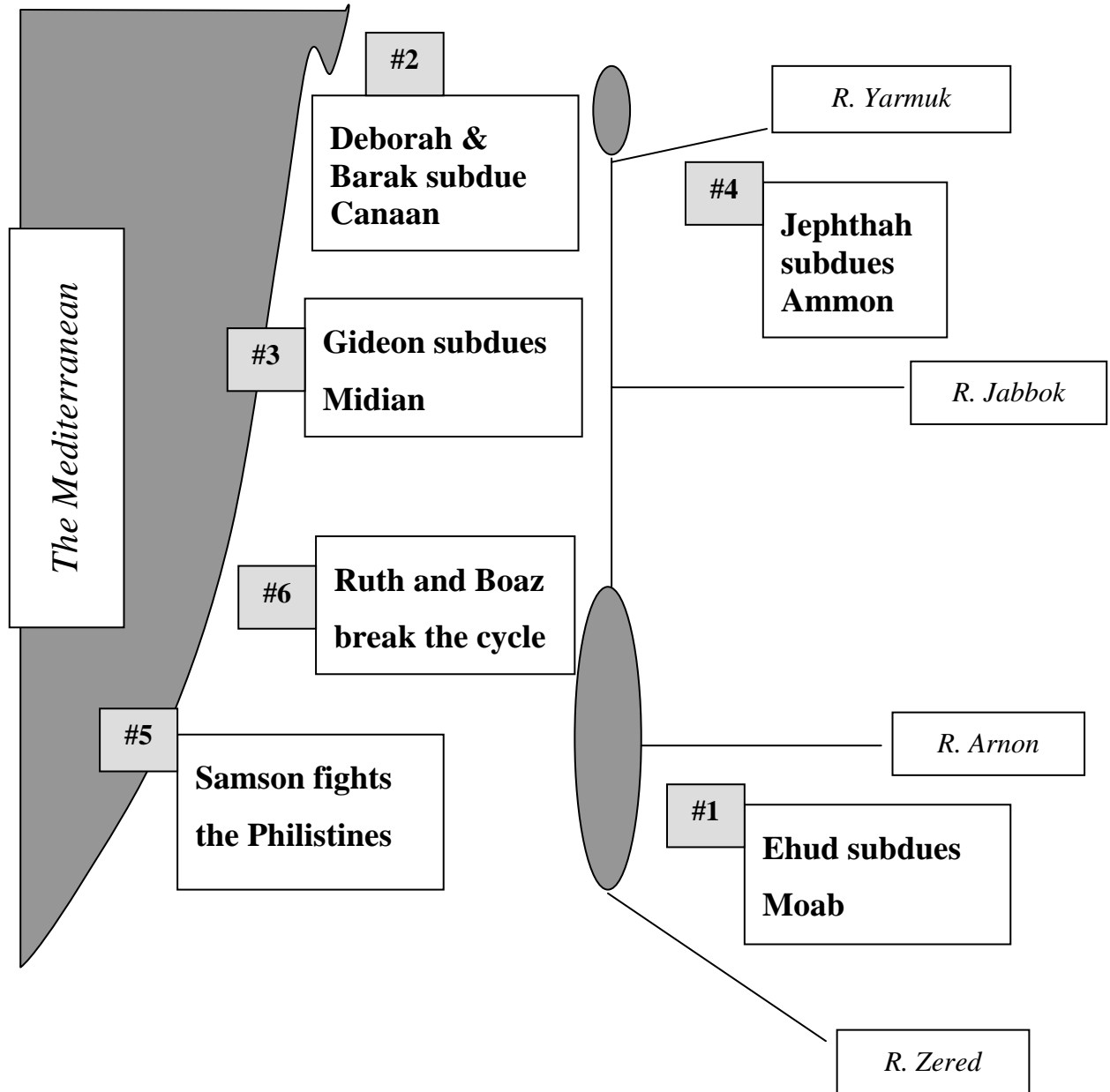


Judges and Ruth



(Major characters are numbered in the order in which we read about them.)

by Ink Man

Fall 2001

Many thanks to Phil Davis who began many of the notes and questions and developed the diagram of the "Cycle," the Timeline, and the Table of the Judges.

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Primary Sources

The Holy Bible, New King James Version, (Nashville, Tennessee: Thomas Nelson, Inc.) 1982.

International Standard Bible Encyclopedia (ISBE), © 1988 by William B. Eerdmans Publishing Co.

Nelson’s Complete Book of Bible Maps and Charts, 1996.

Nelson’s 3-D Bible mapbook [computer file], electronic ed., Logos Library System, (Nashville: Thomas Nelson) 1997, ©1985 by Lion Publishing.

Outline of Judges

Here is an easy-to-memorize outline:

Below is a more detailed outline:

Chapter(s)

1	Political Setting – Incomplete Conquest
2	Spiritual Setting – The Cycle
3	Ehud subdues Moab
4-5	Deborah and Barak subdue Canaan
6-8	Gideon subdues Midian
9	Abimelech the Non-Judge
10-12	Jephthah subdues Ammon
13-16	Samson versus the Philistines
17-18	Idolatry in Israel
19-21	Immorality and In-fighting

Part One: The Deterioration of Israel and Failure to Complete the Conquest (1:1–3:6)¹

I. Failure to Complete the Conquest (1:1–36)

II. God’s Judgment for Not Completing the Conquest (2:1–3:6)

Part Two: The Deliverance of Israel (3:7–16:31)

I. The Southern Campaign (3:7–31)

- A. The Judge Othniel (3:7–11)
- B. The Judge Ehud (3:12–30)
- C. The Judge Shamgar (3:31)

II. The Northern Campaign: The Judges Deborah and Barak (4:1–5:31)

- A. Deborah and Barak Are Called (4:1–10)
- B. Canaanites Are Defeated (4:11–24)
- C. Song of Deborah and Barak (5:1–31)

III. The Central Campaign (6:1–10:5)

- A. The Judge Gideon (6:1–8:32)
 - 1. Israel Sins (6:1–10)
 - 2. Gideon Is Called (6:11–40)
 - 3. Midianites Are Defeated (7:1–8:21)
 - 4. Gideon Judges (8:22–32)
- B. Abimelech (8:33–9:57)
- C. The Judge Tola (10:1–2)

- D. The Judge Jair (10:3–5)

IV. The Eastern Campaign: The Judge Jephthah (10:6–12:7)

- A. Israel Sins (10:6–18)
- B. Salvation: Jephthah (11:1–12:7)

V. The Second Northern Campaign (12:8–15)

- A. The Judge Ibzan (12:8–10)
- B. The Judge Elon (12:11–12)
- C. The Judge Abdon (12:13–15)

VI. The Western Campaign: The Judge Samson (13:1–16:31)

- A. Miraculous Birth of Samson (13:1–25)
- B. Sinful Marriage of Samson (14:1–20)
- C. Judgeship of Samson (15:1–20)
- D. Failure of Samson (16:1–31)

Part Three: The Depravity of Israel (17:1–21:25)

I. The Failure of Israel through Idolatry (17:1–18:31)

- A. Example of Personal Idolatry (17:1–13)
- B. Example of Tribal Idolatry (18:1–31)

II. The Failure of Israel through Immorality (19:1–30)

- A. Example of Personal Immorality (19:1–10)
- B. Example of Tribal Immorality (19:11–30)

III. The Failure of Israel through the War between the Tribes (20:1–21:25)

- A. War between Israel and Benjamin (20:1–48)
- B. Failure of Israel after the War (21:1–25)

¹ Thomas Nelson, Inc., *Nelson’s teaching outlines of the Bible [computer file], electronic ed., Logos Library System*, (Nashville: Thomas Nelson) 1997, © 1986.

Lesson 1: The Political Setting (Judges 1)

The book of Judges opens by emphasizing Israel's failure to complete the conquest of Canaan. Although the land has been divided to the 12 tribes during Joshua's lifetime, battles must still be fought in order to "drive out the inhabitants." The case of Jerusalem shows clearly how the Israelites could succeed in battle while failing to carry through with the annihilation of the idolatrous natives.

The case of Jerusalem also illustrates that some of the fighting is neither the first or last time Israel would fight some of the peoples. Joshua had killed the king of Jerusalem in Joshua 10: Apparently he had not conquered the city itself. The children of Judah attack and burn the city (Judges 1:8), but some of the Jebusites remain in the city. (1:21) David later seems to complete the conquest of Jerusalem by taking over the "stronghold of Zion" (1 Samuel 5:6-9) Also, Hormah had been previously conquered during the wilderness wanderings. (Numbers 21:1-3) Some of Judges 1 is simply the second *telling* of the events. For example, we read about the victory over Debir and Kirjath Sepher first in Joshua 15:13-19.

Notice that there is no longer a single military leader. Joshua's only contemporary, Caleb, is a key figure, but does not lead in battle.

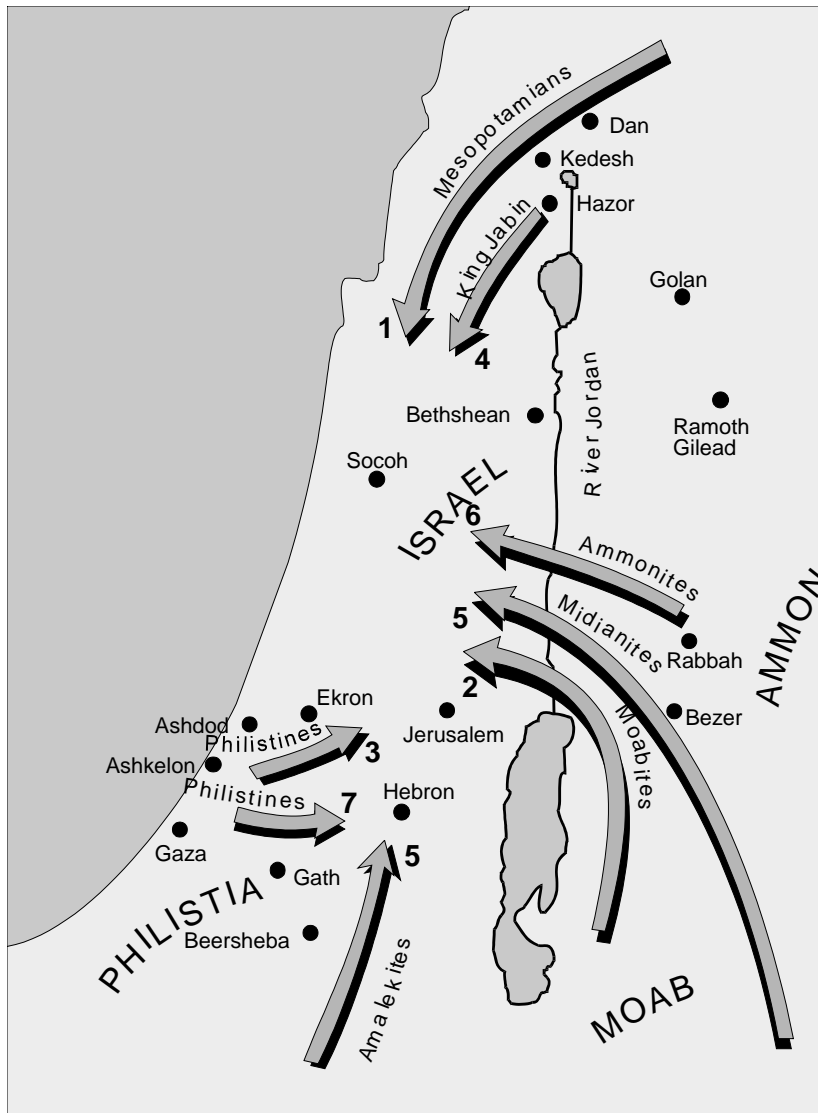
The Kenites were Midianites, descendants of Moses' father-in-law, Reuel (a.k.a., Jethro) through Reuel's son, Hobab. (Cp. Judges 1:16; 4:11; Numbers 10:29; Exodus 3:1. Moses only had one wife, and one father-in-law.) They had traveled with the Israelites and now choose to settle among them.

Judges 1:1-18: Limited Success

1. Which two tribes help each other fight to take control of their territories?
2. Assuming they start from Shechem, which direction do they head?
3. How is "poetic justice" rendered upon Adoni-Bezek?
4. What does Judah do to Jerusalem?
5. How does Caleb motivate the attack against Kirjath Sepher?
6. Who accomplishes it?
7. How does the woman cause the reward to be increased?
8. Identify "the city of palms." (Cp. Deut. 34:3 and 2 Chron. 28:15)
9. Where do Judah and Simeon attack next?
10. What nation is later associated with the three cities of verse 18?
11. Who lives there at the time of Judges 1? (Cp. Joshua 11:22)

Judges 1:19-36: Widespread Failure

12. Whom does Judah not drive out and why?
13. What does Benjamin fail to do? What is the result of this failure?
14. How does "the house of Joseph" get into Bethel? What do they do to the city?
15. Who is spared by "the house of Joseph," and what does he do?
16. (Key point) In verses 27-36, how many tribes fail to "drive out the inhabitants"?
17. We are given the same reason for both Manasseh's failure and Dan's failure. Tell the reason.
18. What is done to the inhabitants in four of these cases?



