

## **~JUDGES, BOOK OF (543)**

- **Arrangement**
- **Writer And Time Of Composition**
- **Highlights Of Judges**

- **A Bible book that basically covers a period of some 330 years between Israel's conquest of Canaan and the beginning of the monarchy.**
- **Earlier, the Israelites had been forewarned that their failure to drive out the inhabitants of the land, as divinely commanded, would lead to their adopting the debased religious practices of the Canaanites. Finally this would result in Yehowah's disfavor and his abandoning them to their enemies.**
- **You are not to conclude a covenant with them or their gods. (Exodus 23:32)**
- **They should not dwell in your land, that they may not cause you to sin against me. In case you should serve their gods, it would become a snare to you. (Exodus 23:33)**
- **For your part keep what I am commanding you today. Here I am driving out from before you the Amorites and the Canaanites and the Hittites and the Perizzites and the Hivites and the Jebusites. (Exodus 34:11)**
- **Watch yourself that you do not conclude a covenant with the inhabitants of the land to which you are going, for fear it may prove itself a snare in your midst. (Exodus 34:12)**
- **But their altars you people are to pull down, and their sacred pillars you are to shatter, and their sacred poles you are to cut down. (Exodus 34:13)**
- **For you must not prostrate yourself to another god, because Yehowah, whose name is Jealous, he is a jealous God. (Exodus 34:14)**
- **For fear that you may conclude a covenant with the inhabitants of the land, as they will certainly have immoral intercourse with their gods and sacrifice to their gods, and someone will be**

- certain to invite you, and you will certainly eat some of his sacrifice. (**Exodus 34:15**)
- Then you will have to take some of their daughters for your sons, and their daughters will be certain to have immoral intercourse with their gods and make your sons have immoral intercourse with their gods. (**Exodus 34:16**)
  - You must not make molten idol gods for yourself. (**Exodus 34:17**)
  - If, though, you will not drive the inhabitants of the land away from before you, then those whom you leave of them will certainly become as pricks in your eyes and as thorns in your sides, and they will indeed harass you on the land in which you will be dwelling. (**Numbers 33:55**)
  - And Yehowah your God will certainly abandon them to you, and you must defeat them. You should without fail devote them to destruction. You must conclude no covenant with them nor show them any favor. (**Deuteronomy 7:2**)
  - And you must form no marriage alliance with them. Your daughter you must not give to his son, and his daughter you must not take for your son. (**Deuteronomy 7:3**)
  - For he will turn your son from following me, and they will certainly serve other gods, and Yehowah's anger will indeed blaze against you, and he will certainly annihilate you in a hurry. (**Deuteronomy 7:4**)
  - On the other hand, this is what you should do to them: Their altars you should pull down, and their sacred pillars you should break down, and their sacred poles you should cut down, and their graven images you should burn with fire. (**Deuteronomy 7:5**)
  - The historical record found in the book of Judges shows how the warning became a reality. However, rather than deal extensively with Israel's unfaithfulness and the resultant foreign oppression, the book primarily relates the exploits of the judges and the marvelous deliverances Yehowah performed by means of them.

- Thus Yehowah's saving ability and his long-suffering, mercy, undeserved kindness, and justice are highlighted. The judges themselves stand out as sterling examples of faith.
- And what more shall I say? For the time will fail me if I go on to relate about Gideon, Barak, Samson, Jephthah, David as well as Samuel and the other prophets. ([Hebrews 11:32](#))
- Who through faith defeated kingdoms in conflict, effected righteousness, obtained promises, stopped the mouths of lions. ([Hebrews 11:33](#))
- Stayed the force of fire, escaped the edge of the sword, from a weak state were made powerful, became valiant in war, routed the armies of foreigners. ([Hebrews 11:34](#))
- And yet all these, although they had witness borne to them through their faith, did not get the fulfillment of the promise. ([Hebrews 11:39](#))
- As God foresaw something better for us, in order, that they might not be made perfect apart from us. ([Hebrews 11:40](#))

