

I. Joshua 24/Judges 2:6-10: Joshua's time comes to an end

- Joshua reviews the history of Israel from Abraham to the place they are now. The Lord has provided them a land with cities and fields they did not build or cultivate. A ready-made home has been provided to them.
- Because of this, God has fulfilled the promise made 10 generations ago to Abraham. They are commanded to revere the Lord and observe His commandments because of what He has done for them.
- The people agree, recognizing the great works God did to deliver them to Canaan. Joshua warns the people that if they do not obey, and chase after the false gods of Canaan, that God will deal harshly with them. The people make a covenant to do what Joshua has said. A stone memorial is erected as a witness to this pact and Joshua records it in the book of the teaching.
- Joshua dies at the age of 110 and is buried in the land of his people, Ephraim.
- The people continue to obey the Lord during the period after Joshua while the elders of the generation that conquered Canaan are alive.
- We see also the burial of Joseph's bones in Shechem (location purchased by Jacob from Hamor in Genesis 33) and the death of Aaron's son, Eleazar.

II. The Book of Judges:

- Timeline of this book is not necessarily continuous.
- Three major sections:
 1. Background of the story (1:1-3:6)
 2. Acts of the judges (3:7-16:31)
 3. Micah's graven image @ Dan & Rape in Gibeah/civil war (17-21)
- Some say that Judges was written by Samuel (last judge); others say it was written at a later time by several authors.
- The main theme seems to be the inability of the judge's rule to have lasting effects on the obedience and unity of Israel. This book seems to pave the way for the coming monarchy.
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III. Judges 1: Conquering (almost) all of the remaining land

- The people of Judah and Simeon unite together for victories against the Canaanites, Perizzites and Jebusites at Bezek, Jerusalem, Hebron, and Debir. Caleb promises his daughter to Othniel (later first judge) for his work in defeating Debir. Othniel was Caleb's nephew.
- Judah and Simeon continue and experience victory at Zephath, Gaza, Ashkelon and Ekron. They complete the conquest of the hill country but not the plain country. The Anakites are driven from Hebron, but the Jebusites are not fully driven from Jerusalem (despite the city being burned).
- There are many other pockets of natives that are not driven from Canaan, which will prove to pain Israel for many years.

IV. Judges 2: Israel quickly forgets

- God notes that He has kept His covenant. The Israelites did not, however, obey God. They did not tear down the altars of the Canaanite gods and dispossess them completely from the land. They made covenants with them instead. God explains that because of this, these remaining inhabitants will be a thorn in Israel's side.
- Once the generation of Joshua and his contemporary elders die, Israel is swift to forsake God and chase after the idols of Canaan. Obviously, Deuteronomy 6:4-15 was not heavily observed. They serve the chief god of Canaan, Baal and the goddess Ashtoreth.
- The Lord provides rebuke and punishment via the armies and kings of foreign rulers lording over them. Upon the cries of His people for deliverance, God raises up judges (chieftains/rulers) to put out the enemies. Israel, however, slips right back off the wagon once each effective and godly leader dies.
- God allows these enemy nations to remain and torment Israel. There are three reasons listed:
 1. Because of the sins of the people (2:20, 21)

2. In order to test Israel's commitment to following God and leave temptation (2:22)
3. To keep their military skills sharp in subsequent generations (3:1, 2)

V. Here come the judges...

- The people of Israel disobey God further by taking wives from the Canaanites and offering their daughters to the Canaanite men for wives.
- The Lord allows the Mesopotamian king Cushan-Rishathaim to enslave Israel for 8 years.
- Upon the cries of Israel for relief, God raises up Caleb's nephew Othniel ("lion of God") to defeat Cushan-Rishathaim. Othniel presides over Israel for 40 years of peacetime.
- Upon the death of Othniel, Israel again falls into sin and is conquered by the Moabite king Eglon. Eglon rules over Israel for 18 years.
- Again, Israel whines to God for help and the Lord raises up Ehud ("I will give thanks"), a southpaw to judge Israel. Ehud assassinates King Eglon after visiting before and presenting him a tribute (learn the layout for second visit?). Eglon is described as an obese man, so much so that Ehud's dagger is trapped fully inside Eglon's body after Ehud thrusts it into him. The word translated "cubit" here is "gomed" and different than the word "ammah" used elsewhere to describe a full cubit (18"). Speculation is that this most likely is a half-cubit, or 9", more reasonable for a concealed dagger.
- Ehud leads Israel on a rout of the Moabite forces and provides Israel 80 years of peace.
- After Ehud, we have only a brief description of Shamgar ("sword"), the next judge. The description is impressive: Shamgar is a man who killed 600 Philistines with an ox goad (a cattle prod, for all intents). This impressive feat is unequaled by an individual until Samson.
- We assume that after Shamgar, Israel falls back into practicing evil in God's sight. The Lord delivers them into the hands of the Canaanite king Jabin, who rules them ruthlessly for 20 years.
- Deborah ("bee"), the ruling judge during this time, is also described as a prophetess. We are not told how long she has been a judge or the strange reason a female is acting in the role. We are told that she provided answers and judgments while sitting under a tree in the land of Ephraim. It is also noted that she is married to Lapidoth, although some scholarship notes that the phrase here in Hebrew is "woman of fire", which does indeed describe Deborah.
- Deborah summons Barak and instructs him to assemble 10,000 men from the tribes of Naphtali and Zebulun. She is going to draw the commander of Jabin's army, Sisera, out into battle. She promises defeat of Sisera's forces at Barak's hand. Barak refuses to go unless Deborah accompanies him. Deborah notes that there will be no glory for him, but that Sisera will be delivered into the hands of a woman (Deborah or Jael?). In the end, she agrees and they set out for Mt. Tabor.
- Sisera is informed of Israel's troop movements by the pseudo-traitor Heber, a descendant of Moses' father-in-law who had defected from the Kenites. Sisera assembles his troops and 900 chariots and sets up against Barak's forces.
- Deborah issues the war cry and the army charges down the mountain in attack of Sisera's forces. The army of King Jabin is routed to the last man (by the Lord, v. 15), save Sisera, who flees for refuge in the tent of Jael, Heber's wife. Initially, Jael conceals Sisera and he instructs her not to reveal his presence. He requests some water and is given milk by Jael. Sisera inexplicably falls asleep (milk?) and Jael sneaks up on him, killing Sisera by hammering a tent peg through the side of his head.-
- Jael intercepts Barak during his pursuit of Sisera and shows Barak the slain body of the enemy commander. Although her husband's loyalty is questionable, Jael ensures protection from any repercussions.
- The forces of Israel proceed and eventually rid the country of Jabin altogether. The land was peaceful again for 40 years.