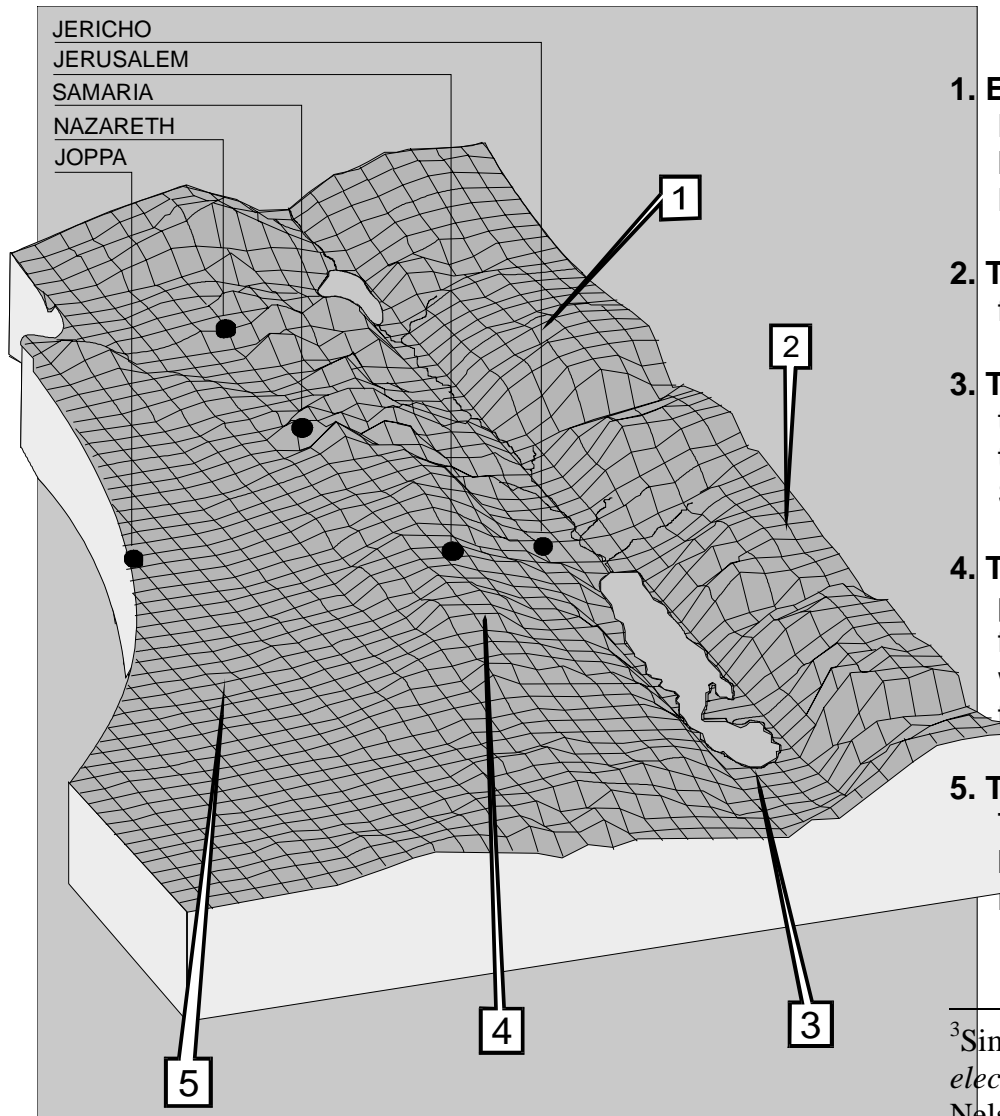
Enemies on Every Hand

Israel's incomplete conquest and the worship of foreign gods caused great problems in the time of the judges. The Israelites came under the rule of one country after another. However, several of the judges defeated the enemy armies and liberated Israel.

1. **Othniel** defeats King Cushan Rishathaim of Mesopotamia, who had ruled Israel for 8 years (**Judges 3:7–11**).
2. **Ehud** defeats King Eglon of Moab who had ruled for 18 years (**Judges 3:12–30**).
3. **Shamgar** defeats the Philistines (**Judges 3:31**).
4. **Deborah and Barak** defeat Jabin of Hazor, who had ruled Israel 'with cruelty and violence for 20 years' (**Judges 4–5**).
5. **Gideon** drives out the Midianites and Amalekites who had oppressed Israel for 7 years (**Judges 6–8**).
6. **Jephthah** defeats the Ammonites, who had ruled for 18 years (**Judges 10:6–12:7**).
7. **Samson** did great exploits against the Philistines, who ruled Israel for 40 years (**Judges 13–16**).²

²Simon Jenkins, *Nelson's 3-D Bible mapbook [computer file]*, electronic ed., Logos Library System, (Nashville: Thomas Nelson) 1997, c1985 by Lion Publishing.

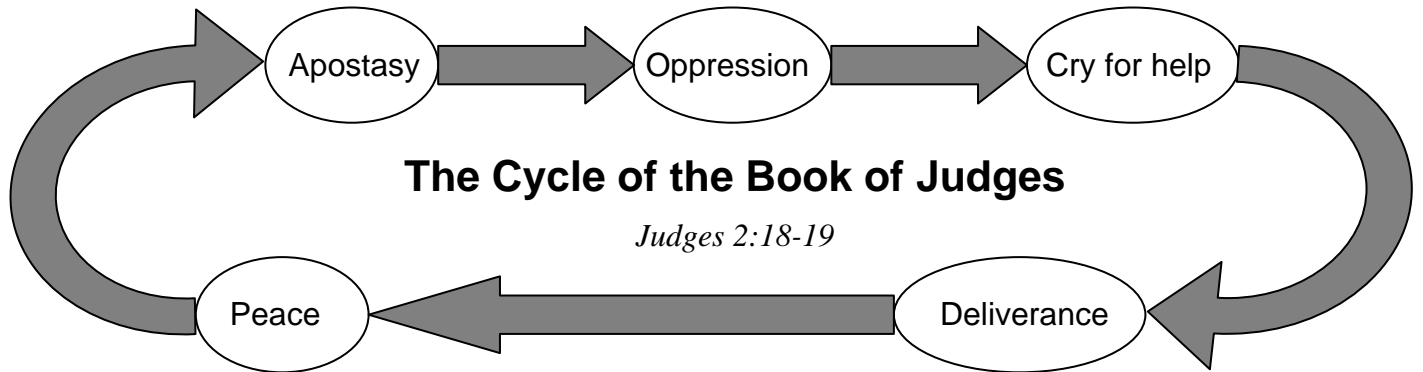
Topography of Palestine



1. **EASTERN HILLS.** These fertile hills made areas like Bashan (in the north) and Gilead (further south) legendary for their grain, cattle, wine, olives, and timber. But the hills soon give way to desert.
2. **THE DESERT.** The bleak wastes of the Syrian desert formed a natural eastern boundary to the land.
3. **THE JORDAN VALLEY.** A great geological fault splits the country. Through it, the River Jordan drops rapidly to the Dead Sea, 1,285 feet below sea level. The Dead Sea is 1,300 feet at its deepest.
4. **THE HILL COUNTRY.** The hill country of Judah held plenty of opportunities for guerilla warfare and was a formidable challenge for a would-be attacker. The hills were covered by woods. Galilee in the north was richly fertile, prosperous, and densely settled in Jesus' time.
5. **THE COASTAL PLAIN.** Heavily populated in Old Testament times. Southern end of the plain dominated by the 5 cities of the Philistines. The straight coastline means there are no natural harbors.³

³Simon Jenkins, *Nelson's 3-D Bible mapbook [computer file]*, electronic ed., Logos Library System, (Nashville: Thomas Nelson) 1997, © 1985 by Lion Publishing.

Lesson 2: The Spiritual Setting (Judges 2)



Judges 2 takes us back in time to an unspecified point during the life of Joshua. It reminds us of the fundamental reason for the Israelites' failure, and we come to realize that iron chariots and the natives' fierce determination not to be conquered were, in a word, irrelevant.

Then chapter 2 proceeds to give a preview of the rest of the book of Judges, with its theme being God's unwavering faithfulness in spite of the Israelites' continual unfaithfulness. The cycle of oppression and ultimate deliverance *begins* with apostasy, and the implication is that the cycle would only be *broken* by Israel's faithfulness. Sadly, however, the cycle is not broken in the book of Judges.

In fact, we see not simply a *cycle*, but rather a downward *spiral*. Notice in verse 19, that once a judge dies, the people "reverted and behaved more corruptly than their fathers." This downward spiral continues until it reaches the disgusting immorality detailed in the last five chapters of the book. The spiral actually can be seen as continuing well *beyond* the book of Judges, with Israel's condition worsening through the period of the kings (except for a brief recovery during the reign of David and the early reign of Solomon) and culminating with the conquest of Israel by Assyria and Babylon.

Concerning making covenants with the natives of Palestine, see Exodus 23:30-33, 34:10-16; Deuteronomy 7:1-5. Concerning placing certain peoples under tribute, see Deuteronomy 20:10-18.

1. What is the theme of the book of Judges?
2. What are the five events of the cycle in the book of Judges?
 - a.
 - b.
 - c.
 - d.
 - e.
3. How many times had the Israelites promised to follow the Lord in Joshua 24:14-24?
4. Did the Israelites follow the Law concerning placing people under tribute?

Judges 2:1-9: A Previous Visit by an Angel

5. Of what fact does the Angel of the Lord remind the people?
6. With whom had Israel entered a covenant (before the conquest)?
7. With whom had Israel entered covenants after the days of Moses?
8. What would their punishment be?

9. Translate the name of that place, Bochim.
10. Where do the people go after Joshua dismisses them?
11. Compare and contrast three agreements (“covenants”) made with the inhabitants of the land. Use the following table.

Person or group	The agreement that was made	Reason for the agreement	Outcome of the agreement
Rahab (Josh. 2:1-21)			
The Gibeonites (Joshua 9:1-15)			
The man from Bethel (Judges 1:22-26)			

12. For how long do the people remain faithful?

Judges 2:10-23: Apostasy and More Apostasy

13. What does the next generation do?
14. What is said of the Lord's anger? What does He do to punish Israel?
15. Whom does God raise up for deliverance?
16. How does Israel respond to the judges?
17. What happens every time a judge is raised up?
18. Why does God deliver the people?
19. What happens when the judge dies?
20. Why does God leave the nations without delivering them into Joshua's hands?

Judges 3:1-5: A Hard Test for Israel

21. Which nations are left?
22. What purpose is served by the presence of the remaining nations?
23. What happens because of the Israelites dwelling among the Canaanites? (Two things.)
 - a.
 - b.

Lesson 3: Ehud and Deborah (Judges 3 – 5)

“*Shophetim*,” the Hebrew title “Judges,” refers to people who do more than merely pass judgment on certain matters. They also “deliver” or “liberate.” The judges in this period (in this book) can be identified by two key features:

- 1) They were **appointed**, raised up, and supported **by God**.
- 2) They **delivered Israel** (certain tribes or areas, rather than the entire nation of Israel) by providing military victory **over oppressing nations**.

So the judges in the book of Judges were distinct from other public servants. There had been judges appointed in Israel even before the Law was given at Mt. Sinai (Exodus 18:13-27), and the 70 elders had been appointed during the wilderness wanderings to ease Moses’ burden of leading the people. (Numbers 11:14-17) Moses also intended for there to be judges in Canaan to maintain justice and settle disputes. (Deut.16:18; e.g., 1 Sam. 8:3). As in the case of Deborah, a judge might have been serving in a civil capacity before God called him or her to deliver Israel in battle. (Judges 4:4-5) But only the judges in Judges were militant *deliverers*.

However, the judges were distinct from ordinary military leaders. They were *appointed by God*, sometimes even over the judge’s doubts and objections, as in the case of Gideon. (Judges 6:11ff) Gideon’s son, Abimelech (chapter 9) was self-willed and self-appointed, unlike a true judge. Notice that the text says he “**reigned over** Israel three years.” (Judges 9:22, emphasis mine, GC) And the text never says he “*judged*” Israel. Also, concerning the nature of Abimelech’s fighting, notice that he does not deliver Israel from any oppression. Rather, we see that Abimelech is more of an oppressor, himself, than a deliverer! Considerable space is given in the book to Abimelech’s actions, apparently to show us what a true judge was *not*.