## • Arrangement

- **Judges** is linked with the preceding Bible book by its opening words, And after the death of Joshua. However, some of the happenings narrated therein evidently occurred before Joshua died. For example,
- When Joshua sent the people away, then the sons of Israel went their way, each to his inheritance, to take possession of the land. ([Judges 2:6](#))
- Reads; When Joshua sent the people away, then the sons of Israel went their way, each to his inheritance, to take possession of the land. So it appears that;
- And after the death of Joshua it came about that the sons of Israel proceeded to inquire of Yehowah, saying; Who of us will go up first to the Canaanites to fight against them? ([Judges 1:1](#))
- And they proceeded to take their daughters as wives for themselves, and their own daughters they gave to their sons, and

they took up serving their gods. (**Judges 3:6**)

- Serves as an introduction, the writer having drawn on events taking place before and after Joshua's death in order to provide the historical background for the account that follows.
- The section running from (**Judges Chapter 3 verse 7**), to the end of (**Judges Chapter 16**) is, basically, in chronological order and relates the activities of 12 **judges**, not including Deborah, starting with Othniel and concluding with Samson.
- The last part of the book could be termed an appendix and fits a period much earlier than Samson's **judgeship**. The capture of Laish by the Danites could reasonably have taken place before Joshua's death.
- And the territory of the sons of Dan was too cramped for them. And the sons of Dan proceeded to go up and war against Leshem and to capture it and strike it with the edge of the sword. Then they took possession of it and went dwelling in it, and they began to call Leshem Dan, according to the name of Dan their forefather. (**Joshua 19:47**)
- As for them, they took what Micah had made and the priest that had become his, and they kept going toward Laish, against a people quiet and unsuspecting. And they proceeded to strike them with the edge of the sword, and the city they burned with fire. (**Judges 18:27**)
- And there was no deliverer, for it was far away from Sidon, and they had nothing at all to do with mankind, and it was in the low plain that belonged to Beth-rehob. Then they built the city and took up dwelling in it. (**Judges 18:28**)
- Furthermore, they called the name of the city Dan by the name of their father, Dan, who had been born to Israel. Nevertheless, Laish was the city's name at first. (**Judges 18:29**)
- The mass sex crime of the men of Gibeah and subsequent events resulting in the near extermination of the tribe of Benjamin probably occurred not many years after Joshua's death.
- Now it happened in those days that there was no king in Israel. And it came about that a certain Levite was residing for a time in the remotest parts of the mountainous region of Ephraim. In

time he took as his wife a concubine from Bethlehem in Judah. (Judges 19:1)

- In those days there was no king in Israel. What was right in his own eyes was what each one was accustomed to do. (Judges 21:25)
- And Israel continued to serve Yehowah all the days of Joshua and all the days of the older men who extended their days after Joshua and who had known all the work of Yehowah that he did for Israel. (Joshua 24:31)
- This would allow sufficient time for the Benjamites to have increased from about 600 men.
- But six hundred men turned and went fleeing to the wilderness to the crag of Rimmon, and they continued to dwell on the crag of Rimmon four months. (Judges 20:47)
- To nearly 60,000 warriors by the time of David's reign.
- The sons of Benjamin were Bela and Becher and Jediael, three. (1 Chronicles 7:6)
- And the sons of Bela were Ezbon and Uzzi and Uzziel and Jerimoth and Iri, five, heads of the house of their forefathers, valiant, mighty men, and their genealogical enrollment was twenty-two thousand and thirty-four. (1 Chronicles 7:7)
- And the sons of Becher were Zemirah and Joash and Eliezer and Elioenai and Omri and Jeremoth and Abijah and Anathoth and Alemeth, all these the sons of Becher. (1 Chronicles 7:8)
- And their genealogical enrollment by their descendants as respects the heads of the house of their forefathers, valiant, mighty men, was twenty thousand two hundred. (1 Chronicles 7:9)
- And the sons of Jediael were Bilhan, and the sons of Bilhan were Jeush and Benjamin and Ehud and Chenaanah and Zethan and Tarshish and Alishahar. (1 Chronicles 7:10)
- All these were the sons of Jediael, according to the heads of their forefathers, valiant, mighty men, seventeen thousand two

hundred going out to the army for war. (**1 Chronicles 7:11**)

