

Historical Content

Judges 21

People

The Men of Israel / The Children of Israel

- Those who were religiously and politically part of the covenant nation of Israel during the time of the Judges.

400 Young Virgins

- The women taken as spoils of war from Jabesh-Gilead and given to the tribe of Benjamin as wives (Jg 21:8–12)

Benjamites (The Tribe of Benjamin)

- The descendants of the patriarch Benjamin during the time of the Judges.
- “Descendants of Benjamin, son of Jacob. Israel’s first king, Saul, belonged to Benjamin (1 Sam 9:1–2), as did the Apostle Paul (Phil 3:5). The territory allotted to the tribe of Benjamin was between Ephraim, the Jordan River, Judah, and Dan... After Benjaminites in the town of Gibeah rape a Levite’s concubine, the tribe is nearly wiped out by the 11 other tribes.”¹

The Daughters of Shiloh

- The women of Shiloh whom the sons of Benjamin took as wives (Jg 21:20–24)

Places

Mizpah

- “Mizpah of Benjamin, a town on the border of Judah and Israel. It was the assembly point for the Israelite tribes going against Gibeah of Benjamin (Judg. 20:1–48). Mizpah was also on the circuit made annually by Samuel when he was judging Israel (1 Sam. 7:16–17). King Asa made Mizpah a fortified city after the heavy fighting between Israel and Judah (1 Kings 15:17–22). After the fall of Jerusalem at the exile (587 BCE), Mizpah became the Babylonian provincial capital. Gedaliah was made provincial governor, but was assassinated at Mizpah by Ishmael and a band of zealots.” “Ancient city in northern Israel, located at the foot of Mount Hermon. An inscription found at the site in 1993 may provide archaeological evidence of the existence of King David. Tel Dan was inhabited from the Neolithic age until about AD 500 and forgotten until the 19th century. Excavation at Dan did not begin until 1966.”²

Jabesh Gilead

- “A town on the east of Jordan, on the top of one of the green hills of Gilead, within the limits of the half tribe of Manasseh, and in full view of Beth-shan. It is first mentioned in connection with the vengeance taken on its inhabitants because they had refused to come up to Mizpeh to take part with Israel against the tribe of Benjamin (Judg. 21:8–14).”³

Places

Shiloh

- A city in the hill country of Ephraim located “north of Bethel, on the east of the highway that goes up from Bethel to Shechem.” (Jg 21:19)
- Joshua and the tribes of Israel camped in Shiloh after the settlement in the land. (Jos 18:1)
- Home of the ark of the covenant and the tabernacle during the time of Joshua to Samuel. (Jg 21:19)

Canaan

- “Territory between the Mediterranean Sea and the Jordan River reaching from the brook of Egypt to the area around Ugarit in Syria or to the Euphrates.”⁴

Rock of Rimmon

- “A rock to which six hundred Benjaminites fled to escape from the Israelites (Judg. 20:45–47; 21:13); it is identified with a limestone hill about three miles east of Bethel, on which is the modern village of Ramun.”⁵

Bethel

- “Part of the territory allotted to the tribes of Manasseh and Ephraim (Josh 16:1). The phrase “hill country of Bethel” is used only once in the Old Testament (1 Sam 13:2), but Bethel is also generally mentioned as being located in a hilly region, likely part of the hill country of Ephraim. The town of Bethel was a major worship site for the northern kingdom of Israel.”⁶

Places

Shechem

- “Also known as Tell Balâṭah; located 40 miles north of Jerusalem in the fertile valley between Mount Ebal and Mount Gerizim, just east of modern-day Nablus. The city’s location along the Shechem pass allowed it to control commercial and military traffic throughout the region. This territory was occupied by the tribes of Manasseh and Ephraim.”⁷
- The place where Abraham first entered Canaan and built an altar to God after He spoke to Abraham, promising to give the land to his offspring. (Ge 12:6-7)
- Jacob and his family settled in Shechem after he and Esau were reconciled. (Ge 33:12-20)
- Jacob’s daughter Dinah was raped in Schechem, by Schechem the prince who then came to Jacob’s house to make a treaty and take Dinah as his wife. (Ge 34:1-31)
- Jacob sent Joseph to check on his sons who were shepherds in the fields near Shechem. (Ge 37:12-17)
- Jacob gave Shechem as Joseph’s inheritance, and Joseph was later buried in Shechem. (Gen 48:22; Jos 24:32)
- Joshua renewed the covenant at Shechem. (Jos 24:1-33)

