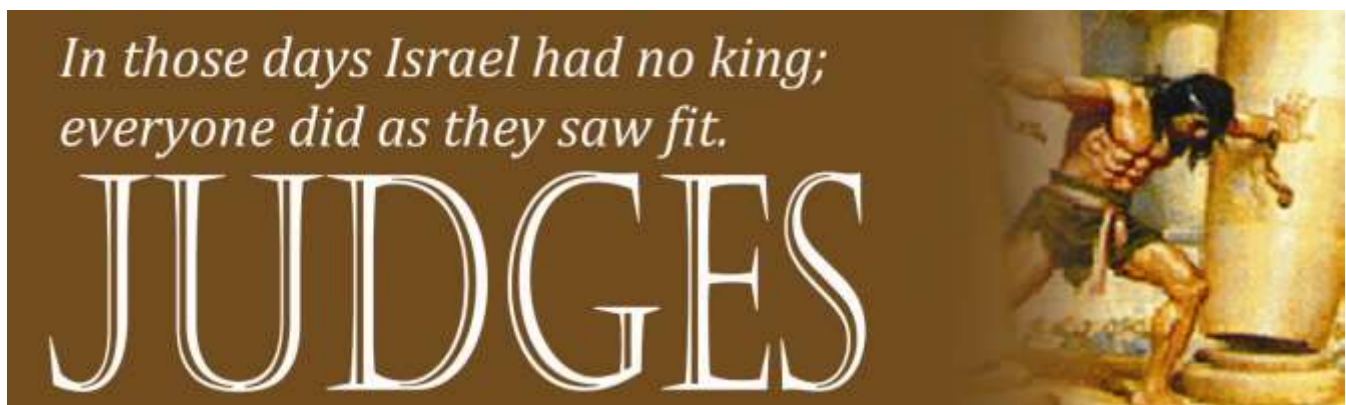
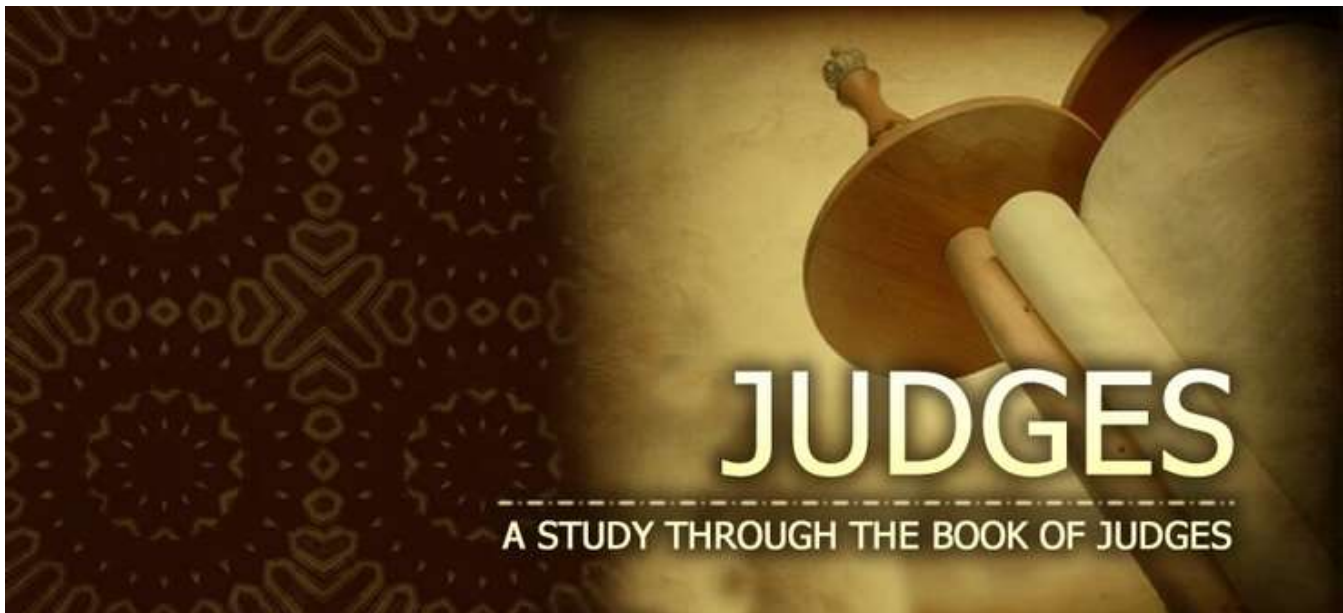


09/24/2020

## The Book of Judges



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#### Abbreviations used:

JSB = Jewish Study Bible

ESB = ESV Study Bible

NFSB = NIV First-Century Study Bible

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## Introduction – Jim Bodnar

### Judges = Chieftains

Author unknown. Could have been written by multiple authors. Late Jewish tradition ascribes authorship to Samuel which is certainly possible.

Date of events: Between Joshua's death (either mid 14th or late 13th century BC) ie 1350 to 1250 BC and rise of Samuel and Saul (mid 11th century BC) ie 1050 BC Saul roughly 1020, David 1000 to 960, Solomon 960 to 920.

Theme: The downward spiral of Israel's national and spiritual life into chaos and apostasy, showing the need for a godly King to lead it (17:6; 21:25)

The book was written to show the consequences of religious apostasy and to point the way to a righteous King who would lead the people. Israel began to disobey God even in the time of Joshua.

Judges was written as a justification for the monarchy as implied by (21:25)  
"In those days there was no King in Israel. Everyone did what was right in his own eyes."

Next book in the English Bible is Ruth, which ends with a genealogy that points to David, a godly King par excellence (Ruth 4:18-22) followed by books of 1st and 2nd Samuel which relate the establishment of the legitimate David monarchy, which pleased God.

- Key theme - to follow
- History of salvation summary - to follow
- The Judges - to follow
- Literacy Features + maps - to follow

### Judges/Judge: *shofet* שופט

This word can also be translated "leaders", "chieftains" or even "warriors." The judges were something like guerilla commanders, and their stories read like other ancient Near Eastern hero stories. The judges temporarily filled a leadership void in this chaotic time in Israel's history.

## The Judges [Source: ESB]

Judge	Reference	Tribe	Oppressor	Period of Oppression	Period of Rest	Total Length of Time*
Othniel	3:7-11	Judah	Mesopotamians	8 years ( 3:8 )	40 years ( 3:11 )	48 years
Ehud	3:12-30	Benjamin	Moabites	18 years ( 3:14 )	80 years ( 3:30 )	98 years
Shamgar	3:31		Philistines			
Deborah	chs. 4-5	Ephraim	Canaanites	20 years ( 4:3 )	40 years ( 5:31 )	60 years
Gideon	chs. 6-8	Manasseh	Midianites	7 years ( 6:1 )	40 years ( 8:28 )	47 years
Tola	10:1-2	Issachar			23 years ( 10:2 )	23 years
Jair	10:3-5	Gilead-Manasseh			22 years ( 10:3 )	22 years
Jephthah	10:6-12:7	Gilead-Manasseh	Ammonites		24 years ( 10:8 ; 12:7 )	24 years
Ibzan	12:8-10	Judah or Zebulun?			7 years ( 12:9 )	7 years
Elon	12:11-12	Zebulun			10 years ( 12:11 )	10 years
Abdon	12:13-15	Ephraim			8 years ( 12:14 )	8 years
Samson	chs. 13-16	Dan	Philistines	40 years ( 13:1 )	20 years ( 15:20 ; 16:31 )	60 years

\* Added together, the dates in this column total about 410 years. However, many of the episodes in Judges overlap each other, unfolding in different parts of the land. This overlapping of periods is not a phenomenon unique to Israel: it was also practiced in Egypt.

See: [Maps: Judge's homeland or dominant area of influence](#)

See also:

[The Cycles of Sin: The Cycle Defined](#)

[List of 15 Judges in the Bible](#)

## Assessment of the Judges [Source: ESB]

Two of the most famous judges were anything but paragons of virtue. After an auspicious beginning, Gideon's badgering God for a confirmatory sign (6:36-40) may indicate a decided lack of faith (or at least fear). Later he made an ephod that became an object of worship and a snare for him, his family, and all Israel (8:24-27). Samson violated all of the main provisions of his Nazirite vow (13:7; cf. Num 6:1-21): he drank wine at his wedding feast (Judges 14:10: "feast" here [Hb. *mishteh*] is specifically a "drinking feast"); he had contact with the dead (e.g., 14:8-9, 19; 15:15); and he allowed his hair to be cut (16:17-19). Furthermore, he married an unbelieving Philistine (14:1-20), and he had intimate relations with at least two other Philistine women (16:1, 4).

In general, the book does not describe the judges as leading Israel in true repentance and in putting away foreign gods, certainly not in the way the reforming kings did later in the kingdom of Judah. The one judge who did the most along this line--Gideon (6:25-32)--did so only at the beginning of his "ministry"; by the end, he was leading the people in exactly the opposite direction (8:24-27).

The NT may seem to present a more idealized view of Gideon, Samson, and others than what is found in the book of Judges: Hebrews lists Gideon, Barak, Samson, and Jephthah, along with David, Samuel, and the prophets, as examples of those "who through faith conquered kingdoms, enforced justice, obtained promises, stopped the mouths of lions" (Heb 11:32-33). However, to say that these heroes had some measure of faith is not to say that they were consistent models of faith and virtue. Undoubtedly, they demonstrated faith (at times) that allowed God to "conquer kingdoms" through them, but just as surely, the book of Judges focuses more on other aspects of their character to make a point about the widespread apostasy during the period.

While the judges themselves did not always contribute to improving the spiritual conditions in the land, this was not always their fault. The people as a whole did not supply the repentance that makes a godly leader effective. But despite their flaws, the judges often acted heroically. The book of Judges does not exaggerate or romanticize their exploits. These stories are not primarily about the judges as individuals: the judges' main function is to dispense God's justice and merciful faithfulness to his people, usually by military deliverance. All servants of God's purposes for his people have their flaws; the question is whether God should choose to allow those flaws to bear their bitter fruit. Even in these circumstances, God is working out his plan; he is not thwarted, even by human failure.

