rotten – made riddles, played pranks, wise-cracked, allowed women to make a fool of him – NOT A HERO! His acts had nothing to do with delivering Israel – they were personal vengeance, sex was his ruin. **Samson and Jesus (comparison):** Both: births foretold by angel, separated to God from the womb, Nazarites, moved in the power of the Holy Spirit, rejected by their people, destroyed their enemies

SAMSON	JESUS
Lived life of sin	Lived sinless life
"Began" to destroy enemies	Completely destroyed enemies
At death prayed, "to be avenged"	At death prayed for forgiveness for enemies
In death, Samson's arms outstretched in wrath	In death, Jesus' arms outstretched in forgiveness and love
Samson died.	Jesus lives!

13. Samuel - last Judge, first prophet, probably wrote this book, dedicated to Lord before birth

- Tribes vow their daughters will not marry Benjamites
- Benjamites in jeopardy of extinction
- Men at Jabesh Gilead murdered, 400 virgins carried off
- Women of Shiloh kidnapped
- The End of Judges...

Israel as a nation, as individuals, Israel's spiritual state, moral state, political state - all polluted, corrupted, confused and completely depraved. ...

America, take note...

They all did what was right in their own eyes.
(sound familiar?)

- Many Canaanites left in the land, against God's commands. God allowed this to "test" Israel.
- 2nd Generation was not raised up to walk with God.
- **Seven Sin Cycles over a period of 350 years** – spiraling downward; Extreme depth of immorality, depravity, sin, fast spiritual decline
- **Judges of note:** Deborah (a woman, poor male leadership), Gideon, Samson (not the hero he seems to be)
- Contains some most detailed and graphic (and gruesome!) stories of Israel's darkest time.
- Contains probably **most perverse, graphic despicable event** in Scripture (other than crucifixion!) (ch 19)
- This book details what happens to mankind anywhere, and everywhere, that they **"do what is right in their own eyes."** Right is not righteous, it means doing whatever you please, each one doing what he or she wishes to do, with no regard for consequences, rightness, or anything else. This book describes the human condition, not just the condition of the young nation of Israel, who determines to live apart from God. The book of Judges is a warning to nations, and individuals, everywhere. We are given free choice to walk with God, or not. But the results of a life apart from Him are disastrous, with eternal consequences.



The "Levite" makes his case about the Benjamites to the rest of Israel.