- And the Shuppim and the Huppim were the sons of Ir, the Hushim were the sons of Aher. (**1 Chronicles 7:12**)

## •• **Writer And Time Of Composition**

- Internal evidence provides a basis for determining when the book of **Judges** was written. It was compiled while a king ruled over Israel. Otherwise, the writer, when referring to the past, would not have said; In those days there was no king in Israel.
- In those days there was no king in Israel. As for everybody, what was right in his own eyes he was accustomed to do. (**Judges 17:6**)
- In those days there was no king in Israel. And in those days the tribe of the Danites was looking for an inheritance for itself to dwell there, because up to that day an inheritance had not fallen to them in the midst of the tribes of Israel. (**Judges 18:1**)
- Now it happened in those days that there was no king in Israel. And it came about that a certain Levite was residing for a time in the remotest parts of the mountainous region of Ephraim. In time he took as his wife a concubine from Bethlehem in Judah. (**Judges 19:1**)
- In those days there was no king in Israel. What was right in his own eyes was what each one was accustomed to do. (**Judges 21:25**)
- Yet it was at a time when the Jebusites still inhabited Jerusalem.
- And the sons of Benjamin did not drive out the Jebusites inhabiting Jerusalem, but the Jebusites keep on dwelling with the sons of Benjamin in Jerusalem down to this day. (**Judges 1:21**)
- Since, in **1070 B.C.E**, David captured the stronghold of Zion, a part of Jerusalem, from the Jebusites and transferred his capital there.
- Consequently the king and his men went to Jerusalem against the Jebusites inhabiting the land, and they began to say to David; You will not come in here, but the blind and the lame ones will

certainly turn you away, they thinking; David will not come in here. (2 Samuel 5:6)

- Just the same, David proceeded to capture the stronghold of Zion, that is, the City of David. (2 Samuel 5:7)
- So David said on that day; Anyone striking the Jebusites, let him, by means of the water tunnel, make contact with both the lame and the blind, hateful to the soul of David! That is why they say; The blind one and the lame one will not come into the house. (2 Samuel 5:8)
- And David took up dwelling in the stronghold, and it came to be called the City of David, and David began to build all around from the Mound and inward. (2 Samuel 5:9)
- The book of **Judges** must have been committed to writing before that date, probably during Saul's reign. At that time Samuel was the main advocate of true worship and, as Yehowah's prophet, would have been the logical one to have recorded this book.
- That the book of **Judges** rightly occupies a place in the Bible canon there can be no question. It is frank and honest, and it does not hide Israel's gross sins. Throughout, the book gives glory and honor, not to the human judges, but to Yehowah God as Israel's real Deliverer. It shows that God's spirit empowered the **judges**
- And the sons of Israel began to call to Yehowah for aid. Then Yehowah raised a savior up for the sons of Israel that he might save them, Othniel the son of Kenaz, the younger brother of Caleb. (Judges 3:9)
- The spirit of Yehowah now came upon him, and he became the judge of Israel. When he went out to battle, then Yehowah gave Cushan-rishathaim the king of Syria into his hand so that his hand overpowered Cushan-rishathaim. (Judges 3:10)
- And Yehowah's spirit enveloped Gideon so that he went blowing the horn, and the Abi-ezrites got to be called together after him. (Judges 6:34)
- Yehowah's spirit now came upon Jephthah, and he proceeded to pass through Gilead and Manasseh and to pass through Mizpeh of Gilead, and from Mizpeh of Gilead he passed along to the sons of