## History of Salvation Summary

[Source: ESB]

God's people were to fulfill their calling by being faithful to the covenant in the land God had given them. The leadership of Joshua had set them up to do just this, and yet success was not automatic. The people depended on faithful leadership, which they generally lacked. Even the judges fell short of the ideal for leaders; nevertheless, God used them to preserve and chastise his people, and to teach them their need for a faithful king (a provision narrated by 1–2 Samuel). (For an explanation of the "History of Salvation," see the [Overview of the Bible](#). See also History of Salvation in the Old Testament: [Preparing the Way for Christ](#).)

## Literary Features

The format of Judges is a collection of individual "hero stories"; together, they tell the history of Israel during a specific era. Like Genesis, Judges pictures a mixture of good and bad behavior: the judges are not idealized, nor is their portrait uniformly negative. Mingled with the hero stories are brief units of historical facts about judges whose stories are not told in detail. The famous Song of Deborah ([ch. 5](#)) is poetry, while the story

of Samson ([chs. 13–16](#)) meets the usual criteria of literary tragedy.

The pattern introduced in [2:11–23](#) shapes the plot: (1) the Israelites do what is evil in the sight of God; (2) God allows the nation to be conquered and oppressed by a neighboring nation; (3) the people cry to God; and (4) God sends a judge to deliver them (see [chart](#)). Then the cycle repeats itself. In addition to this cycle, the book is structured on the premise of a double plot. The overall story is one of national descent into lawlessness and apostasy; but within this national narrative lies a collection of stories that celebrate the heroic exploits of judges. Even though they had severe flaws, four of these judges are mentioned among the heroes of the faith ([Hebrews 11](#)).

Realism permeates Judges, for the book refuses to overlook the sordid side of life. As the book unfolds, readers encounter shocking accounts of violence, sexual abuse, idolatry, and misuse of power. Before the book is over, gruesome scenes of bodily mutilation and dismemberment are disclosed. While Judges portrays the worst with regard to bad behavior, such realism was included to reveal something important about life and human nature apart from God.



Note: the History and Literary Features [ESB] section proceeds this page:



The Merneptah Stele is an Egyptian inscription from c. 1200 BC which contains the first documented instance of the name “Israel.”

Baker Photo Archive. The Egyptian Museum, Cairo [Source: NFSB]

*More Literary Features [NFSB] on next page...*

## Literary Features [Source: NFSB]

Even a quick reading of Judges discloses its basic threefold division: (1) a prologue (1:1–3:6), (2) a main body (3:7–16:31) and (3) an epilogue (chs. 17–21). Closer study brings to light a more complex structure, with interwoven themes that bind the whole into an intricately designed portrayal of the character of an age.

The prologue (1:1–3:6) has two parts, and each serves a different purpose. They are not chronologically related, nor does either offer a strict chronological scheme of the time as a whole. The first part (1:1–2:5) sets the stage historically for the narratives that follow. It describes the Israelites' occupation of the promised land—from their initial success to their large-scale failure and divine rebuke.

The second part (2:6–3:6) indicates a basic perspective on the period from the time of Joshua to the rise of the monarchy, a time characterized by recurring cycles of apostasy, oppression, cries of distress and gracious divine deliverance. The author summarizes and explains the Lord's dealings with his rebellious people and introduces some of the basic vocabulary and formulas he will use in the later narratives: "did evil in the eyes of the LORD," 2:11 (see 3:7, 12; 4:1; 6:1; 10:6); "gave them into the hands of," 2:14 (see 6:1; 13:1); and "sold them," 2:14 (see 3:8; 4:2; 10:7).

The main body of the book (3:7–16:31), which gives the actual accounts of the recurring cycles (apostasy, oppression, distress, deliverance), has its own unique design. Each cycle has a similar beginning ("The Israelites did evil in the eyes of the LORD," 3:7, 12; 4:1; 6:1; 10:6; 13:1) and a recognizable conclusion ("the land had peace . . . years" [3:11, 30; 5:31; 8:28] or "led Israel . . . years" [12:7; 15:20; 16:31]). The first of these cycles (Othniel; see 3:7–11) provides the "report form" used for each successive story of oppression and deliverance (that is, beginning statement; cycle of apostasy, oppression, distress, deliverance; recognizable conclusion).

The remaining five cycles form the following narrative units, each of which focuses on one of the major judges:

(1) Ehud (3:12–30), a lone hero from the tribe of Benjamin who delivers Israel from oppression from the east.

(2) Deborah (chs. 4–5), a woman from one of the Joseph tribes (Ephraim), who judges at a time when Israel is being overrun by a coalition of Canaanites under Sisera.

(3) Gideon and his son Abimelek (chs. 6–9), whose story forms the central account. In many ways Gideon is the ideal judge, evoking memory of Moses, while his son is the very antithesis of a responsible and faithful judge.

(4) Jephthah (10:6–12:7), a social outcast from the other Joseph tribe (Manasseh, east of the Jordan), who judges at a time when Israel is being threatened by a coalition of powers under the king of Ammon.

(5) Samson (chs. 13–16), a lone hero from the tribe of Dan who delivers Israel from oppression from the west.

The arrangement of these narrative units is significant. The central accounts of Gideon (the Lord's ideal judge) and Abimelek (the anti-judge) are bracketed by the parallel narratives of the woman Deborah and the social outcast Jephthah—which in turn are framed by the stories of the lone heroes Ehud and Samson. In this way even the structure focuses attention on the crucial issue of the period of the judges: Israel's attraction to the Baals of Canaan (shown by Abimelek, ch. 9) versus the Lord's kingship over his people (encouraged by Gideon, 8:23).

The epilogue (chs. 17–21) characterizes the era in yet another way, depicting religious and moral corruption on the part of individuals, cities and tribes. Like the introduction, it has two divisions that are neither chronologically related nor expressly dated to the careers of specific judges. The events must have taken place, however, rather early in the period of the judges (see 18:30; 20:28).

By dating the events of the epilogue only in relationship to the monarchy (see the recurring refrain in 17:6; 18:1; 19:1; 21:25), the author contrasts the age of the judges with the better time that the monarchy inaugurated, undoubtedly having in view the rule of David and his dynasty (see note on 17:1–21:25). The book mentions two instances of the Lord's assigning leadership to the tribe of Judah: (1) in driving out the Canaanites (1:1–2) and (2)



in disciplining a tribe in Israel (20:18). The author views the ruler from the tribe of Judah as the savior of the nation.

The first division of the epilogue (chs. 17–18) relates the story of Micah's development of a paganized place of worship and tells of the tribe of Dan abandoning their allotted territory while adopting Micah's corrupted religion. The second division (chs. 19–21) tells the story of a Levite's sad experience at Gibeah in Benjamin and records the disciplinary removal of the tribe of Benjamin because it had defended the degenerate town of Gibeah.

The two divisions have several interesting parallels:

1. Both involve a Levite's passing between Bethlehem (in Judah) and Ephraim across the Benjamin-Dan corridor.
2. Both mention 600 warriors—those who led the tribe of Dan and those who survived from the tribe of Benjamin.
3. Both conclude with the emptying of a tribal area in that corridor (Dan and Benjamin).

**Not only are these Benjamin-Dan parallels significant within the epilogue, but they also form a notable link to the main body of the book. The tribe of Benjamin, which in the epilogue undertook to defend gross immorality, setting ties of blood above loyalty to the Lord, was the tribe from which the Lord raised up the deliverer Ehud (3:15). The tribe of Dan, which in the epilogue retreated from its assigned inheritance and adopted pagan religious practices, was the tribe from which the Lord raised up the deliverer Samson (13:2, 5). Thus the tribes that in the epilogue depict the religious and moral corruption of Israel are the very tribes from which the deliverers were chosen whose stories frame the central account of the book (Gideon-Abimelek).**

The whole design of the book from prologue to epilogue, the unique manner in which each section deals with the age as a whole, and the way the three major divisions are interrelated clearly portray an age gone awry—an age when “Israel had no king” and “everyone did as they saw fit” (see note on 17:1–21:25). Of no small significance is the fact that the story is in episodes and cycles. It is given as the story of all Israel, though usually only certain areas are directly involved. The book portrays the centuries after Joshua as a time of the Israelites' unfaithfulness to the Lord and of their surrender to the allurements of Canaan. Only by the mercies of God were the Israelites not overwhelmed and absorbed by the pagan nations around them.

Meanwhile, the history of redemption virtually stood still—awaiting the forward movement that came with the Lord's servant David and the establishment of his dynasty.

