

Tuesday Evening Bible Study
Series #15: Historical Books of the Old Testament
Week 2: Judges
Tuesday, January 29, 2019

The Book of Judges: History repeats itself.

Summary

The title refers to the leaders Israel had from the time of the elders who outlived Joshua until the time of the monarchy. Their principal purpose is best expressed in 2:16: "Then the Lord raised up judges, who saved them out of the hands of . . . raiders." Since it was God who permitted the oppressions and raised up deliverers, he himself was Israel's ultimate Judge and Deliverer.

Who wrote Joshua?

Although tradition ascribes the book to Samuel, the author is actually unknown. It is possible that Samuel assembled some of the accounts from the period of the judges and that such prophets as Nathan and Gad, both of whom were associated with David's court, had a hand in shaping and editing the material.

The date of composition is also unknown, but it was undoubtedly during the monarchy. The frequent expression "In those days Israel had no king" (17:6; 18:1; 19:1; 21:25) suggests a date after the establishment of the monarchy. The observation that the Jebusites still controlled Jerusalem has been taken to indicate a time before David's capture of the city c. 1000 BC. But the new conditions in Israel alluded to in Chs. 17-21 suggest a time after the Davidic dynasty had been effectively established (10th Century BC).

Historical Context

The book of Judges is a Deuteronomic interpretation of Israel's history from the death of Joshua up to the birth of Samuel that displays their need for a centralized government.

How should I read Joshua?

Judges is a collection of older stories about tribal heroes that has been structured around a recurrent formula of apostasy, oppression, and deliverance. As this formula deteriorates we are meant to see Israel's ever-worsening decline. The editorial comment with which the book closes, "In those days there was no king in Israel; all the people did what was right in their own eyes" (21:25; compare 17:6; 18:1; 19:1), lifts up Israel's failure to deal with external enemies and internal dissention. The book is thus a theological exposé of that failure and a rationale for the centralized government of the monarchy.

Why Study **JUDGES**?

During a dark time in Israel's history when everyone thought they alone knew best, God used twelve men and one woman as judges to lead communities back to Himself. Explore the amazing grace of God for a backsliding people as we study the book of Judges on Thru the Bible.

History repeats itself: "First we follow God. Then we do evil and turn away from God. Then we're judged and cry out to God for help. He delivers us and we follow Him again. Then we forget Him and the hoop of history just turns over again. You can follow that hoop right through the Bible, and it is still turning today."

—Dr. McGee, from our study in Judges



ON THE BIBLE BUS THROUGH THE BOOK OF JUDGES, WATCH FOR THE FOLLOWING ROAD SIGNS:

WARNING:



Don't forget God and all that He's done for you.
Abandoning God's laws = Chaos.
Life is always better when you follow, love, and worship God.

STOP THINKING:



... that you know best.
... that God's Word is negotiable.
... that sin won't hurt you.
... that you have to be amazing before God can use you.

YIELD TO GOD: *When will we learn?*



... that when God says "don't," He means "don't hurt yourself."
... that God uses flawed, weak people to lead His people.
... that when we repent, God sends someone to rescue us.

In those days there was no king in Israel; everyone did what was right in his own eyes —Judges 17:6

The Vicious Cycle of Israel's Sinfulness



Watch the YouTube video “Read Scripture: Judges” <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=kOYy8iCfIJ4>.

Outline of Judges

- I. Double Introduction (1:1 – 3:6)
 - A. Part One: The Military Problem (1:1-36)
 - 1) Israel’s failure to complete the conquest of Canaan
 - a) Victories in the South (1:1-21)
 - b) Setbacks in the North (1:22-36)
 - B. Part Two: The Religious Problem (2:1 – 3:6)
 - 1) Israel’s disobedience (2:1-5)
 - 2) The death of Joshua (2:6-10)
 - 3) Israel’s unfaithfulness (2:11-23)
 - 4) Foreign nations remaining in the land (3:1-6)
- II. The Cycle of Oppression and Deliverance: The Judges (3:7 – 16:31)
 - A. Othniel defeats Aram-naharaim (3:7-11)
 - B. Ehud defeats the Moabites (3:12-30)
 - C. Shamgar (3:31)
 - D. Deborah defeats Canaan (4:1 – 5:31)
 - 1) Deborah and Barak conspire against Sisera (4:1-23)
 - 2) The Song of Deborah (5:1-31)
 - E. Gideon defeats the Midianites (6:1 – 8:35)

- 1) The Midianite oppression (6:1-10)
- 2) The call of Gideon (6:11-27)
- 3) Gideon destroys the altar of Baal (6:28-35)
- 4) The sign of the fleece (6:36-40)
- 5) Gideon surprises the Midianites (7:1-25)
- 6) Gideon's triumph and vengeance (8:1-21)
- 7) Gideon's idolatry (8:22-28)
- 8) The death of Gideon (8:29-35)

