

Lesson 14 Judges

Read the Book of Judges, chapters 1 through 10

STUDY QUESTIONS

1. Read the last verse of the book of Judges. Why might this be a good subtitle for the book? What indications are there of near anarchy?
2. The books of Joshua and Judges cover an historical time that partly overlaps. How would you contrast the point of view of each? Are both true?
3. Who are the Judah, Simeon, and Benjamin referred to in the first chapter? In the fourth chapter the family of Hobab (descendant of Jethro, Reuel -Moses' in-law family) befriends Israel again. How are they helpful this time?
4. What reasons are given for the fact that contrary to God's command all the nations are not driven out? It will be helpful to always keep the map book open to visualize the locations.
5. Do you find anything spiritually uplifting in this narrative? Explain.

Psalm 81 and prayer

The books of Joshua and Judges cover somewhat the same time frame. The book of Judges extends for some years after the death of Joshua. The book named for him is idealistic in comparison with Judges which exposes the bitter, disillusioned side of the early years of life in the Promised Land. In Joshua the conquest interweaves two sequences which seem to be different accounts of the same occasion, or else a happening which did indeed occur twice. The possible meaning of the event must be found in underlying, unexplained situations. The event takes place at Shechem between Mt. Ebal and Mt. Gerizim. The geographical layout includes two high hills which flank the city. The place had an old history with the Israelites long before the time of Joshua. Abraham had sojourned there, also Jacob. It was against the Shechemites that Simon and Levi vindicated their sister, Dinah. So the area had ties historically to the Israelites. There is no account of the city

forcibly taken by Joshua. It seems that the people of the area, ancient relatives, simply welcomed Joshua and the Israelites without a battle.

Joshua calls all the people to Shechem. Chapters 8 and 24 of Joshua deal with the great conclave that he called at Shechem according to the directives left by Moses. There the people were divided - one set toward Mt. Ebal, the other toward Mt. Gerizim; the ark carried by the priests was stationed between. They were recovenanted to God; the Law was read and actually again engraved upon stone. Their unique history was "remembered." Joshua calls them to accept God and no other; to put away the gods "that their fathers had worshipped beyond the river" (harking back to El Shaddai, or more likely the household gods of the Arameans. Abraham's roots). It seems from verse 35 of chapter 8 that this was a wedding of two groups of people, both from the same old stock. The "sojourners or strangers" were people related through traditions of the patriarchs to the Israelites, but people who had not left Canaan with the sons of Jacob and had not had the Egypt experience, nor experienced the Exodus, nor the discipline of the desert wanderings, nor did they know the Law or the Covenant of Sinai. They had lived in with the Canaanites for many generations and worshipped the local gods as well as the gods "from beyond the river." But they were not Canaanites and did not fit into their settled, citified, more luxurious and decadent way of life.

Here a joining together took place. These people, related to the Hebrews (actually called Abiru), were not landed people, but were still semi-nomadic. They were not wealthy in terms of the Canaanite town-folks. They had recognized Joshua and the Hebrews as of their stock and they welcomed them. The Law of Sinai was a great attraction. The land was to be divided, tribe, clan and family were all to be recipients. In a land where the separation of rich and poor was evident - land being of the greatest value, this was a wonderful thing. All people would have an equal chance for a good life. The Law made clear that the land belonged to God. He was the only real owner. Each tribe, clan and family merely was given stewardship of a certain section by lot. This they cared for in perpetuity. It was to provide their livelihood. The symbolism of this was apparent when the land was parceled out to them

by lot, by Urim and Thummim, God was the owner giving it into the hands of His caretakers.

The Law also provided for equity. There was nothing like Social Security, and some people have a tendency to get rich while others have a tendency to get poor. So if the land was sold, or if, on the other hand, land was acquired, it would revert in the Jubilee year (a fiftieth year) to the original owner. In this way equity was maintained, and the great dichotomy that arises between the rich and the poor was avoided. It is unclear, however, how many Jubilee years Israel ever celebrated, if any. The idea, however, was eagerly accepted as economic justice by the sojourners and they readily came into the assembly of their “brothers.” They appreciated the social and legal fairness that this God-centered system promised. Joshua tells them that it is a religious commitment that they must make in order to become part of this new order, and they agree to worship God alone. They promise to serve Yahweh and put away their gods. How deep this experience went for the sojourner may be questioned, and this religious weakness in the tribes as they settled Canaan may partially account for the ease with which the people fell into idolatrous ways. These new folk, after all, did not have the benefit of those whose parents came out of Egypt. They had heard the story from the lips of those who experienced the great Deliverance, the Sinai theophany, the wilderness discipline; and they had been regulated by the demands of the earliest holiness code from their first breath. The acts and requirements of almighty God had molded the incoming Israelites.