**Ammon. (Judges 11:29)**

- **Later the woman gave birth to a son and called his name Samson, and the boy kept getting bigger, and Yehowah continued to bless him. (Judges 13:24)**
- **In time Yehowah's spirit started to impel him in Mahaneh-dan between Zorah and Eshtaol. (Judges 13:25)**
- **Then Yehowah's spirit became operative upon him, so that he tore it in two, just as someone tears a male kid in two, and there was nothing at all in his hand. And he did not tell his father or his mother what he had done. (Judges 14:6)**
- **And Yehowah's spirit became operative upon him, so that he went down to Ashkelon and struck down thirty men of theirs and took what he stripped off them and gave the outfits to the tellers of the riddle. And his anger continued hot, and he went his way up to his father's house. (Judges 14:19)**
- **He, for his part, came as far as Lehi, and the Philistines, for their part, shouted exultantly at meeting him. And Yehowah's spirit became operative upon him, and the ropes that were upon his arms came to be like linen threads that have been scorched with fire, so that his fetters melted off his hands. (Judges 15:14)**
- **Now he became very thirsty, and he began to call on Yehowah and say; It was you that gave this great salvation into the hand of your servant, and now shall I die of thirst and must I fall into the hand of the uncircumcised? (Judges 15:18)**
- **Now she said; The Philistines are upon you, Samson! At that he woke up from his sleep and said; I shall go out as at other times and shake myself free. And he himself did not know that it was Yehowah that had departed from him. (Judges 16:20)**
- **Samson now called to Yehowah and said; Sovereign Lord Yehowah, remember me, please, and strengthen me, please, just this once, O you the true God, and let me avenge myself upon the Philistines with vengeance for one of my two eyes. (Judges 16:28)**
- **With that Samson braced himself against the two middle pillars upon which the house was firmly established, and got a grasp on**

them, one with his right and the other with his left hand. (**Judges 16:29**)

- **And Samson proceeded to say; Let my soul die with the Philistines. Then he bent himself with power, and the house went falling upon the axis lords and upon all the people that were in it, so that the dead that he put to death in his own death came to be more than those he had put to death during his lifetime. (**Judges 16:30**)**
- **And they, in turn, recognized Yehowah as (**Judge 11:27**) and,**
- **And he went on to say; O Yehowah the God of Israel, there is no God like you in the heavens above or on the earth beneath, keeping the covenant and the loving-kindness toward your servants who are walking before you with all their heart. (**1 Kings 8:23**)**
- **Other inspired Bible books refer to events recorded therein.**
- **And they went forgetting Yehowah their God, so that he sold them into the hand of Sisera the chief of the army of Hazor and into the hand of the Philistines and into the hand of the king of Moab, and they kept fighting against them. (**1 Samuel 12:9**)**
- **And they began to call to Yehowah for aid and say; We have sinned, for we have left Yehowah that we might serve the Baals and the Ashtoreth images, and now deliver us out of the hand of our enemies, that we may serve you. (**1 Samuel 12:10**)**
- **And Yehowah proceeded to send Jerubbaal and Bedan and Jephthah and Samuel and deliver you out of the hand of your enemies all around, that you might dwell in security. (**1 Samuel 12:11**)**
- **Who was it that struck down Abimelech the son of Jerubbesheth? Was it not a woman that pitched an upper millstone upon him from on top of the wall so that he died at Thebez? Why did you men have to go so close to the wall? You must also say; Your servant Uriah the Hittite died too. (**2 Samuel 11:21**)**
- **Do to them as to Midian, as to Sisera, as to Jabin at the torrent valley of Kishon. (**Psalms 83:9**)**

- They were annihilated at En-dor, they became manure for the ground. (**Psalms 83:10**)
- As for their nobles, make these like Oreb and like Zeeb, and like Zebah and like Zalmunna all their dukes. (**Psalms 83:11**)
- Who have said; Let us take possession of the abiding places of God for ourselves. (**Psalms 83:12**)
- For the yoke of their load and the rod upon their shoulders, the staff of the one driving them to work, you have shattered to pieces as in the day of Midian. (**Isaiah 9:4**)
- And Yehowah of armies will certainly brandish against him a whip as at the defeat of Midian by the rock Oreb, and his staff will be upon the sea, and he will certainly lift it up in the way that he did with Egypt. (**Isaiah 10:26**)
- And what more shall I say? For the time will fail me if I go on to relate about Gideon, Barak, Samson, Jephthah, David as well as Samuel and the other prophets. (**Hebrews 11:32**)
- Who through faith defeated kingdoms in conflict, effected righteousness, obtained promises, stopped the mouths of lions. (**Hebrews 11:33**)
- Stayed the force of fire, escaped the edge of the sword, from a weak state were made powerful, became valiant in war, routed the armies of foreigners. (**Hebrews 11:34**)

