

Judges

“Deliverers”

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Content of Judges

- After the death of Joshua, Israel entered a long period of apostasy—a sad cycle of spiritual decline, distress and deliverance (2:10-19)
- God, in mercy, delivered the Jews repeatedly, even if they didn't repent—their outcry doesn't necessarily imply repentance (2:16; 3:9; 4:3; 6:7)

Message of Judges

- The certainty of human failure and divine punishment when people disobey God and do what is right in their own eyes (2:19b; 17:6; 21:25)
- God will fulfill his promises and love his people even if they are disobedient

The Book

- Perhaps written by Samuel
- The history of the 13 judges (deliverers) who ruled and delivered Israel
- Covers: 7 apostasies of Israel, 7 servitudes to 7 heathen nations, 7 cries to God and 7 deliverances under the judges

The Judges

- Othniel, Ehud, Shamgar, Deborah and Barak, Gideon, Abimelech, Tola, Jair, Jephthah, Ibzan, Elon, Abdon and Samson
- The last two judges Eli and Samuel came later
- Most memorable: Deborah, Gideon, Jephthah, Samson and Samuel

Deborah

Ch. 4

- The only woman judge
- Accompanied her captain, Barak and gained victory over Jabin, the Canaanite king
- Sisera, captain of Jabin's army, was killed while sleeping when Jael, Heber's wife, drove a tent peg through his temple

Gideon

Chs. 6-8

- Gideon and his 300 men defeated 135,000 Midianites and delivered Israel from oppression
- This victory proved to the Israelites that it was God and not themselves who delivered them
- Gideon foolishly made a golden idol to Baal, which the Israelites worshiped even after his death (8:22-35)

Jephthah

Ch. 11

- Remembered for his rash vow: And Jephthah made a vow to the Lord, and said, “If You will indeed deliver the people of Ammon into my hands, then it will be that whatever comes out of the doors of my house to meet me, when I return in peace from the people of Ammon, shall surely be the Lord’s, and I will offer it up as a burnt offering” (vv. 30-31)
- Led a successful battle against the Ammonites and delivered Israel

Jephthah's Vow

11:30-31, 34-40

- Debate surrounds exactly how Jephthah sacrificed his daughter
- “he carried out his vow with her which he had vowed. She knew no man” (v. 39)
- Did he offer her as a burnt offering or did she become a life-long virgin?
- Why did the people lament four days each year (v. 40)?

Samson

Chs. 13-16

- A Nazarite who was physically strong but morally weak
- Slew a lion with his bare hands (14:5-6)
- Destroyed the grain and orchards of the Philistines by tying burning brands to the tails of 300 foxes and letting them go into the standing grain and olive yards
- Killed 1,000 men with a donkey's jawbone

Samson

Chs. 13-16

- Tore the gates of Gaza from their hinges and carried them about 30 miles to the top of a mountain in Hebron
- The gates may have weighed ~700 lbs
- Then Samson said, “Let me die with the Philistines!” And he pushed with all his might, and the temple fell on the lords and all the people who were in it. So the dead that he killed at his death were more than he had killed in his life (16:30)

Key Word

- Confusion

Verses to Remember

- 17:6
- 21:25

Chapter to Remember

- Chapter 2

Trivia

Out of what did the Canaanites and Philistines make their chariots that caused Israel not to be able to drive them out?

Iron (Judges 1:19; 4:3)

Memory Verse

Judges 17:6; 21:25