The identity and location of Cushan-Rishathaim is uncertain from other historical records, beyond what the Bible text says. The location of Meroz has not been confirmed. The city of Debir was in the southern hills of Judah. (See the long ISBE article.)

Chapter 5 is the poetic version of chapter 4. Other nations at that time also wrote both poetic and non-poetic accounts of battles. Deborah’s Song is one of the oldest Hebrew poems we have. However, it not only adds poetic aspects to the battle such as the contrast between Deborah and Sisera’s mother, it also adds some historical detail such as the Israelites’ lack of spears and shields (using archers, 5:11, in addition to swords, 4:15, 16) as well as the role of the weather. (5:4, 5, 21)

Fill in the following chart as much as possible during the course of the next six lessons.

The Table of the Judges				
Judge’s Name	Tribe	Oppressor	Length of Oppression	Length of Judge’s Rule
1. Othniel				
2. Ehud				
3. Shamgar				
4. Deborah/Barak				
5. Gideon				
6. Tola				
7. Jair				
8. Jephthah				
9. Ibzan				
10. Elon				
11. Abdon				
12. Samson				

Judges 3:7-11: Introduction to the Judges

1. Whom do the people forget, and whom do they serve?
2. What is God's reaction?
3. Into whose hand does God sell Israel? For how long do they serve him?
4. Who is the deliverer whom God raises up?
5. What had he done previously, according to chapter 1?
6. For how long does the land have rest?

Judges 3:12-30: Ehud

7. Whom does God strengthen against Israel next? (3:12)
8. What other two peoples help him?
9. For how long does Israel serve him?
10. Who is the deliverer whom God raises up?
11. What physical trait does he use to his advantage?
12. What is he sent to do?
13. Describe the deception and the assassination.
14. How does Ehud escape?
15. Whom does Ehud rally, and how many enemies do they kill?
16. For how long does the land have rest?
17. (From verse 31) After Ehud was “_____ the son of Anath, who killed _____ men of the _____ with an _____; and he also delivered Israel.”

Judges 4 and 5: Deborah and Barak

18. Into whose hand are the Israelites sold? Where does he reign?
19. Who is the commander of his army, and where does he live?
20. Why do the children of Israel cry out to the Lord?
21. Who is already judging Israel (apparently in civil matters) at this time?
22. In what territory was her open-air “office”?
23. For whom does she send, and what tribe is he from?
24. What does she tell him to do?
25. *Why* will he receive no glory?
26. *Through what event* will someone else receive the glory?

27. Who is Heber, and what had he done, especially regarding Jabin?

28. Describe the initial battle.

29. Who escapes the battle, and where does he go?

30. Tell the events surrounding his death.

Judges 5: The Song of Deborah

31. What did Deborah and Barak do on that day?

32. Besides praise to God, what themes emerge in the song?

(vv. 2, 9, 14-18, 23)

(vv. 6, 24)

Other?

33. What happened when the Lord went out from Seir?

34. What was life like before Deborah?

35. What is to be recounted and spoken? (v. 11)

36. Which tribes helped Deborah and Barak?

37. Which tribes did not?

38. Describe the role of nature in Sisera's defeat. (vv. 4, 5, 20, 21)

39. Why is Meroz cursed?

40. Why is Jael most blessed among women?

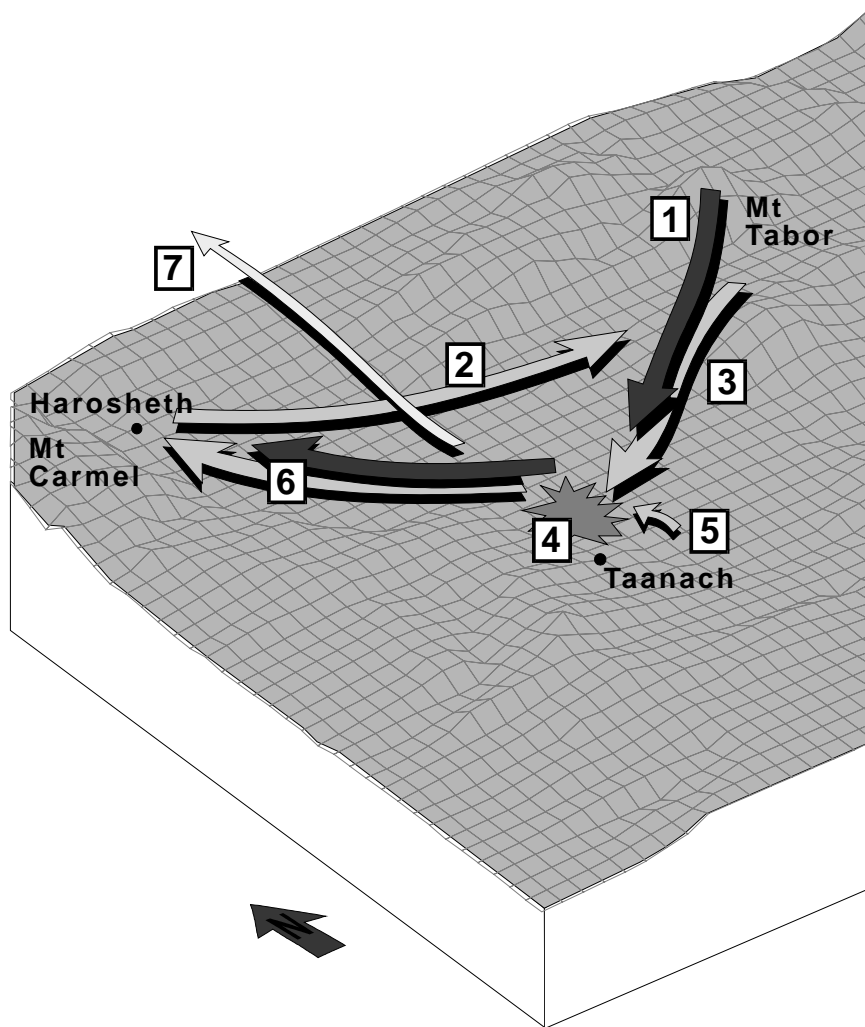
41. Why is the mother of Sisera worried?

42. How do her wise advisors comfort her (with wishful thinking)?

43. Let those who love [the Lord] be like the _____ when it _____ in
full _____." (v.31)

44. For how long does the land have rest?

Deborah's Victory



Israel had been oppressed by the violent rule of King Jabin of Hazor for 20 years. Deborah, a prophetess, makes plans with Barak to lure the army of Jabin to defeat. . . .

1. **Deborah and Barak** gather an army from some of the tribes to Mt Tabor, dominating the area.
2. **Sisera**, commander of Jabin's army, brings his troops and 900 iron chariots to the foot of Tabor.
3. **Deborah gives the signal to attack** (possibly after a heavy rainstorm). Barak's forces sweep down the steep slopes of Mt Tabor. Sisera's troops panic and head towards the marshy River Kishon.
4. **The rainstorm floods the river.** Sisera's chariots are useless or are swept away (Judges 5:21). His army is routed.
5. **Local Canaanite kings** try to aid Sisera's men by Taanach, but they, too, are defeated. (Judges 5:19)
6. **Barak pursues** the retreating army as far as Harosheth. It is completely defeated.
7. **Sisera** himself abandons his now-useless chariot. He flees for his life, but is killed while sleeping in a tent.⁴

⁴Simon Jenkins, *Nelson's 3-D Bible Mapbook [computer file], electronic ed., Logos Library System*, (Nashville: Thomas Nelson) 1997, ©1985 by Lion Publishing.

Lesson 4: Gideon (Judges 6 – 8)

Midian was the son of Abraham through Keturah. Ishmael was Abraham's son through Hagar. The term "Ishmaelites" probably came to refer to all peoples dwelling in that certain desert region. Thus, the Midianites are called "Ishmaelites" both in Genesis 37:25, 28 and in Judges 8:24.

There was apparently more than one Ophrah in Israel: One in Benjamin (Joshua 18:23), and the one in this story, which belonged to the Abiezirites of Manasseh. (Judges 6:24, etc.)

Mt. Tabor and the hill of Moreh were next to each other, just north of the Valley of Jezreel.

The wooden image beside the altar of Baal (Judges 6:30) may have been an asherah pole, a tall tree stump with idols carved into it. Sometimes whole groves of these were sculpted.

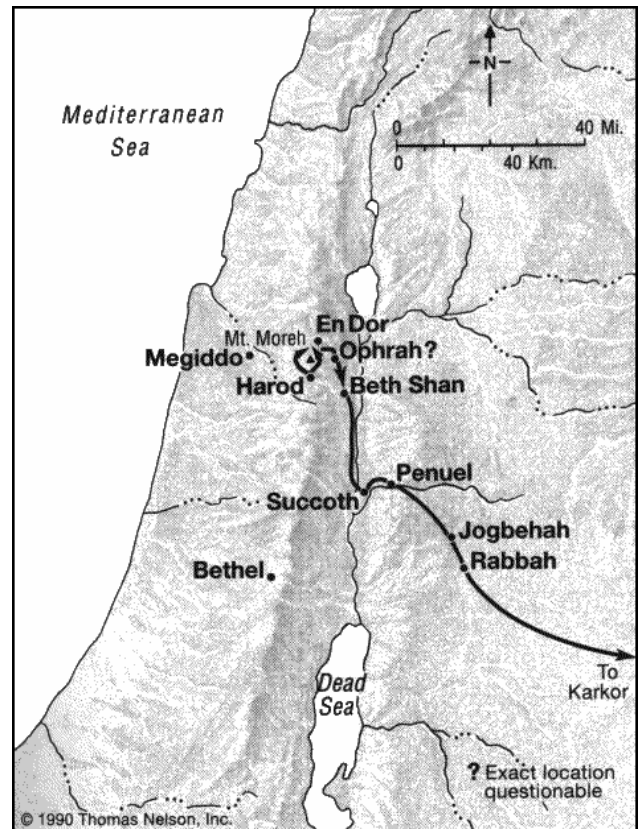
Ephraim apparently wanted to dominate the tribes. This may be one reason that the northern kingdom is sometimes referred to as "Ephraim."

Notice Gideon's exercise of his position as a leader appointed by God when he deals harshly with men who refuse to support him.

An ephod was originally a priestly garment made of cloth and adorned with gold, jewels, and ornaments. (Ex. 28:4–40; 35:27; 39:2–30) The text does not say how Gideon used so much plunder to fashion one, or exactly what it looked like. But we know that it had nothing to do with Levitical service. Later in Judges, Micah also presumes to make one which is used in idolatrous worship. (Judges 17:5)

This story sadly comes full circle, with the judge delivering the people from oppression and idolatry, only to lead them back to idolatry by the story's end.

Gideon Sends Midian Back Home



Thomas Nelson, Inc., *Nelson's complete book of Bible maps and charts: Old and New Testament [computer file], electronic ed., Logos Library System*, (Nashville: Thomas Nelson) 1997, c1996.

Judges 6:1-10: An Evil Situation

1. When Israelites again does evil, the country of _____ persecutes them for _____ years.
2. When they and their allies move in, how many are there?
3. How does the persecution affect the Israelites' economy?
4. Where are the Israelites living?
5. Whom does God send (*before* raising up a judge)?
6. According to him, what had God done for the Israelites?
 - a. _____
 - b. _____
7. What had God asked in return?
8. The Israelites had not obeyed God's _____. Does God still listen to the Israelites?

Judges 6:11-24: Gideon Meets the Angel of the Lord

9. In verse 12, Gideon is called a “_____ of _____”, and v. 14 refers to his _____.
10. Tell Gideon’s actions and statements that show he was NOT what the Angel was describing:
- a. (fear of the Midianites)
 - b. (lack of understanding of God’s punishment)
 - c. (walking by sight, not faith)
 - d. (reliance on his own strength)
11. How would Gideon be able to do everything he does? (It’s mentioned in verses 12, 14, and 16.)
12. The defeat of the enemies was foretold as being compared to the defeat of “_____ man.”
13. What sign is Gideon shown to prove that the Lord would be with him?
14. Tell two things Gideon does to show his respect and appreciation for the meeting and the sign.
- a. _____
 - b. _____

Judges 6:25-32: Gideon’s New Name

15. What two things is Gideon told to tear down that same night?
- a. _____
 - b. _____
- Who owns them?
16. Besides the Midianites, of whom is Gideon afraid?
17. What do those very men want to do to Gideon?
18. Who (surprisingly) supports Gideon’s actions?
19. What is Gideon’s new name?
- What does it mean?

