



A Study of the Book of Judges

The Book of Judges...An Introduction Think William Wallace...Not Judge Judy...

I am reading this morning from Judges 2:1-15.

^{NIV} Judges 2:1...The angel of the LORD went up from Gilgal to Bokim and said, "I brought you up out of Egypt and led you into the land that I swore to give to your forefathers. I said, 'I will never break my covenant with you, ² and you shall not make a covenant with the people of this land, but you shall break down their altars.' Yet you have disobeyed me. Why have you done this? ³ Now therefore I tell you that I will not drive them out before you; they will be *thorns in your sides and their gods will be a snare to you.*" ⁴ When the angel of the LORD had spoken these things to all the Israelites, the people wept aloud, ⁵ and they called that place Bokim. There they offered sacrifices to the LORD. ⁶ After Joshua had dismissed the Israelites, they went to take possession of the land, each to his own inheritance. ⁷ The people served the LORD throughout the lifetime of Joshua and of the elders who outlived him and who had seen all the great things the LORD had done for Israel. ⁸ Joshua son of Nun, the servant of the LORD, died at the age of a hundred and ten. ⁹ And they buried him in the land of his inheritance, at Timnath Heres in the hill country of Ephraim, north of Mount Gaash. ¹⁰ After that whole generation had been gathered to their fathers, another generation grew up, who knew neither the LORD nor what he had done for Israel. ¹¹ Then the Israelites did evil in the eyes of the LORD and served the Baals. ¹² They forsook the LORD, the God of their fathers, who had brought them out of Egypt. They followed and worshiped various gods of the peoples around them. They provoked the LORD to anger ¹³ because they forsook him and served

Baal and the Ashtoreths. ¹⁴ In his anger against Israel the LORD handed them over to raiders who plundered them. He sold them to their enemies all around, whom they were no longer able to resist. ¹⁵ Whenever Israel went out to fight, the hand of the LORD was against them to defeat them, just as he had sworn to them. They were in great distress.

This morning we are beginning a new series in the Old Testament Book of Judges. Now I wanted to read the particular section that I just read because of the wonderful way it encapsulates the whole story and message of the Book of Judges.¹

It does that even though what it says is not particularly pleasant. You see the Book of Judges is not a very happy book. In fact, I think it is proper to say that the Book of Judges is a dark book, even a distressing book.²

It is a dark book both because of the story it tells and because the characters it portrays are characterized by failure.

You see Judges portrays, in almost excruciating detail the failure, the repeated failure, of the nation of Israel to do what God demanded of it.

Now that failure is outlined in the beginning of the book in general terms. That is, it is outlined in terms of the people of the nation not driving the inhabitants of Canaan out of the land. The author of Judges makes the point that most of what happened to the Israelites happened because of their initial failure to obey God in driving out the Canaanites.³ But as the book develops, the failure is outlined in specific terms...that is, it is outlined in the lives of specific individuals.

As the book develops, things get worse, people get worse, actions get worse and their suffering resulting from God's righteous anger gets worse.⁴

That doesn't mean there are no redeeming people or events in the Book of Judges. The first judges in the book were men and women of wonderful character and discernment but by the end of the book the deliverers themselves are flawed. They were men with questionable behavior, questionable motivations and questionable judgment.

Samson for example, the final major judge in the book, married an idolater, consorted with prostitutes and threw his life and gifts away for the sensuous embrace of a foreign woman.

Now if you are like me that is a lot different than what we tend to remember from the lessons we learned in Sunday School as children...what we learned there was that Samson killed a lion with his bare hands...that he killed 1,000 Philistines with the jawbone of an ass. We focused on his strength. We heard about him as a great national hero who lost his power due to an unfortunate choice in women and a bad haircut. But that is hardly the whole story. He was a hero; but he was a tragic hero destroyed by his own tragic flaws and lusts. He was a hero but at the same time a loner. He fought alone, lived alone and died alone.

That does not mean that we ought to conclude that Samson was an unbeliever. The Book of Hebrews won't allow us to do that. Turn there, to Hebrews 11:32 for a moment.

^{NIV} **Hebrews 11:32**...And what more shall I say? I do not have time to tell about Gideon, Barak, Samson, Jephthah, David, Samuel and the prophets, ³³ who through faith conquered kingdoms, administered justice, and gained what was promised; who shut the mouths of lions, ³⁴ quenched the fury of the flames, and escaped the edge of the sword; whose weakness was turned to strength; and who became powerful in battle and routed foreign armies.

