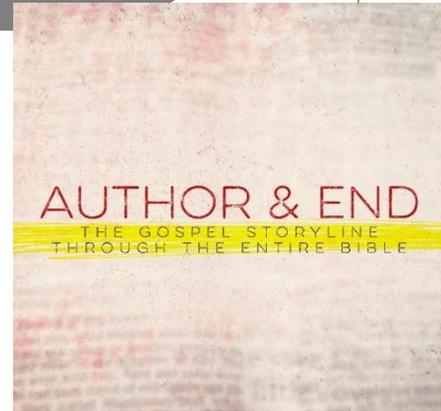


# THE "JUDGES" OF ISRAEL

## Lesson 13 - Man Fails; God Prevails - Judges 1-21

To this point, we have studied Old Testament passages that have outlined the gospel storyline throughout the whole Bible. Continually, we have found that God doesn't change; He has a plan; He keeps His promises; and He is merciful. For this lesson, we are going to "zoom out" and look at what we learn about God from the book of Judges. We are going to attempt to take it as a whole and grasp the concepts that God was teaching Israel and now us. It will become plain very quickly that the cycle and people we find in the book point to the coming of God's Son and the fulfillment of His plan.



### BACKGROUND OF JUDGES

1. Judges gives us the history of Israel following the death of Joshua. (1:1)
2. God's promise \_\_\_\_\_, mission \_\_\_\_\_, and warning \_\_\_\_\_ remained the same. (1:2, 2:1-15)
3. Israel cycled into a continuous cycle of sin, discipline, repentance, and deliverance.
4. God raised up human "judges" to be used to deliver his people. These "judges" were rulers and leaders rather than one administering justice or deciding guilt.
5. Some judges are "major" or "minor" based on the amount of details given, but the message is clear: "None of them were enough." The "best" of Israel's leaders were no match for the sin in Israel's heart.

### THE PLACE OF JUDGES IN THE STORY OF THE BIBLE

**"We must learn to see the shape of the Bible.** We must seek to understand how the Bible fits together. It is ultimately a story about Jesus, the coming and Gospel of Jesus the Son of God. Essentially, it is a long and very big promise! **The promise is that God will bring to completion His good purposes for His whole creation."**

**Even a book like Judges, is about this promise and fits into the shape of the Bible.**

- Faith is not just about believing God exists or believing the information in His Word. Faith is believing the promise of God about all things.

We find the promise and purpose of God found in Genesis given in the garden and to Abraham, and then we can see the Bible in three parts regarding this promise.

1. History of the Promise - Genesis → The Kingdom - We find God at work in faithfulness to His promise. This includes the filling out and revelation of what God's promise really means.  
\*How? How can God redeem such a messed-up world? It's a big thing. So big that the preparation for the answer to this question requires the history of a whole nation. Nothing involved in preparation was the answer. This became abundantly clear.
2. Prophecy toward the Promise - Collapse of the Kingdom → Prophets to Israel - We find that God is not done with His promise but will keep it. When He does keep it, it will be far better and grander than Israel (or we) can imagine.)
3. New Testament of the Promise - Coming of Jesus → Promise of His Return - We find that the one coming that will be king and establish a kingdom is Jesus. The final promises of God will be kept in Him.

### THE PROBLEM WITH THE MISSION

#### **Destruction? Genocide? Conquest?**

Some people point to this portion of the Bible and cannot reconcile what the Bible says about God with the things we find here. The question is asked, "Was the conquest of Canaan an immoral mission?"

1. Not how the Bible views it, the people of Israel were punished when they did not obey.
2. This was not sudden or random. (Psalm 103:8 → Judges?)  
Genesis 15:13-16 / Exodus 12:40-41
3. This was not directed for the gain of substance or the conquering of people. It was about the unwillingness of God to have His people serving false gods. His wisdom is best. - Judges 2:6-15

4. God did reject all those that were not of Israel. - Ruth 1:1

## THE PROBLEM WITH THE HEROES

**"We tend to read the Bible looking for heroes assuming that the actions of heroes are commanded or to be imitated."**

- We are informed of how God used them but also how they failed God. We end up trying to reconcile the actions of sinful people with the character of God when this was never the intention.
- There were twelve leaders grouped in the book as judges: Othniel, Ehud, Shamgar, Deborah, Gideon, Tola, Jair, Jephthah, Ibzan, Elon, Abdon, and Samson.
- 1. Each time Israel fell into judgment from sin they repented, and God would provide a leader.
- 2. In the absence of a leader, Israel would wander from God again. They needed a leader.
- 3. Even leaders appointed by God can do evil deeds and mislead people because they are still sinful people.

## A TYPE OF CHRIST OR A PICTURE OF MAN?

In the twenty-one chapters of Judges one fact becomes abundantly clear about the Judges of Israel. They were not able to fix the problem of Israel's sin (nor were they ever meant to). They could not escape their disobedience. They needed someone else. **These judges do not parallel Christ so much as they point us to look at ourselves. Our hope is not in getting our act together; it is about looking outward to Christ.**

### 1. What we find in the "judges". - Fear, Lack of Faith, Failure to Glorify God - (6:11-17, 36-40)

Gideon- Sometimes, we draw instinctually from things we learned in the past. This can cause us to miss the point. We look to Gideon as a hero and seek to find things to copy. What are some things we may have failed to see.

- Gideon is found living in hiding. (6:11)
- Gideon is told that God is with him and he is a mighty man, he questions both statements. (6:12-17)
  - Gideon proves his view is wrong. (6:27)
- Gideon hid his obedience and was defended by his father. (6:27-32)
- The fleece was not a show of faith but the lack thereof. (6:36-40)
- Not convinced, Gideon ends up finally believing after hearing the dream of a pagan man. (7:9-15)
- Gideon refused to be the king/leader of Israel, but he asked for a king's ransom or tax. From this gold he created a golden ephod/garment, and it became an idol of sorts that snared Israel. (8:22-27)
- Gideon brought peace to the land, but not to his house or people. He was selfish. (8:28-31)

\*The book of Judges ends in horrific fashion. The time of the judges led directly to tragedy. The shame and sin we find in Judges makes our hearts cry for justice. Someone must pay, and someone certainly would, Jesus. We need a Savior!

### 2. What we find about God in Judges. - He does not change.

- He does not share His glory with false gods.
- He does not allow sin to go unpunished.
- He is longsuffering and merciful toward sinners.
- The failures and sins of sinful people cannot defeat His purpose or His promise.
- Though we desire other things, only God can satisfy.

The people of Israel wanted a leader and eventually begged for a king to fix things for them. God gave them leaders and eventually kings that continually failed them. God was not surprised by this but used it to create a hunger and thirst for a perfect leader and holy king. Israel kept begging for more; the promise of the Messiah was not enough. We often desire more; the promise in our Messiah is often "not enough". God used the failures of His people to point their eyes back to His purpose and forward to Jesus. God uses the failures and dissatisfaction of this world to point our eyes back to His purpose (Jesus coming to save) and forward to Jesus coming again.

## The cycle of rebellion

