

## Lesson 7 – The Judges

Text: Judges 1 – 1 Samuel 9

Main Characters: God, the Judges, Samuel

### Key Verses

- Judges 2:10-19 – After Joshua’s generation died, Israel did not know about God or His works. As a result, they entered into the cycle of sin, described in these verses.
- Judges 21:25 – During the time of the judges, everyone did whatever they wanted. Nobody looked to God for instruction or guidance.
- 1 Samuel 8:19-20 – Israel rejected God as king, and wanted a physical king like other nations.

### List

| <u>The Judges</u> |          |        |        |  |
|-------------------|----------|--------|--------|--|
| Othniel           | Gideon   | Ibzan  | Eli    |  |
| Ehud              | Tola     | Elon   | Samuel |  |
| Shamgar           | Jair     | Abdon  |        |  |
| Deborah           | Jephthah | Samson |        |  |

Song: *The Judges*

### Transition from Invasion and Conquest of Canaan

Remember that in the previous time period, Joshua had led the people through the Jordan River and into the Promised Land (Canaan) and destroyed many of the wicked people that had lived there. While Joshua and the other elders were alive, the Israelites remained faithful to the Lord. However, once these faithful men died, the people forgot about God and how good He had been to them, and so began to be disobedient.

### Main Storyline

When the people became wicked because they did not know God, He punished them by allowing them to be oppressed by foreign nations (such as the Philistines and others). The Israelites, after suffering at the hands of their enemies, began to cry to God, asking to be saved and promising to repent of their sins. God would then raise judges to come and save the people from their oppressors. For a while, the people would be righteous, but as soon as a judge died, they would fall away from God and become even more evil than they had been before. This “cycle of sin” occurred numerous times during the time period of the Judges.

The main problem with Israel during this time was the fact that they did not know God, nor accept Him as their king. As a result, everyone in Israel did whatever was right in his own eyes (see Judges 21:25). The people were very evil in this time period, and even the judges were never really able to fully restore the people’s faith in God, who had taken such good care of them up to this point.

### Transition to the United Kingdom

Eventually, the people became tired of having judges rule over them. This was partly because of the fact that Samuel’s two sons (who would have become judges) were evil and corrupt, but also because the people wanted to be like all of the other nations around them. God, through Samuel, tried to convince them that they did not want a physical king, but eventually God told Samuel that they would have a king just as they wanted. Samuel would soon anoint the first king of Israel, King Saul.