After Joshua’s death there was no great leader. Had there been a Moses or a Joshua with great organizing skills and charisma, perhaps the distances that now separated the tribes would not have been an insurmountable obstacle. But as it was the people settled their lands, much of which was still under the control of large Canaanite cities, the best they could, and the only thing that held them in confederation was their religion. There was no centralized government. They were faced with a great many political problems. The great Hittite Empire on the north had crumbled and was no more. Egypt on the south which had

controlled the area for many hundreds of years was internally weak and outwardly harassed by the Libyans and the Sea People whom we know in the Bible as the Philistines. The whole rich area of Canaan lay open for many people hungry for land and cities. Some very important big cities long remained in Canaanite hands. All across the mid section of the country guarding the passes toward the fertile north were fortresses - Meggido, Beth-Shan, Taanach, Ibleam. In order to settle the territories given them by lot, the tribes had to skirt these areas or run into trouble with those who were stronger. About the same time, the Sea People began their invasion of the coastal cities along the Mediterranean. These were cities Joshua had never attempted to take from the Canaanites, but the Sea People were successful. Fierce warriors, they brought with them from somewhere in the Greek Islands or Asia Minor the advantages of iron. Forced out because of political unsettledness or because of years of famine, they came into Crete and from there became like the later Vikings. They raided the coasts of the Mediterranean, finally conquering many of the large southern coastal cities. After establishing a strong presence, they began to harass the Israelites far inland until eventually they were quieted by David’s military might. In a late bronze age culture, which was the milieu of Israel, the Philistines held the secret of iron which gave them the upper hand militarily for several generations, and they assiduously protected its formula from all others.

The country was subject to all kinds of invasions. It was not just from the west that the country was invaded, and Israel was not the only group to invade it from the east. Strong bands of Ammonite, Amorite, and Midianite nomadic groups, riding the recently domesticated camel, became chronic raiders from the eastern desert. Crossing through the ravines that ran perpendicular to the Jordan, they plundered the rich agricultural valley of Jezreel whose farms were now the livelihood of Israel. The hardships of the farmers are described in Judges 6. The desert raiders became so intolerable that the oppressed Israelites cried out to God for help. Gideon arose as a deliverer sent from God. The severity of oppression forced him to hide his grain in a winepress. Obviously being the wrong season for wine, he threshed grain for the family sustenance where raiders might not find it. If east and west raiders, and big unconquered cities were not enough oppression, the

old hostile country of Moab gained strength, soon succeeding in putting Israel under its rule and demanding tribute.

Israel struggles for its existence. Disorganized within and harassed from all sides, there is a phlegmatic response when the judges, who now loosely rule Israel, call for arms - 5:16. Some tribes even refuse to help, 5:23. Relatives are cursed, there is anarchy, caravan routes are closed because of general instability 5:6, and there are rivals, like Abimelech, for the power of rule. And where is Levi, the priestly tribe? He has forty-eight towns, but little is heard from the order of priests or Levites. Jealousy and one-up-manship predominate among the tribes. 8:1 The inspired writer is sure that all this comes upon the People of God because of the state of their response to God. If the people had obeyed and kept God at the center of their lives none of these enemies would have had a chance against them. Religiously, however, things have fallen to pieces. Out and out worship of foreign gods, the Baals, has replaced Yahweh. There is no regard for His Law. The ark of the covenant is at this time either at Bethel where it was taken from Gilgal quite early, or in Shiloh which is the next cult center until the Philistines ravage that city.