No...you can see that Hebrew says that Samson was a hero and a man of faith but it is still perfectly proper to say that he was a tragic hero and a man of flawed faith. In that regard, he was very much a picture of the nation as a whole. In that regard, he was very much like you and me. For there is no man or woman that doesn't display bad judgment from time to time...that doesn't show flaws in their character, that doesn't wind up taking some knocks because of their flaws.

Still that does not mean that the men and women that made up Israel's judges were all bad. They were not. Many of them were flawed. In some cases, they were terribly flawed but they were not without greatness. They were not without courage and resolve. When they acted, they often acted strongly and sometimes when they did they made great mistakes.

In that regard, Judges is a book very much in line with our lives today, very much directed toward the concerns we face today.

It is a book, an ancient book that reaches through 3,200 years of history to touch us where we live.

It is a book that has a wonderfully contemporary message cast in wonderfully, ancient stories.

That brings me to my next point. When you think of the judges you ought not to think of modern American judges and you especially ought not to think of someone like Judge Judy.⁵ The judges in the book of Judges were not a thing like Judge Judy. They did not sit and pontificate or make assertions in the quiet solitude of a secure courtroom. No, they made their judgments in battle oftentimes in blood. They made their judgments when they delivered the oppressed. They took up swords and fought real enemies and killed real people and suffered real pain and bled real blood. In that regard, the judges in the Book of Judges were a lot less like Judge Judy and lot more like William Wallace of Scotland, otherwise known as Braveheart.

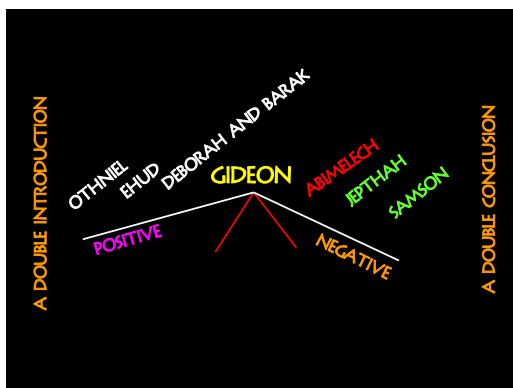
Now certainly some of the judges did actually judge Israel in terms of mediating between conflicting parties or in terms of settling disputes. But for the most part, they judged Israel by delivering Israel from its enemies. In that respect, the judges in ancient Israel were more like saviors. When they judged, they took their lives in their hands to rescue God's people. Rather they put their lives in the hands of God and He used them to deliver His people. Because that was true even their mistakes...even their failures...were used by God to honor His name.

Now I want to tell you that the Book of Judges has a rather obvious structure and that I think that structure is very helpful in navigating the book. I think it would be helpful, very helpful, for you to commit the book's structure to memory. In order to help you do that I have tried to come up with a descriptive sentence that is easy to remember. Here's what I came up with...⁶

Two beginnings and two endings with by seven judges on a seesaw in between and Gideon in the middle.

TWO BEGINNINGS...
AND TWO ENDINGS...
WITH SEVEN JUDGES ON A SEESAW
IN BETWEEN...
AND GIDEON IN THE MIDDLE.

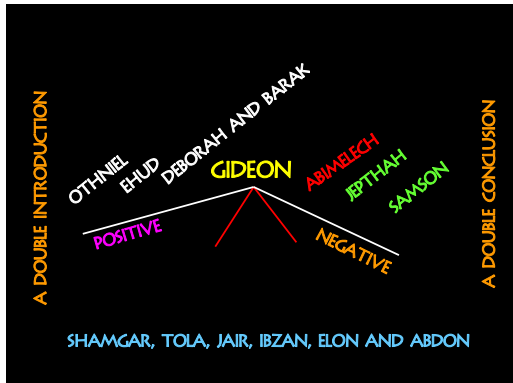
Now the reason I put it like that is because most commentators understand the structure of the book to look something like this.



Now the fact that commentators focus only on seven judges in the book is pretty interesting. It is interesting because the Book of Judges has more than seven judges. It actually mentions twelve judges...thirteen if you include Abimelech.

