

# **Book of Judges**

## **Part 1**

### **“God Allows Difficulty”**

In the period of the Judges, Israel lost the critical next link in its godly leadership. Moses was the great leader used by God to bring them out of Egypt; Joshua was Moses’ assistant and the great leader used by God to bring them into the land of promise. But Joshua appointed no leader after him to guide the whole nation.

So after the death of Joshua there was no standing “office” of national leadership. Israel had no king, no president, and no prime minister on earth – only God in heaven. Yet at the necessary and appropriate times God brought forth leaders for the nation. For the most part these leaders would rise up, do his (or her) job, and then return to their obscurity. This required that the people of Israel maintain a real, abiding trust in God.

These national deliverers were not elected, and they didn’t come to leadership through royal succession. They were stirred by God, called by God and specially gifted by God for leadership in their times, and the people of God recognized and respected that gifting.

When this book uses the term judge, it doesn’t mean someone who sits in a court and decides legal issues; the Hebrew word shaphat has more the idea of a heroic leader. “The Hebrew word Shophetim is derived from a word meaning to put right, and so to rule, and this is exactly what these men did.” (Morgan)

The people of Israel had great obstacles. They were surrounded by people who lived in the most terrible immorality and idolatry, making a constant temptation to the same sins. The idolatrous lives of the Canaanites who lived around Israel were focused mainly on three

things: money, sex, and the worship of idol gods for the purpose of favor and prosperity.

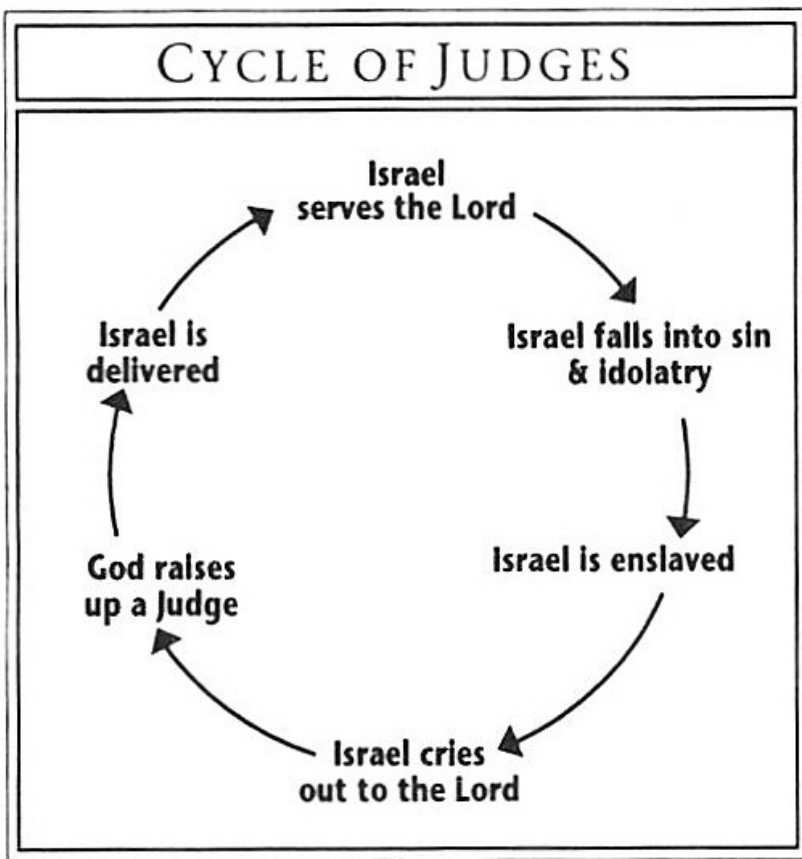
**After the death of Joshua:** The Book of Judges shows us a time that is sometimes confusing, difficult, and dark. For this reason, many neglect the Judges and regard this period of time as a “dark ages” of Israel’s history. Yet if we neglect this book we neglect a wonderful account of the mercy and graciousness of God, and how He lovingly, yet sternly corrects His people.

## **Judges 2**

**6** After Joshua had dismissed the Israelites, they went to take possession of the land, each to their own inheritance. **7** The people served the Lord throughout the lifetime of Joshua and of the elders who outlived him and who had seen all the great things the Lord had done for Israel.

**8** Joshua son of Nun, the servant of the Lord, died at the age of a hundred and ten. **9** And they buried him in the land of his inheritance, at Timnath Heres in the hill country of Ephraim, north of Mount Gaash.

**10** After that whole generation had been gathered to their ancestors, **another generation grew up who knew neither the Lord nor what he had done for Israel.** **11** Then the Israelites did evil in the eyes of the Lord and served the Baals. **12** They forsook the Lord, the God of their ancestors, who had brought them out of Egypt. They followed and worshiped various gods of the peoples around them. They aroused the Lord’s anger **13** because they forsook him and served Baal and the Ashtoreths. **14** In his anger against Israel the Lord gave them into the hands of raiders who plundered them. He sold them into the hands of their enemies all around, whom they were no longer able to resist. **15** Whenever Israel went out to fight, the hand of the Lord was against them to defeat them, just as he had sworn to them. They were in great distress.