There is also syncretism in religion. This attempt to merge the worship of the Baals with the worship of Yahweh is like some modern cults, the B'Hai's cult comes to mind. When the Israelite farmers got down to raising food in the new land, they were impressed with the easy religion of the Baals which didn't call on the spiritual muscle that the religion of Yahweh demanded. Very practical, this fertility religion was obvious with its prostitutes and orgiastic worship. It seemed so very relevant. Better to go along with this obvious worship of fertility if one wanted good crops. What could really be wrong as long as you continued to worship Yahweh? After all, the blessings and curses they had heard from the Law made it imperative not to neglect Yahweh, but no need to neglect the Baals either. Just observing the two somehow would be best. The one God, I AM, or I AM WHO AM, demands a great deal more from a person than this very earthy god, Baal, and his equally earthy consort, Astarte (or Ashtaroth). We see this syncretism in the temple "Baal Berith" mentioned in the Gideon story, 8:33, 9:4. This meant "Lord of the Covenant" What was wrong with that? They were combining Baal with the ideas of Yahweh of the Covenant. Also the

combination is seen in the name "Jerubbaal," Gideon's other name, which was probably the name his father gave him (the sacred author tries to explain this is really because he was "against BaaI.") But many other Israelites of the period have "baal" as part of their name, even as they often had had "el' (God) as part of their name.

God's commands begin to be ignored. They had been told in the Law that they were to have one cult center, one place where an altar would be raised to God upon which their sacrifices were to be made. This was to guard the people from the very thing that was happening. With an altar for sacrifice on every high place, Gideon himself erected at least a couple, it would not be long before there would be idols there belonging to the worship of the locality. If centralized worship could have been maintained it would have been under the control of the Chief Priest, the priests and Levites, and godly authority could have been levied on form, practice and belief. But the command of God given through Moses about a centralized worship fell into oblivion and was forgotten.

God continues to love. Despite all the forgetfulness, accommodation to idolatry, and flagrant disobedience, God does not give up on His people. He visits them with the truth through angelic visitors and through prophets, (both in Chapter 6), calling back into their remembrance the experiences that had made them His People in the first place. The Holy Spirit fell upon great leaders who delivered the foolish people from the effects of their disobedience time and again.

Each man did what he thought was right. The spiritual lessons being learned bring us to consider our own progress in faith. First, just as in a family we see young people in adolescence break away from strong authority to internalize their beliefs, the Israelites are given the chance to do the same. Moses and Joshua had been strong men who epitomized a strong central authority, but now there is no such authority, "Each man did what he thought was right, "following his own lights. Previously, religion had been imposed from the outside. They conformed or else, just like small children in a family. Now that was loosened. They were on their own, and the truth had to be a part of them or it was lost. It was a time of testing, even as God had said. Either

His religion would be brought into their hearts and lived from the inside out, or they would demonstrate unfaithfulness to God and His ways. The times seem like sheer chaos as a result.

The People learn the hard way. Like teenagers, the people are left to learn that total independence is not constructive for them. They learn the hard way; rejecting authority, they will try their ways, foreign ways and not God's, until they are ready to return to Him. Then they will be ready to ask Him how He would have them live, willingly ordering their lives according to His Will. In the meantime there will be suffering. There is no way we can shield our children from this testing without keeping them children; the same is true for God's children. He is there for them, but they must call upon Him and ask Him; He does not automatically take care of them. Is this the situation of the Catholic Church today? The parental image of the Church will always remain; she is our mother in a real sense. But her spiritual children, once taken care of like babies, are now rebellious teenagers and are doing it their way. When this period is over, after the testing has done its work, the sorting process can begin. Many, tired of the confusion and frustration of being their own governor, are returning to the authority God has given in the Church, but now as grateful spiritual adults.

How do we learn the ways of God? There seems to be a pattern laid out in Judges.

1. We forget so easily the things of God and our relationship to Him.
2. Then we sin. We transgress His Law because we have really forgotten it who He is and who we are and what that relationship requires.
3. With sin comes oppression. We fall under the influence and control of outside forces which enslave us. Satan is mentioned very little in the Old Testament - the people have enough to learn without the contusion of what easily becomes superstition. It is Jesus who, alongside His assurance of deliverance, teaches who this

enslaver really is. But the Midianites, the Philistines, the Canaanites and all such are analogic of Satan's enslavement.

4. We remember. When the unbearable oppression and its pain, we come to ourselves and begin to remember. This was not what was meant for us. There is a God. He has a Way, and we are not on it.
5. We repent and are truly sorry - not sorry for ourselves, but sorry that we have wandered from the one God who loves us. We repent that we have been hurtful to Him and neglectful of His love.
6. He delivers us, forgives us, restores us.
7. We are free!