See also: [Outline \[NFSB\]](#) and [History and Literary Features \[ESV\]](#)

## General Milestones

See also: [Outlines](#) and [Overviews](#)

<https://bibleproject.com/explore/judges/>

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# Milestones



## Outline [Source ESB]

See also: [Overviews](#)

- I. The Roots of Israel's Apostasy ( 1:1-3:6 )
  - A. Prelude to apostasy: incomplete conquests ( 1:1-2:5 )
    - 1. Initial battles and the seeds of apostasy ( 1:1-21 )
    - 2. Incomplete conquests portending apostasy ( 1:22-36 )
    - 3. The angel of the Lord and Israel's apostasy ( 2:1-5 )
  - B. The unfolding and consequences of apostasy ( 2:6-3:6 )
    - 1. Joshua's death and the coming apostasy ( 2:6-10 )
    - 2. The recurring pattern of Israel's apostasy, God's grace, and God's anger ( 2:11-23 )
    - 3. The testing of Israel ( 3:1-6 )
- II. The Downward Spiral of Israel's Apostasy ( 3:7-16:31 )
  - A. Othniel ( 3:7-11 )
  - B. Ehud ( 3:12-30 )
  - C. Shamgar ( 3:31 )
  - D. Deborah ( 4:1-5:31 )
    - 1. Victory over the Canaanites ( 4:1-24 )
    - 2. Deborah and Barak's victory song ( 5:1-31 )
  - E. Gideon ( 6:1-8:35 )
    - 1. Continuing apostasy ( 6:1-10 )
    - 2. Gideon's call ( 6:11-40 )
    - 3. Gideon's first battle ( 7:1-8:3 )
    - 4. Gideon's second battle ( 8:4-21 )
    - 5. Gideon's apostasy ( 8:22-28 )
    - 6. Gideon, father of Abimelech ( 8:29-32 )
    - 7. Continuing apostasy ( 8:33-35 )
  - F. Abimelech, apostate "king" ( 9:1-57 )
    - 1. Abimelech's sordid rise ( 9:1-6 )

2. Indictment of Abimelech: Jotham's fable ( 9:7-21 )
3. Abimelech's violent reign and end ( 9:22-55 )
4. Final verdict on Abimelech ( 9:56-57 )
- G. Tola ( 10:1-2 )
- H. Jair ( 10:3-5 )
- I. Jephthah ( 10:6-12:7 )
  1. Apostasy and distress ( 10:6-18 )
  2. Introduction to Jephthah ( 11:1-3 )
  3. Jephthah's commissioning ( 11:4-11 )
  4. Diplomatic discussions ( 11:12-28 )
  5. Victory and Jephthah's foolish vow ( 11:29-40 )
  6. Jephthah's conflict with Ephraim ( 12:1-7 )
- J. Ibzan ( 12:8-10 )
- K. Elon ( 12:11-12 )
- L. Abdon ( 12:13-15 )
- M. Samson ( 13:1-16:31 )
  1. The birth of Samson ( 13:1-25 )
  2. Samson and the Philistines, part 1 ( 14:1-15:20 )
  3. Samson and the Philistines, part 2 ( 16:1-31 )
- III. The Depths of Israel's Apostasy ( 17:1-21:25 )
  - A. Religious corruption ( 17:1-18:31 )
    1. Religious corruption of a household ( 17:1-6 )
    2. Religious corruption of a Levite ( 17:7-13 )
    3. Religious corruption of a tribe ( 18:1-31 )
  - B. Moral and social corruption ( 19:1-21:24 )
    1. Moral outrage at Gibeah ( 19:1-30 )
    2. Civil war ( 20:1-48 )
    3. Chaotic aftermath ( 21:1-24 )
  - C. Final verdict ( 21:25 )

See also: [Outline \[NFSB\]](#) (following)



## Outline [Source: NFSB]

### I. Prologue: Incomplete Conquest and Apostasy (1:1–3:6)

A. First Episode: Israel's Failure to Purge the Land (1:1–2:5)

B. Second Episode: God's Dealings with Israel's Rebellion (2:6–3:6)

### II. Oppression and Deliverance (3:7–16:31)

#### *Major Judges*

A. Othniel Defeats Aram Naharaim (3:7–11)

B. Ehud Defeats Moab (3:12–30)

C. Deborah Defeats Canaan (chs. 4–5)

D. Gideon Defeats Midian (chs. 6–8)  
(Abimelek, the anti-judge, ch. 9)

E. Jephthah Defeats Ammon (10:6–12:7)

F. Samson Checks Philistia (chs. 13–16)

#### *Minor Judges*

1. Shamgar (3:31)

2. Tola (10:1–2)

3. Jair (10:3–5)

4. Ibzan (12:8–10)

5. Elon (12:11–12)

6. Abdon (12:13–15)

### III. Epilogue: Religious and Moral Disorder (chs. 17–21)

A. First Episode (chs. 17–18; see 17:6; 18:1)

1. Micah's corruption of religion (ch. 17)

2. The Danites' departure from their tribal territory (ch. 18)

B. Second Episode (chs. 19–21; see 19:1; 21:25)

1. Gibeah's corruption of morals (ch. 19)

2. The Benjamites' near removal from their tribal territory (chs. 20–21)

See also: [Outline \[ESB\]](#) and [Literary Features \[NFSB\]](#)

## Overviews of Judges

### Bible Illustration – The Book of Judges

<https://christianuniversity.org/resource-library/bible-illustrations/>



See next page for larger view...

BE WARNED! DISTURBING AND VIOLENT TRAGIC TALE BECOMES CANAANITE

17-21

THE EXPRESSION OF GOD'S SPIRIT ≠ ENDORSEMENT OF HUMAN CHOICES

JUDGES

SO REMEMBER... JOSHUA - TORAH! OBEY THE COMMANDS OF THE LORD

PROMISED LAND

1-2

ISRAEL'S TOTAL FAILURE

3-16

PRETTY GOOD

6-9

GRAY

10-12

WORSE

13-16

CORRUPTION OF ISRAEL'S JUDGES

IN THOSE DAYS ISRAEL HAD NO KING AND EVERYONE DID WHAT WAS RIGHT IN THEIR OWN EYES.

17-21 SEXUAL VIOLENCE VERY DISTURBING (AND THAT'S THE POINT.) CIVIL WAR

CORRUPTION OF THE PEOPLE OF ISRAEL

1 CANAANITES

2

3

4

5

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19

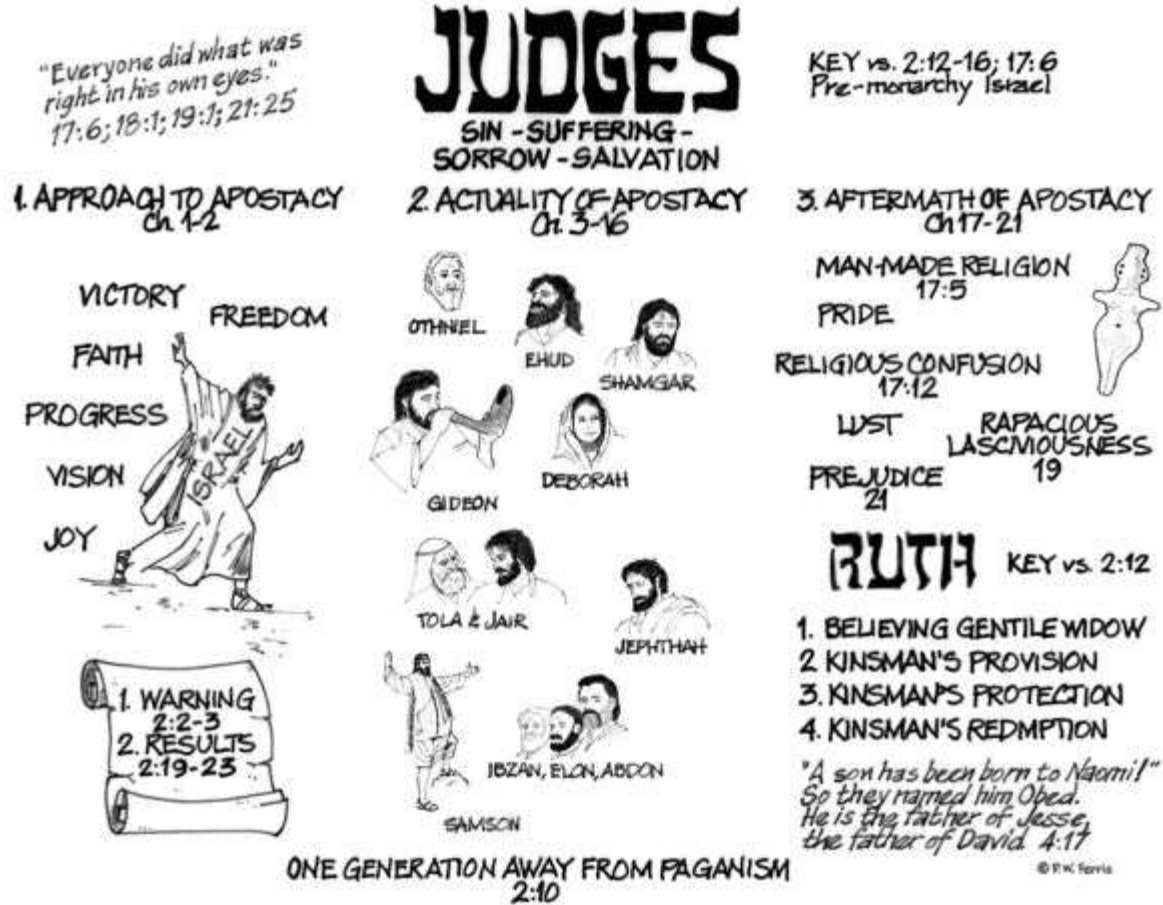
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21

