

## **7. The Time of the Judges**

*The Nation Fails the Conquest of Canaan*

### Introduction

- Old Testament Overview
  
- New testament Overview
  
- The Beginnings
  
- The Age of the Patriarchs
  
- The Exodus out of Egypt
  
- The Wilderness Wanderings
  - Camped at Mt Sinai
  
  - Journey to the Promised Land
  
  - Camped on the Plains of Moab
  
- The Conquest of Canaan

# The Period of the Judges

- This period is described in the Book of Judges and Ruth
- The period runs from c. 1380 BC--Joshua died at the age of 110 in 1383 BC (cf. Josh. 24:29) --to c.1100 and the last of the Judges Samuel (c. 1105- 1030 BC)
- This period is characterized by the type of political and spiritual rulers leading the Nation—the Judges
  - The Hebrew for Judges means “deliverers” or “saviors”
  - 13 Judges are identified as ruling during the period covered by Judges (Eli and Samuel make for a total number of 15 Judges)
  - This covers approx. 350 years between the conquest of the Land under Joshua and the anointing of the first King Saul in c. 1043 BC
- This period is characterized by moral and spiritual decline and apostasy. As such, it stands in sharp contrast to the period of Conquest under Joshua:

**Josh. 21:43** So the LORD gave Israel all the land which He had sworn to give to their fathers, and they possessed it and lived in it. **44** And the LORD gave them rest on every side, according to all that He had sworn to their fathers, and no one of all their enemies stood before them; the LORD gave all their enemies into their hand. **45** Not one of the good promises which the LORD had made to the house of Israel failed; all came to pass.

- 5 reasons are cited for the defection from God
  1. Israel failing to completely drive out the Canaanites (Judges 1:19, 21, 35)

**1:19** Now the LORD was with Judah, and they took possession of the hill country; but they could not drive out the inhabitants of the valley because they had iron chariots.

2. idolatry (Judges 2:12)

**2:12** and they forsook the LORD, the God of their fathers, who had brought them out of the land of Egypt, and followed other gods from among the gods of the peoples who were around them, and bowed themselves down to them; thus they provoked the LORD to anger.

3. intermarriage with the Canaanites Judges 3:5, 6)

**3:5** And the sons of Israel lived among the Canaanites, the Hittites, the Amorites, the Perizzites, the Hivites, and the Jebusites; **6** and they took their daughters for themselves as wives, and gave their own daughters to their sons, and served their gods.

4. failing to follow the leadership of the Judges (Judges 2:16-17)

**2:16** Then the LORD raised up judges who delivered them from the hands of those who plundered them. **17** And yet they did not listen to their judges, for they played the harlot after other gods and bowed themselves down to them. They turned aside quickly from the way in which their fathers had walked in obeying the commandments of the LORD; they did not do as their fathers.

5. turning away from the Lord after the death of the Judges (Judges 2:19)

**2:19** But it came about when the judge died, that they would turn back and act more corruptly than their fathers, in following other gods to serve them and bow down to them; they did not abandon their practices or their stubborn ways.

- While there were 15 total Judges during this period, 7 *cycles* of God's dealings with the Nation are highlighted in this book (sin to salvation progression; Judges 2:11-19):

1. the moral defection of the people (Judges 2:11-13)

**2:11** Then the sons of Israel did evil in the sight of the LORD, and served the Baals, **12** and they forsook the LORD, the God of their fathers, who had brought them out of the land of Egypt, and followed other gods from among the gods of the peoples who were around them, and bowed themselves down to them; thus they provoked the LORD to anger. **13** So they forsook the LORD and served Baal and the Ashtaroth.

2. the Lord is angered and raised up a foreign nation to oppress and punish the Israelites (Judges 2:14-15)

**“14** And the anger of the LORD burned against Israel, and He gave them into the hands of plunderers who plundered them; and He sold them into the hands of their enemies around them, so that they could no longer stand before their enemies. **15** Wherever they went, the hand of the LORD was against them for evil, as the LORD had spoken and as the LORD had sworn to them, so that they were severely distressed.”

3. the Nation cried out to God for mercy (Judges 2:18b)

**“ . . . for the LORD was moved to pity by their groaning because of those who oppressed and afflicted them.”**

4. The Lord listened to the cries of the people and raised up a deliverer for the people (Judges 2:18a)

**“18** And when the LORD raised up judges for them, the LORD was with the judge and delivered them from the hand of their enemies all the days of the judge; . . .”

- (1.) When the Judge died the people lapse into disobedience again (Judges 2:19)

**“19** But it came about when the judge died, that they would turn back and act more corruptly than their fathers, in following other gods to serve them and bow down to them; they did not abandon their practices or their stubborn ways.”

