

SYNOPSIS OF THE CONTENT OF JUDGES

Judges

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Military Failure (1:1-2:5): Israel's failure to supplant the Canaanites and to occupy the tribal allotments is because of covenant disobedience after Joshua's death.

Religious Failure (2:6-3:6); Israel's failure to keep the covenant after Joshua's death is demonstrated through the cycle of sin, oppression, and deliverance and through God's testing of Israel by the nations.

Othniel (3:7-11): Due to Israel's apostasy, God gives them over to a distant northern oppressor and delivers them by the power of his Spirit through the foreigner Othniel.

Ehud (3:12-30): God providentially delivers Israel from Moabite oppression through the risky and tricky schemes of Ehud even though Israel has neglected God's commands.

Prose Account of Deborah and Barak (4:1-24): God is the ultimate hero who commands Israel and miraculously delivers Israel from the Canaanites while God's people are faith challenged and their participation is partial.

Poetic Account of Deborah and Barak (5:1-31); The song of Deborah and Barak reveals the kingship of God by celebrating his miraculous acts of deliverance and the blessings that are received by the individuals and tribes who participate.

Gideon's Rise (6:1-32); God affirms his presence with Gideon, commissions him to deliver Israel from the Midianite oppression, and initiates him through direct confrontation with Baal.

Gideon's Battle (6:33-7:25): God gets the glory by empowering Gideon to conscript Israel, reducing the number of troops and defeating Midian while Gideon is doubtful, controlling, fearful, and egotistical.

Gideon's Demise (8:1-32): Gideon leaves behind God's miraculous defeat of the Midianites and is consumed with selfish vendettas, aggrandizement, and the consolidation of economic and religious power in Ophrah.

Abimelek (8:33-9:57): Israel's worship of Baal-Berith and Abimelek's three-year oppression are followed by God's retribution on both Abimelek and the Shechemites for their violence against Gideon's house.

Israel's Problem (10:6-16): God responds to Israel's habitual apostasy by sending more oppression, refusing to deliver them, and rejecting their superficial repentance as a manipulative ploy.



Jephthah's Rise (10:17-11:28): Jephthah emerges as a leader in Gilead despite his sordid past, selfish ambitions, and theological ignorance, and Jephthah exclaims that God is the ultimate Judge who can bring justice in Israel's dispute with Ammon.

Jephthah's Fall (11:29-12:7); God delivers Israel from the Ammonites but passively lets Jephthah and the Israelites destroy themselves through gratuitous acts of human sacrifice and civil war.

Minor Judges (3:31; 10:1-5; 12:8-15): The minor judges reinforce the progressive patterns and themes of the book, provide thematic transitions between cycles, and bring the total number of leaders to twelve in order to indict all Israel.

Samson's Beginning (13:1-25): God graciously raises up Samson from an apathetic Danite family, and God equips him in order to initiate Israel's deliverance from the Philistines.

Samson's Marriage (14:1-20): God's plans against the Philistines are accomplished through Samson even though he is self-absorbed, marries a Philistine, and is disengaged from God.

Samson's Revenge (15:1-20): God's plans against the Philistines are accomplished in spite of Judah's opposition and Samson's vengeful and selfish behavior.

Samson's End (16:1-31): God's victory over Dagon is accomplished by graciously empowering Samson despite his foolishness with Delilah, his apathy toward God, and his vengeance against the Philistines.

Micah's Shrine (17:1-13): The story of Micah's shrine shows that Israelite worship was indistinguishable from Canaanite worship because of a disregard for God's authority and instruction.

Danite Migration (18:1~31): The story of the Danite migration shows that judgment is inevitable when religious leaders and whole tribes reject God's presence and revelation and live for their own interests.

The Levite's Concubine (19:1-30): The disturbing story of a concubine's rape and murder shows a degenerate religious leader and a Canaanized Israel who operate apart from God's authority and according to their own self-interests.

Israel versus Benjamin (20:1-48): God judges Canaanized Israel as the tribes precipitously unite under the Levite, consult God on their own terms, and apply the ban to the Benjamites because of the reported atrocities at Gibeah.

Wives for Benjamin (21:1-25): Israel's spiraling descent into Canaanization reaches its lowest point as God lets Israel partially destroy itself through hateful oaths, increased genocide, and the violent exploitation of women.