

The Judges of Israel
Deborah: The Female Judge (pt.1)
Judges 4:1 – 24

Judges of Israel:

The judges of Israel were not what most people would consider to be conventional leaders. One had a violent temper (Gideon), one was the son of a prostitute (Jephthah), one a woman in a male dominated society (Deborah), and another a neglectful father (Eli). But they were all also courageous, shrewd, relentless, and passionate seekers of the Lord. The Bible calls them “judges”. They were chosen by God to deliver His people, to liberate them from oppression, and bring the people back into a right relationship with God.

After the death of Moses, Joshua completed the journey and led God’s people into the promised land. Over a period of time Joshua and all the generation of people who had seen the mighty works of God (deliverance from Egyptian bondage, crossing of the Red Sea, manna from heaven, etc) had passed away. This was the first time Israel was without a central leader (Judges 17:6).

The Israelites repeatedly fell into idolatry, worshipping the false gods of the surrounding nations. In response to this behavior God allowed various enemies to oppress His people.

After a period of time the people would reach a breaking point where they would cry out for God to save them. God would raise up a deliver – called judges – to rescue His people. The era of the judges-and the cycle of turning from God, being defeated, crying out to God, and being delivered- lasted more than 300 years until the first king of Israel was put in place.

There are many lessons that can be learned from the judges, one of the most important ones being that no matter how often or how far we stray, God always provides a way for us to be reconciled with Him. God never gives up on those who belong to Him.

Rose Publishing – Judges of Israel

God’ Agent of Punishment:

Judges 4:1, 2

Israel Responds to the Oppression:

V. 3

God’s Agent of Deliverance:

V. 4-10

God's Gift of Deliverance:

Vv. 11-22

God's Gift of Security:

Vv. 23-24

Small Group Discussion:

- 1. What nation did God raise up against Israel? Why?**
- 2. Why is this situation different from the other judges of Israel?**
- 3. Who is Barak and what was his response to this judge's request?**
- 4. Discuss verse 9 and its implications.**
- 5. Who is Jael and what important role does she play in this particular battle against the Canaanites?**
- 6. Was Barak a judge?**

Next Week's Lesson:

Deborah: The Female Judge (pt. 2) – Judges 5: 1-31