Judges 6:33 - 7:18: Preparing for Battle - Three More Signs

20. When the Spirit of the Lord comes upon Gideon, he is brave enough to do what?
21. For what two signs does Gideon ask (*after* his brave act)?
- a. _____
 - b. _____
22. From how many tribes does Gideon ask help?
- How many soldiers are there at first?
23. [*Key point*] Why does God want there to be fewer soldiers?
24. What two methods does God use for thinning their ranks?
- a. _____
 - b. _____
25. Why does God keep the men who lap? (Answer very carefully! Remember the “Key Point”?)
26. What additional sign does God give Gideon to encourage him?

Judges 7:19-25: The “Battle”

27. What three things do Gideon and his men do to start the nighttime battle?
- a. _____
 - b. _____
 - c. _____
28. Who does all the killing of Midianites in the camp?
29. Who beheads Oreb and Zeeb?

Judges 8:1-21: Mopping Up

30. What complaint do the men of Ephraim have?
How does Gideon respond?
31. Who is with Gideon at this point, and what are they doing?
32. What do the men of Succoth and Penuel refuse to do?
Are these men Israelites?
What does Gideon do to the elders of Succoth?
What does he do to the men of Penuel?
33. Where are Zebah and Zalmunna, and how many men are with them?
How many men had already been killed?
34. Where and when does Gideon attack their army?
35. What command does Gideon's oldest son not obey?
Why not?
How does Gideon respond?

Judges 8:22-28: Gideon's Influence

36. Why does Gideon refuse for himself and his descendants to rule over Israel?
37. What does Gideon do with jewelry from the plunder?
What happens with that item?
38. What becomes of the Midianites?

Judges 8:29-35: Gideon's Legacy

39. What happens as soon as Gideon is dead?
40. The only other Bible reference to Gideon in the Bible is in Heb. 11:32.
With what group of people is he mentioned?
What phrases from Heb. 11:33-38 describe Gideon?
41. Think of other faithful men who were little in their own eyes when God called them.
42. Find New Testament passages that fit with the last half of Judges 7:2.
43. Identify parts of Gideon's story that remind us of ...
Moses' objections to God's calling -
Abraham's intercession for Sodom -
Joshua's conquest of Jericho -
Israel asking for a king -
The golden calf at Sinai -

Lesson 5: Abimelech (Judges 9)

Apparently Shechem's central location in Canaan was responsible for this ancient city's frequent mention in the Old Testament. (The ISBE has a long article about the city, with good photographs of extensive excavation. Some remaining walls are 30' high. Various artifacts from various periods have been found at the site.) Shechem is the first city in Canaan where God had appeared to Abraham. (Genesis 12:6-7) The text mentions a prominent terebinth tree where Abram built an altar in response to the covenant with God. Centuries later at Shechem, Joshua renewed the covenant of God with the people and erected a large, sacred stone under a prominent oak tree. (Joshua 24:1, 26 - a terebinth is a type of oak.) By Abimelech's time, the Israelites had turned that sacred area into a temple for Baal-Berith (literally, "lord of the covenant"), and that Baal's temple had a fortified tower, or "stronghold." (Judges 9:4, 46-47) The men of Shechem "made Abimelech king beside the terebinth tree at the pillar that *was* in Shechem." (Judges 9:6)

"Abimelech" means "My father is king." That name strikes one strangely in light of Gideon's stated desire not to rule over the people. (Judges 8:22-23) Gideon had many wives by whom he fathered 70 sons, and he had Abimelech by a concubine who lived in Shechem. After Abimelech is made king, one of his half brothers, Jotham, tells the parable in which a bramble (thorn bush) represents Abimelech. The parable carries a curse which comes alive in the remainder of chapter 9.

Remember from Lesson 3 that Abimelech possesses neither of the two features that identify a true judge: 1) Appointed by God; 2) Delivered the people. Abimelech *promotes himself* and murders his brothers to stay in power, and eventually kills the wicked men who helped put him in power. Abimelech is more of an oppressor, himself, than a deliverer. To his everlasting shame, he is finally killed by a woman. (Judges 9:53-54; 2 Sam. 11:21) He embodies everything a judge should not have been, and displays none of the qualities of a true servant of God.

The upper millstone dropped on Abimelech was probably small, used to grind grain on a larger stone (as referenced in Matthew 24:41), likely 10-14" across and weighing about 5 pounds.

Judges 9:1-6: Abimelech's Conspiracy

1. Whom does Abimelech first approach concerning his desire to reign?
2. How does he verbally distance himself from his father, Gideon?
3. In what sense was Abimelech a "brother" to the men of Shechem? (9:3)
4. Who pays Abimelech 70 shekels of silver?
5. From where does the money come?
6. What does Abimelech do with the money?
7. What does Abimelech do in Ophrah?
8. Who escapes?
9. What do the men of Shechem do to Abimelech?

Judges 9:7-21: The Parable of the Trees

10. Which noble trees and plants refused to reign over the trees?
11. V. 15: "The _____ said to the trees, 'If in _____ you anoint me as king over you, then come and take shelter in my _____; But if not, let _____ come out ... and devour the cedars of Lebanon!'"
12. What does Jotham say his father, Gideon, had done for them?

13. Whom does Jotham accuse of murdering the 70?
14. What image describes the mutual annihilation of Abimelech and the men of Shechem?

Judges 9:22-49: In-fighting at Shechem

15. After three years, what does God send between Abimelech and the men of Shechem?
16. What do the men of Shechem do in the mountains?
17. Who comes to Shechem and usurps Abimilech's position?
18. Judges 9:28 mentions Hamor. Who was he? (Hint: Gen. 34)
19. Who is angered by Gaal's statements?
20. What does he incite Abimelech to do?
21. How does Zebul stall Gaal?
22. What is the result of the ensuing battle?
23. What do the people do on the next day?
24. Describe how Abimelech surrounds them outside the city.
25. Where do the men of Shechem fortify themselves?
26. How many people fit inside that structure?
27. What do Abimelech and his people do to the structure?

Judges 9:22-49: In-fighting at Shechem

28. What happens when Abimelech tries the same strategy at Thebez?
29. What does Abimelech ask of his armorbearer, and why?
30. Whose wickedness was returned to their own heads?
 - a.
 - b.

Lesson 6: Jephthah (Judges 10 – 12)

After a brief mention of two judges who serve for 45 years, the cycle continues in chapter 10 with Israel's unfaithfulness, God's hot anger, and the resulting oppression. We have a somewhat fuller description of their cry for help in which the Israelites actually admit their sin. (10:10) As refreshing as their confession might seem, however, the Lord's response might seem equally harsh. He reminds them not only of His delivering them from Egypt, but He also mentions that He had saved them from various oppressors in the more recent period of the judges. (10:11-12) He then rebuffs their plea for help, and refers them for help to the false gods which they had chosen. (vv. 13-14 - We are simply not told how or through whom this dialogue was conducted.) Israel again admits their sin, puts away the foreign gods, and serves the Lord. (vv. 15-16) God's emotional response to the people's suffering is expressed at the end of verse 16. Then chapter 10 leaves us with Israel and their oppressor, Ammon, poised for battle at Mizpah, and the leaders of Gilead looking for a deliverer.

"Mizpah" (or the masculine form, "Mizpeh") means "lookout" or "watch tower." Several locations bear at least part of that name. 1) Jacob and Laban set up a heap of stones which is called Mizpah because Laban said, "May the Lord **watch** between you and me..." (Gen. 31:44-53, emphasis mine, GC) This is probably the same Mizpah as in the story of Jephthah, east of the Jordan and north of the Jabbok. 2) Samuel does much of his work from a Mizpah in Benjamin which had been the staging ground for military action against the Benjamites during the time of the judges. (Josh. 18:21,26; Judges 20-21; 1 Samuel 7:5-12) At least three lesser important Mizpahs are mentioned. 3) A town in southern Judah (Josh. 15:38), 4) A place near Mt. Hermon in what is later known as Galilee (Joshua 11:3, 8), and 5) A town in Moab. (1 Samuel 22:34)

Ammon was a descendant of Lot. (Genesis 19:36-37)

The land of Tob would have been east of the Jordan.

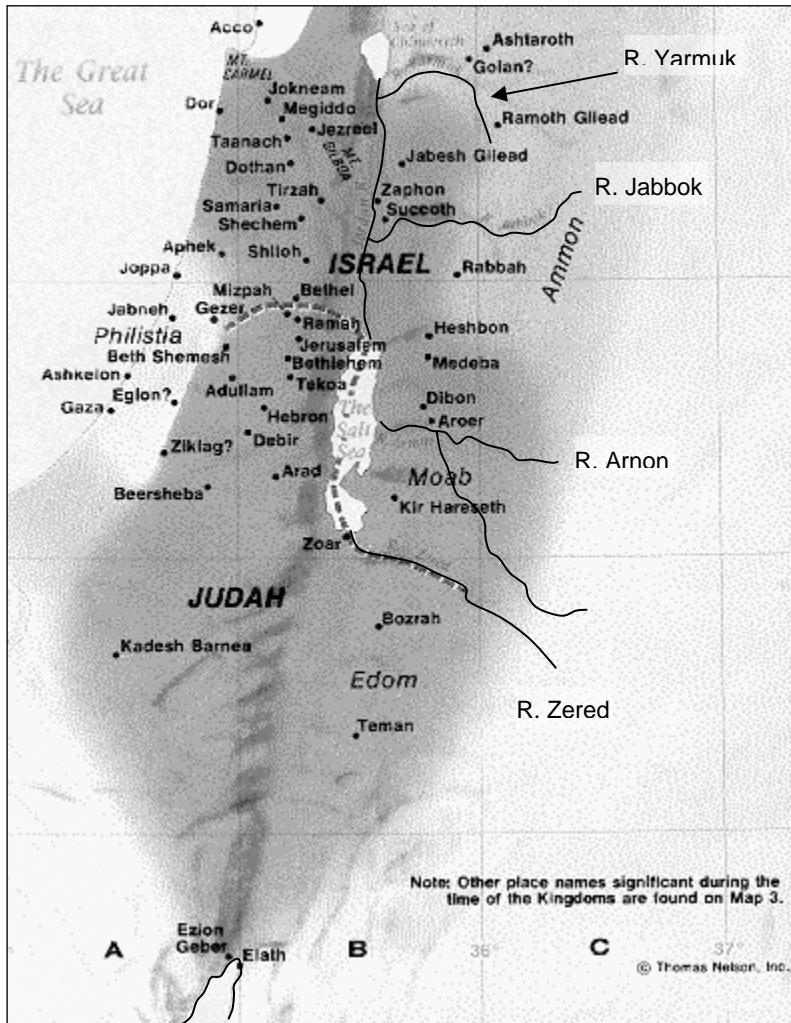
Jephthah, like the Lord, had been rejected by his people, and is sought out by the very people who had rejected him in their time of distress.

As Jephthah straightens out the king of Ammon regarding ancient (cf. 11:26) trans-Jordanian history, Judges 11:16-17 parallels Numbers 20:1, 14-21, and Judges 11:19-22 parallels Num. 21:21-26, showing Jephthah's (and the writer's) knowledge of the Pentateuch.

Our first reaction as civilized people to Jephthah's vow is to try to explain it as being something other than what the text describes. However, the word translated "burnt offering" (Heb. <olah>) indeed refers to a "(whole) burnt offering" or "burnt sacrifice". While it is not clear what possibly could have come out of his house to greet him that would have been an appropriate burnt offering, it is clear that Jephthah's vow was rash, apparently stemming either from his fear of the impending battle, or from his lack of confidence about his relationship with God. (In this respect, his vow may remind us of Jacob's vow in Genesis 28:20-22.) It is also clear that Jephthah keeps his vow, and that his daughter is fully submissive and compliant. The Law of Moses made provision for rash vows (Leviticus 5:4-6), but Jephthah, for whatever reason, does not avail himself of that provision.

Unlike some of the other judges, Jephthah has only one child, a fact which makes his vow even more tragic because his lineage ceases. His rash vow brings sorrow on himself, on his daughter, on his daughter's companions, and on everyone who reads the story throughout time.

Recall that Deborah had criticized the lack of cooperation between Israel's tribes. (Judges 5:17) Remember, too, that Gideon had been at odds specifically *with Ephraim* because Ephraim had not been called to the battle. (Judges 8:1ff) The Ephraimites call Jephthah and his men a bunch of "fugitives of Ephraim among the Ephraimites and among the Manassites" (12:4), and stir up perhaps a long-standing dispute between the peoples of that region. Jephthah is always referred to as a "Gileadite." Gilead was clearly east of the Jordan, though its boundaries are not clearly specified. Originally, the man, Gilead, was a descendant of Manasseh (Numbers 26:29ff; Joshua 17:3-6), and his clan's territory was clearly in the area that Manasseh held east of the Jordan. Jephthah takes personal offense at the Ephraimites' remarks, and suggests that there was another side to the story of Ephraim's supposed eagerness to do battle with Ammon. (12:2-3) Jephthah's response is not nearly so diplomatic as Gideon's, and civil war breaks out. Ephraim had moved east across the Jordan, and is cut off from retreat by the Gileadites holding the fords. A dialectal difference is used as a test to identify Ephraimites trying to sneak back across the Jordan, and further emphasizes the lack of unity between the tribes.