In addition to the seven judges you see on the overhead...Othniel, Ehud, Deborah and Barak (who are counted as one judge), Gideon, Abimelech, Jephthah and Samson the book also mentions Shamgar, Tola, Jair, Ibzan, Elon and Abdon. But these last six judges are all fairly minor characters. We are given little tidbits about them but that is all. For example, the Book of Judges tells us

that Shamgar killed 600 men with an ox goad.⁷ But other than that we know almost nothing about him.



You see, Judges intentionally focuses on seven major characters...and I will over the course of our study call them judges...even though I know that technically Abimelech was not really a judge.

You can tell that the book focuses on these seven individuals by the fact that the text has more to say about them than it does about the others. But you can also tell that the book focuses on them because of an oft repeated phrase that acts as a literary structural indicator highlighting their significance. I'll talk about that in just a minute.

What I would like for you to notice right now is the fact that there is a double introduction. We won't actually go into any detail about that right now. Instead, we'll wait and talk about that at length next week. Right now I just want you to take note of the fact...the fact that the book has a double introduction.

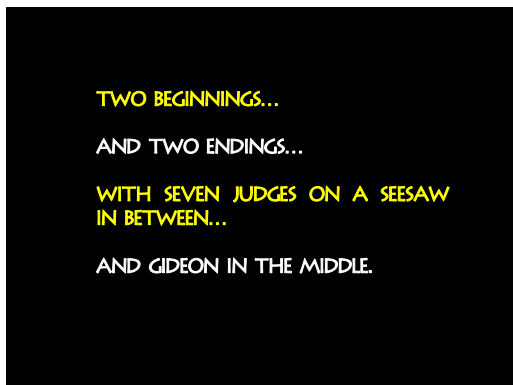
There is also a double ending or conclusion to the book.

Now I have to tell you it is a big help to have someone tell you that there is a double ending to the book. Otherwise as you read the book of Judges you might come to the conclusion that the end of Judges was just inadvertently tacked on and that it is completely disconnected from what has gone before.⁸

But it is connected and when we get to that point in our study I think you will see that the double ending makes perfect sense and is in many ways parallel to the double introduction.⁹

Now have you got the structure of the book? Let me repeat it for you.

Two beginnings and two endings with by seven judges on a seesaw in between and Gideon in the middle.



Now I said a moment ago that the Book of Judges focuses on seven particular Judges. I also said that commentators consider Gideon to be the literary center of the book.¹⁰ Let me explain why they say that.¹¹

In Judges the author repeats a particular phrase eight times.

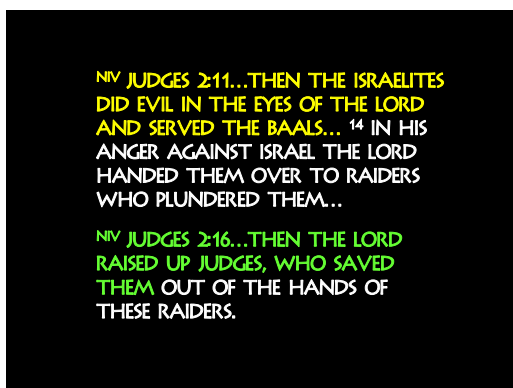
Initially, he simply states as a general principle...a general principle regarding Israel's sin, their suffering on account of their sin and their eventual deliverance following their suffering and repentance.¹²

That is, he starts by stating the principle in general terms and then applies the principle to seven specific judges as he develops the book.

Now the general, historical principle is stated first in two parts in Judges 2:11 and Judges 2:16 which comes at the end of the section I read when I first started the lesson. Look at the two verses with me for a moment.

NIV Judges 2:11...Then the Israelites did evil in the eyes of the LORD and served the Baals...¹⁴ In his anger against Israel the LORD handed them over to raiders who plundered them. He sold them to their enemies all around, whom they were no longer able to resist.

NIV Judges 2:16...Then the LORD raised up judges, who saved them out of the hands of these raiders.



