

SUMMARY OF THE BOOK OF JUDGES

BIBLICAL PERIOD	#5 THE JUDGES RULE ISRAEL				
FOCUS	CYCLE OF APOSTASY	CYCLE OF DELIVERANCE	CYCLE OF DEPRAVITY		
COVENANT	THE SINAI COVENANT				
SCRIPTURE	1:1-----3:6-----17:1-----19:1-----20:1-21:5				
DIVISIONS	Prologue: -Israel fails to complete the conquest -God judges Israel	The six campaigns to take the land	Results of Israel's spiritual and moral decay		
TOPIC	Causes of apostasy	Curses of apostasy	Sin of idolatry	Sin of immoral conduct	Sin of Civil War
	Living with the pagan occupiers of the land	The wars against Israel's enemies	Adopting pagan customs and religious practices		
LOCATION	THE PROMISED LAND OF CANAAN/ISRAEL				
TIME	circa 350/ 410 YEARS*				

*When the various time spans of the Judges are added together they total 410 years (i.e., the years oppression, judging, and peace). However, a number of the judges' time of service probably overlapped since they were all from different tribes and regions of the land.

TIME LINE: BC

World Empire: Egypt-----Assyria

UNITED KINGDOM --- DIVIDED KINGDOM

Northern Kingdom = Israel

Southern Kingdom = Judah

c. 1300	c.1200	1100	1047	1000	930	722
---- Conquest of ----	c. Period of the Judges -----	Canaan	Saul /	David conquers Ruth and Boaz	Rehoboam= Civil War Jerusalem	Assyria conquers Israel

The Judges and their Tribes:

1. Othniel – Judah
2. Ehud – Benjamin
3. Shamgar (perhaps a foreign convert)
4. Deborah – Ephraim
5. Gideon – Manasseh
6. Tola – Issachar
7. Jair – Manasseh (in Gilead on the east side of the Jordan River)
8. Jephthah – Manasseh (in Gilead on the east side of the Jordan River)
9. Ibzan – Judah
10. Elon – Zebulun
11. Abdon – Ephraim
12. Samson – Dan

Handout 2: Judges Lesson 1

The Judges too, each when he was called, all men whose hearts were never disloyal, who never turned their backs on the Lord, may their memory be blessed! May their bones flourish again from the tomb, and may the names of those illustrious men be worthily borne by their sons!

Ecclesiasticus (Sirach) 46:11-12

Hebrew title of the book is the word *Shophetim* which means “judges.” However, *Shophetim* not only means “judges” in the sense of maintaining justice by settling disputes, it can also carry the meaning “liberators” or “deliverers.”

The first two chapters are both a prologue and a bridge from the narrative at the end of the Book of Joshua. Chapter one contains the account of the death of Joshua, God’s agent and the hero of the conquest of Canaan, and also the failure of the twelve tribes of Israel to complete the conquest after his death. The announcement of the uncompleted conquest sets the stage for the events during the years between Joshua’s death and the beginning of the united monarchy of Israel. Chapters 3-12 present a formulaic sequence of events:

1. Israel’s disloyalty to God (sin).
2. God removes his hand of protection and Israel is oppressed by her enemies (subjugation).
3. Israel’s repentance and pleas to God for deliverance (supplication).
4. God sends a judge to unite the people and rescue them from their enemies (salvation).

The Book of Judges records the six campaigns against Israel’s enemies that took place in southern (Judg 3:7-31), northern (4:1-5:31) central (6:1-10:5), eastern (10:6-12:7), second northern (12:8-15), and western Canaan/Israel (Judg 13:1-16:31).

The book concludes in Judges 17:1-21:25 with three failures of the Israelites in sinning like the pagan peoples they were commanded to dispossess and in their failure to maintain the unity as a covenant people and the summary statement: *In those days there was no king in Israel and everyone did as he saw fit* (Judg 21:25).

1. The failure of Israel through idolatry (17:1-18:31)
2. The failure of Israel through immorality (19:1-30)
3. The failure of Israel through civil war (20:1-21:25)

In the Book of Judges, every incidence of Israel’s repentance and deliverance is sadly followed by another descent into sin and apostasy. The stories of each of the twelve judges that God sent to deliver Israel are presented in a seven-part formulaic sequence:

1. Announcement of Israel’s wrong doing
2. Statement of Yahweh’s response
3. Notice of how long Israel was oppressed by the enemy
4. Reference to Israel’s repentance in “crying out” to God
5. Announcement of God “raising up” a deliver
6. Description of how deliverance was achieved
7. Concluding statement of how long peace lasted

The twelve Judges do not represent the twelve tribes: Simeon, Reuben and Levi have no judges.