

Lecture 13- Judges: Israel's Compromise (II)

These are the nations the LORD left to test all those Israelites who had not experienced any of the wars in Canaan (he did this only to teach warfare to the descendants of the Israelites who had not had previous battle experience): the five rulers of the Philistines, all the Canaanites, the Sidonians, and the Hivites living in the Lebanon mountains from Mount Baal Hermon to Lebo Hamath. They were left to test the Israelites to see whether they would obey the LORD's commands, which he had given their forefathers through Moses. The Israelites lived among the Canaanites, Hittites, Amorites, Perizzites, Hivites and Jebusites. They took their daughters in marriage and gave their own daughters to their sons, and served their gods.

Judges 3:1-6

Key Terms

Compromise, cycles, "in those days Israel had no king; everyone did as he saw fit," chaos, Gideon

Lecture Objectives

- Briefly outline the book of Judges, highlighting its place in the development of scripture.
- Identify key characteristics of Judges, especially noting how they lend to our understanding of the message of Judges.
- Explore parallels between: themes, issues in Judges and themes, issues facing our culture and church today.

Preliminary Questions

- Who are your favorite Judges from the book of Judges? Why are they your favorite? How do they help you better understand God's character and his redemptive purposes in the world?

Judges: Israel's Compromise (II)

I. Judges: Israel's Compromise

A. General introduction to the period

1. Downward spiral in the book of Judges

B. Structure of the book of Judges

1. Three major divisions

a. Prologue 1:1-3:6 incomplete conquest; reason for incomplete conquest

b. Body 3:7-16:31 Judges, cyclical pattern: oppression - deliverance

c. Epilogue 17:1-21:25 religious and moral chaos

2. More detailed outline below (by Dr. Long with musical references by Barry Webb)

The Book of Judges: Israel's Compromise

I. Prologue (Overture)

A. Political decline

1. Declining success in occupying allotments after the death of Joshua (1:1-2:5)

B. Religious cause

1. Declining success caused by disobedience (2:6-3:6)

a. Both sections mention Joshua's death and the people left in the land

Compare and contrast the introductions to the books of Joshua and Judges.

II. Cycles of Judges (Variations)

Sin, subjugation, supplication, salvation (rebellion, retribution, repentance, restoration)

- A. Lone hero - Ehud
 - 1. Failed test and first judges - Othniel, Ehud, and Shamgar
- B. Unusual judge - Deborah (Barak)
 - 1. Deborah
 - 2. Song of Deborah
- C. Pivotal judge - Gideon (and Abimelech)
 - 1. Golden designation, demonstration and confirmation
 - 2. Golden (God's) victory with 300 men
 - 3. Golden mop-up, mess-up and death
 - 4. Abimelech gets crowned (twice!)
- D. Unusual judge - Jephthah
 - 1. Tola, Jair, and Israel's relapse and repentance
 - 2. Jephthah's political climb and its familial cost
 - 3. Jephthah vs. Ephraim
- E. Lone hero - Samson
 - 1. The promise and fulfillment of Samson's birth
 - 2. The riddle of Samson's Philistine marriage
 - 3. Samson has a (jaw) bone to pick with the Philistines
 - 4. Samson nagged to death by Delilah

III. Epilogue (coda): "No king...everyone did his own thing" Proverbs 4:19

- A. Religious chaos
 - 1. Micah's idol and the idle Levite
 - 2. Danite migration and "conquest" of a "peaceful and unsuspecting people"
- B. Political chaos
 - 1. Levitical nightmare in Israel's own "Sodom" (Gibeah)
 - 2. Civil war instead of conquest
 - 3. Rape (?) and murder in Jabesh-Gilead and Shiloh
- C. Implications of the structure of Judges

A Lone hero Ehud

B Woman Deborah

X Ideal vs. Anti-judge Gideon/Abimelech

B' Outcast Jephthah

A' Lone Hero Samson

- 1. David Gooding's outline (Sometimes the outlines we find in the text are as much a part of the creativity of the interpreter as they are germane to the text.)

A B

C D E F E' D' C'

B' A'

Introduction

Epilogue

n Gideon

a b b' a'

Specifically:

A Israel vs. Canaanites

B Israel forsakes Yahweh and serves other gods (idolatry)

C Othniel's Israelite wife is the secret of success

D Ehud - takes message to a foreign king - slays Moabites at the fords of the Jordan

E Jael slays Sisera and ends the War

F a his fight against idolatry 6:1-32

b his fight against the enemy 6:33-7:25

b' his fight against his own nationals 8:1-21

- a' his lapse into idolatry 8:22-32
 - E' "A certain woman" slays Abimelech and ends the war
 - D' Jephthah - sends messages to a foreign king - slays Ephraimites (Israelites) at the fords of the Jordan
 - C' Samson's foreign women the secret of his downfall
 - B' Idolatry is rampant. Levites service idolatrous shrines. Dan conquers Laish and establishes idolatry.
 - A' Israel vs. Benjamin
2. Gideon
- a. Judges 8:22 - Gideon makes a good confession
 - 1) v. 24 - request for earrings
 - 2) What is the ephod? Possibly a mannequin shape (transference of meaning)
 - b. Gideon is a pivotal judge
 - c. Gideon had 70 sons by many wives – acting like a king!
 - d. v. 31 he named a son Abimelech, "my father is king"
 - e. There is a theme of decline which is implicit in the symmetry of the book of Judges
 - f. The judges themselves become a part of the decline.

What judges illustrate this decline?

D. Theme of the book of Judges: Israel's compromise

- 1. Why is Judges 16:4 important?
 - a. Usually details are significant.
 - b. Samson was born to be a Nazarite.
 - c. Numbers 6 - A Nazarite was not supposed to
 - 1) Drink wine
 - 2) Touch dead bodies
 - 3) Cut his hair
 - d. Valley of Sorek. Sorek, "grapes"
 - 1) Delilah sounds like "vessel" or "bucket"
 - e. God's patience is not a sign of a lack of power or concern

What happened when Jephthah offered his daughter? The text says burnt offering.

Who emerges as the hero of the book of Judges, and why?

What would you say is the key verse/passage for the book of Judges, and why?