Not all of Jephthah's actions are commendable, but insofar as he "through faith subdued kingdoms," he is mentioned in Hebrews 11:32.

Chapter 12 closes with the mention of three minor judges: 1) Ibzan. Note that there are two Bethlehems, one in Zebulun (Josh 19:15) , and one in Judah. (Ruth 1:1); 2) Elon. From Zebulun, the same area as Deborah and Gideon; 3) Abdon. From Pirathon of Ephraim. Notice how many of the judges are from this vicinity.

(Map at Left)

River Borders of the TransJordan

¹Thomas Nelson, Inc., *Nelson's Bible map collection [computer file], electronic ed., Logos Library System*, (Nashville: Thomas Nelson) 1997, ©1983.

Judges 10:1-5: Two Judges

1. Fill in the Table of the Judges for the two judges who are mentioned next.

Judges 10:6-18: The Cycle Continues

2. Whose gods does Israel turn to serve?
3. Into whose hand does the Lord sell Israel, and for how long?
4. What areas of Israel are oppressed? (vv. 8-9)
5. What do the Israelites admit when they cry out to the Lord?
6. What does God say to rebuff Israel?
7. What does Israel say and do to try to change God's mind?
8. What is God's emotional reaction by the end of this chapter? (Contrast this with 10:7.)
9. Where do the Ammonites gather? Where do the Israelites gather?

Judges 11:1-11: Jephthah Arises

10. Bonus Question: How many "h"s are in the name "Jephthah"?
11. Why is Jephthah not accepted by his half brothers?
12. What does Jephthah do after fleeing to Tob?
13. Why do the elders go get Jephthah to be their military leader?

14. What had the elders previously done against Jephthah?
15. What promise does Jephthah make the elders of Gilead confirm?

Judges 11:12-28: Jephthah's Diplomacy

16. The king of Ammon wants the land between what borders returned peacefully?
17. [Key point] V. 15, "Israel did not _____ the land of Moab, nor the land of the people of Ammon." So why were Israelites living there?
18. Who does Jephthah say should give the Ammonites land?
19. Why does Jephthah mention the ancient Moabite king, Balak?
20. Jephthah concludes, "May the Lord, the _____, render judgment this day between ... Israel and ... Ammon."

Judges 11:29-33: Jephthah Delivers Israel

21. Jephthah advances when the _____ of the Lord comes upon him.
22. As he advances, what vow does Jephthah make to the Lord?
23. From how many cities does Jephthah drive the Ammonites?

Judges 11:34-40: Jephthah Keeps His Rash Vow

24. Who comes out to meet Jephthah with joy?

...and she was his _____
25. On what point do Jephthah and his daughter agree?
26. What does his daughter request?
27. What annual custom is established?

Judges 12:1-7: Dealing with Ephraim: Diplomacy Goes Out the Window

28. What do the men of Ephraim threaten, because they had not been included in battle?
29. With what accusation does Jephthah counter?
30. Why are the Gileadites willing to enter the civil war which ensues?
31. When Jephthah's men cut off the retreat, how do they determine who is an Ephraimite?

Judges 12:8-15: Three More Judges

32. Fill in the Table of the Judges for the judges who are mentioned next.

Lesson 7: Samson, Part 1 (Judges 13 – 14)

Zorah, like its neighboring city, Eshtaol, belong to Dan (Joshua 19:41), although they originally appear as border cities of Judah. (Joshua 15:21, 33) The borders of Dan are not as clearly defined as some other tribes' (cf. Joshua 19:47), and to complicate matters further, the Danites later move far north, north of the Sea of Galilee in the Jordan Valley. (Judges 18)

While the Nazirite (KJV, "Nazarite") vow is explained in Numbers 6, the term "Nazirite" is only applied to Samson in all of Scripture. Some aspects of the vow are mentioned, however, before the births of Samuel (1 Samuel 1:11) and John the Baptist (Luke 1:15), and during Paul's life. (Acts 18:18) Keeping the Nazirite vow would help Samson act responsibly with his strength.

Notice the limited success that Samson would have: Unlike Ehud who *subdued* Moab (Judges 3:30), Deborah and Barak who *subdued* the king of Canaan (Judges 4:23), Gideon who *subdued* Midian (Judges 8:28), and Jephthah who *subdued* Ammon (Judges 11:33), Samson does not *end* the oppression of the Philistines. The Angel says "he shall *begin* to deliver Israel" from the Philistines. (Judges 13:5, emphasis mine, GC) The Philistines are finally *subdued* by Samuel at the battle of Mizpah, after which Samuel raises his "Ebenezer" stone. (1 Samuel 7:7-13)

The angelic visits to Manoah and his (unnamed) wife have several features in common with other such appearances in Scripture. For example, 1) the Angel's identity is practically the same as God (notice Hagar's response in Genesis 16:7-14, the appearance of "three men" in Genesis 18:1-2, the pronouns used in Genesis 22:11-18, and the description given in Genesis 32:24-30); 2) a meal is prepared to show hospitality and honor (see Genesis 18:2-8, but notice that *those* men eat; also, Judges 6:17-23); and 3) the human in the story asks the angel's name. (Genesis 32:24-30)

Samson's supernatural strength was not, of course, a consequence of the Nazirite vow: The Spirit of the Lord comes upon him for special tasks. (Compare Judges 13:25 and 14:6) Gideon, Othniel and Jephthah are other judges who had the Spirit of the Lord come on them.

Bees generally avoid dead bodies. This makes Samson's riddle especially tricky. The bees, as does Samson on many occasions, make an exception to their general practice.

This lesson has great application to modern choices of whom to marry, although the Lord was clearly responsible for using Samson's foolishness to accomplish His will. The tactics that Samson's wife uses are every bit as *effective* as they are *childish*. There may be a manuscript difference in 14:15. The pressure from the 30 men probably begins on the fourth day.

As with Gideon, we see weakness, folly, and sin in Samson's life, and his actions do not always seem motivated by his devotion to God. But he does eventually serve God by faith, and is honored in Hebrews 11:32.

Judges 13:1-7: The First Angelic Visit

1. Into whose hand is Israel delivered, and for how long?
2. To what barren woman does the Angel of the Lord appear?
3. What other women in the Bible have similar angelic visits?
4. From Numbers 6, what three main prohibitions are connected with the Nazirite vow?
 - a.
 - b.
 - c.
5. From Numbers 6, what word (in one form or another) is used 7 times in each verse, vv. 2-8?
6. Numbers 6:9-12 makes provision for what violation of the vow?
7. Numbers 6:13-20 details the ritual for what event in the life of a Nazirite?
8. Because the child will be a Nazirite, what is *she* to be careful not to do?
9. Compare Judges 13:5 and 13:7. What detail does the Angel mention that the woman does *not* relate to her husband (and is not part of the Nazirite vow)?

10. What detail does she mention to her husband in v. 7 that we do *not* see in the text of v. 5?

Judges 13:8-25: The Return Visit

11. For what does the woman's husband pray?
12. What is Manoah's initial question to the Angel?
13. What is the Angel's reply in verses 13 and 14?
14. Is there any new information for Manoah in vv. 13-14?
15. (Speculate) What is the purpose of the return visit?
16. Does the Angel allow Himself to be detained?
17. Why does Manoah ask for the Man's name?
18. What happens as Manoah makes his offerings?
19. When Manoah overreacts in verse 22, what does his wife point out?
 - a.
 - b.
 - c.

Judges 14: Intermarriage with the Enemy

20. What does Samson see in Timnah?
21. How does Samson respond to his parents' encouragement to marry an Israelite?
22. [Key Point] Why does God permit Samson to marry a Philistine?
23. (Speculate) Why do Samson's parents permit him to marry a Philistine?
24. Do his parents go with him to Timnah? Do they see the lion approach?
25. How easily, and with what weapon, does Samson kill the lion?
26. When Samson later passes by the carcass, what does he find?
27. How long does the wedding feast last? At least how many guests attend?
28. What riddle does Samson propose?
29. What are the stakes of the challenge to solve the riddle?
30. What threat do the men make against Samson's wife?
31. What does Samson's wife do?
32. How is it clear that "love" or trust has nothing to do with Samson keeping the riddle to himself?
33. In Samson's words, how do the men solve the riddle?
34. Where does Samson get the changes of clothing to pay off the bet?
35. Where does Samson go, and what is his emotional state?

Lesson 8: Samson, Part 2 (Judges 15 – 16)

In the previous lesson, Samson's father complains about Samson's choice of a wife, but ultimately condones the choice. (14:1-10) This may remind us of Eli, who did nothing more than to rebuke his sons (1 Samuel 2:22-25; 3:13-14), and David, who *did not even rebuke* his self-willed son, Adonijah. (1 Kings 1:6) Notice in the cases of Eli and David the element of God's punishment, both against the wicked sons and against the parents.

In chapter 14, Samson is to blame for losing the bet, but he uses his complaint about the circumstances as justification for the murder of 30 Philistines. Almost with his dying breath, Samson prays for vengeance for the injuries inflicted on him because of his own folly. (16:28) This pattern shows God's purpose in "seeking an occasion to move against the Philistines." (14:4)

In spite of Samson's statement which might seem to suggest that he plans a measured response (15:7), he consistently escalates the killing. By the end of his life, the death toll (according to the story) is about 4,030 (14:19; 15:15; 16:27-30) plus a "very great slaughter" (15:8), compared to three (Samson, his wife, and her father). Notice the Philistines description of Samson as "the one who multiplied our dead." (16:24) Compare Samson's accomplishments to Shamgar's victory (Judges 3:31) and to God's promised blessing of easy victory. (Leviticus 26:8; Deuteronomy 28:7 Josh. 23:10)

Etam was close to Bethlehem and Tekoa. (2 Chronicles 11:6) Hebron lies 30+ miles almost due east of Gaza.

Samson repeatedly allows himself to be bound. While this seems to reflect his strategy to gain the element of surprise in chapter 15, it seems to stem from nothing more than flaunting his strength in chapter 16.

Sadly, Samson never learns to overcome the very same emotional tactics which his wife had used. Once they cost him a bet; once they cost him his freedom and health, and give God's enemies an occasion to rejoice in their false god. Samson's weakness with women contrasts strikingly with his physical strength against men.

Lessons to learn from Samson include the following:

- Choose a mate wisely. (2 Corinthians 6:14ff)
- Control your passions. (Galatians 5:24; Romans 13:14)
- Beware taking God's blessings for granted (Ephesians 1:3ff; 1 Peter 1:17ff) and becoming too full of pride because of our blessings. (2 Corinthians 12:7)
- God's giving His blessings is often dependent on our continued obedience. (Heb. 3:14)
- God can use people in their selfishness to accomplish His will. (Philippians 1:15-18)
- Even God's servants upon whom "the Spirit of the Lord came mightily" were prone to sin. (cp. Gideon, Judges 8:27; Peter, Galatians 2:11ff; etc.)

Judges 14:20 – 15:3: Samson Loses More Than a Bet

1. When Samson returns to his wife, what does he learn?
2. Why had this been done?

Judges 15:4-8: "An Eye (and a Hip and Thigh) for an Eye"

3. How does Samson vandalize the Philistines' property?
4. What all is destroyed?
5. When the Philistines learn that it was the Timnite who had stirred up Samson, what do they do?
6. How does Samson respond. . .
 - a. . . . in word?
 - b. . . . in action?

Judges 15:9-20: The Slaughter Increases at Lehi

7. How many Israelites go to arrest Samson on behalf of the Philistines?
8. Why are they willing to turn over Samson to the Philistines?

9. What assurance does Samson seek?
10. With what do they bind Samson?
11. What do the Philistines do at Lehi?
12. What becomes of the ropes when the Spirit of the Lord comes upon Samson?
13. What weapon does Samson find?
14. How many Philistines does Samson kill?
15. What two names does Samson assign to that place, and what does each name mean?
 - a.
 - b.
16. Fill in the Table of the Judges for Samson.

Judges 16:1-3 Samson Versus the Gazites

17. What sin does Samson commit in Gaza (16:1)?
18. When does Samson escape the ambush?
19. How does he “rub in” the fact that he escaped? (Locate the two cities on a map.)

