

JUDGES

The Spiral of Sin

I. PREPARING TO STUDY

The book of Judges gets its name from the people God raised up as _____ in Israel after the death of Joshua. They were called judges. Thirteen are often identified although only twelve of those are actually given the title judge. Their rule was not usually over the entire nation but was more _____. Had their ministries been end to end, the period of the judges would have lasted 410 years, but their ministries often overlapped. The period of time for this portion of Israel's history was around _____ years, from the death of Joshua in 1372 B.C. to the anointing of Saul as the first king of Israel in 1065 B.C.

A. Authorship

The human author of Judges is not recorded inside the book or elsewhere in Scripture. The oft repeated statement "in those days there was no _____ in Israel" hints that the book was written during the early days of the kingdom. Tradition identifies _____ as the author.

B. Relationship to the Other Books of the Bible

The book of Judges bears witness to the exceedingly stubborn _____ nature in man and the persistent, faithful grace of our holy and righteous God.

Romans 3:23 for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God,

II. EXAMINING THE TEXT

The problem that set up the cycle of sin we see in Judges has already been noted in our study of Joshua. God gave Israel power over all her enemies, sufficient to obey His command to utterly _____ them so that the land would no longer be polluted by those who hated God to His face.

While God was insistent in His demand that the national life, culture, and abominations of the enemies of God be removed from the land, in most cases, a surrender and self-exile of those enemies was acceptable. In fact, God told Israel to offer terms of peace to a city before they laid siege to it.

If the pagans would not surrender and leave the land, they were to be killed. Only three cities, which were the center of wickedness and hatred for YHWH – Jericho, Ai, and Hazor – were condemned to total destruction with no opportunity for surrender and deportation.

But Israel did not obey. Instead they left pockets of pagans living in the land and continuing to practice their abominations, which God had steadfastly warned them not to do!

Deuteronomy 7:1–6 1 “When the LORD your God brings you into the land which you go to possess, and has cast out many nations before you, the Hittites and the Girgashites and the Amorites and the Canaanites and the Perizzites and the Hivites and the Jebusites, seven nations greater and mightier than you, 2 and when the LORD your God delivers them over to you, you shall conquer them and utterly destroy them.

You shall make no covenant with them nor show mercy to them. 3 Nor shall you make marriages with them. You shall not give your daughter to their son, nor take their daughter for your son. 4 For they will turn your sons away from following Me, to serve other gods; so the anger of the LORD will be aroused against you and destroy you suddenly.

5 But thus you shall deal with them: you shall destroy their altars, and break down their sacred pillars, and cut down their wooden images, and burn their carved images with fire. 6 “For you are a holy people to the LORD your God; the LORD your God has chosen you to be a people for Himself, a special treasure above all the peoples on the face of the earth.

Judges 1:21-36 documents Israel’s failure to heed the Word of God.

Judges 1:21–36 21 But the children of Benjamin did not drive out the Jebusites who inhabited Jerusalem; so the Jebusites dwell with the children of Benjamin in Jerusalem to this day. ...

27 However, Manasseh did not drive out the inhabitants of Beth Shean and its villages, or Taanach and its villages, or the inhabitants of Dor and its villages, or the inhabitants of Ibleam and its villages, or the inhabitants of Megiddo and its villages; for the Canaanites were determined to dwell in that land.

28 And it came to pass, when Israel was strong, that they put the Canaanites under tribute, but did not completely drive them out. 29 Nor did Ephraim drive out the Canaanites who dwelt in Gezer; so the Canaanites dwelt in Gezer among them. 30 Nor did Zebulun drive out the inhabitants of Kitron or the inhabitants of Nahalol; so the Canaanites dwelt among them, and were put under tribute. 31 Nor did Asher drive out the inhabitants of Acco or the inhabitants of Sidon, or of Ahlab, Achzib, Helbah, Aphik, or Rehob. 32 So the Asherites dwelt among the Canaanites, the inhabitants of the land; for they did not drive them out.

33 Nor did Naphtali drive out the inhabitants of Beth Shemesh or the inhabitants of Beth Anath; but they dwelt among the Canaanites, the inhabitants of the land. Nevertheless the inhabitants of Beth Shemesh and Beth Anath were put under tribute to them. 34 And the Amorites forced the children of Dan into the mountains, for they would not allow them to come down to the valley; 35 and the Amorites were

determined to dwell in Mount Heres, in Aijalon, and in Shaalbim; yet when the strength of the house of Joseph became greater, they were put under tribute. 36 Now the boundary of the Amorites was from the Ascent of Akrabbim, from Sela, and upward.

