

Week #:	160	Series:	God's Judgment	Title:	Introduction to the Book of Judges
Scriptures:	Hebrews 3:12; Judges 21:25				
Songs:	You Won't Relent – Misty Edwards (5:00)				
	Medley: I Sing Praises; I Just Want to Praise You; We Exalt Thee – Reggie Royal and Judah (10:24)				
	PRAYER:	I Speak Jesus – Here Be Lions (5:11)			
Videos:	Overview of Judges				

## Introduction to the Book of Judges:

God's ultimate rescue plan started in Genesis. He promised Abraham three things:

1. That he would be the father of a great nation.
2. That they would reside in a land of promise.
3. That the whole world would be blessed because of this nation.

In the book of Joshua, we saw how God brought them to this land – a land “flowing with milk and honey” [meaning: a land where the farmers and the shepherds could both live fruitfully] – and how God performed miracles to bless them. They were given instructions to drive out every inhabitant there, and that is where Israel failed. God's purpose in this command was because the people there had many false gods. God didn't want the Israelites to take on the culture of this land, He wanted them to keep the culture that He had established with them. He had already seen them take on the culture of Egypt while they were there, and God had to do a lot of clean-up because of that.

Remember when Moses sent the 12 spies into the land to observe and make a plan, and only two – Joshua and Caleb – came back with a positive and enthusiastic outlook. The other ten came back with a bad report. Joshua and Caleb were then the only two from that generation who were allowed to enter the Promised Land.

God's purpose was to bless His people in a land where they could find peace and rest. God's blessings and protection would come only if and when they would put God first and not follow the culture of the people who already were in the land. They did not deal with the Promised Land as they were told to – “Drive everyone out “ – and so they have accepted a little bit of the Canaanite's culture and mindset into their life. In so doing, they accept things that lead to the morale corruption of their entire nation over a period of several generations after Joshua and Caleb die.

Judges is the second book in the section of the Old Testament called the Historical Books. It tells of the time after Joshua died. In Judges we see something called the **cycle of apostasy** that the Israelites get into (1:1 – 3:6). The book of Judges tells of the people who God raises up to bring His people back to Him over the course of about 250 years. These are not judges like we have that preside over a court and judicial cases. We've studied before about the judges and elders that would sit at the Tabernacle entrance with Moses and would preside over the cases that would come up, the worst of the incidences being brought to Moses himself, who would then make a judgment over the situation. Instead, these judges are men and women who God used to try to drive out the apostasy from His people, but the cycle never ended, eventually leading to the period of the Kings of Israel.

## Apostasy

The term apostasy is derived from Ancient Greek: ἀποστάτης, meaning "rebellious"

It means:

1. an act of refusing to continue to follow, obey, or recognize a religious faith
2. abandonment of a previous loyalty/cause : defection