ISRAEL FAILS TO DRIVE OUT THE CANAANITES



## Overview Judges: Sin – Suffering – Sorrow – Salvation

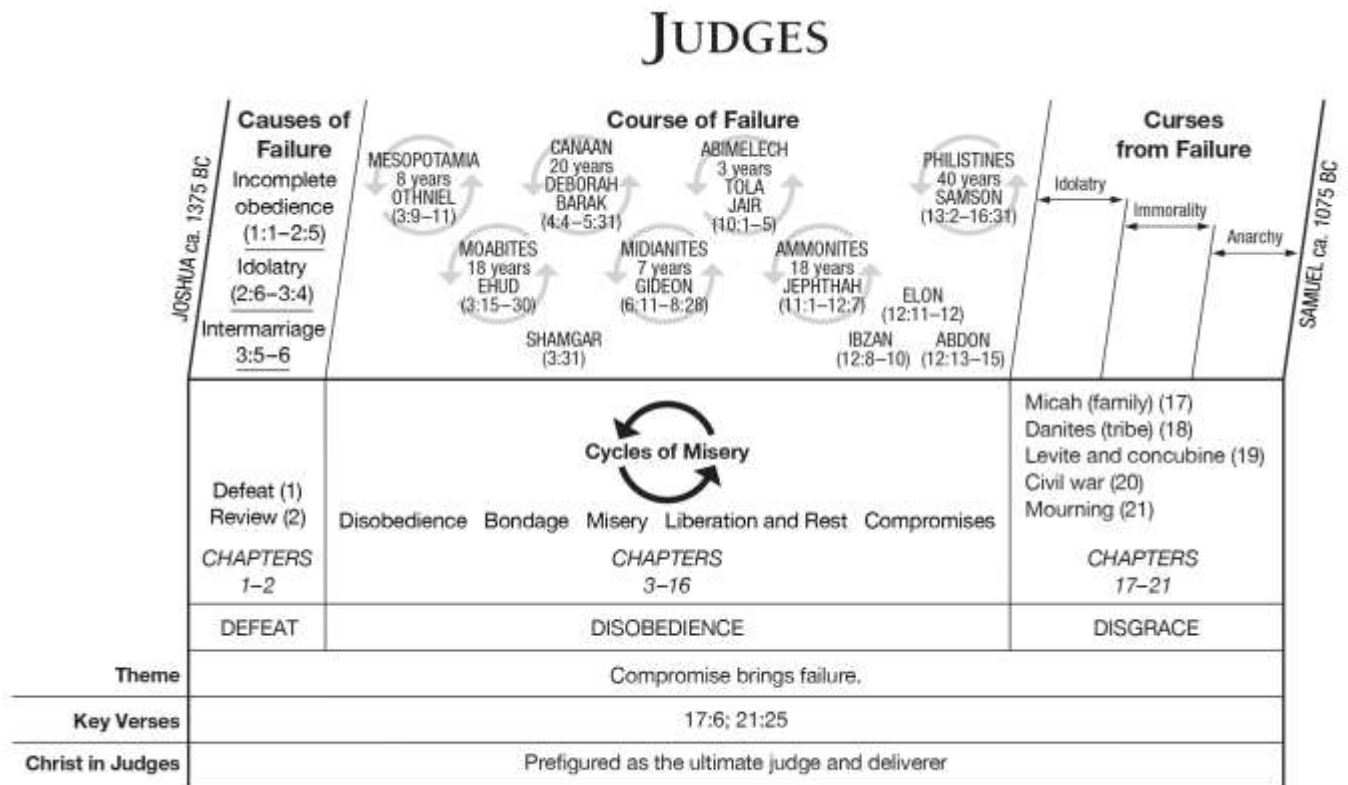


Continued next page...



**Judges Overview Chart** (Charles Swindoll)

<https://www.insight.org/resources/bible/the-historical-books/judges>



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## Maps

[The conquest of Canaan according to the book of Joshua](#) (JSB 2014)

[The incomplete conquest of the Promised Land](#) (ESB 2008)

[The Levitical cities as per Joshua](#) (JSB 2014)

[Important cities mentioned in the book of Judges](#) (JSB 2014)

[The Judges of Israel](#) (NFSB)

[Judge's homeland or dominant area of influence](#) (ESB 2008)

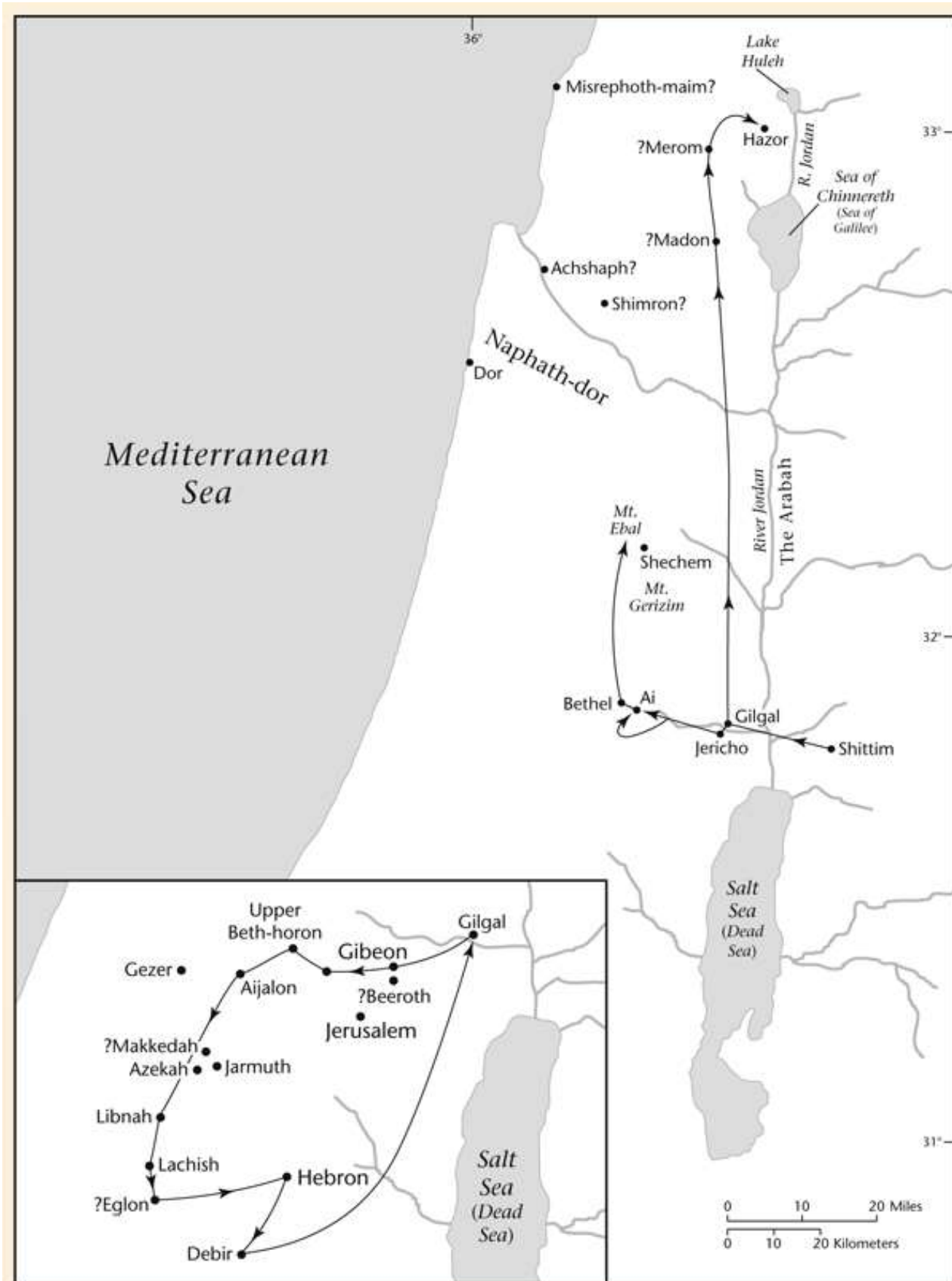
[Sites mentioned in connection with the Benjaminite War](#) (JSB 2014)

JSB = Jewish Study Bible

ESB = ESV Study Bible

NFSB = NIV First-Century Study Bible

# The Conquest of Canaan according to the book of Joshua



**The incomplete conquest of the Promised Land** set the stage for the book of Judges, which recounts the exploits of the various leaders raised up to deliver Israel from their oppressors.