The rest of the book of Judges documents the _____ of Israel's disobedience.

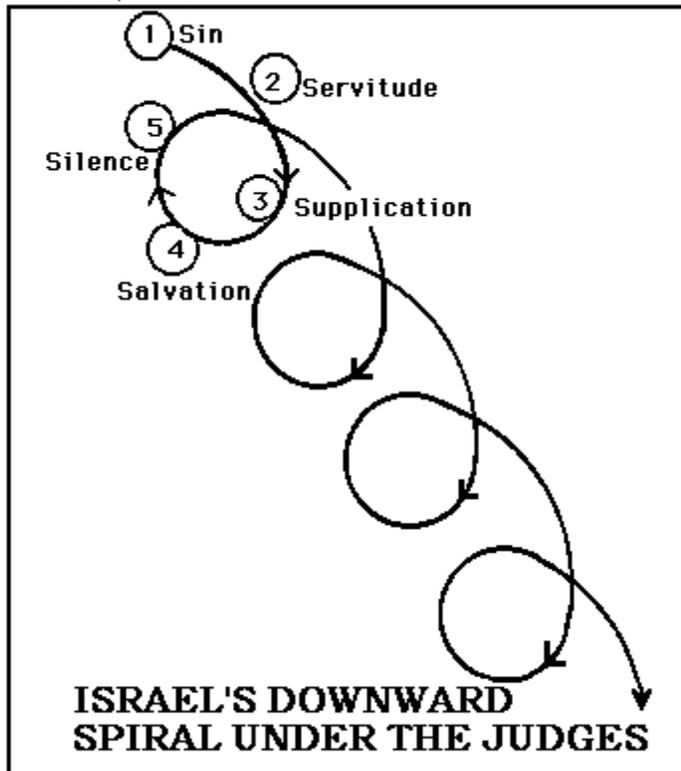
III. APATHY (1-2)

- A. The record of compromise (1:21-36)** - Four times in the above passage, the Scripture says they "did not _____" the pagan inhabitants of the land.
- B. The results of compromise (2)** – "their gods shall be a _____ to you."

IV. APOSTASY (3-16)

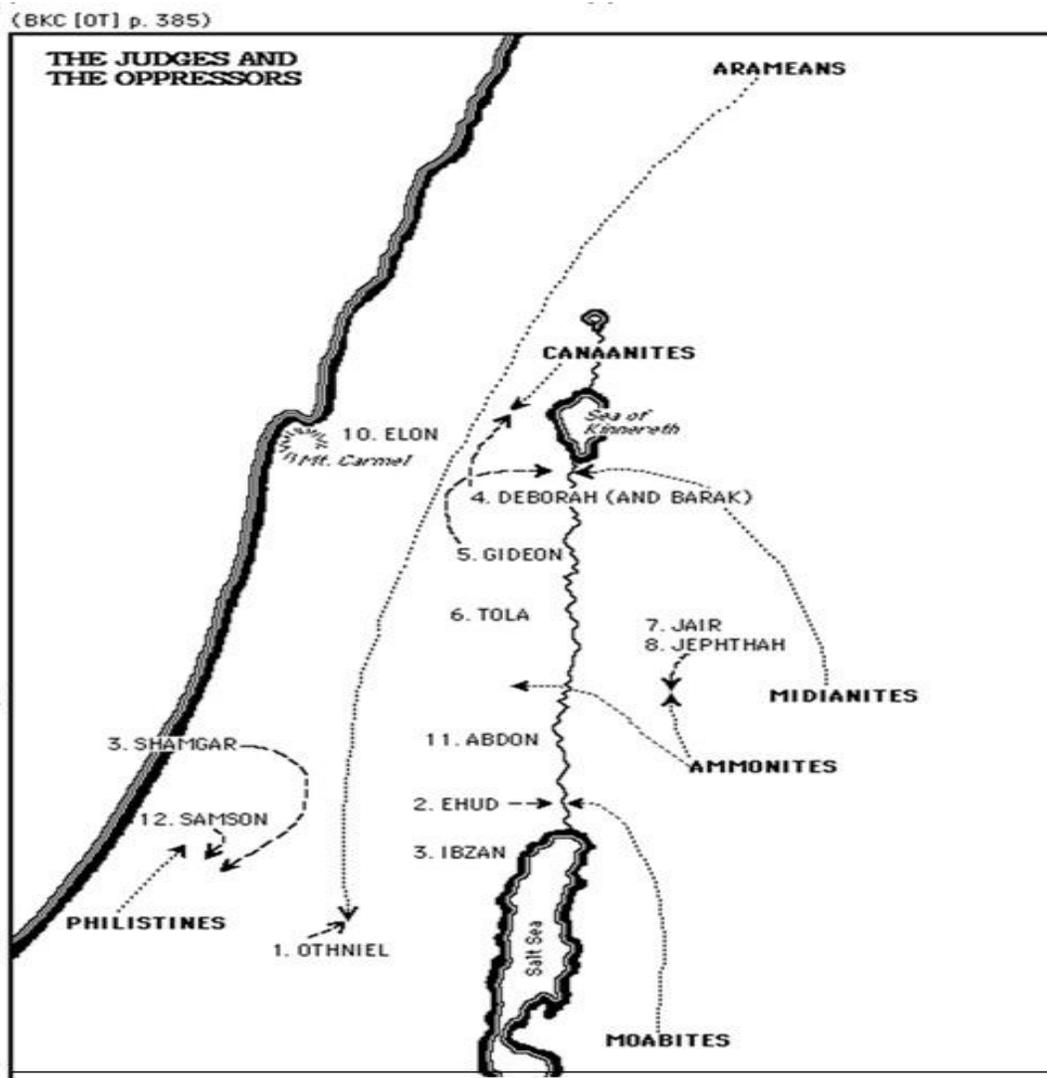
Many students have observed in the book a pattern of sin that can be depicted as a downward spiral.

