

Judges 1:1-21:25

Israel's Apostasy and Need for a Godly King

Author and Timeframe

From the *ESV Study Bible* – “The name of the book of Judges comes from the title given to the 12 leaders (“judges,” whose temporary leadership was both civil and military) of Israel during the period between Joshua and Samuel. The book is anonymous; nowhere in Scripture is any author indicated. The book consists of various blocks of material about different judges, which conceivably could have been written by multiple authors over a period of time. Late Jewish tradition ascribes authorship to Samuel, which is certainly possible. However, in the end, the book’s author is not known.” End quote. The book covers about 325 years during the time period from the death of Joshua about 1375 BC to the rise of Samuel the prophet and Israel’s last judge (1 Sam 7:6), about 1050 BC.

Overview

The book of Judges tells the story of the Israelites in the Promised Land after the death of Joshua. The people are in the land but have no godly leader and so they do not heed the warnings of Moses and Joshua, but rebel against God’s rule. The same cycle is repeated again and again throughout the book. The Israelites turn from God and serve other gods. God responds by judging them and allowing them to be defeated by their enemies. Then they cry out to the Lord for help, and he responds by raising up a judge or ruler. These judges defeat their enemies in the power of God’s spirit and restore peace to the land, but it never lasts long. The people soon turn away from God again, and the cycle is repeated.

Judges 3:7-11 - 7 And the sons of Israel did what was evil in the sight of the Lord, and forgot the Lord their God, and served the Baals and the Asheroth. 8 Then the anger of the Lord was kindled against Israel, so that He sold them into the hands of Cushan-rishathaim king of Mesopotamia; and the sons of Israel served Cushan-rishathaim eight years. 9 And when the sons of Israel cried to the Lord, the Lord raised up a deliverer for the sons of Israel to deliver them, Othniel the son of Kenaz, Caleb's younger brother. 10 And the Spirit of the Lord came upon him, and he judged Israel. When he went out to war, the Lord gave Cushan-rishathaim king of Mesopotamia into his hand, so that he prevailed over Cushan-rishathaim. 11 Then the land had rest forty years. And Othniel the son of Kenaz died.