

## Timeline of Truth: Judges Full-Book Review (Judges 1:1 – 21:25)

### 1. Judges Intro – Introduction

Timing: “Consequently the Book of Judges records about 300 years of Israel’s history (cf. 11:26). This is about 30 percent of the total history of Israel in the Old Testament (from about 1446 B.C. to 430 B.C.)” – Dr. Tom Constable

#### 5 Aspects of Israel’s Faithlessness & Failure:

- Their Descending Spiral of a Repeated Cycle
- Their Self-Defined Lifestyle
- The Canaanization of Israel
- A Reversal of Joshua’s Conquest
- A Rejection of the Revealed Will of God

#### High-Level Outline:

- The Two-Part Prologue (1:1-3:6)
- The Cycles of the Judges (3:7-16:31)
- The Two-Part Epilogue (17-21)

### 2. Judges 1:1-2:5 – Military Failure: Partial Obedience

#### a. Israel Asks the Lord for Direction

#### b. Caleb Arranges to Defeat His Enemies

#### c. The Tribes Fail to Complete the Defeat

- They dwelt among the people, did not drive them out, and were even driven out by the Canaanites
- God gives us commands for our benefit
- Incomplete obedience is disobedience
- God may withhold help if we refuse to obey

### 3. Judges 2:6-3:6 – Spiritual Failure: God Responds by Sending Trouble on the Disobedient Nation

#### a. Israel’s Rapid Departure (2:6-7)

<sup>6</sup> And when Joshua had dismissed the people, the children of Israel went each to his own inheritance to possess the land. <sup>7</sup> So the people served the LORD all the days of Joshua, and all the days of the elders who outlived Joshua, who had seen all the great works of the LORD which He had done for Israel.

#### b. Israel’s Cycle of Departure (2:6)

##### THE SIN – Rejection of God (2:6-13)

<sup>6</sup> And when Joshua had dismissed the people, the children of Israel went each to his own inheritance to possess the land. <sup>7</sup> So the people served the LORD all the days of Joshua, and all the days of the elders who outlived Joshua, who had seen all the great works of the LORD which He had done for Israel. <sup>8</sup> Now Joshua the son of Nun, the servant of the LORD, died when he was one hundred and ten years old. <sup>9</sup> And they buried him within the border of his inheritance at Timnath Heres, in the mountains of Ephraim, on the north side of Mount Gaash. <sup>10</sup> When all that generation had been gathered to their fathers, another generation arose after them who did not know the LORD nor the work which He had done for Israel. <sup>11</sup> Then the children of Israel **did evil** in the sight of the LORD, and **served** the Baals; <sup>12</sup> and they **forsook** the LORD God of their fathers, who had brought them out of the land of Egypt; and they **followed** other gods from among the gods of the people who were all around them, and they **bowed down** to them; and they **provoked** the LORD to anger. <sup>13</sup> They **forsook** the LORD and **served** Baal and the Ashtoreths.

##### SLAVERY – Response by God (2:14-15)

<sup>14</sup> And the anger of the LORD was hot against Israel. So **He delivered them** into the hands of plunderers who despoiled them; and **He sold them** into the hands of their enemies all around, so that they could no longer stand before their enemies. <sup>15</sup> Wherever they went out, the hand of the LORD was against them for calamity, as the LORD had said, and as the LORD had sworn to them. And they were greatly distressed.

##### SAVIOR – Rescuer from God (2:16-19)

<sup>16</sup> Nevertheless, the LORD raised up judges who delivered them out of the hand of those who plundered them. <sup>17</sup> Yet they would not listen to their judges, but they played the harlot with other gods, and bowed down to them. They turned quickly from the way in which their fathers walked, in obeying the commandments of the LORD; they did not do so. <sup>18</sup> And when the LORD raised up judges for them, the LORD was with the judge and delivered them out of the hand of their enemies all the days of the judge; for the LORD was moved to pity by their groaning because of those who oppressed them and harassed them. **(SPIRAL DOWNWARD)** <sup>19</sup> And it came to pass, when the judge was dead, that they reverted and behaved more corruptly than their fathers, by following other gods, to serve them and bow down to them. They did not cease from their own doings nor from their stubborn way.

- To remain in sin or to tolerate breaks our relationship with God and fights against Him and His protection.
- Sin in us or around us must be rejected and confessed or it will eventually rule us

### 4. Judges 3:7-11 – Othniel, Faithful Foreigner

- God Does Not Have to Help Us When We Disobey
- God Will Find Someone to Do His Work

### 5. Judges 3:12-30, 31 – Ehud, Elite Assassin

- God desires us to walk with Him to avoid misery.
- God supervises history to keep His plan on track.
- God controls the varying details.

### 6. Judges 4:1-5:31 – Barak, Reluctant Leader

- Barak failed to trust and obey God right away.
- God used Deborah, a woman, to encourage Barak to lead as God wanted him to.

### 7. Judges 6:1-9:57 – Gideon, Faulty Judge

- God patiently calls Gideon; God leads Gideon to a miraculous victory; Gideon takes credit for the victory; Gideon’s son furthers Gideon’s sin
- The fastest way to spiritual failure is to take credit for God’s work through you.
- Today’s spiritual victory does not eliminate the obedience needed for tomorrow’s victory.
- Resist pride, the sinful idea that I do not need God, and that my victories are only the result of my own efforts.
- Live your life in light of the fact that your actions and choices have impact beyond your own lifetime.

### 8. Judges 10:6-12:7 – Jephthah, Negotiating Judge

- God may use leaders for one good purpose but who are faulty and even evil in other ways.
- Jephthah mixed truth with the idolatrous ideas of the culture around him.

## 9. 6 Minor Judges:

- 3:31 – Shamgar
- 10:1-2 – Tola
- 10:3-5 – Jair
- 12:8-10 – Ibzan
- 12:11-12 – Elon
- 12:13-15 – Abdon

## 10. Judges 13:1-16:31 – Samson, the Selfish Judge

- Sin will patiently let you play until you are trapped.
- Temptation will always let you think you can win in the end, but sin will lure you, entrap you, and destroy you.
- Sin always has hurtful consequences and will never result in the helpful impact that obedience brings.

## 11. Judges 17:1-18:31 – Abuse of the Priesthood

- 17:1-13 – Micah & Jonathan
- 18:1-31 – Danites & Jonathan
  - *When we ignore God's Word, we justify our foolish, sinful decisions so that they sound right to us.*
  - *When we disobey God, it becomes easier to CONTINUE to disobey. Obedience takes CONTINUAL effort.*
  - *God's way is often not the EASY way. Obedience takes commitment and strength.*

## 12. Judges 19:1-21:25 – Abuse of Women

- 19:1-30 – Levite & Concubine
  - *God reveals the unavoidable downward path of disobedience.*
  - *Self-focus is indicative of spiritual departure.*
  - *Sexual perversion is indicative of spiritual departure.*
  - *The degrading, devaluing, and abuse of women is a result of disobedience.*
- 20:1-48 – War Against Benjamin's Tribe
  - *Doing what is right in one's own eyes results in a lack of righteous justice*
  - *Doing what is right in one's own eyes results in a lack of sound judgment*
  - *Doing what is right in one's own eyes brings the cost of purging sin (God lets Israel suffer great defeats)*
- 21:1-25 – Seeking to Fix Benjamin's Tribe

## Sobering Lessons About Doing What WE Think Is Right:

- 1) *Selective application of God's Word and selective obedience to God's Word results in disastrous consequences.*
- 2) *We can become satisfied making horrible decisions that have horrible results.*
- 3) *We can easily be convinced that our decisions and directions are "right."*
- 4) *Being convinced of our "rightness" is no guarantee of being right.*
- 5) *Our "right" can actually violate many of God's clear commands.*
- 6) *We must measure our decisions and direction continually using God's Word.*
- 7) *If we are not doing so, we must assume that we are defying God's rule and His Word, regardless of how we feel.*

**2 Tim 3:1-5** But know this, that in the last days perilous times will come: <sup>2</sup> For men will be lovers of themselves, lovers of money, boasters, proud, blasphemers, disobedient to parents, unthankful, unholy, <sup>3</sup> unloving, unforgiving, slanderers, without self-control, brutal, despisers of good, <sup>4</sup> traitors, headstrong, haughty, lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God, <sup>5</sup> having a form of godliness but denying its power. And from such people turn away!

**2 Tim. 3:13-17** But evil men and impostors will grow worse and worse, deceiving and being deceived. <sup>14</sup> But you must continue in the things which you have learned and been assured of, knowing from whom you have learned *them*, <sup>15</sup> and that from childhood you have known the Holy Scriptures, which are able to make you wise for salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus. <sup>16</sup> All Scripture *is* given by inspiration of God, and *is* profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness, <sup>17</sup> that the man of God may be complete, thoroughly equipped for every good work.

**2 Tim 4:1-4** I charge *you* therefore before God and the Lord Jesus Christ, who will judge the living and the dead at His appearing and His kingdom: <sup>2</sup> Preach the word! Be ready in season *and* out of season. Convince, rebuke, exhort, with all longsuffering and teaching. <sup>3</sup> For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine, but according to their own desires, *because* they have itching ears, they will heap up for themselves teachers; <sup>4</sup> and they will turn *their* ears away from the truth, and be turned aside to fables.

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## The Transformational Power of the Book of Judges

Way, K. C. (2016). [OT217 Interpreting Judges](#). Bellingham, WA: Lexham Press.

The book of Judges is a book that's about so many things, but yet at its core, it's really just about sin and salvation. It's about sin in all of its facets—the cycle of sin, the patterns of sin, what I would call the “psychology of sin”—but the book is also about God as deliverer, God as the rescuer of His sinful people.

A number of other themes...we should always keep in mind: first, the relevance of Canaanization. Canaanization was Israel's problem, but it is also our problem. Canaanization is something that God's people will struggle with, do struggle with. It's something I struggle with. The question is not whether or not we practice syncretism; the question is: to what extent are we practicing syncretism? This is why we need the grace and deliverance of God.

Another theme here ... is the idea that God is the deliverer, that this is about God, that God is the hero, that even though this book is exploring themes of sin and Canaanization ... we must keep God at the forefront of our minds. That is where deliverance will be found. It's only in Him where we can find transformation.

But there's another piece that runs through the book, and that is ...the necessity of Scripture, the necessity of taking in what God has said. God's instruction is the antidote to Canaanization, and so if we are filling our hearts and minds with the words of God, this is one of the ways that we can be transformed, that we can break the cycle of sin.

My prayer is that we would be transformed, that we can break the cycle through the power of Christ—lay hold of the cross. He alone, Jesus, can deliver us from the power of sin.

## ISRAEL'S JUDGES

Judge	Scripture	Israel's Oppressors		Length in Years		
		Nation(s)	King(s)	Oppression	Judgeship	Peace
<b>Othniel</b>	3:7-11	Mesopotamia	Cushan-rishathaim	8 <i>(ca. 1358-1350 B.C.)</i>		40 <i>(ca. 1350-1310 B.C.)</i>
<b>Ehud</b>	3:12-30	Moab <i>(with Ammon &amp; Amalek)</i>	Eglon	18		80
<b>Shamgar</b>	3:31	Philistia				
<b>Barak (&amp; Deborah)</b>	4:1-5:31	Canaan	Jabin	20 <i>(ca. 1250-1230 B.C.)</i>		40 <i>(ca. 1230-1190 B.C.)</i>
<b>Gideon</b>	6:1-8:35	Midian <i>(with Amalek &amp; Arabia)</i>	Zebah & Zalmunna	7		40 <i>(ca. 1180-1140 B.C.)</i>
<b>Tola</b>	10:1-2				23 <i>(ca. 1117-1094 B.C.)</i>	
<b>Jair</b>	10:3-5				22 <i>(ca. 1115-1093 B.C.)</i>	
<b>Jepthah</b>	10:6-12:7	Ammon		18 <i>(ca. 1123-1105 B.C.)</i>	6	
<b>Ibzan</b>	12:8-10				7	
<b>Elon</b>	12:11-12				10	
<b>Abdon</b>	12:13-15				8	
<b>Samson</b>	13:1-16:31	Philistia		40 <i>(ca. 1124-1084 B.C.)</i>	20 <i>(ca. 1105-1085 B.C.)</i>	

*Based on a chart by Dr. Thomas L. Constable, in "Notes on Judges," page 27*

# Locations of the Judges

- JUDGES (CAPS)
- Tribes underlined