Judges 16:4-9 Samson Versus Delilah, Round #1

20. What does Delilah love more than she loves Samson?
21. What does he say will weaken him?

Judges 16:10-12 Samson Versus Delilah, Round #2

22. What does she accuse Samson of doing? Was her accusation right?
23. What lie does Samson tell *this second* time?

Judges 16:13-14 Samson Versus Delilah, Round #3

24. What is Samson’s third lie to Delilah?
25. How does this show that he is toying not only with Delilah, but with God’s blessing?
26. Do the Philistines dare move against him even while he is asleep?

Judges 16:15-22 Samson Versus Delilah, Round #4

27. Of what does she accuse Samson *this* time?
28. Of what time in Samson’s life does this remind us?
29. What is ironic about this accusation coming from Delilah?
30. (Bonus) What Bible character withstands daily pressure from a woman without sinning?
31. Where does Samson sleep?
32. Who shaves his seven locks of hair?
33. In verse 20, what does Samson not realize?

34. (Speculate) How can a person who is dedicated to the Lord from birth, and who accomplishes such great things for the Lord fall into that state of mind?

Judges 16:21-31: Samson's Final Victory in Gaza

- 35. What do the Philistines do to Samson?
- 36. What do they allow to happen without thinking about the consequences?
- 37. Who is praised for Samson's capture?
- 38. How many people join in this praise (and in mocking Samson)?
- 39. How do we know that the regrowth of Samson's hair did not automatically make him strong?
- 40. So, explain why shaving his hair had weakened him. (*Hint:* 16:17, 20)
- 41. What does Samson ask of the boy leading him?
- 42. How full is the temple?
- 43. How does Samson collapse the temple?
- 44. What is said about the number killed?
- 45. Compare the judgeship of Samson to that of other judges:
 - a. Who else fought alone against the Philistines, with no army?
 - b. Who else was abandoned (even captured and turned over to the enemy) by his fellow Israelites?
 - c. Who else sinned?
 - d. Who else was killed in battle?
 - e. Who killed more of the enemy?

46. Describe Samson's personality and character.

Choose from the following list, and come up with your own descriptions.

- | | |
|--|--------------|
| humble | resourceful |
| cocky | persistent |
| a "thinker" | a loner |
| learns from his mistakes | a "hot head" |
| accepts responsibility for his actions | other: _____ |
| mischievous | other: _____ |

47. Circle the phrases from Hebrews 11:33-38 which apply to Samson:

³³who through faith subdued kingdoms, worked righteousness, obtained promises, stopped the mouths of lions, ³⁴quenched the violence of fire, escaped the edge of the sword, out of weakness were made strong, became valiant in battle, turned to flight the armies of the aliens. ³⁵Women received their dead raised to life again. And others were tortured, not accepting deliverance, that they might obtain a better resurrection. ³⁶Still others had trial of mockings and scourgings, yes, and of chains and imprisonment. ³⁷They were stoned, they were sawn in two, were tempted, were slain with the sword. They wandered about in sheepskins and goatskins, being destitute, afflicted, tormented—³⁸of whom the world was not worthy. They wandered in deserts and mountains, *in* dens and caves of the earth. 5

⁵The Holy Bible, New King James Version, (Nashville, Tennessee: Thomas Nelson, Inc.) 1982.

Lesson 9: Idolatry in Israel (Judges 17 – 18)

While there was a Bethlehem which belonged to Zebulun (Joshua 19:15), the Bethlehem of *this* story (17:7; also, 19:1; Ruth 1:1) is in Judah, about five miles SSW of Jerusalem, and less than ten miles east of Zorah and Eshtaol.

The wayward priest is named Jonathan. He is called “the son of Gershom, the son of Manasseh” in the KJV and NKJV. (18:30) However, the Septuagint (LXX) and Vulgate (Vg.) both read, “the son of Gershom, the son of Moses,” which makes sense, seeing that the man was a Levite (17:7), and that the Gershom of old was the son of Moses, not Manasseh. (Exodus 2:22) The variant reading can be understood as a scribal error, given the fact that, in Hebrew, there is only one letter’s difference between “Moses” and “Manasseh.”

Another priest who lived away from his assigned city (but later returned there) is Abiathar. (1 Sam. 22:9-23) Even later, king Jehoshaphat specifically sent priests “to all the cities of Judah” in order to teach the people. (2 Chron. 7:7-9)

Remember that an ephod was a vest for the high priest. (Ex. 28:4-35; recall Judges 8:24-27)

Obviously, it was wrong for a man to set up a private sanctuary. (See Deut. 12:4-14; 16:1-7) But Micah is willing to admit his sins (when he is aware of them), and seems like a nice, religious man with a very religious family. The only problem is that he creates a Jewish-pagan hybrid religion which the entire tribe of Dan later hijacks.

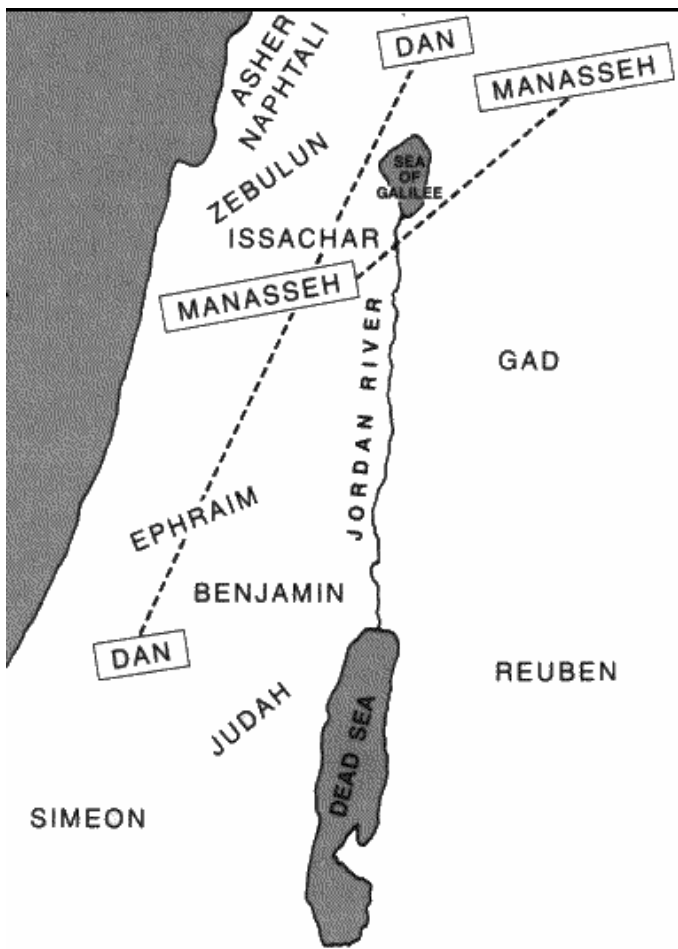
The tabernacle was still in Shiloh (Joshua 18:1; Judges 18:31), less than 30 miles from Dan’s allotted territory. (Joshua had cast lots after seven of the tribes had surveyed the remaining land. (Joshua 18:2-10; 19:40-48)) Remember that the Danites have failed to drive out the Amorites (Judges 1:34-35), and now they find it easier to change the borders of their territory and the worship of the Lord than to stay where they were assigned to be and do their duty. The proximity of the tabernacle

means less to the Danites than the proximity of the Philistines.

So the Danites move far north, north of the Sea of Galilee, and conquer a peaceful city which they rename Dan. They import stolen idols and a priest, both of which could be bought and sold, and establish a private priesthood for the tribe of Dan which lasts for quite some time. (18:30) They seem to take whatever they want, as long as they don’t have to work too hard for it.

We are told twice in this text that “in those days there was no king in Israel” (Judges 17:6) which supposedly explains why “everyone did what was right in his own eyes.” (Also 21:25; 18:1; 19:1) But we will see later that *kings* sometimes do what is right in *their* own eyes, also. In fact, King Jeroboam later forms two golden calves and establishes his own idolatrous religion fueled by convenience and served by man-made priests. (1 Kings 12:26-33) Given the location and the idolatrous history of this new, northern Dan, it should come as no surprise that Dan was selected to house one of the golden calves.

General Area of the 12 Tribes



¹Thomas Nelson, Inc., Nelson’s complete book of Bible maps and charts: Old and New Testament [computer file], electronic ed., Logos Library System, (Nashville: Thomas Nelson) 1997, c1996.

Judges 17:1-6: Religion Run Amok

1. To whom had Micah's mother dedicated 1,100 shekels of silver?
2. For what purpose?
3. What has Micah done with the silver before the story opens?
4. When he gives the silver to his mother, what does this religious woman say of him?
5. How much silver does it cost for the silversmith to fashion the 1,100 shekels into two idols?
6. What does Micah make to go with his household idols?
7. What does Micah do with one of his sons?
8. "Everyone did what was _____ in his _____ _____."

Judges 17:7-13: The "Yeah, sure - whatever." Levite

9. Who comes to Micah's house from Bethlehem?
10. What is the man's job to be?
11. What will be the man's annual salary (excluding food and clothing)?
12. How does the young man feel about the arrangement?
13. Pinpoint at least two major flaws with Micah's reasoning in verse 13:
 - a.
 - b.
 - c.

Judges 18:1-10: The Danites' Scouting Trip

14. (Review) What other man of valor was from Dan, between Zorah and Eshtaol?
15. How many men are sent to spy out and search the land?
16. Where do these men come to first?
17. How do they first recognize the young man?
18. What favor do they ask of the young man?
19. How does he respond?
20. What city strikes the Danites' fancy, and why?

Judges 18:11-26: The Danites on the Move

21. How many Danite men head north, armed for war?
22. Besides the city of Laish, what had the five spies seen that they wanted?
23. When they take the things, who questions them?
24. How do they respond to being questioned?
25. How does the young man feel about the suggested arrangement?

26. How does the young man participate in the Danites' actions?
27. Who overtakes the Danites?
28. What tone of voice do the Danites take with Micah and his neighbors?
29. Why does Micah not try to stop them?

Judges 18:27-31: The Danites Settle Down

30. What do the Danites do to Laish?
31. What is the icon of the Danites' new religion?
32. What new priestly line is established?
33. For how long does that priesthood continue?
34. How does the writer remind the reader in verse 31 that this whole arrangement is sinful?

Lesson 10: Immorality and In-fighting (Judges 19 – 21)

The mention of Phineas in 20:28 tells us that we are early in the period of the judges. Recall that the first two chapters of Judges are clearly not in correct time sequence (1:1; 2:6ff): The book is arranged topically rather than chronologically. By way of review, here is our outline of Judges:

<u>Chapter(s)</u>	<u>Topic</u>	<u>Immorality</u>
1	Political Setting – Incomplete Conquest	Genesis 19 tells of Sodom; Judges 19 tells of Gibeah, the new Sodom which is pointed to by the prophets as a beginning point of Ephraim's sins. (Hosea 9:9; 10:9). A hospitable person is not to be found, except for one outsider (like Lot), and perversion is the norm. But this time there is no one praying for the city, and no miracle to save the travelers. When God's punishment comes, it is not in the form of fire and brimstone,
2	Spiritual Setting – The Cycle	
3	Ehud subdues Moab	
4-5	Deborah and Barak subdue Canaan	
6-8	Gideon subdues Midian	
9	Abimelech the Non-Judge	
10-12	Jephthah subdues Ammon	
13-16	Samson versus the Philistines	
17-18	Idolatry in Israel	
19-21	Immorality and In-fighting	

but in the form of Israelite warriors. The justice meted out is not as complete, and the subsequent events pose a whole new set of problems.

One can only wonder if the foreigners in Jebus wouldn't have been more hospitable.

The Levite has already shown his love for his concubine, but after he allows her to be brutalized, he seems to make no effort to comfort her: "Get up and let us be going." (19:28) Then, rather than showing respect to the dead (or to her family), he makes a gory, public display of her body. His actions have the intended effect of rallying the people of Israel to answer the atrocities which had been committed. Sometimes it takes a scandal to arouse people from their tolerant apathy.

In-fighting

The tribe of Benjamin seals its doom by choosing to harbor and protect the perverted, violent men of Gibeah. They do not attend the inter-tribal conference at Mizpah (20:3), and when they are directly confronted with the sins of the men of Gibeah, they go to battle with their brethren. (20:12-14)

The Israelites are said twice to be acting "as one man" (20:1, 11), and their actions seem to be motivated by their devotion to God. They assemble "before the Lord" (20:1), and in addition to fasting and offering sacrifices to the Lord (20:26; 21:4), they three times inquire of the Lord for advice concerning their actions. (20:18, 23, 28) But they should've inquired a fourth and fifth time regarding the two rash vows they make! Even during acts of service to God, people can get carried away in their religious fervor and exercise their own foolish will and make rash vows. (Remember Jephthah?)

