JUDGES

*Disobedience and apostasy*

SETTING

Israel is led and saved by judges (approx. 1370-1070 BC)

KEY VERSE

*"Then the Lord raised up judges, who saved them out of the hands of these raiders. Yet they would not listen to their judges but prostituted themselves to other gods and worshiped them. They quickly turned from the ways of their ancestors, who had been obedient to the Lord’s commands. Whenever the Lord raised up a judge for them, he was with the judge and saved them out of the hands of their enemies as long as the judge lived; for the Lord relented because of their groaning under those who oppressed and afflicted them. But when the judge died, the people returned to ways even more corrupt than those of their ancestors, following other gods and serving and worshiping them. They refused to give up their evil practices and stubborn ways."*

2:16-19

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The Book of Judges spans approximately 300 years when God raised up judges to lead the people and deliver them from enemies. As soon as Joshua dies, they start worshiping other gods, and many other sins follow. God then sends some form of calamity or distress, for example, when they are attacked by an enemy. The people then realize that they need help and cry out to God, who sends a judge who delivers them and gives them peace for a certain number of years. But then the same thing happens again in the next generation, as described in chapter 2. The Book of Judges is a dark book where the people get worse and worse, and the judges are not much better either.

It is a miracle, and only through the grace of God do the people survive despite their behavior. God is always faithful to the covenant, and this book shows that he was right to hand them over to enemies as described. But God also gets bored:

*"Therefore the Lord was very angry with Israel and said, “Because this nation has violated the covenant I ordained for their ancestors and has not listened to me, I will no longer drive out before them any of the nations Joshua left when he died. I will use them to test Israel and see whether they will keep the way of the Lord and walk in it as their ancestors did.” The Lord had allowed those nations to remain; he did not drive them out at once by giving them into the hands of Joshua."* Judges 2:20-23

This is the reason why God did not drive out the nations for them.

The book can be divided into 3 parts:

* Ch. 1-2: Intro
* Ch. 3-16: 12 judges
* Ch. 17-21: Epilogue (a non-chronological addition)

In the very last verse (21:25), it is said: *"In those days Israel had no king; everyone did as they saw fit."* This is also repeated three other times in the epilogue and points forward to the establishment of the monarchy that occurs in the Books of Samuel. The book of Judges shows that the people needed a king to lead them.

**Jesus in Judges:**

*"Israel had no king"* points toward David, who in turn points toward Jesus.

11:27 says that the Lord is the Judge. It is, therefore, God who judges through the judges, and this points toward Jesus' return when all evil will be judged.

The judges saved the people and pointed to Jesus, the great Savior.