F. Abimelech (9:1-57)

- 1) Abimelech attempts to establish a monarchy (9:1-6)
- 2) The Parable of the Trees (9:7-21)
- 3) The downfall of Abimelech (9:22-57)

G. Tola (10:1-2)

H. Jair (10:3-5)

I. Jephthah defeats the Ammonites (10:6 – 12:7)

- 1) Background History: Oppression by the Ammonites (10:6-18)
- 2) Jephthah (11:1-28)
- 3) Jephthah's vow & its tragic consequences (11:29-33)
- 4) Jephthah's daughter (11:34-40)
- 5) Civil war between Gilead and Ephraim (12:1-6)
- 6) The death of Jephthah (12:7)

J. Ibzan (12:8-10)

K. Elon (12:11-12)

L. Abdon (12:13-15)

M. Samson (13:1 – 16:31)

- 1) The birth of Samson (13:1-24)
- 2) Samson's marriage & divorce (14:1-20)
- 3) Samson defeats the Philistines (15:1-20)
- 4) Samson & Delilah (16:1-22)
- 5) The death of Samson (16:23-31)

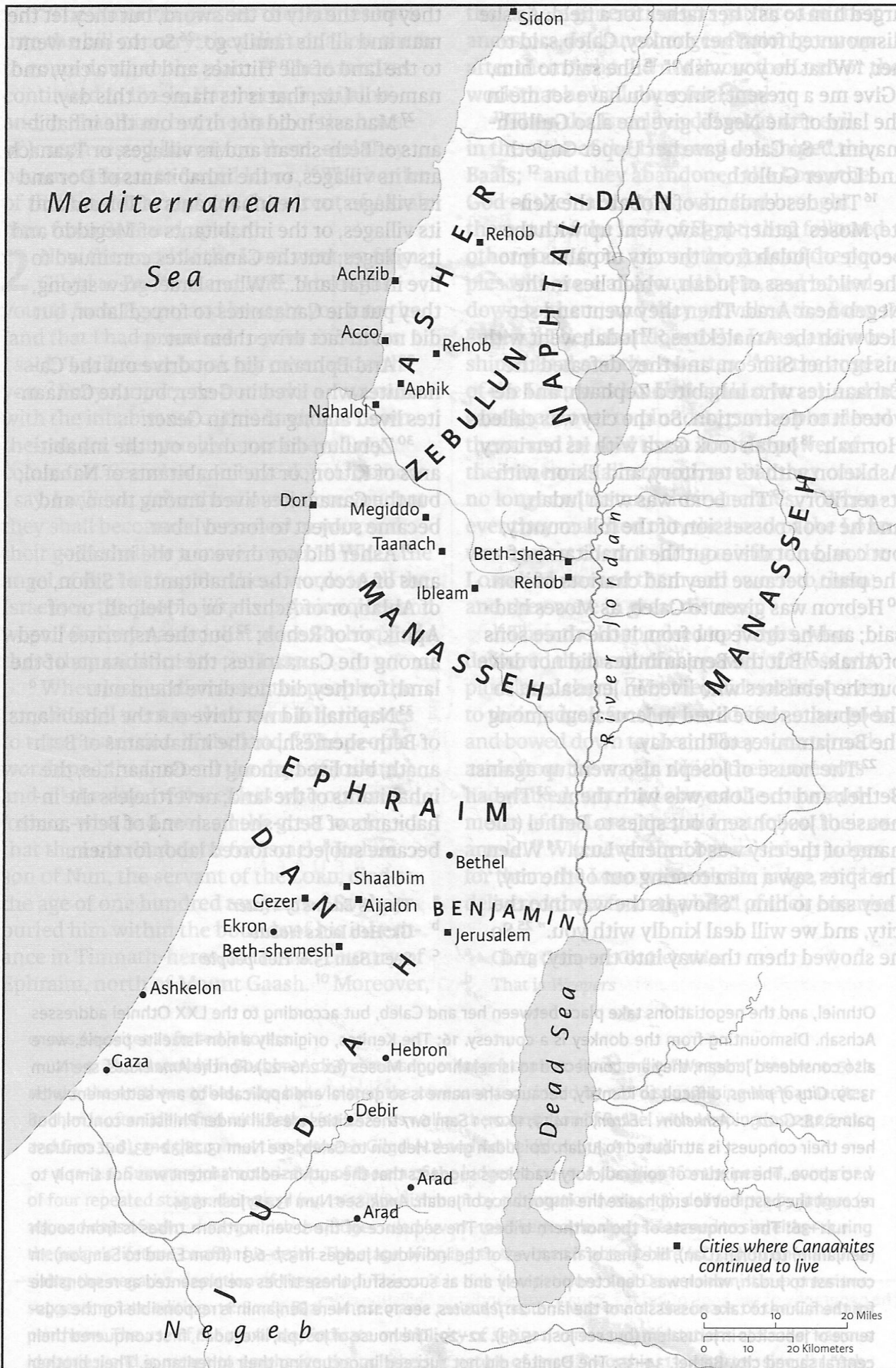
III. Double Conclusion (17:1 – 21:25)