**NIV JUDGES 2:11...THEN THE ISRAELITES
DID EVIL IN THE EYES OF THE LORD
AND SERVED THE BAALS...¹⁴ IN HIS
ANGER AGAINST ISRAEL THE LORD
HANDED THEM OVER TO RAIDERS
WHO PLUNDERED THEM..**

**NIV JUDGES 2:16...THEN THE LORD
RAISED UP JUDGES, WHO SAVED
THEM OUT OF THE HANDS OF
THESE RAIDERS.**

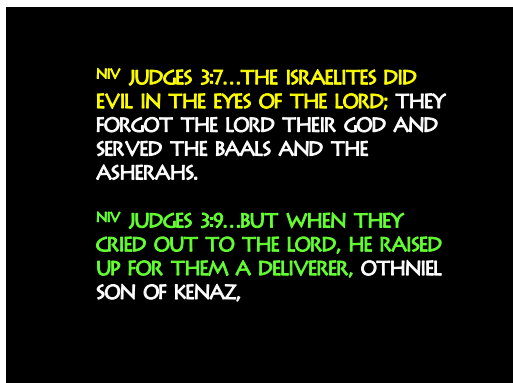
Do you see what I mean about it being a general principle? It is not really about any particular person or group of Israelites. It is rather more of a general

principle about how God dealt with the people of Israel.

As the book develops, however, the author of the book takes that general principle and applies it to specific individuals. The first instance in which he does that occurs in Judges 3:7. In Judges 3:7, the author repeats the idea apostasy and judgment and then introduces the character Othniel. Obviously, according to the pattern...Othniel then is going to be given to the nation as a judge or deliverer to deliver them from the oppressors God used to judge them in their disobedience.

^{NIV} **Judges 3:7**...The Israelites did evil in the eyes of the LORD; they forgot the LORD their God and served the Baals and the Asherahs.

^{NIV} **Judges 3:9**...But when they cried out to the LORD, he raised up for them a deliverer, Othniel son of Kenaz, Caleb's younger brother, who saved them.



Now do you see what I mean about the general principle described earlier being applied to a particular individual?

In this first instance, it is specifically applied to a particular deliverer from the

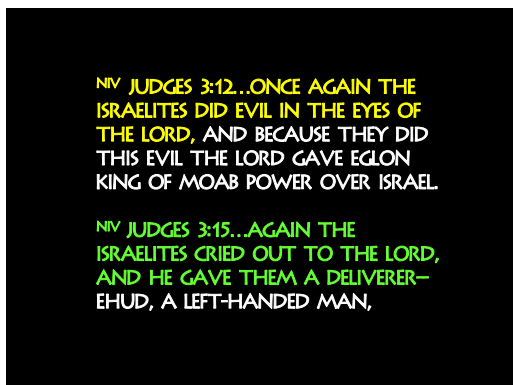
tribe of Judah... a man named Othniel.

As the central portion of the book unfolds in chapters three through sixteen, the same phrase is repeated over and over again to describe a cycle of sin, separation, judgment and deliverance.

After Othniel, the phrase is repeated in conjunction with the story of Ehud, which also happens to be in Judges 3.

^{NIV} **Judges 3:12**...Once again the Israelites did evil in the eyes of the LORD, and because they did this evil the LORD gave Eglon king of Moab power over Israel.

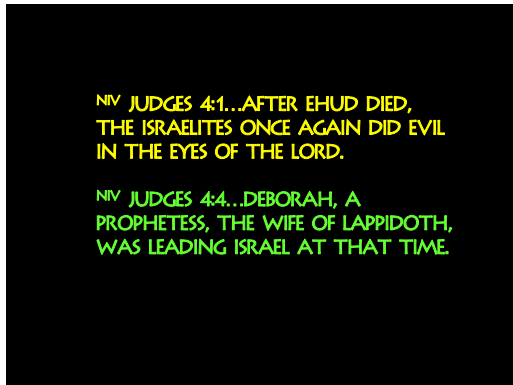
^{NIV} **Judges 3:15**...Again the Israelites cried out to the LORD, and he gave them a deliverer-- Ehud, a left-handed man, the son of Gera the Benjamite. The Israelites sent him with tribute to Eglon king of Moab.



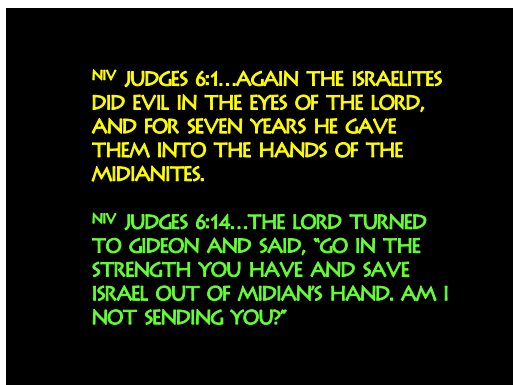
Do you see what I mean about the repetition? It's the same old sin...only with a different tribe...the tribe of Benjamin...and a different deliverer...a left handed man named Ehud.