Then we forget again! Unfortunately in our freedom and happiness we begin to go our own way and to forget; the whole pattern is repeated, until remembrance becomes constant. So it was for the Israelites. This is what the book of Judges is all about. From it we may learn of the need and working of our Sacrament of Confession (penance and reconciliation).

The judges are human instruments empowered by the Holy Spirit.

Othniel, Ehud, Shamgar, Deborah, Barak, Gideon, Tola and Jair - these are the instruments God used for deliverance in the first ten chapters. Ehud's murder of Eglon: the presentness of this story and the clarity of details give the feel of an account very near to the time of the happening. The song of Deborah is a next day writing of an event, it seems. We get more actual information from the poem than from the narrative account. Here we learn about Jael's proficiency with the tent peg and mallet (women were in charge of the tents), and the real reason for the defeat - the rains that had made the Jezreel valley a bog impassable for chariots. Israel recognized this as another God-incidence of supernature. The Gideon story shows us how psychologically the men were prepared for winning by God who bestows a dream and makes sure that Gideon overhears its telling in the enemy camp. The barley cake which symbolizes the farmers (Israel) knocks down the tent (the nomadic Midianites). And the Midianites also realize what this means, Gideon will win. This fires up Israel. God was already at work to assure the victory, and victorious they were. Gideon did refuse to being made

king, but accepted gold tribute and made himself a golden ephod with his own Urim and Thummim which became a snare to his family. His illegitimate son is not hesitant in the least to take over the kingship. He is not a judge appointed by God, and his story describes how bad things could become under local rule by heartless tyrants in an archaic time.

LESSON 14 JUDGES 1-10

INNER STRESSES

- many cities destroyed
- lands given out by lot to tribes
- loose confederation 5:16
- no central government:
- held together by Law, Covenant, Ark
- phlegmatic response to need
- jealousy 8

OUTER STRESSES

- Egypt's role
- Hittite's role
- Mesopotamia
- } diminishing power

enemies:

- Philistines
- Midianites
- Amalakites
- Canaanites - they were not driven out because:

1. Israel disobeyed the Law
2. they were a generation that did not know know the Lord
3. it was a time of testing
4. so that they might know what war was like

ISRAEL

**Served the Baals
played the harlot**

**did what was evil
in the sight of the Lord**

REMEMBER

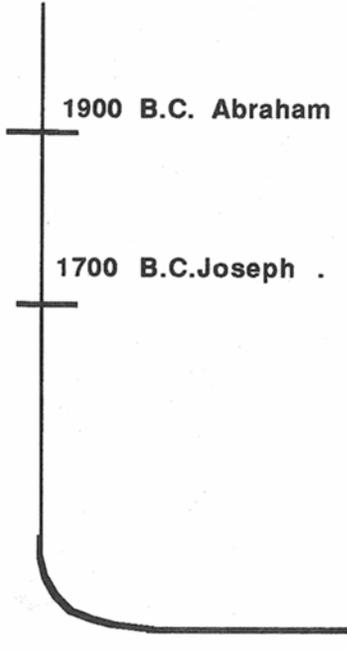
oppression

the Holy Spirit
anoints

JUDGES

- Othniel
- Ehud
- Shamgar
- Deborah-Barak
- Gideon(Jerubbaa)
- Tola
- Jair

to free the people



religion

- anarchy
- where are Levitical priests?
- syncretism
- worship of other gods
- prophets of God
- angelic visitors
- altars-sacrifice
- the ark - at Bethel, then Shiloh

1. we forget God
2. we sin
3. we are oppressed by evil
4. pain brings awareness
5. we repent
6. He delivers us
7. we are free
8. we forget God
9. we sin . . .

Lesson 14 Judges 1 - 10 Synopsis

- 1.. after the death of Joshua the people inquired of God Judah and Simeon chosen by lot go against Canaanites of Bezek take Adonibezek's thumb and toe they defeat Jerusalem fight in hills, Negeb, low-country Hebron is taken, then on to Debir Debir was Caleb's territory he said whoever takes it gets Caleb's daughter Othniel takes it, gets Achsah Caleb gives her water springs the Kenites settle with the people Judah and Simeon take Zephath Hormah, Gezer, Ashkelon, Ekron Caleb drove out the Anak Joseph (Ephraim and Manasseh) went against Bethel with spies put the city to the sword except the man who helped them who established Luz in and of Hittites Manasseh didn't take Bethshean Taanach, Dor, Ibleam, or Megiddo Ephraim did not take Gezer Zebulun left Kitron, Nahalol Canaanites dwell with them Asher left Acco, Sidon, Ahlab, Achzib, Helbah, Aphik, Rehob Naphtaii didn't take Bethshamesh Bethanath, dwelt with Canaanites Danites left those in Harheres Ajilon, Shaalbim to Amarite border soon Canaanites became slaves
2. angel of God comes from Gilgal to Bochim and warns about

