

# OT 501--Old Testament Introduction

## Lecture Notes—Joshua, Judges

### Former Prophets

-**Joshua-Kings**—These books:

1. Relate the acts of God in history, i.e. God working with His people;
2. Are prophetic revelation of God's actions with His people; &
3. Are theologically interpretive, i.e. based upon God's revelatory acts and results dependent upon God and the obedience of His people.

--Message—

1. God controls history—sometimes He intervenes, sometimes not.
  2. The significant acts of prophets, kings, & other instruments of God's dealing with His people (Prophets="spokesmen," Kings=Rulers) are noted.
  3. The books demonstrate in life the great prophetic themes of "Latter Prophets": Exodus, the land, Covenant, Exclusive Worship of Yahweh, justice in the land, & Blessing/Cursing relative to obedience &/or rebellion.
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### The Book of Joshua

--Outline

#### I. Preparation and Crossing of the Jordan (Joshua 1:1-5:12).

--Joshua's leadership, consecration, Crossing the Jordan as a counterpart to the crossing of the Red Sea under Moses. This is a new beginning, just like the former crossing!

#### II. Jericho, Bethel, and Ai (Joshua 6:1-8:29)

--A great victory by the hand of Yahweh as Jericho, is followed by a humiliating defeat at Ai because of disobedience. Achan kept part of the "devoted things" (*cherem*) for himself.

#### III. Covenant Ceremony at Shechem—(Joshua 8:30-35)

--Covenant Renewal Ceremony followed the initial victories. This ceremony at Mt. Ebal/Gerizim is modeled after the instructions given in Dt. 27-30. They set up an altar, offer sacrifices, & renew their covenant, including the blessings & curses from Deuteronomy.

#### IV. "Southern Campaign" (Joshua 9-10)

--The people of Gibeon trick Joshua into entering into a covenant with them. This was a breach of the covenant to allow none of the Canaanites to remain in the land.

--King Adoni-Zedek of Jerusalem led a coalition of kings in southern Canaan against Joshua. Israel defeats them, partially due to the "Sun standing still."

#### V. "Northern Campaign" (Joshua 11)

--Jabin, king of Hazor, led a coalition of northern kings against Israel, but they were also defeated.

## **VI. Defeated Kings & Unconquered Land (Joshua 12:1-13:7)**

--The defeated kings allowed a foothold for Israel, but much was left to be done. Many Canaanite strongholds remained, as did the Philistines.

## **VII. Division of the Land (Joshua 14-22)**

## **VIII. Joshua's Farewell**

--Joshua 24:1-27—Covenant Renewal at Shechem

1. Covenant Renewal Ceremony—possibly an annual event.
2. Joshua summarizes their history, proclaims his commitment to Yahweh, & challenges the people. The People respond with their own commitment.

## **Conquest/Settlement Models**

### **A. Military Conquest**

As presented in Joshua, the army of Israel entered the land and conquered a large portion of it, then divided the land & settled it.

Strengths/Weaknesses—Takes the Bible literally, but archaeology would seem to contradict this view, at least in its totality. There's no evidence for widespread conquest in Palestine at any of these time periods.

### **B. Peasant Revolt**

Groups of people began to rise up against their Canaanite overlords. These can be seen at least partially in the *Habiru*. These groups later joined together into tribes, which later became Israel.

Strengths/Weaknesses—Takes the lack of archaeological evidence seriously. The people who became Israel came out of the Canaanites rather than from Egypt, so change would be minimal. Of course, this ignores much of the Bible.

### **C. Settlement**

Nomadic people settled down during this period. They had or developed tribal allegiances and joined together to become Israel.

Strengths/Weaknesses—Takes seriously the gradual nature of changes seen in the archaeological record. Recognizes the sometimes tenuous nature of the tribal affiliations, which is also seen in the biblical record. But this ignores the clear word of military battle in the Book of Joshua.

### **D. Synthesis**

There is probably truth in all three theories!

1. Joshua led military campaigns against several Canaanite kings & cities. This is not as widespread as it first appears. Josh. 12ff & Judges make this plain.
2. Certain groups of people of the land probably did join Joshua and Israel, as evidenced in the ceremony near Shechem in Josh. 8.

3. Israel would produce evidence of nomadic people slowly settling in the land. The tribes were never totally unified, as seen in Judges, Samuel, & Kings. The tribes appear separated by large stretches of unconquered territory & cities. They settled in available areas.

## Theological Themes in Joshua

### I. Promise & Fulfillment

1. God is faithful to His promises, esp. to the patriarchs—Their descendants would possess this land & be a nation. Joshua is the fulfillment of these promises.
2. Israel will possess the Promised Land, God's gift, as long as they live in obedience to the covenant.

### II. Covenant

1. "Covenant" is used 16 times in the Book of Joshua.
2. Most of these refer to the "Ark of the Covenant," the symbol of God's covenant with His people and His presence among them. Often (w/Howard) the Hebrew almost suggests that the Ark *is* the Lord, i.e. "the ark of the covenant of the Lord," where "of" is not technically in the Hebrew.
3. Covenant Renewal—Joshua 8:30-35 & 24:1-27—The people of each generation were required to submit themselves to the covenant with the LORD.

### III. Rest

1. By being in possession of the land & being in covenant with God, Israel had rest, which suggested relationship with Yahweh, peace in the land, and blessings from Yahweh.
2. In Hebrews 4, the author refers to the concept of rest as ultimately coming through relationship with Christ.

### IV. Holiness/Purity

1. God is holy & requires holiness from His people. This required the people to prepare themselves for entry into the land and to conquer the land. An impure people could not enter God's holy land & hope to survive victoriously.
2. Sin among the people had to be removed. Sin among the people, as Howard pointed out, made them in essence Canaanite. God's people were to be characterized by holiness & purity, not sin.
3. *cherem* (חֶרֶם)—These items (people, material goods, cities) are "devoted to the LORD" or set apart to Him. They are "holy."