Now as the book develops it uses this particular formula seven times and each

time it is used the story gets bleaker. After Ehud it is used to describe the story and the deliverance led by Deborah and Barak. Let's look at it quickly. It occurs in chapter 4.



After Deborah and Barak, the same phrase is used again in chapter six. There the story is about Gideon.



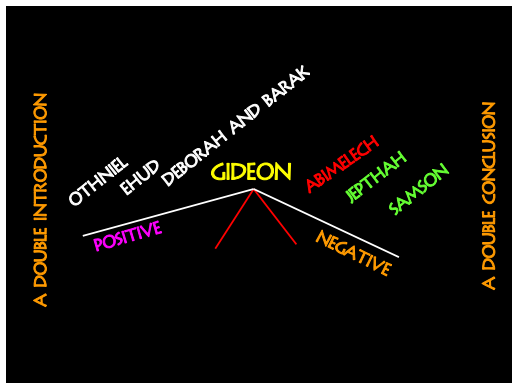
After the story of Gideon, a similar phrase is used to introduce the story of Abimelech, Gideon's son. When the phrase is used to tell the story of Abimelech, it is used differently than all the times before. It is not the least bit positive. In fact, in Abimelech's case the pattern changes. You expect deliverance to be announced but that is not what occurs. What is actually announced is judgment.

You can tell at that point that the book has undergone a shift.

NIV JUDGES 8:33...NO SOONER HAD GIDEON DIED THAN THE ISRAELITES AGAIN PROSTITUTED THEMSELVES TO THE BAALS. THEY...³⁴ DID NOT REMEMBER THE LORD THEIR GOD, WHO HAD RESCUED THEM FROM THE HANDS OF ALL THEIR ENEMIES ON EVERY SIDE.

NIV JUDGES 9:56...THUS GOD REPAID THE WICKEDNESS THAT ABIMELECH HAD DONE TO HIS FATHER BY MURDERING HIS SEVENTY BROTHERS.

Now that is one of the more important reasons why most commentators see Gideon as the central character of the book.



You see before Gideon all of the stories of the judges are positive. After Gideon, all of the stories of the judges are negative. Gideon is the transitional figure.¹³

Gideon, himself, starts of well but ends poorly.

Anyway after Abimelech, Gideon's son, comes the story of Jephthah. And with Jephthah the book reverts back to the phrase it used before Abimelech.

Jephthah does deliver the nation but his story is one of the saddest and most tragic stories in the Bible.

NIV JUDGES 10:6...AGAIN THE ISRAELITES DID EVIL IN THE EYES OF THE LORD. THEY SERVED THE BAALS AND THE ASHTORETHS, AND THE GODS OF ARAM, SIDON, MOAB, THE AMMONITES AND THE PHILISTINES, AND BECAUSE THE ISRAELITES FORSOOK THE LORD...HE BECAME ANGRY WITH THEM AND SOLD THEM INTO THE HANDS OF THE PHILISTINES AND AMMONITES

NIV JUDGES 11:32...THEN JEPHTHAH WENT OVER TO FIGHT THE AMMONITES, AND THE LORD GAVE THEM INTO HIS HANDS.

After Jephthah comes Samson but Samson's story is different than all the others that precede it. You see the author doesn't tell us that Samson delivered the Israelites. Rather he says that he only began to deliver Israel from the Philistines.

Now the point I want to make is that the structural marker **"once again the Israelites did evil in the sight of the Lord"** is repeated over and over in the central portion of the book.

It is how we know a new section has started and an old section has ended.

That is why scholars understand the book to focus on seven judges instead of thirteen. That is why they see the life and work of Gideon as the hinge of the book.

Before Gideon the stories of the judges are almost completely positive.

After Gideon they are almost completely negative. Gideon seems to be the hinge upon which the book turns. He starts off very positively and ends very negatively.

Now I ought to tell right off that I think the Book of Judges was written with a particular purpose and that the structure of the book is the key to understanding its purpose.