- disobedience to God's commands peoples shall not be driven out they shall become adversaries people wept, sacrificed to the Lord after tribes received inheritance Joshua dies, buried on his land another generation grows up who does not know the Lord serving the Beals provokes Him they are given over to plunderers in sore straits because of harlotry God pitied their groaning He raised judges to deliver them stubborn, they transgress again "the nations I will not drive out" to put Israel to the test
3. nations are left so they know war Philistines, Hivites left for testing intermarried, served their gods become slaves to Elam spirit of the Lord raises up Othniel to deliver them from Elam again the people do evil now Moab comes against Israel Ammon, Amalekites took Jericho served them 18 years the Lord raised up Ehud to deliver he killed Eglon, their king occupation troops killed Moabites at the fords of the Jordan Shamgar with an ox-goad delivered Israel from Philistines but the people did what was evil after Ehud died
 4. Jabin, king of Hazor, with Sisera his commander, oppressed Israel with 900 chariots of iron Deborah, Barak and 10,000 men gathered from Naphtali, Zebulun

5. at Kadesh to fight Jabin close to tents of Heber the Kenite Moses' father-in-law's tribe Sisera goes out against Barak with the 900 chariots of iron the river Kishon is flooded mired in mud, Sisera fled on foot Jael gives him drink, covers him drives tent peg through his temple King Jabin subdued under Israel the poem of Deborah begins with an overture to God the Kishon had flooded there were tribes that took part and by apathy, tribes that didn't poetic rendition of Sisera's death mocking irony as his mother waits the people of Israel again did evil Midianites destroy Israel by swift attack plunder their lands Israel again brought low they repent, beg for deliverance a prophet is sent to Ophrah then an angel by a sacred tree Gideon hides wheat in wine press God sends him as a deliverer his is the weakest Manasseh clan Gideon prepares a sacrifice fire consumes *the* offering Gideon built an altar there called, "The Lord is Peace" he pulls down his father's altar Baal's worship center, by night offers up a burnt offering his father Joash is on his side against the angry neighbors "if Baal is god, let him take care" Gideon then named "Jerubbaai" let Baal contend against him"
- 6.

7. Midian invades valley of Jezreel Lord's spirit possesses Gideon he is followed by four tribal groups he tests his call by fleece and dew Gideon has too many fighting men thinned out lest Israel vaunt itself separate those who lap for a drink from those who knelt to drink Gideon with a servant went down into the enemy camp there he overheard a dream a barley cake rolls into the tents he had advantage because of God trumpets blown on every side jars broken, torches shine out Midian breaks and runs Ephraim is called out to help Midian heads, Oreb and Zeeb slain and fords of the Jordan taken Ephraim angry because of late call Gideon placates, pursues Midian through Succoth and Penuel after Zibah and Zalmunna Succoth and Penuel wouldn't help Gideon promised revenge on them at Karkor he defeats Midian has his revenge on Succoth Gideon had a personal motive his own family suffered by them he trained his son to kill he is too young, Gideon kills them invited by the people to be ruler he refuses, took power, no title from spoil asked for gold earrings he made an ephod of gold, jewels which became an idol in Ophrah Israel played the harlot after it rest was gained from Midian
- 8.

9. in Shechem Gideon's concubine's son Abimelech stirs up trouble hires worthless fellows and they slay 70 sons of Gideon Jotham, the youngest, escapes curses Abimelech from Mt Gerizim fire will come out of the bramble the worthless rules his betters in the meantime, Abimelech rules Shechem deals treacherously become ambushers and robbers against caravan traffic the men of Shechem against him unite with Gaal who reviles him but Abimelech wins the battle then fights the city, and kills all burns all in the Tower of Shechem then to Thebez where people hide again he will burn their stronghold but a woman throws a millstone and kills Abimelech his crime against his brothers God has requited Jotham's curse on Shechemites has come upon them
10. Tola judges Ephraim, Jair - Gilead unfaithful Israel is sold into the hands of the Philistines Israel stressed by the Ammonites if they put away false gods God would come **to** their aid again who is the man who will fight the Ammonites?

