

A Dark Time in History

While the topic of the judges is not discussed much among Bible students, it marks a critical moment in Bible history. It was a dark period that lasted several hundred years in Israel. Judges 21:25 sums up the period quite well! Like the rest of the scriptures, the book of Judges is also inspired by God (2 Timothy 3:16). It also contains many valuable lessons that can help us serve God (Romans 15:4).

The Background:

- When the book opens, Israel had completed its forty years of wandering in the wilderness. An entire faithless generation has died. Moses has also died.
- Joshua has led a seven-year conquest on taking Canaan.
- The tribes have divided up the Promised Land (Joshua 13-22).
- Joshua has instructed Israel to drive out the remaining Canaanites (Joshua 23-24). Sadly, the nation failed to do so (Judges 1:27-36).
- God became angry and vowed never again to help Israel drive out the Canaanites (Judges 2:1-5).

The 350-Year Cycle:

- Israel would relapse into sin (Judges 2:11-13).
- God would exercise retribution (Judges 2:14-15). He would punish Israel by allowing their enemies to rise and oppress them.
- While suffering, Israel would then repent (Judges 3:9).
- God would then use a judge (deliverer) to rescue them (Judges 2:16-18).
- The land would then be at rest (Judges 3:11, 30; 5:31; 8:28).

The Judges:

- Othniel (Judges 3:7-11)
- Ehud (Judges 3:12-30)
- Shamgar (Judges 3:31)
- Deborah (Judges 4-5)
- Gideon (Judges 6-8)
- Tola (Judges 10:1-2)
- Jair (Judges 10:3-4)
- Jephthah (Judges 10:5-12:7)
- Ibzan (Judges 12:8-10)
- Elon (Judges 12:11-12)
- Abdon (Judges 12:13-15)
- Samson (Judges 13-16)
- Eli (1 Samuel 4:18)
- Samuel (1 Samuel 7:15)

The Lessons:

- Sin is serious business! See Judges 3:7, 12; 4:1; 6:1; 10:6; 13:1; Proverbs 13:15.
- God is merciful and forgiving (Judges 3:9, 15; 10:10; 13:5; Jonah 4:1-2; Ephesians 2:4-5).
- When life is going well, it is easy to forget about God (Judges 2:19).

Conclusion:

Israel suffered because they failed to obey God (Judges 21:25). Will we learn from their mistake?