You know already, of course, that all of the books of the Bible were written with individual purposes. That is, they were written to accomplish something. No where is that more true than in the book of Judges.¹⁴ Many of the individual stories in Judges are wonderful literary masterpieces, written in such a colorful and gripping style that they grab the reader's attention and drive the reader to make a moral or ethical commitment.

When you read the Book of Judges you cannot help but take pause and think to yourself, **"Now I certainly don't want to act like that"** or **"I certainly wish I could be like that"**.

The author intended that kind of response. The author intended to get the reader's attention and turn them away from sin toward righteousness and he intended to do that on an individual level. But he had other purposes as well. He wanted to demonstrate for his readers the devastating consequences of national sin. He wanted to show how unchecked sin always spirals downward.

That is why, as I said earlier, the Book of Judges is designed to go from bad to worse.

That is why each new judge demonstrates something of a downward turn. That is why each new situation demonstrates something of another slip on the path.

Now that is true even though there is a sense in which the Holy Spirit's purpose in Judges is to ultimately reveal something of the person and work of Christ. We know that the Holy Spirit does that in each individual book of the Bible because the Lord Jesus Himself made it clear that He was the point and object of all Scripture. He did that in his words to the two saints on the road to Emmaus...words that are recorded in Luke 24:25ff.

^{NIV} **Luke 24:25**...He said to them, "How foolish you are, and how slow of heart to believe all that the prophets have spoken! ²⁶ Did not the Christ have to suffer these things and then enter his glory?" ²⁷ And beginning with Moses and all the Prophets, he explained to them what was said in all the Scriptures concerning himself.

And since that is true, and it is true, then the question becomes, **"How then is Jesus revealed in a book like Judges? How is he revealed when there is so much darkness and so much bleakness in the book?"**

I think He is revealed in Judges in God's infinite patience and mercy.

You see when we forgive, if we forgive, we are apt to forgive only once.

But our God is not so harsh. He is quick to forgive. He is quick to show mercy. He is quick to draw us back to Himself and He is quick to do that because of His covenantal faithfulness, a covenantal faithfulness that is extended to us no place else as it is in the person of Christ.

When we plead forgiveness and confess our sins He is quick to extend His mercy and care.

Now there is also a sense in which Jesus is foreshadowed in Judges in that all of the deliverers there are only partial or incomplete deliverers. No one of them is able to completely deliver the nation. No one of them is able to deliver beyond his or her own day. That is why Jesus is foreshadowed. He is able to deliver and in fact does deliver His people once and for all time.

Now almost all of the tribes of Israel are mentioned in the book of Judges but they are not mentioned equally. In fact, there is a large disparity between the number of times the various tribes are mentioned. As an informed reader of the Bible that ought to get you attention.

For example, of the twelve tribes only the tribe of Gad is not mentioned at all.

The tribe of Issachar is mentioned twice...the tribe of Simeon three times...the tribe of Asher is 5 times.

But the tribe of Judah is mentioned twenty-three times.

The tribe of Joseph, which you all know was granted a double portion in Joseph's sons, Manasseh and Ephraim, is mentioned some forty-eight times while Benjamin is mentioned some forty-two times and almost always in a negative way.

Now part of that is understandable. It is easy to understand why the tribe of

Joseph gets mentioned so many times. Gideon and Jephthah were both from Manasseh. Joshua and Samuel were both from Ephraim.

But it is hard to understand why the tribe of Benjamin is mentioned so often in Judges and especially why it is mentioned so negatively when only one of the judges mentioned in the book is from the tribe and when he is a pretty good judge at that...Ehud.

It makes you wonder if the author wasn't trying to paint Benjamin in a negative way.

In fact, it makes you wonder whether the author may have been entering into the conflict that came later between Samuel between David, the pride of Judah, and Saul, the pride of Benjamin.

Some scholars think that the Book of Judges may have been written as a theological/political tract to disparage the kingship of Saul and promote the kingship of David and those that do think that primarily because of the double conclusion of the book.

Now I don't want to get into any of the characters or stories of the final two sections but I do want to show you the repetition of a phrase that occurs there and is different from the phrase used in the central or middle portion of the book.

Notice in Judges 17:6 the phrase, "In those days, Israel had no king; everyone did as he saw fit."

