

JUDGES: SPIRITUAL WARFARE

INTRODUCTION TO THE BOOK OF JUDGES

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Chronologically the period of the Judges lies between Joshua and the kings and covers about 300 years. Samuel is included in the period but not in this account, probably because he served as a bridge between the judges and kings.

1. Having no king meant God gave Israel all the freedom they could possibly desire. Elders and family heads supervised their tribes (Exodus 18:14-27; 1 Samuel 8:4). God was their king. He warned them that they would lose some of their freedoms if they insisted on a king. The king would make them servants and exact tribute from them (1 Samuel 8:11-18).
2. However, they wanted to be like the nations around them, having a king. By insisting they finally did come to have a king with its blessings and its problems. God had planned to give them a king but wanted the man after his own heart in that responsibility.
3. Eventually the kings failed to follow the Lord as David had done and God took their place from them until Messiah came. He is to reign forever. Of course, you ask why isn't Messiah king right now? He is reigning in heaven until the restitution of all things (Acts 3:19-24).
4. While not having a king gave them greater freedom it also allowed them license, if they so chose. Many were the occasions when they chose to go too far. They forsook the Lord and followed other gods.
5. In order to bring his people back to himself he put pressure on them through their enemies. In fact, the book is given to the subject of WARFARE.

God was teaching his people something of THE STRATEGY AND TACTICS OF SPIRITUAL WARFARE (Judges 3:1-6).

- a. To teach those war who had no experience
- b. To test Israel to see if they would obey their "Commander in Chief"

The three main sections of the book:

1. 1:1-3:6 Israel leaves off driving out the enemies in the land. Have you given up the battle against certain spiritual and moral enemies? The key phrase is, "They did not drive out"
2. 3:7-16:31 Israel's up and down experience of apostasy and recovery. Here is the bulk of the material of the book. The key phrase is, "And the children of Israel did evil in the eyes of the Lord"
3. 17:1-21:25 The conclusion gives insight into the internal problems of this period. The parts played by the Levites and Judah figure very highly in this section. In the story of Micah and the Danites we see the institutionalisation of idolatry. In the last account a terrible civil

JUDGES: SPIRITUAL WARFARE

war takes place as the result of immorality. Here the key phrase is, "In those days there was no king in Israel, everyone did that which was right in his own eyes!"

Let us now look at the middle section, which covers the warfare of the Judges. Their goal was to return Israel to the Lord, give them back their freedom and help them serve the Lord (Judges 3:7-16:31).

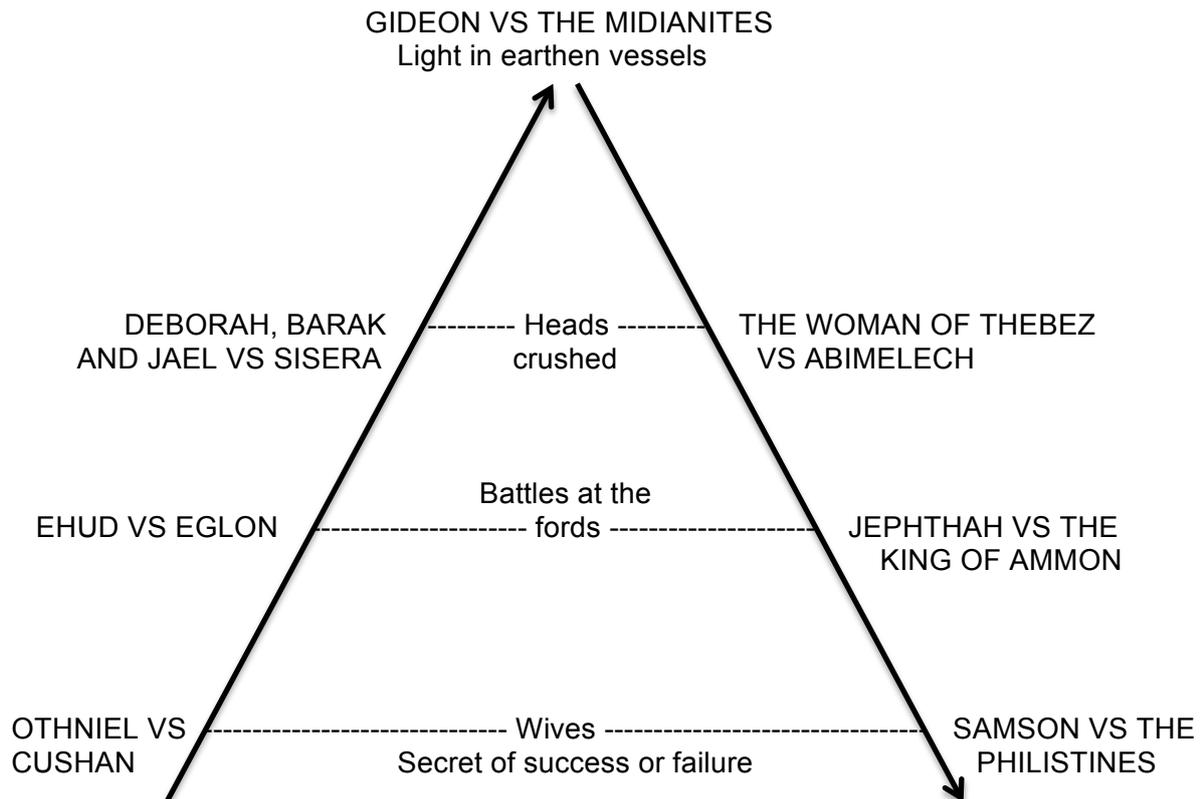


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JUDGES: SPIRITUAL WARFARE

FAILURE IN SPIRITUAL WARFARE

A) **A Good Beginning (1:1-2)**

1. Authority - divine: "Asked of the Lord," (OM begins, prayer, Acts is full of prayer and answers).
2. Unity - complete: "Sons of Israel", "we."
3. Action - attack: "Who will go up before us against the Canaanites?" (Offense is the best defense).
4. Leadership - chosen: "The Lord said: "Judah shall go up." (The election of the substitute for Judas, Acts 1:24).
5. Character - pure: Understood by the context (2:6-10).
6. Vision - complete: "I have given the land into his hand."

B) **A Bad Ending (21:24-25)**

1. Authority - human: "Each one"
2. Unity - incomplete: "Each one did right in his own eyes."
3. Action - internal: "Fighting against each other," Judges 20-21.
4. Leadership - anarchic: "... there was no king ... each one did right in his own eyes."
5. Character - immoral: Sexual sin and perversion (Chap. 19).
6. Vision - egotistical: "... each one ... as he pleased."

JUDGES: SPIRITUAL WARFARE

STRATEGY FOR RESTAURATION

BACKGROUND: God brought Israel out of Egypt, out of the house of slavery into the land of Canaan. In Canaan, God had driven out the nations before them. God's desire was that Israel live under his authority enjoying personal and national liberty. The land of Canaan was now theirs to enjoy and use.

EXPLANATION: However, Israel abandoned the Lord after the death of Joshua and the elders who outlived Joshua. They made covenants with the Canaanite enemies and began to worship their gods (Judges 2:1-10).

In order to test and correct Israel God gave their enemies victory over them. When they tired and suffered under their enemies they cried out to the Lord and he delivered them. This cycle of experience is explained in Judges 2:6-3:6 and illustrated by the seven apostasies registered in Judges 3:7-16:31.

LIVING IN VICTORY

1. Rebellion

- Married unbelievers
- Served their gods (idols)
- Forsook the Lord
- Made covenants with the enemy (Judges 3:6-7)