Lesson 14 Judges 1 - 10 Outline

I. Background of Judges

- A. Literary sources of the book
 - 1. some ancient non-extant sources
 - 2. some read like first hand accounts, parts are written later, see 6:24
 - 3. more than one strand woven together makes some confusion
 - 4. Song of Deborah, ancient poem, sounds like a next day account
- B. Conquest and settling of Israel 1200-1020 B.C.
 - 1. after Joshua's death and burial on his inheritance in Ephraim
 - a. no particular leadership to take his place
 - b. by lot Judah and Simeon are settled on their territories 1:1
 - 1) special interest in tribe of Judah and its primacy, see Gen 49:8-9
 - 2) Caleb is the leader there, see Nu 13:30f
 - 3) the tribe of Simeon is absorbed into Judah early in tribal history
 - c. Mt. Ebal and Mt. Gerizim witness a confederation see Josh 8, 24
 - d. Jerusalem conquered
 - 1) often considered a gloss Judges 1:7, see Judges 1:21
 - 2) if it was conquered, it remained only a short time in Israelite hands
 - 3) was not retaken until David's time
 - 2. territories parceled out to each tribe
 - a. Cities and their surrounding farmlands distributed to Levites Josh 21
 - b. east of the Jordan (always use a map)
 - 1) Reuben, Gad and 1/2 of Manasseh are settled
 - 2) countries of Edom, Moab and Ammon left there will be trouble
 - c. west of the Jordan
 - 1) Joshua distributes the land, 5-19, archeology supports descriptions
 - 2) Ephraim and Benjamin gain their lands
 - 3) final division by Joshua 18:1-7
 - 4) the tribes laid claim but could not always possess
 - 5) all lands were parceled out at the assembly at Shiloh Josh 16-17
 - d. large Canaanite cities control and guard the passes to the north
 - 1) Megiddo holds control until 1100
 - 2) Taanach, Ibleam, Beth-Shan unconquered
 - 3) large Canaanite cities continue to dominate areas
 - 4) reasons given that "nations are not driven out"
 - a) Israel broke covenant 2:20
 - b) they are left for a test of faithfulness 2:22
 - c) they are left so that Israel might learn how to fight war 3:2
 - 3. all the land became ancestral property
 - a. it belongs to God and is only under tribal stewardship
 - b. laws regarding the land are in I Kings 21:3
 - c. the Jubilee years of return to original owners explained in Lv. 25
 - 4. the sojourner mentioned in Joshua 8:25 and 24 were around Shechem
 - a. may have been ancient relatives of Israel
 - b. Jacob and Abraham lived at Shechem at one time
 - c. they readily accepted Joshua's leadership
 - d. and became part of The People
 - 1. they appreciated the Law's equity
 - 2. benefited from the laws concerning land
 - a) they were not landed people
 - b) Canaanites comparatively rich, the nomadic sojourners poor
 - c) land reforms of the Law benefited them Lv 25:8-13, 27:24
 - 3. they accepted Joshua's challenge and chose Yahweh as God
 - e. they may have caused a spiritual weakness in the tribes
 - 1. did not have the Law as part of their experience
 - 2. did not have the discipline of obedience in the desert
 - 3. still worshipping the gods of their fathers Beyond-the-River
 - f. the "homeborn" would then refer to those born to the people of Israel
- C. The governance of the tribes changes
 - 1. the confederation was loose, no strong leaders like Joshua 16, 24:24
 - 2. the strength of confederation depended on the covenant
 - a. when covenant bond was strong, they were strong
 - b. when covenant bond was weak, they were weak
 - 3. observance of the Law held them together
 - 4. the ark was probably at Shiloh, after being at Bethel, after being at Gilgal
 - a. the priesthood is not mentioned: conclude there was weakness
 - b. priests must have been assigned to the ark
- D. State of the political times see Map B 9, 11, 12
 - 1. Egypt is weakened fighting Libyans and Sea People
 - 2. Assyria is still far away and involved in its own affairs
 - 3. Arameans from Arabia settling around Damascus
 - 4. Phoenicia is a strong Canaanite presence
 - a) it is dominating trade, strongly sea-faring
 - b) its Baal-Astarte religion includes child sacrifice
 - 5. Philistines (Sea People - also called Cherethites) are busy taking land
 - a) refugees from famine and political unrest
 - b) seem to have come from Greek islands or Asia Minor (Anatolia)