**NIV JUDGES 17:6...IN THOSE DAYS ISRAEL HAD NO KING;
EVERYONE DID AS HE SAW FIT.**

**NIV JUDGES 18:1...IN THOSE DAYS ISRAEL HAD NO KING,
AND IN THOSE DAYS THE TRIBE OF THE DANITES WAS
SEEKING A PLACE OF THEIR OWN...**

**NIV JUDGES 19:1...IN THOSE DAYS ISRAEL HAD NO KING,
NOW A LEVITE WHO LIVED IN A REMOTE AREA IN
THE HILL COUNTRY OF EPHRAIM TOOK A CONCUBINE
FROM BETHLEHEM IN JUDAH.**

**NIV JUDGES 21:25 IN THOSE DAYS ISRAEL HAD NO KING;
EVERYONE DID AS HE SAW FIT.**

Now let me ask you a question, **“What can you determine from this particular phrase?”**

The one thing I think you can determine rather clearly is that this section was written after there had been a king.

Do you see what I mean?

When the author writes, **“In those days there was no king”** it implies that in the days in which he wrote there was a king. Now that king may have been good or bad. He may have been faithful or unfaithful. He may have been the right king or he may have been the wrong king but it seems to me that the statement more or less demands that there was a king when the stories were written.

Now that fact that the book was written when there was a king will enter into our ongoing discussion of the author’s purpose for the book.

I should tell you that there is another view...there are those that suppose the book to have been written during a time when there was no king...when the

nation was in exile and considering whether or not to return to the monarchy it had known. If that was the case, it would have meant that the author was writing Judges to encourage the nation to avoid the anarchy of the earlier time of the Judges by choosing to themselves a king...a king loyal to YHWH.¹⁵

But we'll talk more about that later. I think that is enough for today and that we'll stop right there. For next time I would like for to read Judges 1:1-2:5 if you don't mind in preparation for our time together.

Let's pray.

¹ Leon Wood, *The Distressing Days of the Judges* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing, 1975), 39. Wood writes: "The first division makes its contribution to the general rationale as an introduction of the idea of Israel's sinfulness. The initial section tells of a particular sin of the people, namely their deficiency in land occupation. The people did not occupy all the land allotted to them, as God had clearly instructed. The mention of this deficiency at this initial point is significant, not only because historically the sin occurred first, but it also provides an immediate clue to the stress that is made throughout the Book. The second section is introductory in the sense that it speaks generally of the sin of the period and the resulting need for the judges. It also identifies the time when this great defection of the people began and tells of the result of their initial sin in not clearing the land of the former inhabitants, as God had commanded."

² The titles of some of the various commentaries are a dead give away that Judges is a dark book. Wood's commentary for example is entitled, *The Distressing Days of the Judges*. Inrig's commentary is entitled *Hearts of Iron...Feet of Clay*.

³ A very good online commentary (and therefore free commentary) is Dr. Thomas Constable's Commentary on Judges at <http://www.soniclight.com/constable/notes/pdf/judges.pdf>. He writes on page 6, "The first major section in the book (1:1—3:6) explains very clearly why the period of the judges was a dark chapter in Israel's history. God revealed the reasons for Israel's apostasy and consequent national problems in terms too clear to miss."

⁴ J. Paul Tanner, "The Gideon Narrative as the Focal Point of Judges" in *Bibliotheca Sacra* 149 Apr-Je 1992, p 152-3. "In relation to the book as a whole, Gideon receives attention as the focal point because he represents a significant shift in the "quality" of the judges that served Israel. A progressive deterioration begins with Othniel and continues through Samson. Othniel was almost an idealized judge, and Samson was a debauched self-centered individual. God used each judge, whether strong or weak, to accomplish His sovereign will and effect deliverance for the

theocratic nation. Gideon, on the other hand, stands somewhere between these two extremes and represents the primary turning point from the “better” judges to the “weaker” ones.”

⁵ Judge Judith Sheindlin.

⁶ When I say I came up with the idea, I mean I came with the simple phrase 2 Beginnings...etc. The structure has long since been noted by others. I particularly like Tanner’s explanation in *Bibliotheca Sacra*. See J. Paul Tanner, “The Gideon Narrative as the Focal Point of Judges” in *Bibliotheca Sacra* 149 Ap-Je 1992, p 149. He writes: “The Book of Judges may be viewed as having a two-part introduction (1:1–2:5 and 2:6–3:6) and a two-part epilogue (17:1–18:31 and 19:1–21:25). Parallel ideas and motifs link the first introduction (1:1–2:5) with the second epilogue (19:1–21:25), and in like manner the second introduction (2:6–3:6) with the first epilogue (17:1–18:31).