A. Part One: The origin of the Sanctuary at Dan (17:1 – 18:31)

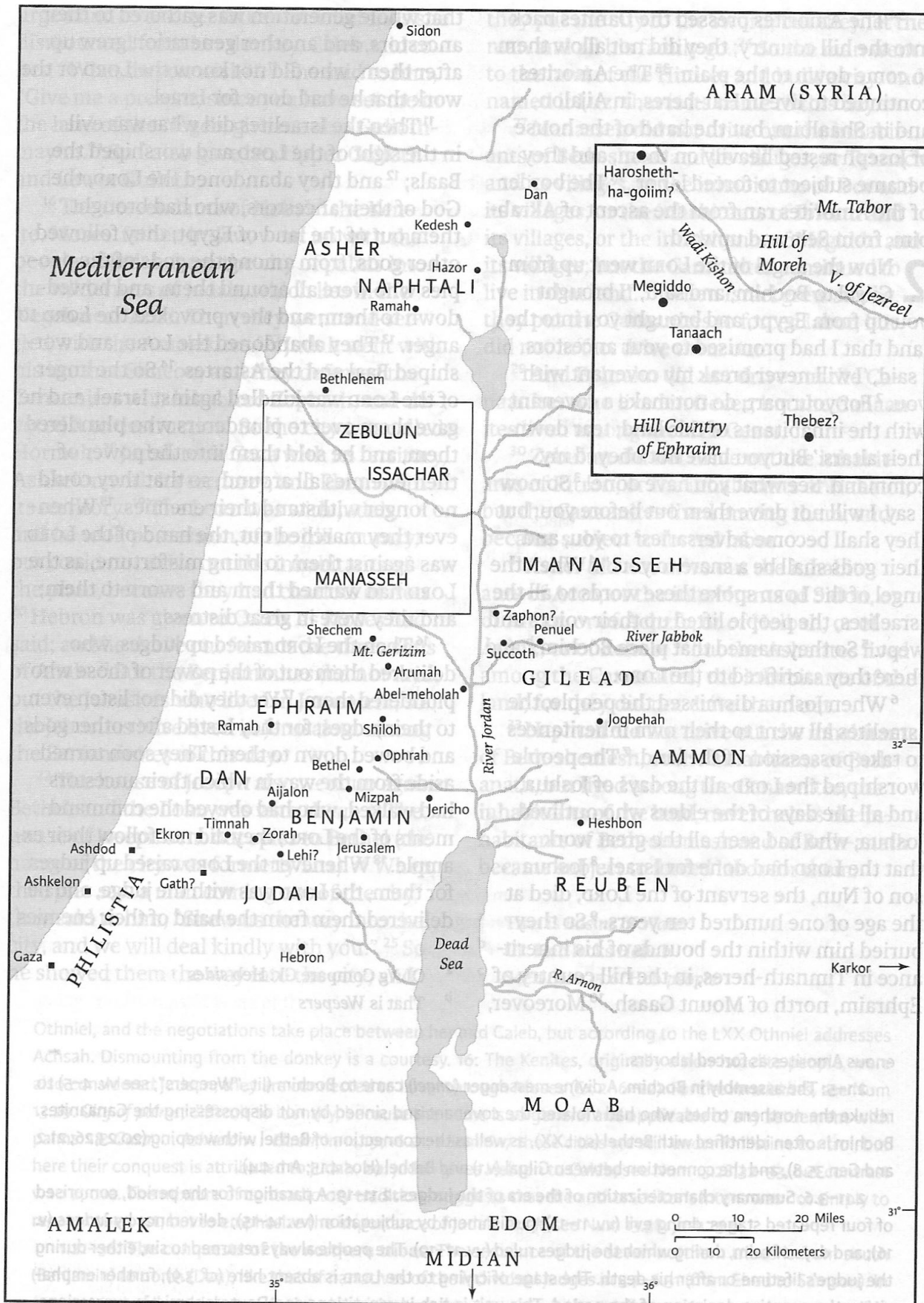
- 1) Micah's corruption of religion (17:1-13)
 - a) Micah's idol and other ritual objects (17:1-6)
 - b) Micah employs an itinerant Levite as his priest (17:7-13)
- 2) The Danites leave their tribal territory (18:1-31)
 - a) Danite spies consult God through Micah's Levite (18:1-6)
 - b) The Danites steal Micah's priest & ritual objects (18:7-26)
 - c) The sanctuary at Dan (18:27-31)