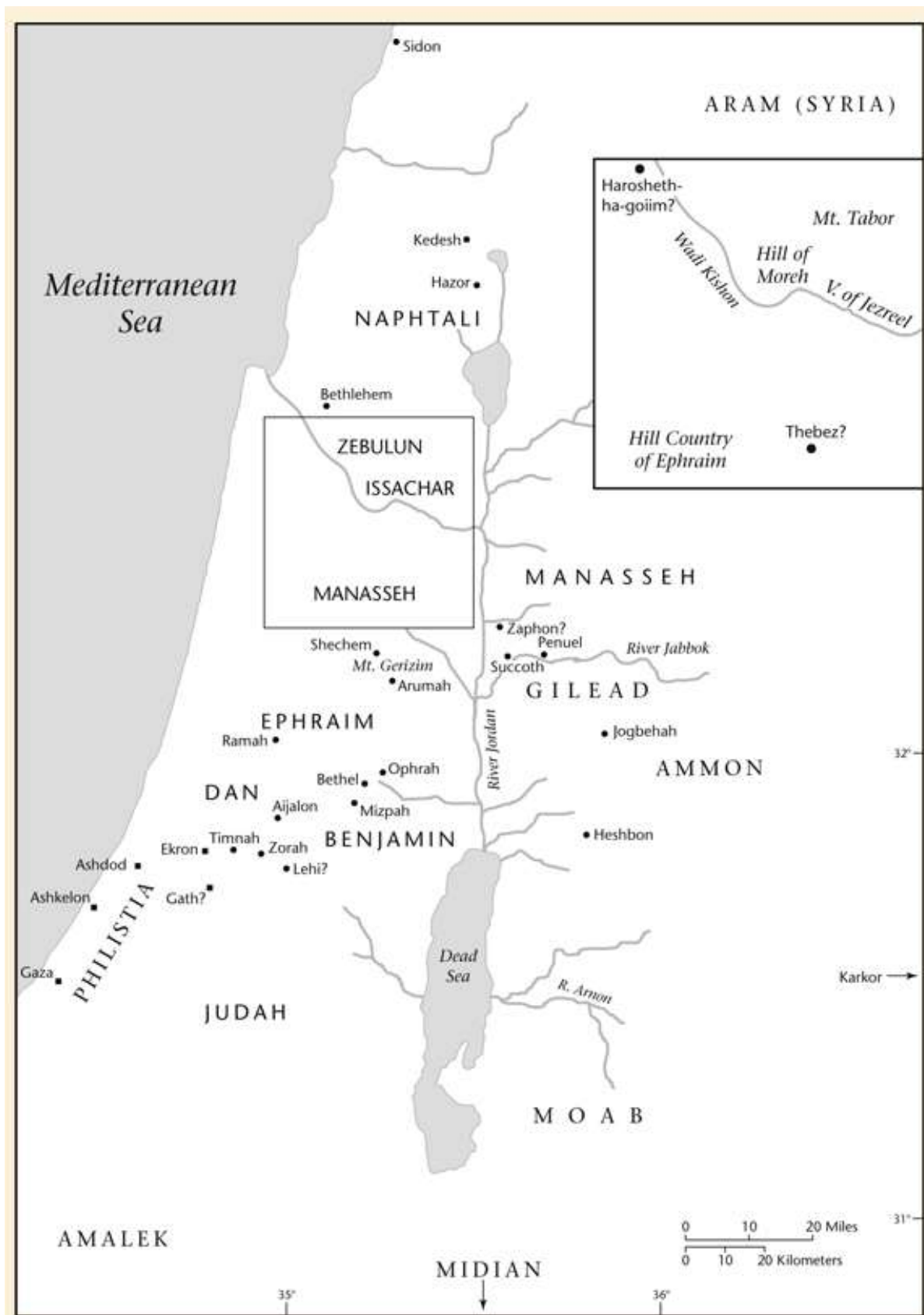




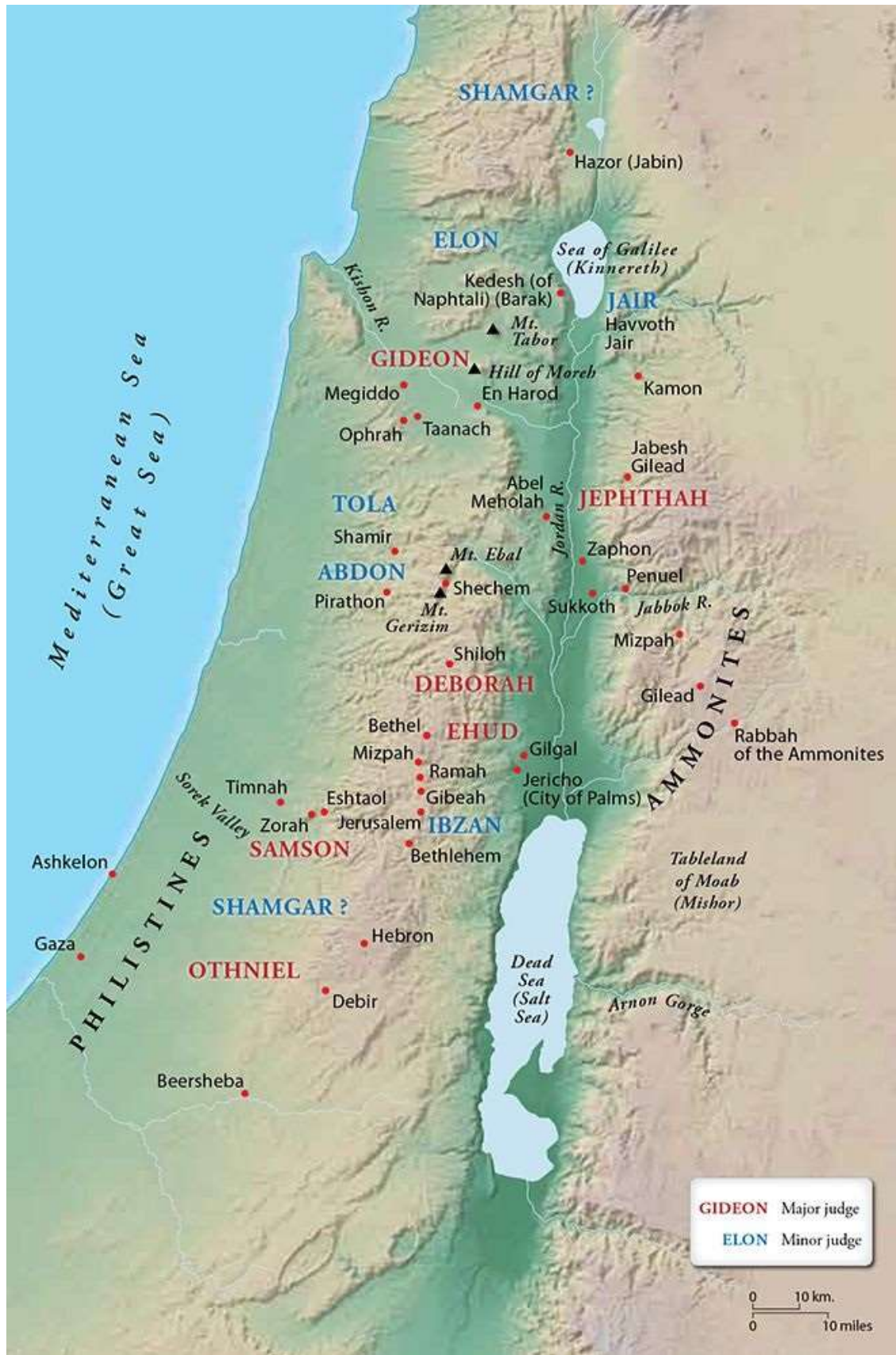
**The Levitical cities.** (Cities of refuge are highlighted with a star. The tribal boundaries are shown by a dashed line.)



**Important cities mentioned in the book of Judges** (Square boxes indicate Philistine cities.)



The Judges of Israel (see the color key)



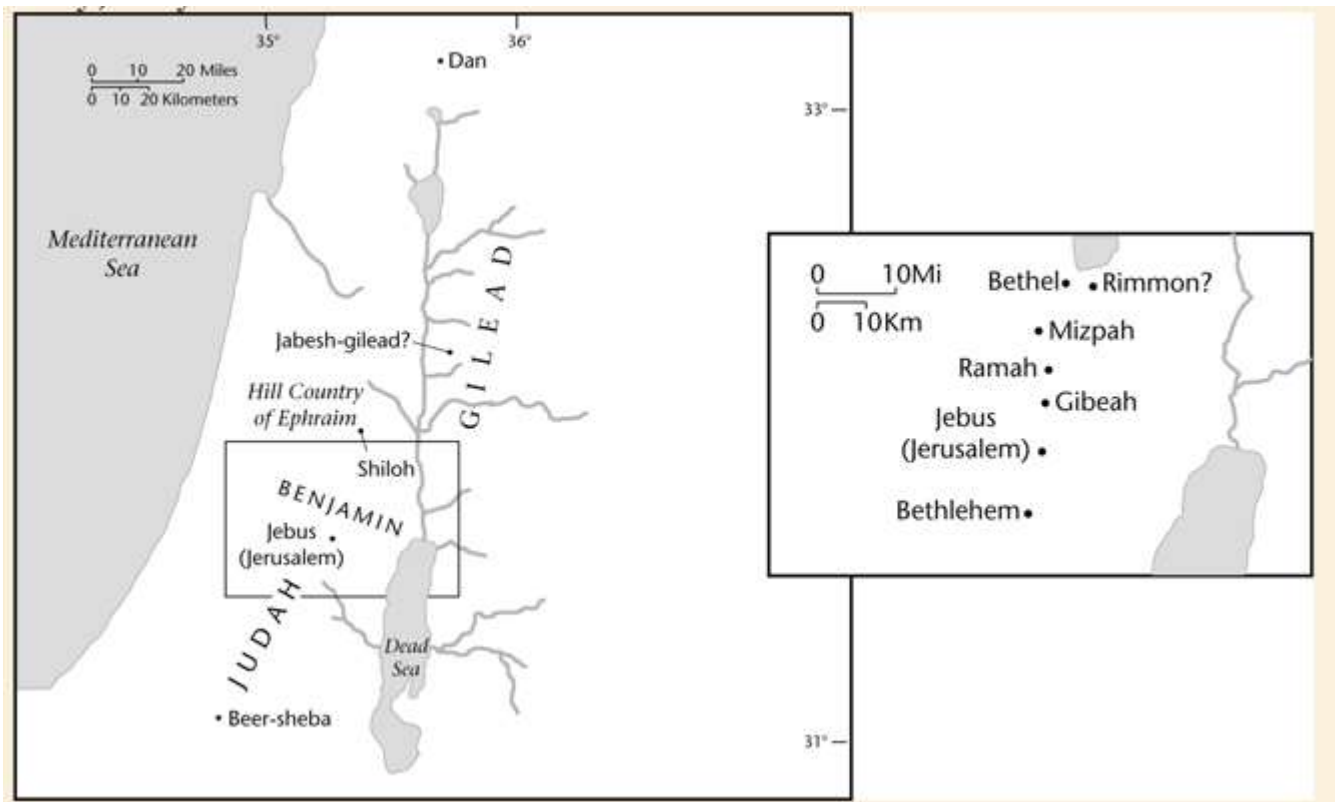


Judge's homeland or dominant area of influence (see color key). (See also: [The Judges](#))





## Sites mentioned in connection with the Benjaminite War



Return to: [Maps](#)

## Other Resources

BOOK OF JUDGES CLASS NOTES - Center Point Bible Institute

<http://www.centerpointbibleinstitute.com/classnotes/JUDGES%20HANDOUT%20CP.pdf> [PDF]

Expository Notes of Dr. Thomas Constable – Judges

<https://www.studydrive.org/commentaries/dcc/judges.html> [online]

<https://www.planobiblechapel.org/tcon/notes/html/ot/judges/judges.htm> [online]

<https://planobiblechapel.org/tcon/notes/pdf/judges.pdf> [PDF]

<https://planobiblechapel.org/soniclight/> [main site]

## The Cycles of Sin (and Redemption) in the Book of Judges

### Sin

What it promises vs What it delivers...



What is Sin?

