

The Book of Judges--an Overview

Judges is an absorbing book describing the tumultuous time in Israel from the time of Joshua's death until Samuel, the last judge, appears in the two books with his name.

- *Judges* records a recurring cycle of 1) taking God for granted; 2) sin & idolatry, which 3) brings God's judgment; 4) a judge to lead Israel, who 5) restores peace and a return to God until the judge dies.
 - This cycle was a result of failing to drive out the Canaanites as God commanded; they then mingled with the Canaanites and adopted their customs & gods--just as today many accommodate the world's values.
 - The 12 judges presented are very different in character & method; six are only lightly mentioned, but you will likely remember some of the others: Othniel, Ehud, Deborah, Gideon, Jephthah & Samson.
 - I love that v3:10 says of Othniel: "The Spirit of the LORD was upon him," He triumphed in God's power.
 - "Southpaw" Ehud went to the king of Moab with a sword hidden where only a 'lefty' could access it.
 - Deborah, in a male-focused society, showed that God can use every one of us & we succeed in His power.
 - God had to bolster Gideon's faith for his task, then reduced his huge army down to only 300 for victory; as in other OT texts, "angel of the LORD" & "the LORD" are used interchangeably--very possibly is Jesus.
 - For the promise of victory, Jephthah made a rash vow to God which cost him his precious daughter.
 - Samson's strength was offset by his extreme moral weakness; he grew proud to thinking he did not need God--he was spiritually blind before he lost his eyes. Yet, he regained God's strength when he repented.
- ⇒ Pride & sin have consequences; God uses judgment to discipline & return us to the rightful path.
- ⇒ Judges gives us a sampling of lifestyles & how God can use each one of us despite flaws & failures.
- ⇒ We come to know God better and how to discern the right path for our own walk in life thru Scripture.

Would appreciate any questions & comments -- Mike Kaye, CE Elder