B. Part Two: Violence at Gibeah & the war against Benjamin (19:1 – 21:25)

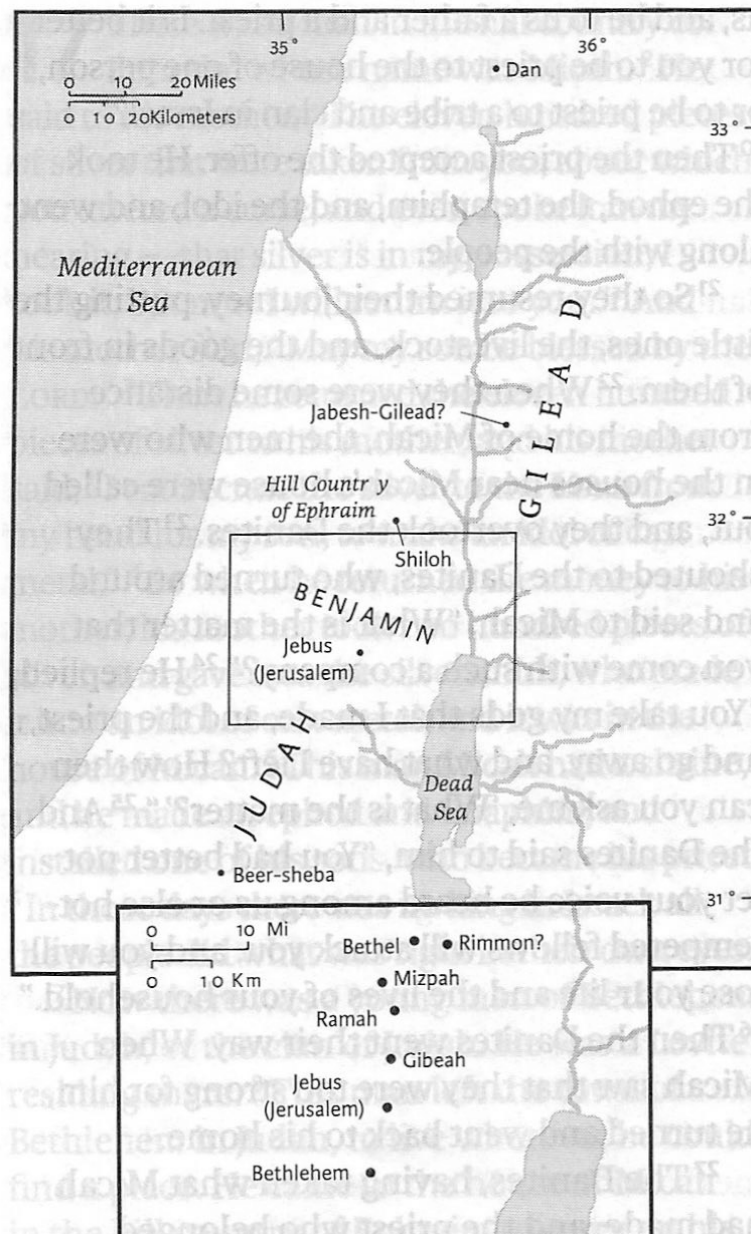
- 1) The Levite's concubine (19:1-9)
- 2) The Levite spends the night in Gibeah (19:10-21)
- 3) The rape of the Levite's wife (19:22-30)
- 4) Other tribes attack Benjamin (20:1-17)
- 5) Benjamin defeats Israel twice (20:18-28)
- 6) Israel destroys Benjamin (20:29-48)
- 7) The Israelites save the Benjaminites from extinction. (21:1-25)



Tribal conquests in chapter 1. Starred cities are locales where Canaanites continued to live.



The geography of the book of Judges. Square boxes indicate Philistine cities.



Chs 19–21: The Benjaminite War.

Resources

Introduction from The New Oxford Annotated Bible (NRSV), 2010

HarperCollins Study Bible (NRSV), 1989

“Book of Judges,” <https://www.biblestudytools.com/nrs/joshua/>

“Judges,” <https://www.enterthebible.org/oldtestament.aspx?rid=26>

“Judges 10-21,” <https://www.lds.org/manual/old-testament-study-guide-for-home-study-seminary-students-2015/introduction-to-judges/unit-16-day-3-judges-10-21?lang=eng>

“Judges Study Guide,” <https://www.ttb.org/resources/study-guides/judges-study-guide>