## 1. You can't serve God if you don't know Him

### **Vs. 10**

**After that whole generation had been gathered to their ancestors, another generation grew up who knew neither the Lord nor what he had done for Israel.**

You are loyal to what you love, and You will never love something you don't know...

I saw a marquee on a Baptist church that said:  
no Jesus, no peace...  
Know Jesus, know peace...

That short saying nails it...

- The Word says, they didn't know the Lord or what he had done for Israel...
- Surely they knew about the Lord...
- Surely they heard the stories...
- Surely someone told them what God had done...
- How could it be that they didn't know...

Look at America today:

Has there ever been any other nation that has preached the Bible more than America...

The best Bible teachers... the biggest churches... the best bible colleges in the world are right here in America yet people in America don't know the Lord or what he has done...

- **Remember the parable of the sower**, when Jesus said: "A farmer went out to sow his seed. As he was scattering the seed, some fell along the path, and the birds came and ate it up." then he explained... "When anyone hears the message about the kingdom and does not understand it, the evil one comes and snatches away what was sown in their heart. This is the seed sown along the path."
- It amazes me how quickly the enemy works to remove and erode away the memories of what God has done, and what his word says from the minds of people...

**A Generation didn't know Him... You can't serve God if you don't know Him**

**2. But God raises up Courageous Leaders as an Instrument in his hands**

**16** Then the Lord raised up judges, who saved them out of the hands of these raiders. **17** Yet they would not listen to their judges but prostituted themselves to other gods and worshiped them. They

quickly turned from the ways of their ancestors, who had been obedient to the Lord's commands. **18** Whenever the Lord raised up a judge for them, he was with the judge and saved them out of the hands of their enemies as long as the judge lived; for the Lord relented because of their groaning under those who oppressed and afflicted them. **19** But when the judge died, the people returned to ways even more corrupt than those of their ancestors, following other gods and serving and worshiping them. They refused to give up their evil practices and stubborn ways.

**20** Therefore the Lord was very angry with Israel and said, "Because this nation has violated the covenant I ordained for their ancestors and has not listened to me, **21** I will no longer drive out before them any of the nations Joshua left when he died. **22** I will use them to test Israel and see whether they will keep the way of the Lord and walk in it as their ancestors did."

**God will raise up unexpected people...**

**God will do things in unexpected ways...**

- No one expected God to call Saul of Tarsus to be an Apostle to the Gentiles...
- The early church struggled to accept Saul of Tarsus, it took a Barnabas to convince them...

The Bible is full of the unexpected elections of God

How about all of the Disciples...

How about Balaam's Donkey...

If God can use a Donkey he can use anyone...

God might even choose people that, at that time, you wouldn't even think he would... Like they weren't even qualified...

**Story: Lindell Cooley**

## Isaiah 41

10

So do not fear, for I am with you;  
do not be dismayed, for I am your God.  
I will strengthen you and help you;  
I will uphold you with my righteous right hand.

11

“All who rage against you  
will surely be ashamed and disgraced;  
those who oppose you  
will be as nothing and perish.

12

Though you search for your enemies,  
you will not find them.  
Those who wage war against you  
will be as nothing at all.

13

For I am the Lord your God  
who takes hold of your right hand  
and says to you, Do not fear;  
I will help you.

14

Do not be afraid, you worm Jacob,  
little Israel, do not fear,  
for I myself will help you,” declares the Lord,  
your Redeemer, the Holy One of Israel.

15

“See, I will make you into a threshing sledge (instrument - KJV),  
new and sharp, with many teeth.  
You will thresh the mountains and crush them,  
and reduce the hills to chaff.

God said, Israel I will make you a threshing instrument, new and sharp, with many teeth... for a purpose; to thresh the mountains and crush them and reduce the hills to chaff.

It's God who said he would do that with Israel...

**God raised up Courageous Leaders and I believe God still raises up Courageous Leaders today, as an Instrument in his hands**

### **3. Difficulty is an Effective Teacher for Israel**

#### **Judges 3**

These are the nations the Lord left to test all those Israelites who had not experienced any of the wars in Canaan **2** (he did this only to teach warfare to the descendants of the Israelites who had not had previous battle experience):

**3** the five rulers of the Philistines, all the Canaanites, the Sidonians, and the Hivites living in the Lebanon mountains from Mount Baal Hermon to Lebo Hamath.

**4** They were left to test the Israelites to see whether they would obey the Lord's commands, which he had given their ancestors through Moses.

#### **The Forging of Steel:**

Forging Steel is the process of realigning the makeup of steel. It forms the grains together in a particular pattern and makes it much harder and stronger than regular cast steel.

Forging takes a hammer... and a flame... and an anvil... and a quench...

Here God will forge a new generation in Israel that is soft... and entitled... and a little lazy... and lacks conviction... and doesn't know or understand the price the former Generation paid. They didn't know or understand the God who lead them and provided for them.

**Vs. 2** says God did this only to teach warfare to the descendants of the Israelites who had not had previous battle experience.

The cycle of the judges will bring them to their knees and cause them to cry out to God, and he will time and time again extend His mercy and compassion because he loves them and longs for Israel to walk in relationship and obedience to Him.

Closing Song: