

## **Key to JUDGES**

### **1. STATISTICS:**

Writer possibly the prophet, Samuel. Time covered approximately 305 years. Key verse, 17:6. Key thought, disorganization and misgovernment. Key characteristics, unbelief and fickleness on the part of the people. Type of book, history.

### **2. THEME:**

Judges is a tersely written account of repeated spiritual failures on the part of Israel. The period may be comprehended as: apostasy, punishment, repentance, deliverance. The root of the problem is countenanced idolatry, introduced by pagan neighbors. The judges were really deliverers, raised up by GOD for the emergency, who stayed to "judge."

### **3. OUTLINE:**

Reason for judges (1:1-3:4)  
Story of 12 judges (3:5-16:31)  
Resultant instances of anarchy (17-21)

### **4. SPECIAL CHARACTERISTICS:**

Joshua is a book of victory; Judges a book of defeats.

There were seven apostasies, seven oppressions by seven nations, seven deliverances.

While faith and obedience pulled down the walls of Jericho, unbelief and disobedience enslaved Israel for 300 years.

The divine estimation of the cause is given in 2:11-19. Read in connection 21:25.

Much is learned from the omissions of the book. There is no mention of the Tabernacle, only once is the High Priest named (20:28), no reference to reading the Law of GOD, no expressions of praise to GOD for His continued goodness.

Emphasis is on the tribes, not the united nation.

In Judges, GOD seems to stand and wait as the Israelites demonstrate their inability to independently care for themselves.

### **5. OUTSTANDING TEACHINGS:**

The sin of Israel in Judges was rooted in the failure to carry out completely the instructions of GOD (Deuteronomy 7:1-6). So the pagans in their midst became a snare and temptation for them to forsake the true GOD and to serve idolatrous gods.

The Judges who GOD raised up were not men of exceptional ability as Moses and Joshua. They performed their part and died. Evidently, there was no line of succession. Nor was there any expressed desire on Israel's part for a great leader for the nation. Both men and tribes seemed intent only on personal success or possessions.

The greatest of the judges was Gideon. He was called at a time of national emergency. His recruited army of 32,000 was whittled down to a pitiful 300 and then given no weapons. But never in all history was there a greater victory. Gideon's exploits are referred to in Psalm 83:9, 10; Isaiah 9:4; 10:26; Hebrews 11:32. His "fleece" episode is an encouragement to all GOD's children.

Samson's victories were all personal. By himself he injected terror into Philistia and courage into Israel. But he lacked the statesmanship of Samuel or the spiritual apperception of David. His great problem was to conquer himself, his appetites and passions. Yet he had faith in GOD and is immortalized in Hebrews 11:32.

## **6. INTERESTING FEATURES:**

We might call Judges the "dark ages" of the Israelitish people.

A sad recital of "neither did's" is in 1:27-36.

Jephthah's vow led to his daughter remaining a virgin throughout her life.

Deborah's song (chapter 5) is a beautiful song of victory.

Two great women, Deborah and Jael, inspire men for victory.

## **7. KEY TO UNDERSTANDING:**

Here is overwhelming proof (seven times) that children of GOD just cannot live successfully by "doing what is right in their own eyes." We must look to GOD, and rely upon the instruments of grace He has given: Bible, prayer, worship, leadership.

~ end of Judges ~

<http://www.baptistbiblebelievers.com/>

\*\*\*