<https://www.gotquestions.org/definition-sin.html>

<https://carm.org/what-is-sin>

[Maps](#)

[Go to TOC](#)

## Judges 1-3 Vicious Sin Cycle

<https://dailytruthbase.blogspot.com/2011/11/judges-1-3-vicious-sin-cycle.html>



### Judges 1 Incomplete Obedience Leads to Compromise

### Judges 2 Vicious Cycle of Sin

### Judges 3 Intermarriage Into Enslaved Idolatry

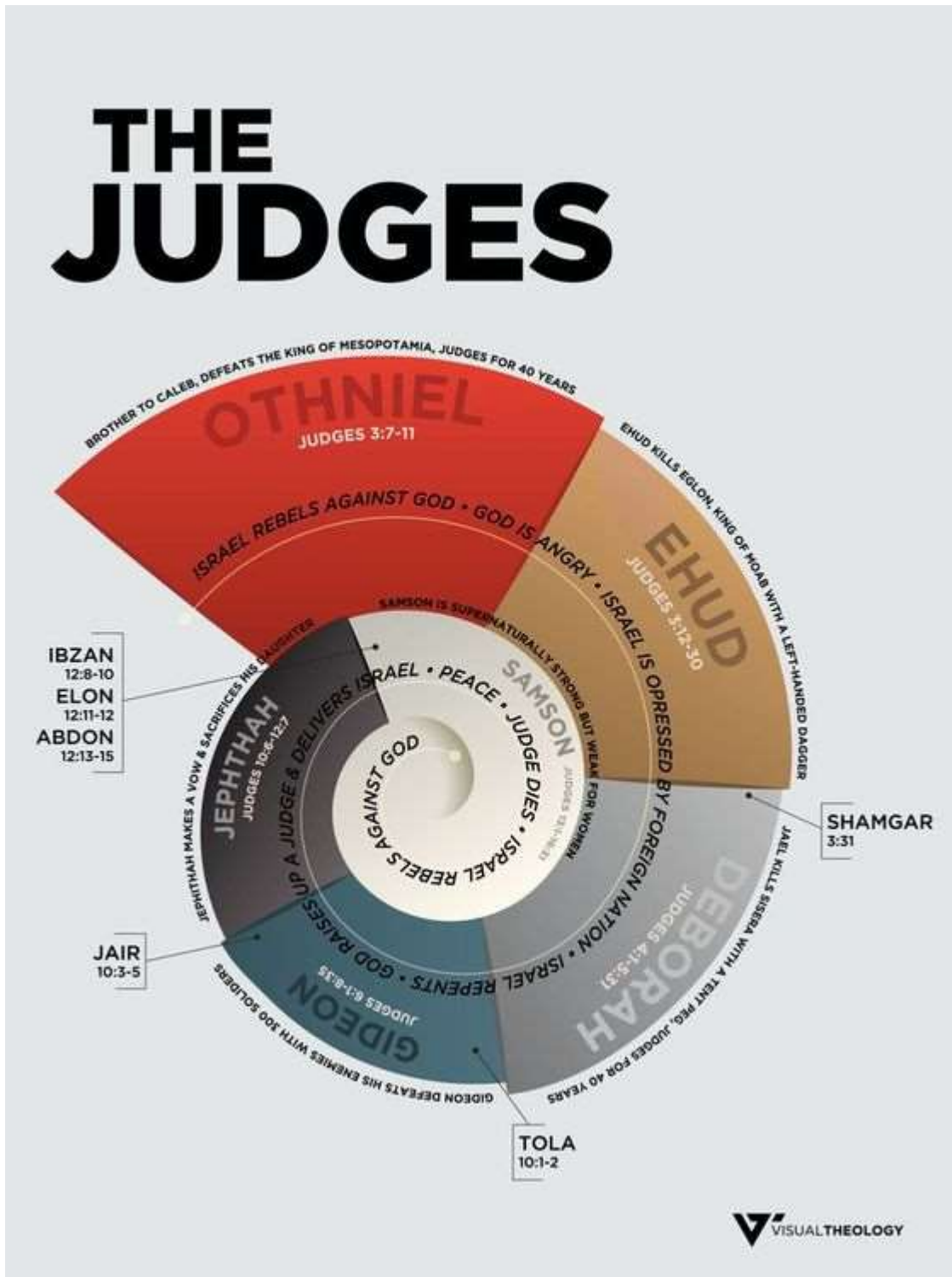
**(ESB): 1:1-2:5** Prelude to Apostasy: Incomplete Conquests. In the first part of the book's introduction, continuing military activity indicates that all conquests had not been completed during Joshua's day ( 1:1-26 ); several tribes achieved only incomplete conquests ( 1:27-36 ). Israel's disobedience in not completely conquering the land is confirmed in 2:1-5 .

#### Reasons Israel Failed to Take the Promised Land

- 1 . The Canaanites had superior arms and fortifications 1:19
- 2 . Israel was disposed to make alliances with the people of the land 2:1-5
- 3 . Israel sinned and must be punished 2:20-21
- 4 . Yahweh was testing Israel to see if they would be faithful or not 2:22-23; 3:4
- 5 . Israel needed to be instructed in the art of war 3:1-3



<https://visualtheology.church/products/the-judges-of-israel>



## The Cycle of Sin in the book of Judges

<https://jesusplusnothing.com/series/post/judges1>

### The Cycle Defined

**Judges 2:18-19** 'Whenever the LORD raised up a judge for them, he was with the judge and saved them out of the hands of their enemies as long as the judge lived; for the LORD had compassion on them as they groaned under those who oppressed and afflicted them. But when the judge died, the people returned to ways even more corrupt than those of their fathers, following other gods and serving and worshiping them. They refused to give up their evil practices and stubborn ways.'

In these two verses we find the pattern for the entire book - a pattern of sin, bondage and repentance that would last for nearly 350 years (around 1380 to 1050 BC). The following table [\[1\]](#) shows how this was repeated over and over...

Enemy	Years of Bondage	Judge	Deliverance and Rest	Scripture
Mesopotamia	8	Othniel	40	3:7-11
Moab	18	Ehud	80	3:12-31
Canaan	20	Deborah	40	4:1-5:31
Midian	7	Gideon	40	6:1-8:28
Ammon	18	Jephthah	6	10:6-12:7
Philistia	40	Samson	20	13:1-16:31

Now, if you look up the starting scripture for each of those passages, you will notice that the same phrase is used to begin each section, and it is this -

**'Then the sons of Israel again did evil in the sight of the LORD...'**

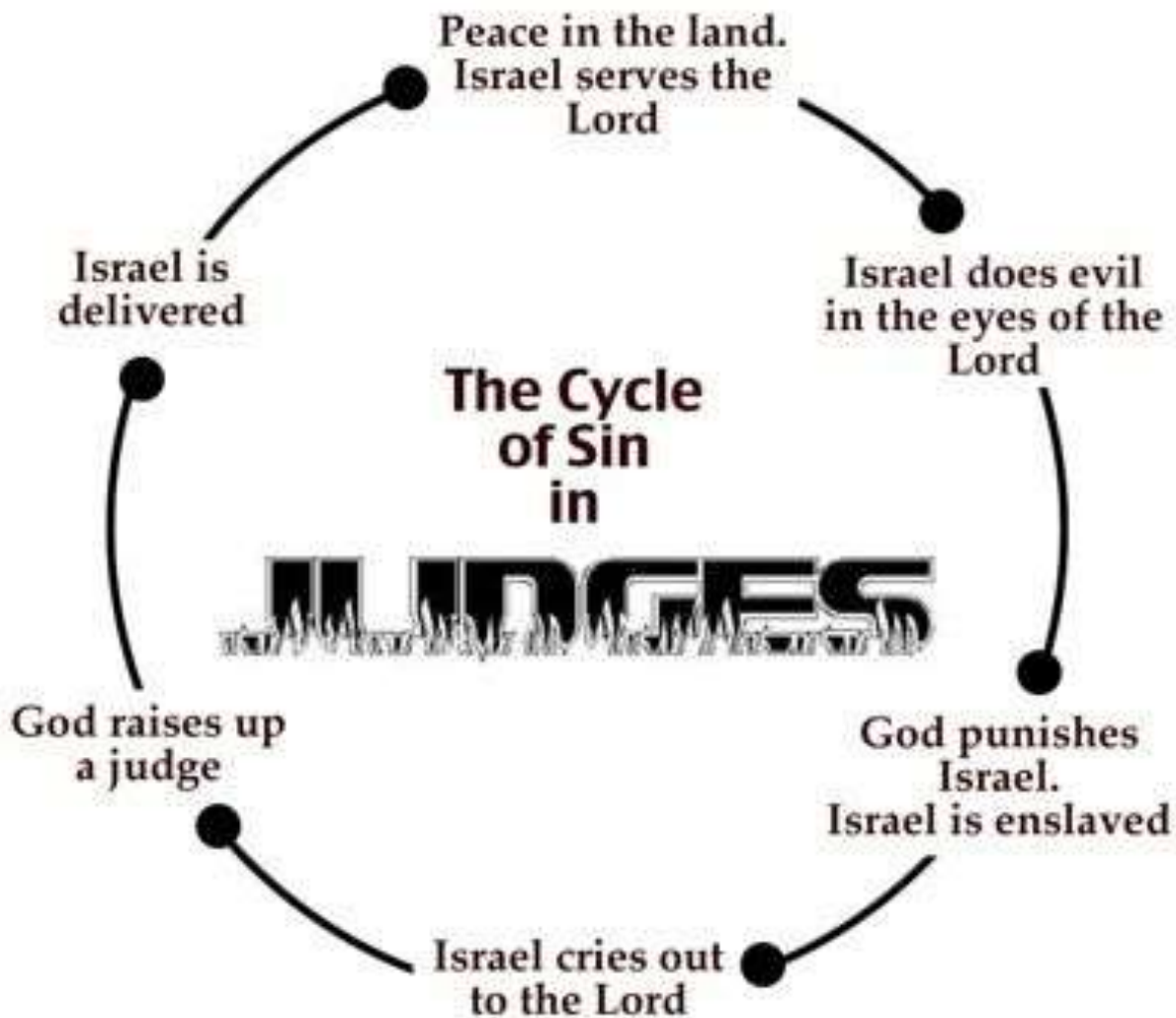
In other words there was a repeated cycle throughout the entire book - a cycle of sin, bondage, repentance, devotion, followed by sin and bondage again. Israel would follow the Lord when there was a leader who reminded them of the ways in which they should walk, but with his death they again wandered off following other gods and their own desires. God would then allow an enemy of Israel to conquer the people so that, through desperation (unfortunately) they would again look to Him. [\[2\]](#) Now it would be nice, would it not, if this was only a

message of history - a message that no longer applies to God's people today. But study church history over the last two thousand years and you see the cycle repeating itself. [\[3\]](#)

