

9 - BIBLE OVERVIEW

BOOK OF JUDGES

Last week we studied Joshua, who led the Israelites to take the land God promised them. The twelve tribes of Israel were each given their portion of their new country. Unfortunately, after Joshua and the elders who ruled with him died, the people fell away from God. They were disobedient and didn't follow God's laws, particularly the second commandment that forbade idol worship.

GOD	MAN
1: Do not worship any other gods	5: Honour your father & mother
2: Do not make any idols	6: Do not murder
3: Do not misuse the name of God	7: Do not commit adultery
4: Keep the Sabbath holy	8: Do not steal
	9: Do not lie
	10: Do not covet

There was no central government or strong leadership, so the people faltered and lost their commitment. Instead of obeying God and eliminating the enemy from the lands they conquered, the Israelites married people who didn't believe in the God of Abraham and started worshipping their gods. Because they broke the covenant (promise) they made with God, they were no longer protected by God when they went to battle.



Because of their sin and idol worship, God allowed the Israelites to be conquered by some of the other countries around them. The people were oppressed (ruled) by these other countries. They would cry out to God and He sent them a judge to help them overcome the people who conquered them. This cycle happened over and over again. God was saddened and angry by the Israelites' behavior, but repeatedly saved them over a period of 325 years.



There were 12 judges:

OTHNIEL: Aram conquered the Israelites and for eight years they were ruled by King Cushan-rishathaim. The people cried to God to save them and the Spirit of the Lord came upon Othniel, and he defeated the king of Aram and there was peace in the land for 40 years.

EHUD: The people fell away from God after Othniel died and were conquered and ruled by the Moabites for 18 years. Then God heard the cries of his people and raised Ehud to rescue them. Ehud tricked Moab's king to allow him to be alone with him. When these two men were alone Ehud killed the king and escaped. He then led the Israelites in an attack against Moab's military and God gave them victory. There was peace for 80 years.



SHAMGAR: We don't know much about this judge, except that he killed 600 Philistines. The Philistines were a great enemy of Israel. They were always causing problems for the Israelites.

DEBORAH: Deborah was the only woman judge. It was exceptional to have a woman in such a powerful position. She had many talents and abilities. She counseled people, was a prophet, and wrote songs. She led the Israelites to defeat the Canaanites and there was peace for 40 years.

GIDEON: Once again the Israelites fell into sin and were conquered by the Midianites for seven years. The Midianites treated the people of Israel cruelly. They stole their crops and the people were starving. God sent an angel to Gideon and told him that God wanted him to lead the Israelites to fight the Midianites.



The Angel talks to Gideon

Gideon was afraid he wasn't up to the job and asked the angel for proof that God wanted him to take on the enemy. So God gave him proof. God used Gideon's leadership to defeat the Midianites with only 300 troops! Gideon ruled for 40 years and there was peace in the land.

After Gideon died one of his sons, Abimelech, ruled the people of Israel. He was not a judge called by God and was evil.

TOLA AND JAIR: Tola ruled Israel for 23 years and Jair for the next 22 years. We know little about these men.

JEPHTHAH: Once again the Israelites worshipped other gods, particularly Baal and Ashtoreth, who were supposed to be gods that controlled weather and love. This, of course, was not true at all. God is love and only He created everything including the rains and other weather. To punish the people, God let the Ammonites and Philistines oppress them for 18 years.

Jephthah tried to settle conflict peacefully first, but he was a military strategist too. So if talking failed he was not afraid to go to battle. God gave him a great victory over the Ammonites.

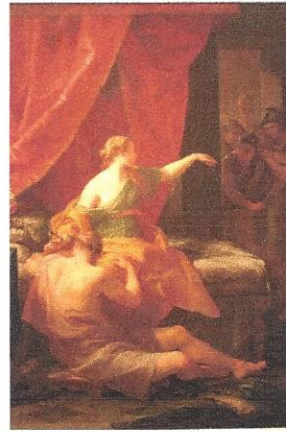
IBZAN, ELON, ABDON: We know little about these men, but they judged Israel for a total of 25 years.

SAMSON: Samson was probably the most famous judge. He was granted great strength by God, but he wasted his gifts by living a life that lacked discipline and was full of partying. He lived during the time when the Philistines ruled over Israel. He had many victories over the Philistines during his lifetime, but did not conquer them completely.

He allowed a Philistine woman named Delilah to trick him into telling her that his strength would leave him if his hair was cut. Delilah betrayed Samson and the Philistines cut his hair while he slept, and Samson lost his strength.

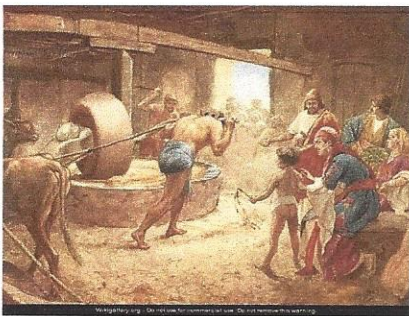


Samson's Strength

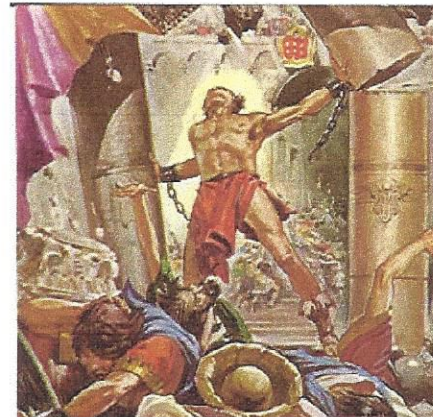


Samson and Delilah

Samson was blinded and taken to a prison to grind grain. While he was in prison his hair grew back and his strength came back. One day when the Philistines brought Samson out to make fun of him, he put his hands on the pillars that held up the temple. He prayed to God to allow him to use his strength to bring the building down. There were at least 3,000 people there. He killed more Philistines that day than he had killed in his lifetime.