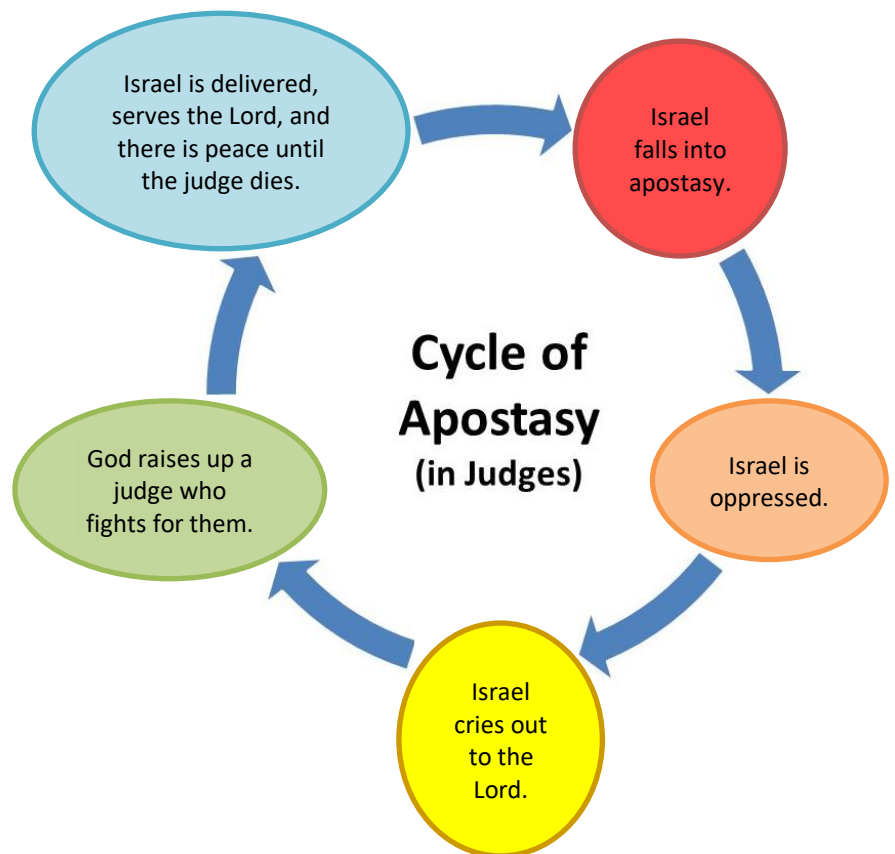
Other words we might use are: turning away; backsliding

Book of Judges					
Author: Likely Samuel			Date Written: 1050 – 1000 BC		
Over about 250 years					
1:1	3:6	3:7	16:31	17:1	21:25
Descent into Apostasy		Disobedience, Discipline, & Deliverance		Depravity Demonstrated & Diagnosed	

After Joshua died, Israel had no leader for about 250 years. As we go through this book, we will see this **cycle of apostasy** over and over again. Here is the cycle:

### Cycle of Apostasy:

- >>> The people turn away from the Lord and they descend into sin and idolatry (apostasy)
- >>> God responds by raising up foreign oppressors who come and take over the land (they become the arm of discipline for God toward His people).
- >>> Israel cries out to the Lord for Him to deliver them from their enemies.
- >>> When the people are adequately disciplined, they turn/repent and cry out to the Lord for deliverance
- >>> God raises up a deliverer for them (judges) who fights their battles in the strength of the Lord. Peace descends upon the nation until the judge dies and the people start this cycle all over again.



Each time they would cycle through this, and God would rescue them, they would start doing things that were even worse than what they did before.

In Judges 19 we see the lowest point of all:

- Some of the tribes were killing each other
- They were all making idols of false gods.
- The priests were helping everyone worship false gods

They descend to a point which we have previously seen in Genesis 19 (Sodom and Gamora) and they come to a point at which decisions have to be made for the safety of everyone in the land. This leads us to their decision on the necessity of a king.

The book of Judges is a miserable book, where we see the children of Israel fail over and over and over again. And over and over again God's grace is poured out to them. It is a parallel to our own lives as well. We fail – often. We then have to repent, turn back to God, and God is gracious enough to pull us back in. However, scripture warns us not to follow this cycle of apostasy as Israel did.

Hebrews 3:12

<sup>12</sup> Watch out, brothers, so that there will not be in any one of you an evil heart lacking trust, which could lead you to apostatize from the living God!

This cycle of SIN > JUDGMENT > DELIVERANCE > REPENTANCE is one God wants us to stay away from. We can do this by keeping our hearts tender toward God, and by staying away from sin. When we allow sin a little toehold in our lives, it turns into a rebellion from God, pulls us away, and leads us down this fateful cycle of apostasy that we see Israel fall into over and over again.

The book ends with an interesting scripture (Judges 21:25)

<sup>25</sup> At that time there was no king in Israel; a man simply did whatever he thought was right.

Israel needed a leader – as was made very clear during the time of these judges.

