

Outline of Judges

We hope this outline of Judges will deepen your understanding of God's Word.

The book of Judges is a book of failure and misery. The spotlight of the book is on a blessed people's miserable failures. But it also is a book about God's great and abiding mercy. There is a cycle found throughout the book of Judges. It is a cycle of Rest, Relapse, Ruin, Repentance, and Restoration; or, in other words, of Sin, Punishment, Repentance, Deliverance, and Peace. The full cycle is found some six times in the book of Judges. In other places, we only have a partial cycle detailed, although the full cycle may have occurred. There are twelve judges (13 if you include Abimelech – Judges 9:22, 10:1) listed. Below are the cycles with the names of the oppressors, number of years of oppression, the judge, and the number of years of peace.

The Cycle from Sin to Peace				
Sin	Punishment	Repentance	Deliverance	Peace
3:7	3:8	3:9	3:10	3:11
Oppressor and years of oppression: Cushan-Rishathaim of Mesopotamia (8 years) Judge and years of peace: Othniel (40 years)				
3:12	3:12-14	3:15	3:15-29	3:30
Oppressor and years of oppression: Eglon of Moab (18 years) Judge and years of peace: Ehud (80 years)				
	3:31		3:31	
Oppressor: Philistines Judge: Shamgar				
4:1	4:2	4:3	4:4-24	5:31
Oppressor and years of oppression: Jabin of Canaan (20 years) Judges and years of peace: Deborah & Barak (40 years)				
6:1	6:1	6:6	6:11-8:21	8:28
Oppressor and years of oppression: Midianites (7 years) Judge and years of peace: Gideon (40 years)				
			10:1	10:2
Judge and years of peace: Tola (23 years)				
			10:3	10:3
Judge and years of peace: Jair (22 years)				
10:6	10:7-9	10:10-16	10:16-11:33	12:7
Oppressor and years of oppression: Philistines & Ammonites (18 year Ammonite rule) Judge and years of peace: Jephthah (6 years)				
			12:8	12:9

Judge and years of peace: Ibzan (7 years)				
			12:11	12:11
Judge and years of peace: Elon (10 years)				
			12:13	12:14
Judge and years of peace: Abdon (8 years)				
13:1	13:1		13:5-15:9	15:20
Oppressor: Philistines (40 years) Judge and years of peace: Samson (20 years)				

Date:

1365 B.C. to 1085 B.C. A period of about 380 years.

(Note: If you add up the above years, you will come to slightly more than 380 years. It is likely that there may have been some overlap in the periods, especially with the oppression of the Ammonites and the Philistines at the very end. It is very possible that Jephthah and Samson may have been nearly contemporaries.)

The period opens with the death of Joshua and closes with the death of Samson, who was a contemporary of Samuel. Samson began what Samuel finished, the defeat of the Philistines.

Divisions: The book of Judges is divided in two parts:

I. The Cycles of the People 1-16

- A. The Background 1-3:6
- B. Othniel 3:7-11
- C. Ehud (and Shamgar) 3:12-31
- D. Deborah and Barak 4:1-5:31
- E. Gideon (and Tola and Jair) 6:1-10:5
- F. Jephthah (and Ibzan, Elon, and Abdon) 10:6-12:15
- G. Samson 13-16

II. The Samples of Sin 17-21

- A. Micah and the Danites 17-18
- B. The Levites Concubine 19-21

Key Phrase: The LORD (170 times)

Eight times we find the clause, “did evil in the sight of the Lord” (2:11; 3:7, 12 (2); 4:1; 6:1; 10:6; 13:1). Two times we have the refrain “In those days there was no king in Israel; everyone did what was right in his own eyes” (17:6; 21:25). What was right in their own eyes was evil in the sight of the Lord.

Key Passage: 2:11-19; see also 10:16; 21:25

Key Lesson: Disobedience brings Judgment