Lebonah

- “Town used to locate annual feast site by Israel’s elders as they sought wives for decimated tribe of Benjamin (Judg. 21:19). It is probably modern el-Lubban, three miles northwest of Shiloh, and was known for its fine grapes.”⁸

Key Dates / Timelines

- **1446 B.C.** The Exodus: Israelites are Delivered from Egypt
- **1250 B.C.** Beginning of the Conquest of Canaan
- **1220-1051 B.C.** The period of the Judges over Israel
- **1051 B.C.** The Prophet Samuel Anoints Saul to be King of Israel (United Kingdom)
- **1051–1011 B.C.** The reign of King Saul
- **1020 B.C.** The Prophet Samuel anoints David to be King of Israel (United Kingdom)
- **1011–971 B.C.** The reign of King David
- **971 B.C.** The Prophet Samuel anoints Solomon to be King of Israel (United Kingdom)
- **971–931 B.C.** The reign of King Solomon
- **922 B.C.** The United Kingdom of Israel divides into two Kingdoms: Israel (north) and Juda (south)
- **722 B.C.** The Northern Kingdom of Israel was conquered by the Assyrians
- **605 B.C.** Battle of Carchemish (Nebuchadnezzar defeats the Egyptians on the Euphrates River)
- **605 B.C.** Nebuchadnezzar invades Jerusalem and takes exiles to Babylon (including Daniel and his companions)
- **597 B.C.** Nebuchadnezzar besieges Jerusalem and takes King Jeconiah (Jehoiachin) as prisoner
- **588 B.C.** Nebuchadnezzar begins his final siege of Jerusalem
- **586 B.C.** Fall of Jerusalem to Babylon; Judah in exile in Babylon

911 - 609 B.C. Assyrian Empire | 626 – 539 B.C. Babylonian Empire | 539 – 358 B.C. Persian Empire

Cross References

Key References:

- **Exodus 15:20** | “Then Miriam the prophetess, the sister of Aaron, took the timbrel in her hand; and all the women went out after her with timbrels and with dances.”
- **Numbers 31:17** | “Now therefore, kill every male among the little ones, and kill every woman who has known a man intimately.”
- **Joshua 18:1** | “Now the whole congregation of the children of Israel assembled together at Shiloh, and set up the tabernacle of meeting there. And the land was subdued before them.”
- **Judges 17:6** | “In those days there was no king in Israel; everyone did what was right in his own eyes.”
- **Judges 20:48** | “And the men of Israel turned back against the children of Benjamin, and struck them down with the edge of the sword—from every city, men and beasts, all who were found. They also set fire to all the cities they came to.”

Cross References

Full List:

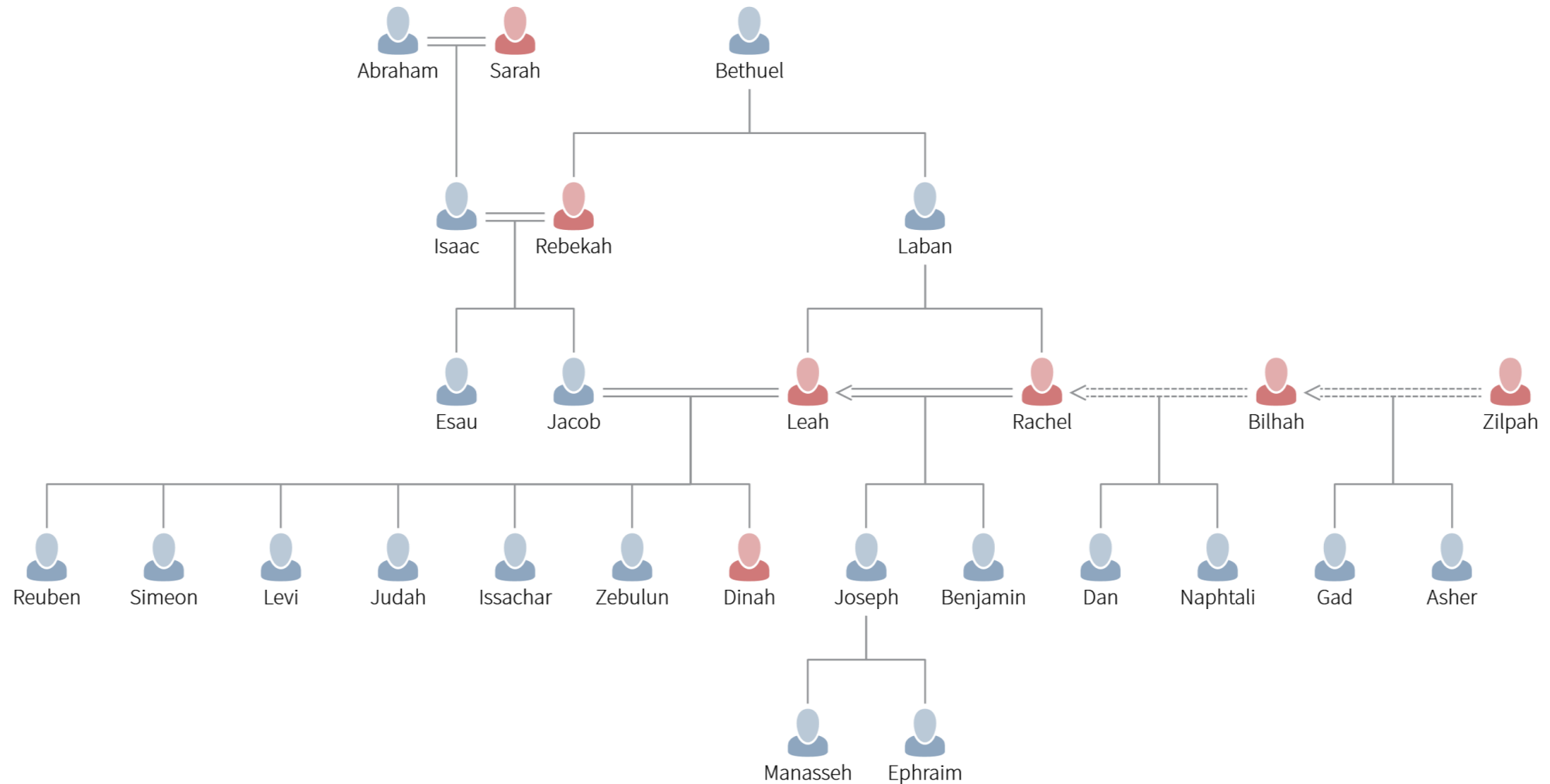
- **Exodus** 15:20
- **Leviticus** 23:2
- **Numbers** 11:22; 31:7, 13–20
- **Deuteronomy** 2:26; 7:2; 12:5, 8; 20:10, 13–14
- **Joshua** 9:18; 11:3; 15:32; 16:1; 17:7; 18:1; 24:28
- **Judges** 5:23; 11:34–35; 17:4–7; 18:1–3, 31–19:1; 20:1–3, 18, 26, 31, 42–48
- **1 Samuel** 1:3; 11:1, 7; 18:6; 21:11; 29:5; 31:11–13
- **2 Samuel** 2:4–5; 21:12; 24:25
- **1 Chronicles** 10:11
- **Jeremiah** 31:13

Images / Maps / Graphs

The Hill Country of Ephraim



The Family Tree of Jacob



THE TRIBAL ALLOTMENTS OF ISRAEL
 JOSH 13:8-19:49

- City
- City (uncertain location)
- ▲ Mountain peak



The Tribal Allotments of Israel



Judges According to Their Tribes

Village of Luban/Lebonah in the Hill Country of Ephraim



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2. Drinkard, Joel F., Jr. 2011. "Mizpah, Mizpeh." In *The HarperCollins Bible Dictionary (Revised and Updated)*, edited by Mark Allan Powell, Third Edition, 642. New York: HarperCollins.
3. Easton, M. G. 1893. In *Illustrated Bible Dictionary and Treasury of Biblical History, Biography, Geography, Doctrine, and Literature*, 353. New York: Harper & Brothers.
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