(BKC [OT] p. 383)



A. Six major episodes of Israel's apostasy (falling away) are recorded.

APOSTASY	1 st	2 nd	3 rd	4 th	5 th	6 th
	3:7-11	3:12-30	4:1 – 5:31	6:1 – 8:35	10:6 – 12:7	13:1 – 16:31
Judge	Othniel	Ehud	Deborah	Gideon	Jephthah	Samson
Sin	3:7	3:12	4:1	6:1	10:6	13:1
Servitude	Arameans	Moabites	Canaanites	Midianites	Ammonites	Philistines
Supplication	3:9	3:15	4:3	6:6-7	10:10, 15	None
Salvation	3:9	3:15	4:4-6	6:12-14	11:29, 33	None
Silence	3:11	3:30	5:31	8:28	11:33	None



B. Highlights from the major judges

1. _____ ranks with greatest of the judges.
2. Gideon was proof that God proves His strength by using the _____.
 - a. 6:36-40 the use of the fleece to test the will of God. In context, this was an act of _____, not of faith. Jesus said, “You shall not tempt the Lord your God.” (Mt. 4:7)
 - b. The initial personnel counts were Midianites – 135,000, Gideon’s army – 32,000. (7:3, 8:10) Read what God said in 7:2. Those odds were not acceptable, so God _____ Gideon’s army first to 10,000 and then to 300.
 - c. Read in 7:16ff, the exciting plan and great victory God gave to Gideon.
3. Samson, the judge with the greatest promise but the _____ fulfillment, with the greatest physical strength, but the least _____ strength.
 - a. He had a miracle birth. (13:1-5)
 - b. He was a Nazarite from birth.
 - 1) He was to be _____.
 - 2) He was not to eat or drink from grapes.
 - 3) He was to touch nothing _____.
 - 4) He was not to cut his hair.

Samson broke all four vows. He was controlled by the _____ of the flesh rather than by the Spirit of God that came upon him. Finally, when Samson allowed his hair to be cut by a harlot, the last vestige of his _____ to God, the Spirit of God left him. The saddest thing about the departure of the Spirit from him was that Samson did not even know it! (16:20) Samson’s _____ faithful moment came as he gave up his own life to try to partially fulfill the purpose for which God had called him, to deliver Israel from the Philistines. (16:30)

V. ANARCHY (17-21)

These final chapters show what was happening in the daily lives of the people of Israel.

A. Personal idolatry – Micah (17)

B. Tribal idolatry – Dan (18)

C. Homosexuality spreads to Israel (19-21)

The book of Judges ends with the key verse of this section, “everyone did what was right in his own _____.”