4. Deliverance

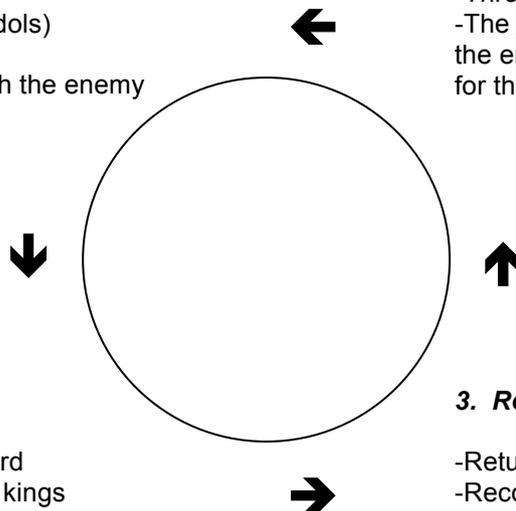
- Through judges God raised up
- The judges brought salvation from the enemy and provided leadership for the nation (Judges 3:9)

2. Slavery

- The died by the sword
- Enslaved by foreign kings
- Paid tribute to their enemies
- Ruined harvests (Judges 3:8)

3. Repentance

- Returned to God
- Recognized their sin
- Rejected their sin
- Served the Lord (Judges 3:9)



JUDGES: SPIRITUAL WARFARE

STRATEGY FOR RESTAURATION

APPLICATION

- A. Areas of **defeat** and **rebellion**, which bring spiritual slavery to the life of the Christian:
1. Do I put myself first, then others and finally God in order of importance? **Mark 12:28-34**
 2. Do I love pleasures more than God? **2 Timothy 3:4-5**
 3. Do I get angry and lose my patience because of the errors of others, or at missing a train or arriving late at a meeting? **James 1:2-4**
 4. Am I overly sensitive when I hear others criticizing me, or my work? **Philippians 4:4-7**
 5. Do I play favorites with people? **James 2:1**
 6. Do I believe the worst about others? **Matthew 7:1**
 7. I like ostentatious jobs so that people can admire what I do? **Ephesians 6:6; Matthew 6:1**
 8. Do I judge by outward appearances? **1 Samuel 16:7**
 9. Do I find it hard to listen to others? **Proverbs 18:13; James 1:19**
 10. Do I reject those in authority over me? **Romans 13:1; 1 Thessalonians 5:12-13; Hebrews 13:17**
 11. Is my physical food more important than my spiritual food? **Matthew 4:1-4; Colossians 3:19**
 12. Is material gain more to me than spiritual gain? **Psalms 119:14,72**
 13. Do I pray little? **1 Thessalonians 5:17**
 14. Do I depend solely on human strength and not God's to accomplish things? **Colossians 3:18-4:1**
 15. Have I tired of doing good? **Galatians 6:9**
 16. Do I enjoy gossiping and passing on rumors? **James 3:8**
 17. Am I thankful? **Romans 1:21; 1 Thessalonians 5:18**

JUDGES: SPIRITUAL WARFARE

18. Am I lazy? **Colossians 3:23-24**
19. Do lustful thoughts control my mind? **1 Peter 2:11; 2 Peter 1:4**
20. Am I envious of others abilities and gifting? **James 3:18ff**

B. Means God uses to bring us to **repentance**:

1. Feelings of guilt (conscience)
2. The rebuke of God's word (Bible)
3. A sense of slavery to a habit
4. Not necessarily, but the loss of a loved one, a friend, a job, money, respect or health
5. Correction by civil authorities, church leaders, a boss, a teacher, parents or another person.

C. The **call** to repentance:

1. Jesus preached repentance: Matthew 4:17; Mark 1:14-15; Luke 5:32; 13:1-5; 17:1-4
2. The apostles preached repentance: Mark 6:12; Acts 2:38; 17:30-31; 26:19-20; 1 John 1:9
3. John the Baptist preached repentance: Mark 1:4
4. Provision for repentance: 1 John 2:1-2

D. The **blessings**:

1. Relationships restored between us and God and people: Matthew 18; 1 John 1:5-10
2. Service to the true and living God: 1 Thessalonians 1:9-10; Rom 12:1-2
3. Enjoy every spiritual blessing: Ephesians 1:3
4. Forgiveness and cleansing from sin: 1 John 1:9; Isaiah 55:7
5. Victory over the devil: James 4:7
6. Knowledge of the truth: 2 Timothy 2:25
7. Victory over the flesh: Galatians 5:16-26

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