The main body of the book (3:7–16:31) evidences structural arrangement by recurring words and phrases that have been labeled *stereotyped formulae*. Most notable of these is the phrase, “**And the sons of Israel again did evil in the eyes of the lord,**” which heads up nearly every narrative block within the main body. These stereotyped formulae suggest that a narrator skillfully wove the accounts together for the purpose of making a theological point.

Within the main body of the book, seven major narrative blocks can be noted. Moreover, there are certain parallel features between these narratives so that the entire book reflects a carefully worked symmetrical pattern.”

I should note that Tanner credits D. W. Gooding, “The Composition of the Book of Judges,” *Eretz Israel* 16 (1982): 70-79, for the identification of this overall scheme.

⁷ ^{NIV} **Judges 3:31**...After Ehud came Shamgar son of Anath, who struck down six hundred Philistines with an oxgoad. He too saved Israel.

⁸ You can traces of that kind of thinking in a very good commentary like the IVP Commentary by Arthur Cundall. Cf. Arthur E. Cundall, and Leon. Morris, *Judges & Ruth*. (Downers Grove, Illinois: Inter-Varsity Press, 1968), 24. “In the final section of the book there are two unconnected incidents: Micah and the Danite migration (17,18) and the incident of the Levite’s outraged concubine and its sequel I9-21).”

I guess the big question would be, “What does he mean by unconnected?”

⁹ Daniel I. Block, *Judges, Ruth* in the New American Commentary Series, (Nashville: Broadman & Holman Publishers, 1999), 49. Block writes: “Although the Book of Judges contains numerous ideological and literary links with the rest of the books in Noth’s so-called Deuteronomistic History, the evidence seems convincing that this is an independent literary composition, written in light of the authentically Mosaic theology of Deuteronomy and in light of the written accounts of the conquest as found in the Book of Joshua. The theory of a separate literary work is reinforced by the independent literary integrity of the Book of Judges itself. While signs of disjunction among the respective parts of the book are obvious, it is apparent to me that a single mind has deliberately selected, arranged, linked, and shaped the sources available to him to

achieve a specific ideological agenda, which has yielded a coherent literary work.”

¹⁰ Cheryl J. Exum, “The Centre Cannot Hold: Thematic and Textual Instabilities in Judges” in the *Catholic Biblical Quarterly* 50 (1990), 416. “No character in the book receives more divine assurance than Gideon and no one displays more doubt. Gideon is, significantly, the only judge to whom God speaks directly, though this privilege does not allay his faintheartedness.”

¹¹ Tanner, 146.

¹² Robert G. Boling, *Judges in the Anchor Bible Commentary Series*, (Garden City, NY: Doubleday Publishers, 1981), 74. Boling writes: “This segment of the introduction describes a pattern of apostasy, hardship, moaning and rescue, a pattern to be illustrated for various segments of Israel in the stories which follow, where Yahweh is represented as the great saving administrator of the realm.”

¹³ Tanner, 152. Tanner writes: “In relation to the book as a whole, Gideon receives attention as the focal point because he represents a significant shift in the “quality” of the judges that served Israel. A progressive deterioration begins with Othniel and continues through Samson.

¹⁴ Constable, 3. He writes: “Arthur Cundall suggested that one of the purposes of Judges may have been to provide apologetic justification for Israel's monarchy. William Dumbrell believed its purpose was primarily to show the sovereign grace of God in preserving Israel in spite of Israel. Leon Wood wrote that its primary purpose was to show why Israel did not experience God's promised blessings. Herbert Wolf believed the primary purpose was to show that Israel's spiritual condition determined its political and material situation. Daniel Block argued that it was to reveal the Canaanization of Israel in the premonarchic period of Israel's history. All these explanations seem to me to be in harmony with what the book records.”

¹⁵ William J. Dumbrell, “‘In Those Days There Was No King in Israel; Every Man Did What Was Right in His Own Eyes.’ The Purpose of the Book of Judges Reconsidered.” In *Journal for the Study of the Old Testament* 25 (1983), 30. Dumbrell believes the book was written in exile to show that Israel's existence was not dependant upon king or judge but on YHWH alone.