But the story of the church is only the story of the culmination of individual Christian lives, so we cannot end there. We need to be more specific. The cycle of sin is unfortunately evident in many Christian lives today. Maybe it is one enemy, or one particular area of weakness that consistently drags you down into bondage. Maybe compromise has allowed the temptation of the enemy to have far too great an influence in your life, leading to worldliness and the deception of sin. You think you have got on top of it until suddenly, the same failure rears its ugly head again and you're back to square one! I think we can all relate to parts of this, so we should all be able to learn from this as well. Judges is a book that teaches us both how they became captive to the enemy, and also how they got out of that bondage. And in doing so, it then teaches us how to break the cycle of sin. Looking over your past as a Christian, have you seen this in your own life? Has your Christian walk been a cycle of victory and defeat? Do you see the cycle occurring in your life? If we are honest, the message of Judges is a wakeup call for each of us. It is a warning of what can happen once we become comfortable and begin to compromise with the enemy. It is a signpost, and a danger signal of the perils that can lie ahead in our Christian lives.

Go to beginning: [The Cycles of Sin](#)

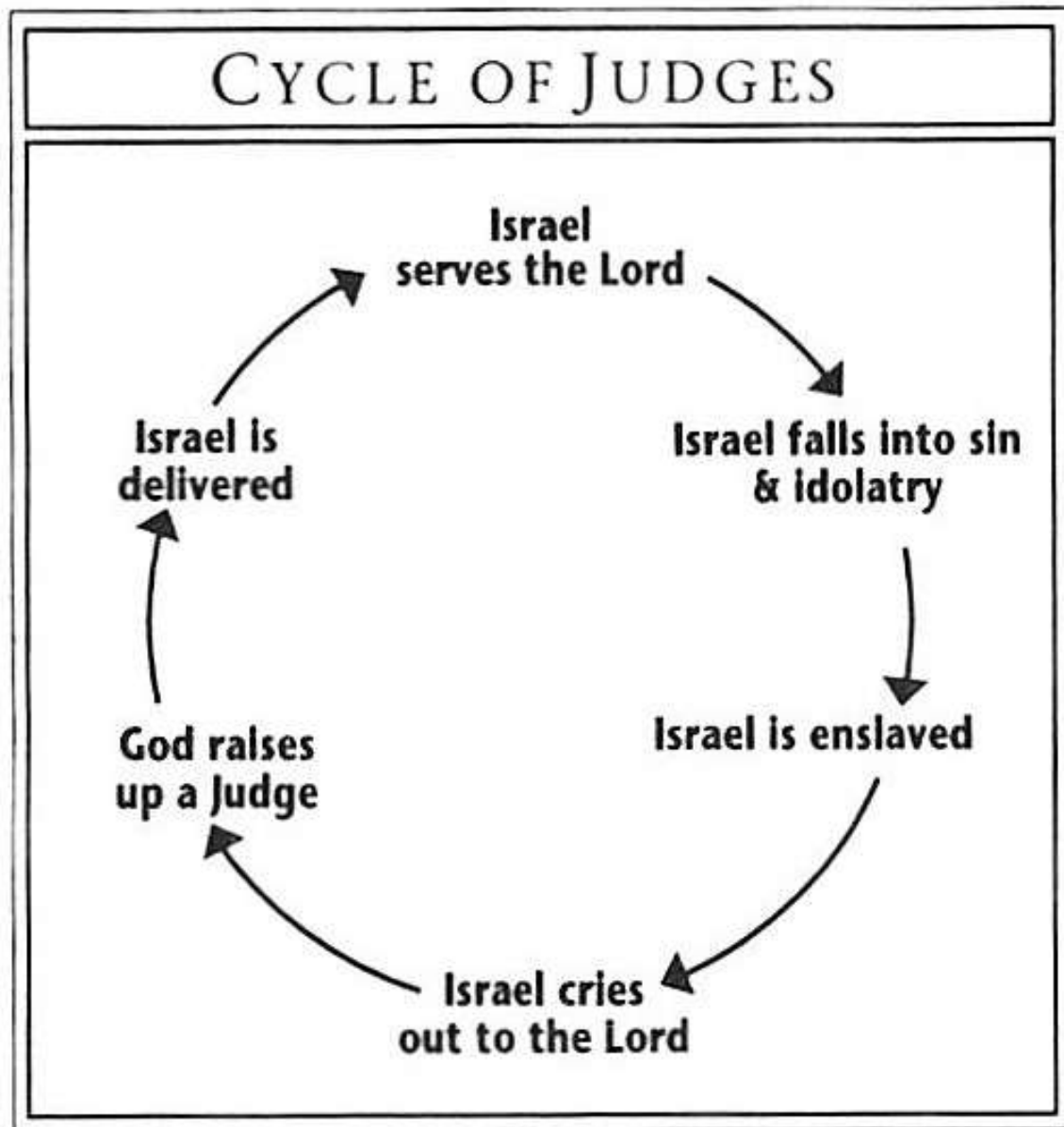
## The Cycle of Sin in Judges





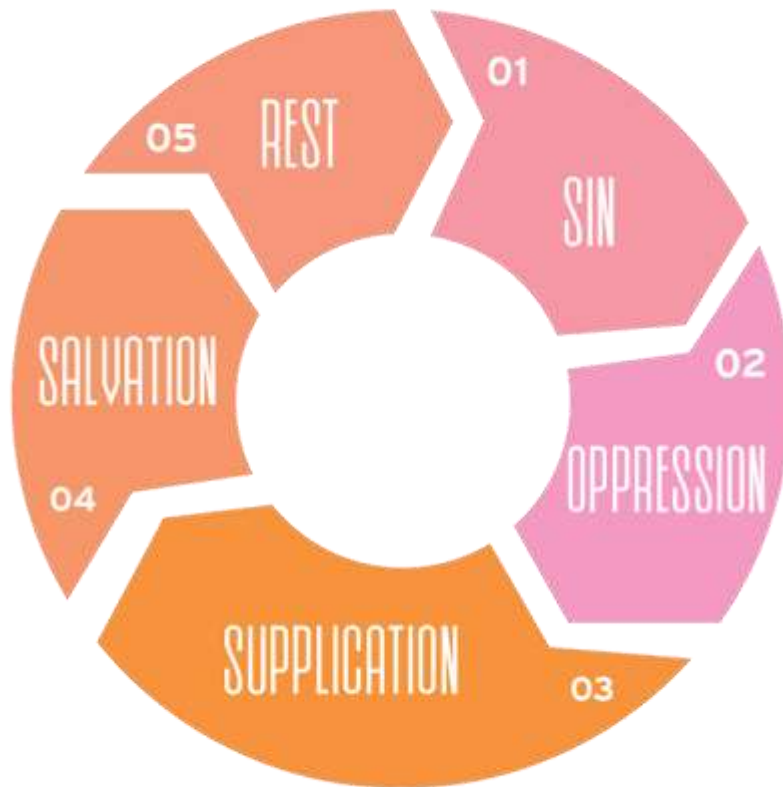
## The Redemption Cycle

<https://makingtalmidim.blogspot.com/2013/12/the-redemption-cycle.html>

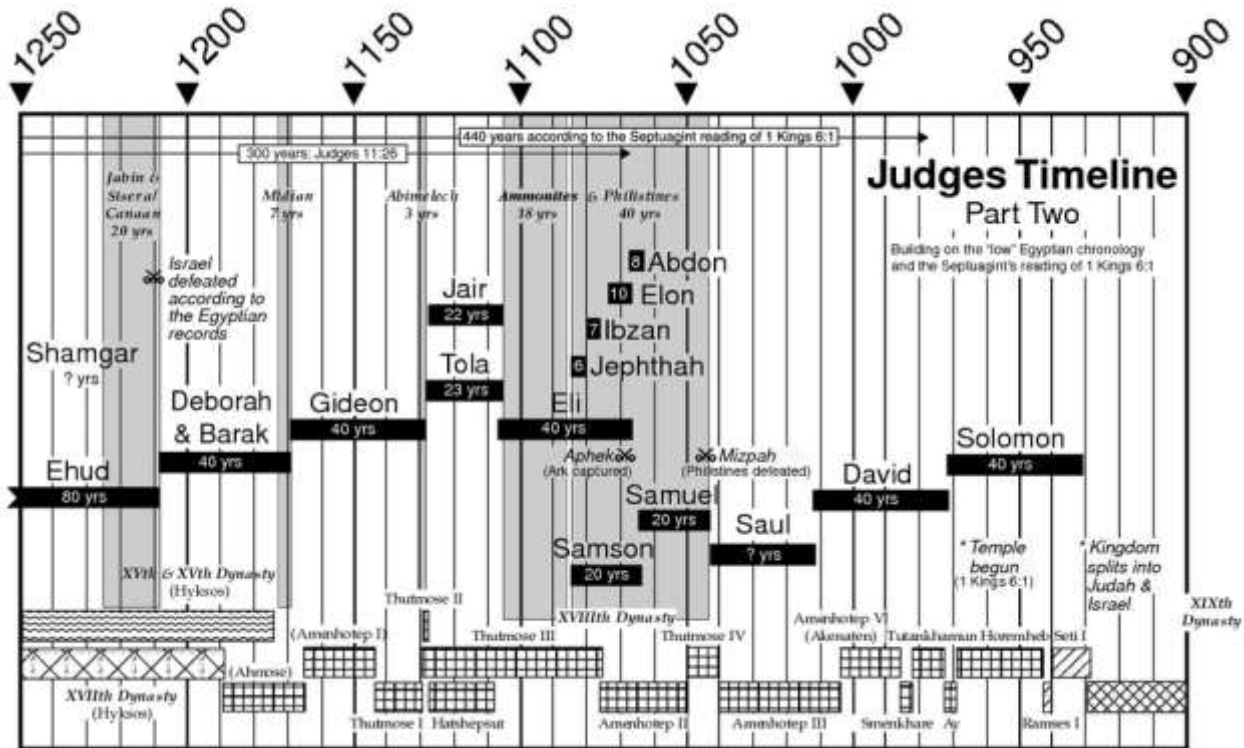


Cycle of the Judges (3:7 – 16:31)