First, the men of Israel swear not to give their daughters to the men of Benjamin as wife, apparently to ensure that Benjamin will be eliminated. They keep this vow – at least they *technically* keep it – at all costs. They actually go to great and terrible lengths to provide wives for the men of Benjamin, which seems to violate the basic intent of their oath. Once the heat of battle subsides – and the civil war which cost over 65,000 lives has not completely eliminated Benjamin – grief over the practical consequences of their oath sets in, and they start looking for a way to salvage the wicked tribe of Benjamin. (21:2-3, 6-7, 16-18) Sometimes purging sin from a congregation is extremely costly, and sometimes it's hard to carry through completely with the necessary course of action.

The second rash vow (to kill anyone who didn't join the battle), is used as a partial way around the first rash vow. The Israelites take the virgins of Jabesh-Gilead, after they slaughter even the other women of that city, and give them to the men of Benjamin. They follow *the letter* of their oath, "None of us shall give his daughter...", but they surely don't hesitate to give someone *else's* daughter to the men of Benjamin! The result is that there is more concern shown for preserving the belligerent Benjamites than the inhabitants of Jabesh-Gilead. (Notice that *neither* the Benjamites *nor* the Jabesh-Gileadites had "come up to the Lord at Mizpah" (21:5), but the men of Jabesh-Gilead are singled out for punishment.) And when there aren't enough (orphaned) virgins from Jabesh-Gilead to go around, the elders of the congregation incite the men of Benjamin to profane one of the annual feasts of the Lord in Shiloh (21:19) by capturing women for themselves. It is important to the elders that no one gives his daughter to them. Obviously, the elders of the congregation who devise this plan are more interested in preserving the *letter* of their oath than the intent of their oath, and they obviously do not have children or sisters who will be among "the (kidnapped) daughters of Shiloh." (21:20-22)

Judges 19:1-7: A Happy Family Reunion

1. For how long is the Levite's concubine at her father's house after playing the harlot?
2. With what demeanor does the Levite go to retrieve her?
3. How is the Levite received by the woman? ... by her father?
4. (Bonus) What other man (from the patriarchal period) kept delaying his son-in-law's departure?

Judges 19:8-21: Lodging at Gibeah

5. On which day does the Levite finally break away from Bethlehem?
6. Who is with the Levite?
7. Ironically, why do they not lodge in Jebus?
8. Why do they choose Gibeah instead of Ramah?
9. Who is the only one who will put them up for the night?

Judges 19:22-26: The New Sodom

10. What do certain men of the city demand?
11. What do they receive instead?
12. When do they stop their violence?

Judges 19:27-30: The Call to Action

13. Where does the Levite take the dead woman's body?
14. What does he do with the body?

Judges 20:1-11: The Israelites

15. From what places do the children of Israel gather?
16. Where do they meet?
17. Toward what target is their wrath directed?

Judges 20:12-17: The Benjamites

18. From verse 3, what have the children of Benjamin heard?
19. What demand is made on the Benjamites?
20. How do the Benjamites respond?

Judges 20:18-48: The Battle

21. What is the result of the first day's battle?
22. What is the result of the second day's battle?
23. What new actions accompany the Israelites' inquiry of the Lord in verse 26?
24. What new military strategy is employed on the third day?
25. Who loses more total men, Israel or Benjamin?
26. Is any pursuit given when the Benjamites flee?

27. How many escape to the rock of Rimmon?

Judges 21:1-12: What Was Right in the People's Eyes

28. What had the men of Israel sworn at Mizpah?

29. What is the new concern among the people?

30. Who is selected to die from Jabesh-Gilead?

31. Why are not all the people from Jabesh-Gilead killed?

32. To what place are the survivors taken?

Judges 21:13-25: What Was Right in the Elders' Eyes

33. What are the terms for the surrender of the Benjamites?

34. How many wives are lacking?

35. What plan do the elders devise for providing the remaining wives?

36. How would the inevitable complaints be soothed?

a.

b.

Note:

It should seem fitting that the Israelites do not complete their punishment of the tribe of Benjamin. After all, the book of Judges opens with the Israelites' failure to drive out the inhabitants of the land, and the cycle in the book suggests that Israel isn't making any progress spiritually. So why should the end of the book be any different from the first?

In order to see a different picture, we'll have to go the next book . . .

Lesson 11: Ruth's Faith Is Demonstrated (Ruth 1 – 2)

Individual Levites, various families, and even entire tribes are practicing idolatry, and entire cities and tribes are condoning immorality. The standard for religious and moral authority has become completely personal and subjective in Israel. **Who can break this cycle of unfaithfulness?** Ruth can! She, although a Moabitess, freely chooses to leave the religion of her native land and to serve the Lord. **Who can avoid apostasy?** Boaz can! He honors God's laws and Israel's traditions, and we are refreshed to see that *not everyone* is doing what is right in *his own eyes*.

It seems especially fitting that she comes to Bethlehem (the home of the wayward Levite in chapters 17 and 18, and the home of the wayward concubine in chapter 19), and that she and Boaz help to restore that city's reputation. Notice that Elimelech and his family, including Boaz (2:1), are Ephrathites of Bethlehem. (1:2) Boaz serves as a redeemer of the family, so it is fitting – no, it is *poetic* – that our ultimate Redeemer is born there. (Micah 5:2; Matthew 2:1ff) When male children in and around Bethlehem are slaughtered after Jesus' birth, Jeremiah's prophecy is quoted about Rachel weeping for her children. (Matthew 2:16-18) Rachel, Jacob's wife, is mentioned because the first biblical reference to Bethlehem is in Genesis 35:19. Rachel dies giving birth to Benjamin whom she names "Son of my sorrow" (Heb. "Ben-Oni) en route to Bethlehem.

In this story, Ruth is every bit as humble and selfless as Naomi is (initially) bitter and self-absorbed. In the beginning, Naomi seems not to realize what a blessing Ruth is to her. Even by the end of chapter 2, however, Naomi begins to acknowledge the Lord's use of Ruth in Naomi's life.

Outline of Ruth

Part One: Ruth's Faith Is Demonstrated (1:1 – 2:23) ⁶

I. Ruth's Decision to Remain with Naomi	1:1–18
A. Ruth's Need to Remain with Naomi	1:1–5
B. Ruth's Opportunity to Leave Naomi	1:6–15
C. Ruth's Choice to Remain with Naomi	1:16–18
II. Ruth's Devotion to Care for Naomi	1:19–2:23
A. Ruth and Naomi Return to Bethlehem	1:19–22
B. Ruth Gleans for Food	2:1–23

Part Two: Ruth's Faith Is Rewarded (3:1 – 4:22)

I. Ruth's Request for Redemption by Boaz	3:1–18
A. Naomi Seeks Redemption for Ruth	3:1–5
B. Ruth Obeys Naomi	3:6–9
C. Boaz Desires to Redeem Ruth	3:10–18
II. Ruth's Reward of Redemption by Boaz	4:1–22
A. Boaz Marries Ruth	4:1–12
B. Ruth Bears a Son, Obed	4:13–15
C. Naomi Receives a New Family	4:16
D. Ruth Is the Great-Grandmother of David	4:17–22

⁶ Thomas Nelson, Inc., *Nelson's complete book of Bible maps and charts: Old and New Testament [computer file], electronic ed., Logos Library System*, (Nashville: Thomas Nelson) 1997, c1996. (GC changed Ruth's "Love" to her "Faith" based on input from our class, especially David Hood, Sr.)

Ruth 1:1-5: A Non-Traditional Family

1. What is the general time frame for the events of this book?
2. Why do Elimelech and his family move to Moab?
3. Describe how Elimelech's wife, Naomi, ends up alone with two Moabite daughters-in-law.

Ruth 1:6-15: A Sad Farewell

4. Why does Naomi decide to return to Israel?
5. To what place does Naomi suggest that her daughters-in-law go?
6. What does she wish for them . . .
 . . . in verse 8?
 . . . in verse 9?
7. What is the basic reason that Naomi suggests they separate?
8. How many times (total) does Naomi tell Ruth to "go," "turn back," or "return"?

9. (NKJV) ^{1:16} But Ruth said:

“Entreat me not to _____ you,
Or to turn back from following after you;
For wherever you _____, I will _____;
And wherever you _____, I will _____;
Your people shall be my people,
And your _____, my _____.
¹⁷ Where you _____, I will _____,
And there will I be buried.
The Lord do so to me, and more also, If
anything but _____ parts you and me.”

(KJV) ¹⁶ And Ruth said,

Intreat me not to _____ thee,
or to return from following after thee:
for whither thou _____, I will _____;
and where thou _____, I will _____:
thy people shall be my people,
and thy _____ my _____:
¹⁷ Where thou _____, will I _____,
and there will I be buried:
the LORD do so to me, and more also, if
ought but _____ part thee and me.

Ruth 1:16-22: A Bitter Woman

10. When the people of Bethlehem are glad to see Naomi, what is Naomi's initial response?
11. How does Naomi interpret the sad events of her life (vv. 13, 20, 21)?
12. Because we know Naomi's future, what enormous blessing is she overlooking?
13. At what time of the year do they arrive in Bethlehem?

Ruth 2: Refuge Under the Lord's Wings

14. Describe Boaz's financial standing.
15. What does it mean to "glean"?
16. As if Ruth's gender and economic status don't present enough challenges for her, how do we know she was expecting to suffer from others' *racial* prejudice, as well?
17. What details inform us about Ruth's good work ethic?
18. With whom is Ruth to associate while gleaning?
19. What protection does Boaz provide for Ruth while she is gleaning (before mealtime)?
20. Why does Boaz treat her so kindly?
21. At the meal (vv. 14-16), what additional help does he give in terms of . . .
 - a. . . . where she sits?
 - b. . . . how much she is given?
 - c. . . . rules about where she may glean?
 - d. . . . new rules determining *how much* there will be to glean?
 - e. . . . protection from verbal abuse?
22. Tell two things that Ruth brings back to Naomi.
 - a.
 - b.
23. Obviously, God shows kindness to the living Naomi (and Ruth). In what sense does He show kindness to the dead? (v. 20)
24. For how long is Ruth allowed to glean?

Lesson 12: Ruth's Faith Is Rewarded (Ruth 3 – 4)

“For the Hebrew people — and indeed for any people engaged in agriculture — harvest was a most important season (Genesis 8:22; 45:6) ... (and) events were reckoned from harvests. (Genesis 30:14; Joshua 3:15; Judges 15:1; Ruth 1:22; 2:23; 1 Samuel 6:13; 2 Samuel 21:9; 23:13) Harvest time came to be the occasion for festivals and rejoicings on the part of all the people (Exodus 34:22; Isaiah 9:3) ... (but) harvest was more than a merely material and self-centered order, for from early times it was associated with requirements with respect to God and mankind. On the one hand the first fruits of the harvest must be offered to Yahweh (Exodus 22:29; Leviticus 23:10); and on the other hand the harvester must leave a corner of his field without harvesting it, setting it aside for the poor person and the stranger. (Leviticus 19:9; 23:22; Deuteronomy 24:19)

The three principal feasts of the Jews corresponded to the three harvest seasons (Exodus 23:16; 34:21f): (1) the Feast of the Passover in April at the time of the barley harvest; (2) the Feast of Pentecost seven weeks later at the wheat harvest (Exodus 34:22); and (3) the Feast of Tabernacles at the end of the year (October) during the fruit harvest (Leviticus 23:24)...”⁷

Boaz's permission for Ruth to stay the rest of the night shows he accepts her proposal, and his help to keep her visit a secret shows his desire to preserve the good reputation she already has.

The book of Ruth is important from a linguistic standpoint because of its contribution to our knowledge of archaic Hebrew words. (Apparently Boaz uses a distinctly “countrified” dialect at times.)

Remember that Ruth had gleaned all day for about an ephah of barley. (2:17. An ephah is about 2/3 of a bushel.) The KJV tells us that Boaz gives Ruth “six measures of barley.” If this is indeed what the NKJV calls “six *ephahs*,” then Ruth has almost four bushels!

The first mention of a levirate marriage (Latin <levir> for “brother”) occurs in Genesis 38:8 where Er's brother Onan refuses to perform the duty. This duty is later mandated and regulated in Deuteronomy 25:5-10, and gives a case where no other redeemer is available. Notice in Ruth, though, that Boaz is there to take the responsibility refused by the near kinsman, so the element of personal insult is not seen.