12 Judges throughout the book					
MAJOR JUDGES:	MINOR JUDGES:	OVERVIEW:	ENEMY:	YEARS OF OPPRESSION:	YEARS OF PEACE:
<b>(1) Othniel</b> Judges 3:7-11		Othniel was the first judge, and he freed Israel from the oppression of King Cushan-Risathaim. His wife Achsah was given to him for conquering a city called Debir.	Mesopotamia	8	40
<b>(2) Ehud</b> Judges 3:12-30		Ehud was a skilled left-handed warrior, which allowed him to deceive King Eglon's guards and bring a sword into Eglon's royal chamber. Ehud said he had a "secret message" for Eglon and then drove the blade all the way into his stomach. In the ensuing confusion, his army drove out Eglon's forces.	Moab	18	80
	<b>(3) Shamgar</b> Judges 3:31	Shamgar killed 600 Philistines with an oxgoad, which is basically an ancient cattle prod. Did he kill them all at once, or over many battles? We don't know.	Philistines?	?	?
<b>(4) Deborah</b> Judges 4:1 – 5:31		Deborah is the only female judge, and she was also a prophetess. After freeing the Israelites from King Jabin, she wrote The Song of Deborah (Judges 5), which is believed to be one of the oldest passages of the Bible.	Canaan	20	40
<b>(5) Gideon</b> Judges 6:1 – 8:32		Gideon is one of the most well-known and important leaders from the Book of Judges. There are more verses dedicated to him than any other judge. Gideon had a miraculous birth, and when he grew up he was called to free the Israelites from Midian. He defeated their armies with just 300 men. The Israelites tried to make him their king, but he refused.	Midian	7	40
	<b>(6) Tola</b> Judges 10:1-2	Tola became judge after the death of Abimilech, and evil son of Gideon who had led many Israelites astray. He was from the tribe of Issachar, and his grandfather was a man named Dodo. He led Israel for 23 years. The Bible says he "rose to save Israel" (Judges 10:1), but we don't know from what.	Shechem	?	23?

12 Judges throughout the book					
MAJOR JUDGES:	MINOR JUDGES:	OVERVIEW:	ENEMY:	YEARS OF OPPRESSION:	YEARS OF PEACE:
	<b>(7) Jair</b> Judges 10:3-5	Jair led Israel for 22 years. His claim to fame is that he had 30 sons who rode 30 donkeys and ruled 30 towns, which were called the “towns of Jair.”	?	?	22?
<b>(8) Jephthah</b> Judges 10:6 – 12:7		Jephthah was a mighty warrior who made a foolish vow, saved the Israelites, and then did something terrible: he sacrificed his own daughter because of his vow.	Ammonites	18	6?
	<b>(9) Ibzan</b> Judges 12:8-10	Ibzan had 30 sons and 30 daughters, all of whom married people outside his tribe – possibly to extend his family’s influence. He judged Israel for 7 years.	?	?	7?
	<b>(10) Elon</b> Judges 12:11-12	Elon is the most unknown judge. About all we can gather is that he was from the tribe of Zebulun, and his name means a type of tree – either an “oak” or “terebinth” (we’re not sure which one).	?	?	10?
	<b>(11) Abdon</b> Judges 12:13-15	Abdon was probably a very wealthy judge, because about all we know about him is that he had 40 sons and 30 grandsons who rode on 70 donkeys. He led Israel for 80 years.	?	?	8?
<b>(12) Samson</b> Judges 13:1 – 16:31		Samson is the strongest person in the Bible, and his life’s purpose was pretty much to wreak havoc on the Philistines. Samson was a Nazarite, and from the time he was born, he never cut his hair. This was the key to his strength and his Achilles heel. He was eventually captured after his lover tricked him into revealing his secret. When his hair grew back, he ripped out the pillars of a building, killing himself and 3,000 Philistines.	Philistines	40	20