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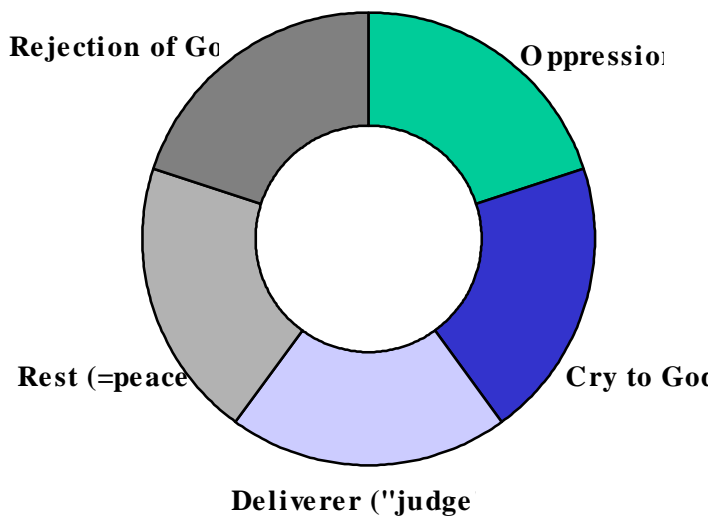
## Title

"Judges"--שֹׁפְטִים=*shophetim*—

- They were actually saviors or deliverers rather than judges.
- Only Deborah served as a judge, i.e. settling cases.

## Key Problem

- A. They forsook Yahweh
  - ...forgot Yahweh
  - ...did evil in the eyes of Yahweh
- B. They served Baals
  - ...worshipped other gods
  - ...“prostituted themselves” to other gods.  
(2:11-13; 3:6-7; 4:1; 6:1; 10:6, 10, 13; 13:1)
- C. “Everyone did what was right in his own eyes” (21:25). (NIV: “Everyone did as he saw fit.”)



## The Cycle of Judges: Judges 2:10-19

### Outline of Contents

#### I. Judges 1:1-2:5—Conclusion of the “Conquest”

--Summary of battles fought & lost, as well as a description of the land left to be conquered. This is both a conclusion of Joshua & an introduction for Judges.

#### II. Judges 2:6-3:6—Introduction to the Period of the Judges

A. 2:6-10—Joshua & his generation is gone. The new generation grew up w/o knowledge of Yahweh. Rebellion & disobedience followed.

B. 3:1-6—The nations left in the land—Philistines, Canaanites, Sidonians, Hivites, etc.

#### III. Judges 3:7-16:31—The “Judges”

A. Judges 3:7-31—Othniel, Ehud, & Shamgar

B. Judges 4-5—Deborah

1. The Battle—A great battle led by an improbable leader, but Deborah obviously had shown herself to be a capable judge and leader. Thus God chose to use her!

2. The Song—Deborah sings a great victory song!

C. Judges 6-8—Gideon

1. A lesson from Gideon's life is that God does always choose to act according to human standards. Gideon was not a paragon of strength, and he acknowledged this fact from the beginning.

2. After the miraculous victory, the people wanted to make Gideon king. His response: Yahweh is our king. Thus he refused this offer, which was noble (or he was simply scared!).

D. Judges 9-Abimelech

--Gideon's son did indeed take up the challenge to be king, technically making him the 1<sup>st</sup> king in Israel, albeit over a small portion of the nation.

E. Judges 10:1-5—Tola & Jair

F. Judges 10:6-12:7—Jephthah

1. He wins a great victory, but he makes a foolish vow that seriously dampens the joy of victory. A lesson to be learned is: Do not make vows lightly, for God takes them seriously. Did God require Jephthah to kill his daughter? Rabbis & other interpreters have debated this for millennia.

G. Judges 12:8-15—Ibzan, Elon, Abdon

H. Judges 13:1-16:31—Samson

--Committed to be a Nazirite by his parents, but he breaks all of his vow, again showing the complete breakdown of faithfulness & obedience to God.

--His real problem was his desire for women (sexual lust?). We see him chasing after them, & ultimately his desire to please Delilah leads to his destruction.

**IV. Judges 17:1-18:32—Micah's Priest & the Tribe of Dan**

A. Micah, a rich man & not a prophet, hires a Levite to be his personal priest. This shows the continued breakdown in Yahweh worship. Their worship was very personalized.

B. The tribe of Dan migrates to the north because they could not conquer their land, & they take the priest of Micah with them.

**V. Judges 19:1-30—A Levite's concubine**

**VI. Judges 20:1-21:24—Israel & Benjamin**

**VII. Judges 21:25—Conclusion**

A. "Israel had no king" (See also 17:6; 18:1; & 19:1)

B. "Everyone did as he saw fit" (See also 17:6)

1. No unity.

2. No morality.

3. No true worship of Yahweh.

**Theological Themes in Judges**

**I. Purity**

A. God had warned that Canaanites would be a snare, and they were! The presence of the Canaanites in the land destroyed the purity that God had desired for Israel's land.

B. A main problem was false worship, i.e. altars, idols, hiring priests, which was considered rebellion against a holy God.

## II. Rest

A. God had given rest in the land, but they lost the rest through disobedience

B. The “judges” restored the rest, but it was only temporary because of disobedience. So the “rest” of the judges was really only a temporary respite from war, not true rest.

C. True rest only comes from being in right relationship with God.

## III. God

--God will take up His battles. He will fight for His honor & His name. He will defend His people, but He will also defeat His own people.