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- c) developed Crete (Caphtor) as a base of raiding operations
- d) harassed the coasts similar to the Vikings of 8-10th century AD
- e) settled in big Canaanite cities along the coast in loose confederation
Gaza, Ashkelon, Ekron, Gath, Ashdod
- f) usher in the Iron Age with iron technology Judges 1:19, 4:2-3
 - 1) keep their secret, others dependent on softer bronze
 - 2) helps trace them to the Hittites of Asia Minor who had iron
- g) by 1050 they dominate Canaan and the Israelites
- 6. Amorites 1:34, Ammonites, Edomites, Moabites, Midianites
 - a) all lie to the east and north, send raiders into Israel
 - b) camels have been domesticated and are in their service
 - 1) they fast hit and run, excellent for raiding
 - 2) no need for water on these raids

II. Character of the Judges of Israel

- A. Spontaneous leaders under the spirit of Yahweh
 - 1. charismatic men inspired with strength of the Holy Spirit
 - 2. not necessarily "judging" but may have settled disputes
 - 3. given limited rule and limited mandate by God
 - 4. Israel's leadership sharply different from nations in the area
- B. The judges appointed by Yahweh in these unsettled times
 - 1. Othniel Co.le.12's nephew)
 - 2. Ehud defeats tglon of Moab
 - 3. 8harngar - 600 Philistines killed with an ox goad
 - 4. Deborah and Barak the general
 - 'a. together they defeat Sisera , Jabin's commander, (with Jael's help)
 - b. eyewitness poem is in Judges 5
 - c. Moses in-laws, the Kenites, appear again as helpers - Jael is a Kenite
 - d. Deborah is the judge and prophetess, and is a dispute settler 4:4-5
 - 5. Gideon from Ophrah, conquers Midianites and Amalekites (Bedouin raiders)
 - a. Abimelech is trouble, not a judge, but a concubine's son, part Canaanite
 - 1) his story tells the relationship of curse on Shechem its fulfillment
 - b. Gideon makes a golden ephod which becomes an idol
 - c. his seventy sons are killed by Abimelech - one, Joash escapes
 - 6. Two others mentioned - Tola and Jair
- C. Phlegmatic response of the tribes to the rallying call 5:16

III. The Development of God's People A.

- They are entering their adolescence

- 1. they show disregard of authority
 - 2. and do a lot of experimenting on their own B.
- Learning through experience, they find it the hard way G.
They are developing a conscience
- 1. beginning to know their right relationship to God
 - 2. formulate their experiences by reflecting on the meaning of happenings
- D. They often suffer anarchy (allusions in the poem of Deborah)
- 1.2:24 plundering; 9:25 Shechemites were robbers 2. 3:6 intermarriage and worship of false gods
 - 3.5:6 caravans ceased, travelers kept to byways
 - 4. peasantry (open country farming) ceases

IV. Religious Realities in Judges

- A. Worship of foreign gods happens constantly
- B. Syncretism of worship shows up
 - 1. Jerubbaal 6:32 his kinsman worshipped Baal
 - 2. loss of true religion is constantly evident 6:1,6:25
 - 3. Baal berith** - "Lord of the covenant" compatible with Yahweh?
- C. Prophetic voices were heard occasionally 6:7
- D. Angelic visitations recorded 6:11
- E. "The Holy Spirit falls upon ..." and another man is chosen
- F. Idolatry and harlotry are considered synonymous 2:16
- G. God tests 2:3
 - 1. He will never break covenant
 - 2. but will punish when they do break the covenant
- H. The Tent of Meeting and ark at Shiloh 8:1-2
 - 1. the Law said there would be only one place or worship
 - 2. nevertheless, altars were put up here and there 6:24
- I. Decisions were made by lot 1:1, brim and Thummim Inquiring of the Lord"
- J. Forgetting God and His will leads to these steps:
 - 1. forsaking His commands and disobeying Him
 - 2. worshipping foreign gods and idols
 - 3. falling under oppression
 - 4. beginning to be in pain and misery
 - 5. slowly remembering
 - 6. repenting and asking forgiveness
 - 7. being delivered by God
 - 8. coming back into freedom
 - 9. forgetting God and His will.

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