Samson Grinding Grain



Samson pulling temple down

The last verse in Judges: “In those days Israel had no king; all the people did whatever seemed right in their own eyes” (Judges 21: 25).



It was a sad time in Israel.

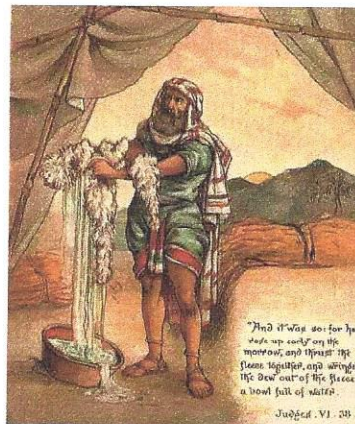
DEVOTION

“But Lord,” Gideon replied, “how can I rescue Israel? My clan is the weakest in the whole tribe of Manasseh, and I am the least in my entire family” (Judges 6:15 NLT)!

Read Judges 6:25, 26, 36—40; 7:1—15 and 8: 28

Gideon was afraid he couldn't do the job and wasn't sure it was an angel from God talking to him. When God proved to Gideon the angel was from God, what was the first thing He asked Gideon to do? (Judges 6:25 and 26)

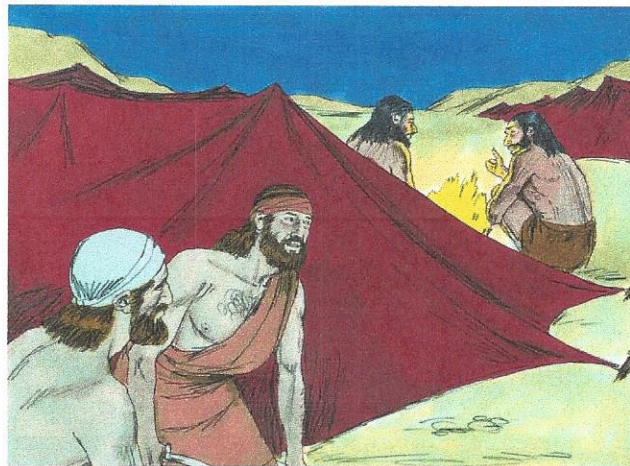
Gideon was still afraid he wasn't up to the job. How did he ask God to prove to him that God would help him rescue Israel from the Midianites? (Judges 6:37)



Proof from God by using a fleece.

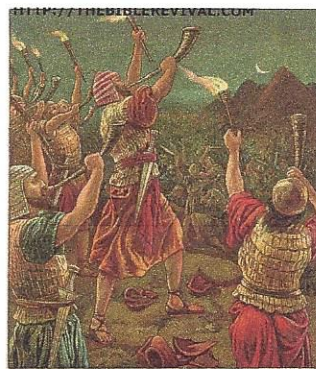
Gideon started with 122,000 soldiers. God winnowed the group to 300. Why? (Judges 7: 2)

Gideon still seemed afraid that God wasn't going to rescue the Israelites. So God gave him one more encouragement. What was it? (Judges 7: 10—15)



Gideon and Purah spying on Midianites

God kept his promise and used Gideon to defeat the Midianites with only 300 soldiers.



REPRODUCED BY PERMISSION OF THE BIBLE RECOVERY CENTER
GIDEON AND HIS THREE HUNDRED
Judg. 7:9-22.
GOLDEN TEXT:—Ye shall not fear them: for the Lord your God he shall fight for you.
Deut. 1:31.

Then there was peace in the land for 40 years.



PEACE

PRAYER

Thank you for being patient with my doubts and fears. Please help me not to doubt like Gideon. Strengthen my faith so I know you are always with me. Amen.

My name is _____ . I am _____ years old. I

am walking through the Bible with _____ on this date

_____ .

FOR A TODDLER

What you need: Nothing this week

There were people called the Midianites and they were mean to God's people, the Israelites. They stole their food and animals.



The people hid in caves so the Midianites didn't find them.

The people called out to God for help. Even though they had not been obeying God, He sent an angel to a man named Gideon.



The angel tells Gideon that he will lead an army against the Midianites so the Israelites can live in peace again.

What do you think Gideon said? He told God he wasn't strong enough or smart enough to do the job God wanted him to do.



Gideon was scared.

“The LORD said to him, ‘I will be with you’” (Judges 6:16a NLT).



Gideon

Judges 7



Leader of God's people : gift of Divison

God wanted Gideon to sort out a war. God told Gideon that anyone in his army who was scared could leave. Then God said there was still too many men and sent most of them away. Gideon split the few men left into 3 groups and only gave them trumpets and mugs. The war was won.



not with sword, but with God's blessing

PRAYER

Thank you God for always keeping your promises and always being with me. Amen.



My name is _____ . I am _____ years old. I
am walking through the Bible with _____ on this date
_____ .