<https://tucson.redemptionaz.com/introducing/>



## Judges – Timelines

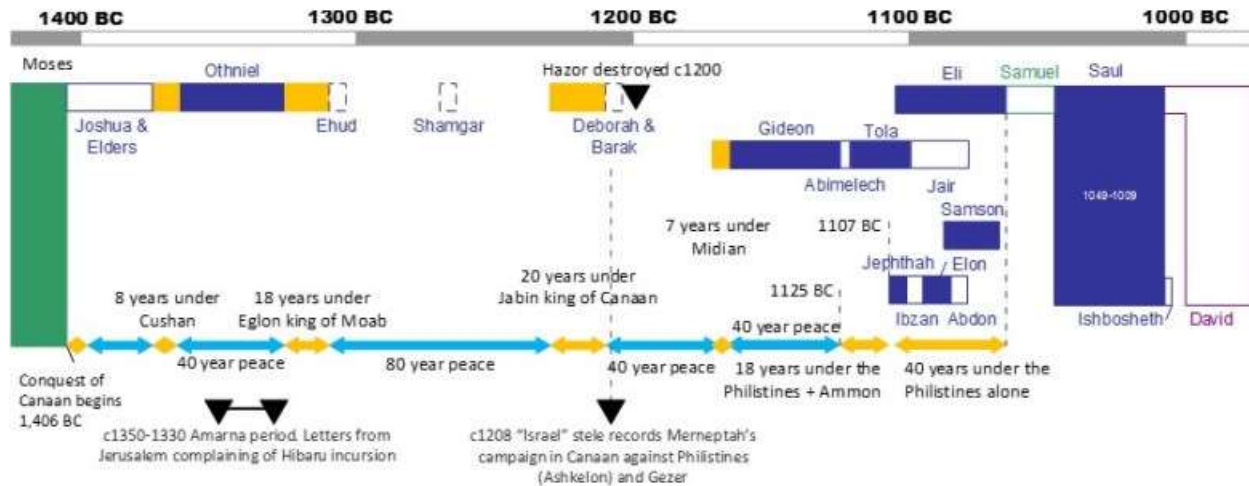


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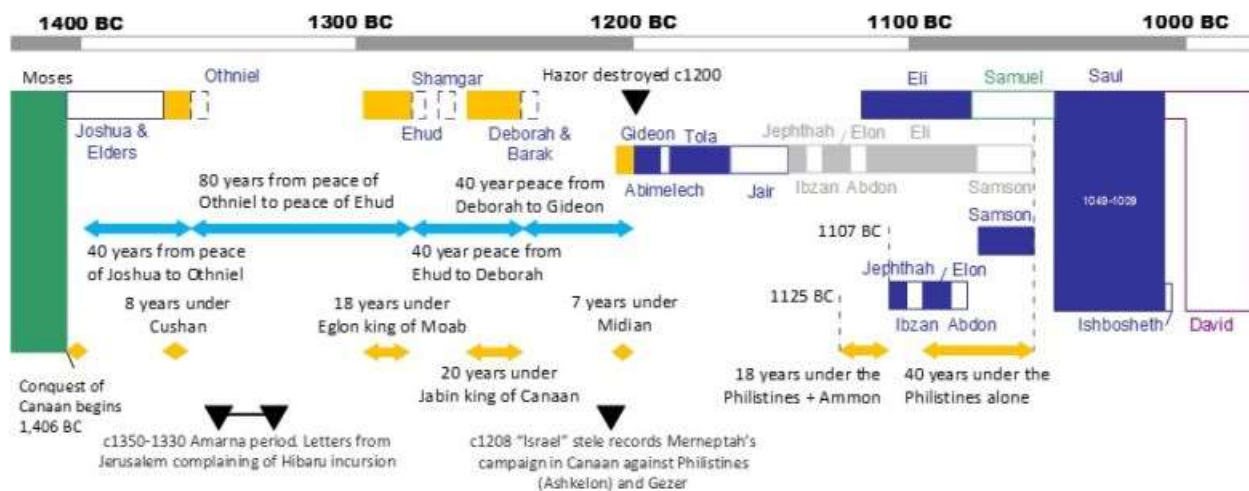
## Biblical Timelines – Judges

<http://www.thebiblicaltimeline.org/the-judges/>

## Proposed



## Most Well-known Alternative





## List Of 15 Judges In Bible

<https://believersportal.com/list-15-judges-bible/>

1. Othniel was the first Judge of Israel, he ruled for 40 years before his death (Judges 3:7-11).
2. Ehud was the second Judge of Israel. He was a left handed man from the tribe of Benjamin. (Judges 3:12-30)
3. Shamgar was the third Judge of Israel. The Bible however, never stated how long he ruled as a Judge (Judges 3:31).
4. Deborah (the Judge) was the 4th of the 15 judges who ruled over the land of Israel during ancient times, before the Israelites had kings. She was also a prophet and the wife of Lappidoth (Judg. 4:4). Read her story in Judges chapters 4 and 5.
5. Gideon son of Joash the Abiezrite from the town of Ophrah, was Israel's fifth Judge. During his time as Judge, he conquered Midian with just 300 men; Midian never recovered from this defeat, and there was peace for 40 years during Gideon's lifetime. Gideon's story is found in Judges chapters 6-8.
6. Abimelech (Abimelek), the judge, was the son of Gideon by a concubine from Shechem, and became a Judge of Israel, but it was not by God's will. Abimelech was one of 70 sons of Gideon's many wives. With a great desire to lead Israel, and with the help of his mother's clan in Shechem, he assassinated all his brothers, only his youngest brother, Jotham, escaped. Read Abimelek's story from Judges 9:20-56.
7. Tola was the seventh Judge of Israel. There were no much record about him (Judges 10:1-2).
8. Jair the eighth Judge of Israel, judged Israel for twenty-two years. He had thirty sons (Judges 10:3-5).
9. Jephthah was the ninth Judge of Israel. He was born an illegitimate child, but judged over Israel for a period of six years (Judges 12:7). He is listed in the Book of Hebrews as one of the heroes of faith (Heb. 11:32). After his death, he was buried in a city of Gilead. Read Jephthah's story in Judges chapter 11, and chap. 12:1-7.
10. Ibzan was the tenth Judge of Israel. He died and was buried in Bethlehem having judged Israel for seven years. (Judges 12:8-10).
11. Elon, a Zebulunite, was the eleventh Judge of Israel. He judged Israel for ten years, died and was buried in Elon in the land of Zebulun. (Judges 12:11-12).
12. Abdon was the twelfth Judge of Israel (Judges 12:13-15)
13. Samson was one of the Judges of Israel. He Judged Israel for 20 years. He was one of the major biblical characters in the Old Testament. The name Samson means "Little Sun." The story of Samson is found in the Book of Judges, chapters 13-16.
14. Eli the High Priest, in the line of Ithamar. He was also Judge of Israel, at Shiloh, for 40 years. Eli died at 98-years old, but his descendants continued in the office of High Priest up

until the time of Solomon. At that time, Abiathar, who had supported Adonijah's bid for the throne, was replaced by Zadok, thus bringing an end to Eli's line (1 Kings 2:22, 35).

15. Samuel was a prophet and the last of Israel's Judges. He grew up under Eli, who was the priest at Shiloh. He served as a prophet, a judge and a military leader of Israel. He was widely recognized throughout the country (1 Samuel 3:20). His home was in Ramah, where he headed groups of prophets. Samuel was the son of Elkanah, and his wife Hannah. You can find his story in the book of first Samuel, chapters 1-25.

See Chronology below...

## Chronology of the Judges

### Chronology of the Judges

Bible Ref:	EVENT	BC	# OF YEARS	REMARKS
Nu 32:13	Exodus to Entry in Canaan	1447—1407	40	
Jud 3:11	Initial 40 years in Canaan	1407—1367	40	Joshua and Othniel delivered Israel
Jud 3:30-31	Next 80 years in Canaan	1367—1287	80	Ehud and Shamgar delivered Israel
Jud 4:3-6	Next 40 Years in Canaan	1287—1247	40	Deborah and Barak delivered Israel
Jud 8:28	Gideon judged	1247—1207	40	
Jud 9:22	Abimelech rules	1207—1204	3	
Jud 10:1-2	Tola judged	1204—1181	23	
Jud 10:3	Jair judged	1181—1159	22	
Jud 12:7	Jephthah judged	1159—1153	6	
Jud 12:8-9	Ibzan judged	1153—1146	7	
Jud 12:11	Elon judged	1146—1136	10	
Jud 12:13-14	Abdon judged	1136—1128	8	
Jud 16:30-31	Samson judged	1128—1108	20	
1Sa 4:16-18	Eli judged	1108—1068	40	
1Sa 6:1	Ark in the hands of the Philistines	1068—1067	1	
1Sa 7:1-6	Samuel judged	1067—1047	20	
Act 13:21	Saul reigned as King	1047—1007	40	
2Sa 5:4	David reigned as King	1007—967	40	Foundation of Temple Laid—967 BC—480 years from the Exodus and 4th year of the reign of Solomon (1Kings 6:1)
2Ch 9:30	Solomon reigned as King	971—931	40	Solomon shared 4 yrs with David

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