We learn that Naomi has sold her family's land (4:3), and Naomi obviously needs for it to be “redeemed” (bought back) by a kinsman. (The redemption of land is discussed in Leviticus 25:8-28.) In the year of Jubilee, the land would be returned to the original owner. In the meantime, the land was only for *use* not for *ownership*. But Naomi's situation is not simply a case of redeeming the land and supporting the widow, Naomi. Because Ruth is present, the redeemer is also expected to perform the levirate duty and marry the Moabitess. His refusal results in *his* loss and *Boaz's* great gain.

The blessing pronounced on Boaz and Ruth by the people mentions Rachel and Leah primarily because of the 12 sons that came from them. (Also, recall Rachel's connection to Bethlehem. See the notes on page 30.) Their blessing also makes a rare mention of Tamar, which seems odd only until we recall that she, like Ruth, 1) had been turned down for a levirate marriage, 2) ended up giving birth by an older man (in Tamar's case, her father-in-law, Judah) and 3) appears in the genealogy of Christ. (Matthew 1:3, 5) When the genealogy is updated at the very end of the book, it picks up not with Abraham, or Jacob, or even Jacob's son, Judah, but with *Tamar's* son – and Boaz's ancestor – Perez.

Lessons from Ruth:

1. God rewards the faithful. (Consider Ruth's and Naomi's family blessings, as well as Ruth's place in the genealogy of Christ.)
2. Loyalty to family is a virtue.
3. “God shows no partiality.”³⁵ “But in every nation whoever fears Him and works righteousness is accepted by Him.” (Acts 10:34-35)

⁷ Bromiley, Geoffrey W., ed, *International Standard Bible Encyclopedia*, (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company) 2001, c1988.

Ruth's Choices

Personal

- No persuasion was needed
- She chose of her own accord
- It was an individual choice: she considered the sacrifices, duties, and rewards

Determined

- ... in spite of Orpah's example and Naomi's statements
- Her steadfastness silenced Naomi

Comprehensive

- New country
- New home
- New religion
- New friends

Early

- She chose when she was "young" (Ruth 2:15)
- Compare Joseph, Daniel, and Jesus

Everlasting

- "I will die ... and be buried" (Ruth 1:15)
-

(Questions from Ruth 3 and 4)

Ruth 3: "Take Your Maidservant Under Your Wing"

1. What is Naomi seeking for Ruth?
2. How will this also benefit Naomi?
3. From verse 3, how does Naomi suggest that Ruth "propose" to Boaz in terms of ...
... her appearance?
... the time to make her move?
... how she actually approaches him?
4. What happens around midnight?
5. What does Ruth request of Boaz?
6. Describe the emotion of Boaz's response.
7. What do all the people know about Ruth?
8. What is the only situation preventing Boaz from accepting her proposal immediately?
9. When does Ruth leave?
10. What instruction does Boaz give his men?

11. What gift does Boaz send?

12. What does Naomi seem to know about Boaz?

Ruth 4:1-10: Boaz Arranges The Marriage

13. Whom does Boaz gather at the city gate?

14. After the near kinsman agrees to redeem the land, what additional information does Boaz reveal?

15. What reason does the near kinsman give for changing his mind?

16. What custom is there for confirming redeeming and exchanging?

Ruth 4:11-16: The Union Is Blessed Indeed

17. Verse 11, "May you _____ in Ephrathah and be _____ in Bethlehem."

18. Verse 12, "May your house be like the house of Perez . . . because of the _____ which the Lord _____ you from this young woman."

19. How do the women describe Ruth?

20. What role does Naomi play once Ruth bears a son?

Lesson 13: The Dating and Timeline of the Book of Judges

When Judges Was Written

The book of Judges contains several clues as to when it was written.

The passages 18:31 and 20:27 show that Judges was written after the ark of the covenant was removed from Shiloh (cf. 1 Samuel 4:3–11). The repeated phrase “In those days there was no king in Israel” (Judges 17:6; 18:1; 19:1; 21:25) indicates that Judges was written after the commencement of the monarchy. The fact that the Jebusites were dwelling in Jerusalem “to this day” (1:21) means that it was written before 1004 B.C. when David took control of the city. (2 Samuel 5:5–9)⁸

Of course, an inspired writer can have knowledge of the future as well as the past, but the tone of the passages seems simply historical rather than prophetic.

Perhaps one passage that goes against a date of writing before 1004 is Judges 18:30, which refers to “the day of the captivity of the land.” This seems to refer to the time of the Babylonian captivity, in which case either the *entire* book of Judges was written after that time (which would go against 1:21 about the Jebusites), or an editor came along later and inserted *that reference*. Some believe another option: That “the captivity” means the Israelites’ completion of *their* conquest of Canaan during the reign of David.

The Timeline of the Book

Concerning the period of years covered by Judges, we know that the events happened after the Exodus and before the time of the kings in Israel. Establishing the timeline of Judges, then, becomes necessarily entangled with trying to establish a date for the Exodus. Here are some passages and some numbers for consideration:

The time reference given in 1 Kings 6:1 is very specific, and events related to Solomon’s reign can be dated by secular references.

And it came to pass in the four hundred and eightieth year after the children of Israel had come out of the land of Egypt, in the fourth year of Solomon’s reign over Israel, in the month of Ziv, which *is* the second month, that he began to build the house of the LORD. -- 1 Kings 6:1

Non-biblical history confirms that Solomon began his reign in 961, so his 4th year would be 957. Dates after the time of Solomon are much more easily corroborated with the written histories of various other world powers, so these dates are undisputed. However, Egyptian and Canaanite history *before* the time of Solomon is very difficult to sort out, and so we have theories of the early date of the Exodus (in the 1400s B.C.) and the late date of the Exodus (in the 1200s B.C.). We should point out that there is significant controversy among Egyptologists who struggle to formulate a clear list of early pharaohs. One pharaoh was monotheistic, so later pharaohs sought (almost successfully) to eradicate any reference to him, and there was a period of political turbulence which complicates the historians’ task. There is also controversy concerning how to date the archaeological evidence in Canaan: Archaeologists agree that certain Canaanite cities were destroyed, most likely by the Israelites, judging from an abrupt change in the type of artifacts found, but cannot agree on exactly when this happened. We must be careful not to be too quick to accept any theory based on a proposed Egyptian or Canaanite chronology.

Based on 1 Kings 6:1, taking it at face value, the early date would win “hands down” (with the Exodus in 1437 B.C.). In order to support a *late* date for the Exodus *from the Scriptures*, those scholars make an assumption that the reference to 480 years in 1 Kings 6:1 is simply the writer’s (almost symbolic) calculation for each of 12 generations at 40 years each. Then the scholars recalculate the 12 generations at *25 years each* for purposes of a timeline, and say that the temple was really built in the *280th year* after the Exodus. (More information is available in the ISBE, and upon request, especially an interesting article from *Reason and Revelation*.)

Another truism is that we cannot determine dates by simply adding the periods of time given in the book of Judges. Adding the periods of oppression and/or judgeship and/or peace in the case of every judge mentioned yields 410 years (which is still short of the number given in Acts 13:20). But then we must allow for the period *before* Judges, and we know that 1) the wilderness wanderings

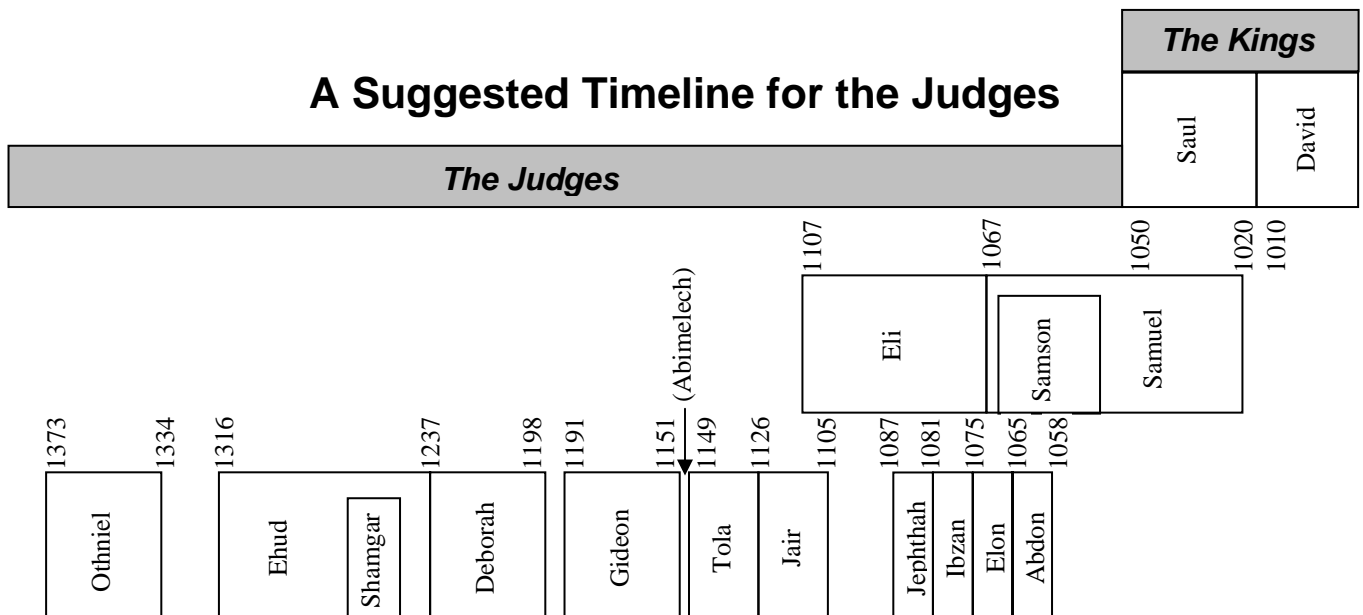
⁸Thomas Nelson, Inc., *Nelson’s complete book of Bible maps and charts: Old and New Testament [computer file], electronic ed., Logos Library System*, (Nashville: Thomas Nelson) 1997, c1996.

lasted 40 years, and 2) the conquest took more than one year (Exodus 23:29) and at least five years. (Joshua 14:6-15) Then in the period *after* Judges, we must allow time for Eli and Samuel, as well as Kings Saul and David, each of whom reigned 40 years. (Acts 13:21; 2 Samuel 5:4) With all these dates simply added together, there are almost 600 years of history portrayed from the Exodus to the kings. But that contradicts biblical accounts as well as all historical and archaeological records, so we cannot simply add all the dates in a straight line, one after the other.

Many events during the judges and kings possibly (or even obviously) overlap in time. For example, some of Saul's reign may overlap some with David's reign, and Samson's service probably overlaps in time with anywhere from two to four other judges. Remember also that the judges (and even King Abimelech) ruled regionally, not nationally, which allows for simultaneous judgeships.

Time references in the Bible aren't easily reconciled with each other regarding certain events (for example, 1 Kings 6:1 and Acts 13:20). This is because some numbers are approximated, and others are rounded off or simplified. We must accept the idea that the *purpose* of a given writer may not always be to be historically precise, and we must consider numbers from various writers when trying to piece together the timeline. The reader is on his own to work out the puzzle.

With all that having been said, here is suggested timeline (to be taken with a grain of salt), assuming the early date (~1437 B.C.) for the Exodus.



Review

1. A "judge" 1) was appointed by _____, and 2) _____ Israel from oppression.
2. Name a left-handed judge who assassinates a fat king and subdues his nation.
3. Who arose "a mother in Israel"?
4. Who is "most blessed among women"?
5. Whose "calling" is accompanied by four signs?
6. Why are those particular 300 men chosen to help Gideon?
7. Who is not well received by his people before acting as a deliverer east of the Jordan?

8. Name the “non-judge.”
9. Whose curse about “fire” comes true against the men of Shechem?
10. Who kills Abimelech? a. a man b. a woman
11. What is Samson to be from birth?
12. What interest does Samson repeatedly show that gives the Lord an occasion to kill Philistines?
13. Name the New Testament passage that lists several of the judges in the “Hall Of Faith.”
14. Which judges “subdue” nations? (Circle all that apply.)
 a. Ehud b. Deborah/Barak c. Gideon d. Jephthah e. Samson
15. Fill in the chapter content.

- | | | |
|--------------|-----------------|-------------------------------|
| 1 | _____ | Setting – Incomplete Conquest |
| 2 | _____ | Setting – The Cycle |
| 3 | _____ | subdues Moab |
| 4-5 | _____ and _____ | subdue Canaan |
| 6-8 | _____ | subdues Midian |
| 9 | _____ | the Non-Judge |
| 10-12 | _____ | subdues Ammon |
| 13-16 | _____ | versus the Philistines |
| 17-18 | _____ | in Israel |
| 19-21 | _____ and _____ | |

16. Fill in the blanks in each numbered box. (The judge’s name on top; the enemy’s underneath.)