## •• Highlights Of Judges

- A vigorous account of the deliverances that Yehowah repeatedly performed for Israel through the **Judges** when Israel abandoned idolatrous practices and earnestly sought his help.
- Likely written by Samuel, the book covers about 330 years between the conquest of Canaan and the beginning of the monarchy.
- Background for conditions prevailing during time of the **Judges**.
- And after the death of Joshua it came about that the sons of Israel proceeded to inquire of Yehowah, saying; Who of us will go up first to the Canaanites to fight against them? (**Judges 1:1**)

- **Through to;**
- **And they proceeded to take their daughters as wives for themselves, and their own daughters they gave to their sons, and they took up serving their gods. (Judges 3:6)**
- **After Joshua's death, the tribes of Israel fail to drive the remaining inhabitants of Canaan out of the land.**
- **Instead, they intermarry with these pagans and are ensnared by their false religion.**
- **Yehowah abandons them to their foes, but from time to time he raises up Judges to deliver them.**
- **Deliverances from oppression when Israel abandoned false worship and called out to Yehowah for help.**
- **So the sons of Israel did what was bad in Yehowah's eyes, and they were forgetful of Yehowah their God and went serving the Baals and the sacred poles. (Judges 3:7)**
- **Through to**
- **Later his brothers and all the household of his father came on down and lifted him up and brought him up and buried him between Zorah and Eshtaol in the burial place of Manoah his father. As for him, he had judged Israel twenty years. (Judges 16:31)**
- **Through Othniel, Israel is delivered from an eight-year subjugation to the Mesopotamian king Cushan-rishathaim**
- **The 18-year domination by Moabite King Eglon ends when he is killed by Ehud, who then assembles an Israelite army and subdues the Moabites**
- **Shamgar single-handedly strikes down 600 Philistines, thus saving Israel.**
- **Barak, encouraged by the prophetess Deborah, defeats Jabin, thus ending his 20-year oppression of Israel, Jabin's army chief, Sisera,**

is killed by Jael, the wife of Heber the Kenite, Deborah and Barak commemorate this victory in song.

- Gideon is commissioned to deliver Israel from seven-year harassment by Midianites. Yehowah grants victory after he reduces Gideon's army to just 300 men. Gideon subsequently refuses kingship.
- Tola **judges** Israel for 23 years, and Jair **judges** for 22 years.
- Israel suffers at the hands of the Ammonites, Yehowah provides deliverance through Jephthah, who subsequently carries out his vow to surrender his only child, a daughter, to Yehowah's service.
- Ibzan, Elon, and Abdon **judge** Israel a combined total of about 25 years.
- Yehowah gives Samson enormous strength and uses him to release Israel from a 40-year domination by the Philistines, his betrothal to a Philistine woman from Timnah gives him occasions to act against them, his betrayal by Delilah eventually leads to a situation in which he kills more Philistines at his death than he had killed in his lifetime.
- Further undesirable situations that developed during the time of the Judges.
- Now there happened to be a man of the mountainous region of Ephraim whose name was Micah. (**Judges 17:1**)
- Through to
- In those days there was no king in Israel. What was right in his own eyes was what each one was accustomed to do. (Judges 21:25)
- In Ephraim, Micah sets up an image in his home and employs a young Levite as a priest.
- Certain Danites come to Micah's house and later steal his idolatrous objects, they also take the Levite to serve as their priest.
- Men of the Benjamite city of Gibeah are guilty of a mass sex crime against the concubine of a Levite, failure to hand over the guilty

**ones for punishment prompts the other tribes to undertake a punitive war against Benjamin, the tribe is almost annihilated.**