

The Book of JUDGES – God Breathed (Grk: thea-on-ooo-stos)
First Assembly of God Ft Myers Wed Night Study

MAJOR THEME #1 IN JUDGES – GOD’S LOVE & FAITHFULNESS IS
LITERALLY SUPERNATURAL – unrelenting, inexorable, constant

MAJOR THEME #2 IN JUDGES – LIFE DEVOID OF GOD leads to social and
moral chaos – unprecedented multifaceted DECLINE

13 JUDGES

Othniel* - Ehud

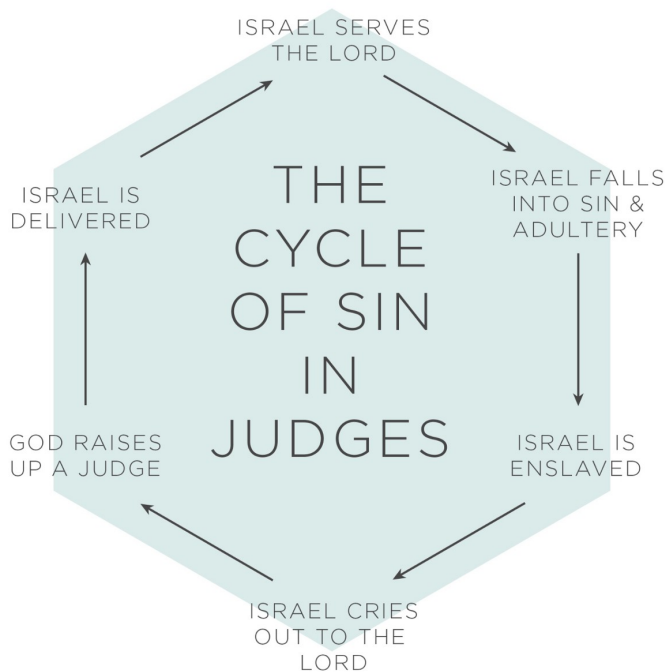
Shamgar - Deborah / Barak

Gideon - Tola

Jair - Jephthah

Ibzan - Elon

Abdon - Sampson



6 SUB-THEMES IN THE BOOK OF JUDGES

- **1.** God relentlessly offers his grace to people who do not deserve it, or seek it, or even appreciate it after they have been saved by it.
- **2.** God wants lordship over every area of our lives, not just some areas.
- **3.** There is a tension between grace and law, between conditionality and unconditionality.
- **4.** There is a need for continual spiritual renewal in our lives here on earth, and a way to make that a reality.
- **5.** We need a true Savior, to which all *human* saviors point, *through both their flaws and strengths*.
- **6.** God often uses people to do what he wants to happen without violating their personal responsibility or condoning their methods.

Pastor John Newton's list of sinful "small fault" areas that run contrary to the fruit of the Spirit:

- ***Austerus*** is a solid and disciplined Christian, but abrasive, critical and ungenerous in dealing with people, temperamental, seldom giving compliments and praise, and almost never gentle.
- ***Infitalis*** is a person of careful and deliberate character, but habitually cynical, negative, and pessimistic, always discouraging ("that will never work"), unsupportive and vaguely unhappy.
- ***Pulsusis*** passionate, yes, but also impulsive and impatient, not thinking things out, speaking too soon, always very quick to complain and lodge a protest, often needs to apologize for rash statements.

- **Querulus** is a person of strong convictions, but known to be very opinionated, a poor listener, argumentative, not very teachable, and very slow to admit they were wrong.
- **Subjectio** is a resourceful and ambitious person, but also someone who often shades the truth, puts spin on things (close to misrepresentation), is very partisan, self-promoting, and turf conscious.
- **Potestas** gets things done, but needs to control every situation, has trouble sharing power, has a need to do everything themselves, and is very suspicious and mistrustful of others.
- **Fragilis** is friendly and seeks friends, but constantly gets hurt feelings, easily feels slighted and put down, is often offended and upset by real and imagined criticism by others.
- **Curiosus** is very sociable, but enjoys knowing negative things about people, finds ways of passing the news on, may divulge confidences, and enjoys confronting too much.
- **Volatilis** is very kind-hearted and eager to help, but simply not reliable— isn't punctual, doesn't follow through on promises, is always over-extended, and as a result may do shoddy work.

Look at these and ask which one or two most describe you. Have the courage to ask someone else who knows you well to evaluate you, too.

One of the reasons that the virtues of gifts and temperament have a corresponding 'dark side' is that our gifts and natural temperament are bound up with the idols that dominate any person whose heart is not filled with the gospel of grace. **Without a thorough knowledge of the gospel, we look to good things—human approval and relationships, the exercise of power and accomplishment, the control of our environment and self-discipline, the enjoyment of comfort, privacy, and pleasure—and make them into pseudo-salvations.** So the person who makes an idol out of human approval may be a sensitive artist and the one who makes an idol out of power might be a courageous leader. But gifts and temperament in the service of idols—*and this is our normal state*—always are a mixed blessing. They have a good side—they produce virtuous behavior—but they lead the person into a corresponding sin or vice as well.

The final result of all this is that people *cannot see their sins*, because they're looking only at their virtues.

How can we be shaken out of our lethargy and awakened to our need to grow?

Here are some principles that I have gleaned from Newton's letters over the years.

1. Know that your worst character flaws are the ones you can see the least.
2. Remember that you can't learn about your biggest flaws just by being told —you must be shown.
3. Be willing to listen to correction and critique from others.
4. Bring the reality of God's power, love and righteousness before you over and over in your life

Commentaries:

James B. Jordan *A Practical & Theological Commentary*

Michael Wilcock *The Message of Judges*

John Goldingay *Joshua, Judges & Ruth for Everyone*