I. Incomplete Obedience: The Failure to Finish the Conquest of Canaan (Judges 1:1-3:6)

A. The setting:

- Joshua had taken the nation into the land and had led them to a spectacular victory
- After a Central Campaign, a Southern Campaign, and a Northern Campaign Joshua had divided up the Land and had charged the 12 Tribes to finish the Job of occupying the Land and in finishing the job of driving out the occupants
- During Joshua's lifetime and the lifetimes of the Elders who helped him lead the Nation the nation had walked in obedience. (Judges 2:7)

**2:7** And the people served the LORD all the days of Joshua, and all the days of the elders who survived Joshua, who had seen all the great work of the LORD which He had done for Israel.

- However, during the final days of Joshua's life the Nation had begun to compromise. At one point God visited the Nation in the form of the Angel of the Lord and rebuked them for their failure to fully obey God in occupying the Land and in failing to remain wholly devoted to the Lord. The Nation then made a half-hearted attempt to obey the Lord. (Judges 2:1-6)

**2:1** Now the angel of the LORD came up from Gilgal to Bochim. And he said, "I brought you up out of Egypt and led you into the land which I have sworn to your fathers; and I said, I will never break My covenant with you, **2** and as for you, you shall make no covenant with the inhabitants of this land; you shall tear down their altars. But you have not obeyed Me; what is this you have done? **3** "Therefore I also said, 'I will not drive them out before you; but they shall become as thorns in your sides, and their gods shall be a snare to you.'" **4** And it came about when the angel of the LORD spoke these words to all the sons of Israel, that the people lifted up their voices and wept. **5** So they named that place Bochim; and there they sacrificed to the LORD. **2:6** When Joshua had dismissed the people, the sons of Israel went each to his inheritance to possess the land.

- Joshua finally died, along with the Elders.
- The new generation was now "leading" the Nation. (Judges 2:10)

**10** And all that generation also were gathered to their fathers; and there arose another generation after them who did not know the LORD, nor yet the work which He had done for Israel.

B. The Disobedience of the Nation Described

- Israel had been charged and warned to completely and utterly drive out the Canaanites and the occupants of the Land:

**Ex. 23:24** "You shall not worship their gods, nor serve them, nor do according to their deeds; but you shall utterly overthrow them, and break their sacred pillars in pieces.

**Deut. 4:25-31** **Deut. 4:25** "When you become the father of children and children's children and have remained long in the land, and act corruptly, and make an idol in the form of anything, and do that which is evil in the sight of the LORD your God so as to provoke Him to anger, **26** I call heaven and earth to witness against you today, that you shall surely perish quickly from the land where you are going over the Jordan to possess it. You shall not live long on it, but shall be utterly destroyed. **27** "And the LORD will

scatter you among the peoples, and you shall be left few in number among the nations, where the LORD shall drive you. **28** “And there you will serve gods, the work of man’s hands, wood and stone, which neither see nor hear nor eat nor smell. **29** “But from there you will seek the LORD your God, and you will find Him if you search for Him with all your heart and all your soul. **30** “When you are in distress and all these things have come upon you, in the latter days, you will return to the LORD your God and listen to His voice. **31** “For the LORD your God is a compassionate God; He will not fail you nor destroy you nor forget the covenant with your fathers which He swore to them.

**Deut. 7:2** and when the LORD your God shall deliver them before you, and you shall defeat them, then you shall utterly destroy them. You shall make no covenant with them and show no favor to them.

**Deut. 12:2** “You shall utterly destroy all the places where the nations whom you shall dispossess serve their gods, on the high mountains and on the hills and under every green tree.

**Deut. 20:17** “But you shall utterly destroy them, the Hittite and the Amorite, the Canaanite and the Perizzite, the Hivite and the Jebusite, as the LORD your God has commanded you,

**HOWEVER:** The nation of Israel had failed to *completely* obey the Lord:

- **Judah and Simeon: (1:19)**

“**19** Now the LORD was with Judah, and they took possession of the hill country; but they could not drive out the inhabitants of the valley because they had iron chariots.”

- **Manassah (1:27-28)**

“**27** But Manasseh did not take possession of Beth-shean and its villages, or Taanach and its villages, or the inhabitants of Dor and its villages, or the inhabitants of Ibleam and its villages, or the inhabitants of Megiddo and its villages; so the Canaanites persisted in living in that land. **28** And it came about when Israel became strong, that they put the Canaanites to forced labor, but they did not drive them out completely.

- **Ephraim (1:29)**

**29** Neither did Ephraim drive out the Canaanites who were living in Gezer; so the Canaanites lived in Gezer among them.

- **Zebulun (1:30)**

**Judg. 1:30** Zebulun did not drive out the inhabitants of Kitron, or the inhabitants of Nahalol; so the Canaanites lived among them and became subject to forced labor.

- **Asher (1:31-32)**

**Judg. 1:31** Asher did not drive out the inhabitants of Acco, or the inhabitants of Sidon, or of Ahlab, or of Achzib, or of Helbah, or of Aphik, or of Rehob. **32** So the Asherites lived among the Canaanites, the inhabitants of the land; for they did not drive them out.

- **Naphtali (1:33)**

**Judg. 1:33** Naphtali did not drive out the inhabitants of Beth-shemesh, or the inhabitants of Beth-anath, but lived among the Canaanites, the inhabitants of the land; and the inhabitants of Beth-shemesh and Beth-anath became forced labor for them.

- **Dan (1:34-36)**

**Judg. 1:34** Then the Amorites forced the sons of Dan into the hill country, for they did not allow them to come down to the valley; **35** yet the Amorites persisted in living in Mount Heres, in Aijalon and in Shaalbim; but when the power of the house of Joseph grew strong, they became forced labor. **36** And the border of the Amorites ran from the ascent of Akrabbim, from Sela and upward.

NB: God sovereignly refused to enable the Israelites to finish the job of driving out the Canaanites (Judges 2:20-3:6)

**2:20** So the anger of the LORD burned against Israel, and He said, “Because this nation has transgressed My covenant which I commanded their fathers, and has not listened to My voice, **21** I also will no longer drive out before them any of the nations which Joshua left when he died, **22** in order to test

Israel by them, whether they will keep the way of the LORD to walk in it as their fathers did, or not.” 23 So the LORD allowed those nations to remain, not driving them out quickly; and He did not give them into the hand of Joshua.

Judg. 3:1 Now these are the nations which the LORD left, to test Israel by them (that is, all who had not experienced any of the wars of Canaan; 2 only in order that the generations of the sons of Israel might be taught war, those who had not experienced it formerly). 3 These nations are: the five lords of the Philistines and all the Canaanites and the Sidonians and the Hivites who lived in Mount Lebanon, from Mount Baal-hermon as far as Lebo-hamath. 4 And they were for testing Israel, to find out if they would obey the commandments of the LORD, which He had commanded their fathers through Moses. 5 And the sons of Israel lived among the Canaanites, the Hittites, the Amorites, the Perizzites, the Hivites, and the Jebusites; 6 and they took their daughters for themselves as wives, and gave their own daughters to their sons, and served their gods.

## II. A Selected History of the Time of the Judges (Judges 3:7-16:31)

A. Othniel vs the Mesopotamians (Judges 3:7-11)

B. Ehud and Shamgar vs the Moabites (Judges 3:12-31)

C. Deborah vs the Canaanites (Judges 4:1-5:31)

D. Gideon vs the Mideonites (Judges 6:1-8:32)

E. Tola and Jair vs the influence and legacy of Abimelech (Judges 8:33-10:5)

F. Jephthah, Ibzan, and Abdon vs. the Philistines and the Ammonites (10:6-12:15)

G. Samson vs the Philistines (13:1- 16:31)

III. Spiritual Depravity of the Nation: A Selected History (Judges 17:1-1:25)

A. The Idolatry of Micah and the Danites (Judges 17:1-18:31)

B. The Crime of Gibeah and War against Benjamin (Judges 19:1-21:25)

IV. The Book of Ruth

A. The Setting

Ruth 1:1 Now it came about in the days when the judges governed, that there was a famine in the land. And a certain man of Bethlehem in Judah went to sojourn in the land of Moab with his wife and his two sons.

- Elimelech and Naomi encounter famine in the land of Israel
- They journey to Moab in order to survive.
- Elimelech dies
- Naomi's 2 sons take wives and then they die
- Naomi hears that "God has visited His people by giving them bread" (1:6) and she and one of her daughters (Ruth) return to Israel
- God appoints Boaz as a "kinsman-redeemer" to save Ruth
- Boaz receives Ruth in his field, a romance blossoms, and finally Boaz redeems Ruth
- God rewards Ruth and Boaz with a child
- This child furthers the line of the Messiah

## B. Major Themes

- God's Plan of Redemption extends beyond the Jews to the Gentiles (Ruth is a Moabite)
- Ruth demonstrates that women are co-heirs with men in God's salvation grace
- Ruth is an example of the *excellent* woman of Proverbs 31 (cf. 3:11, ". . . all the people of my town know that you are a *virtuous* woman")
- Ruth describes God's sovereign and providential care of *seemingly unimportant and insignificant people*
  - "God had visited His people" –stopping the famine(1:6)
  - Ruth "happened to go to the field of Boaz" (2:3)
  - "the Lord enabled Ruth to conceive" –as Ruth and Boaz married(4:13)
- Ruth along with Tamar (Gen. 38), Rahab (Josh. 2), and Bathsheba (II Sam. 11-12) stand in the Messianic line
- Boaz is a type of Christ becoming Ruth's kinsman-redeemer