

CLASS NOTES -- JUDGES

HISTORICAL INFORMATION

The period covered by the book is "Roughly the first three hundred years of Israel's history in the land of Canaan" - Baxter. From the Exodus to Israel's first king, Saul, (the theocratic period) about four hundred years elapsed. The book of Judges covers the mid-three hundred years of this time.

AUTHORSHIP

Various unknown authors probably wrote the individual stories shortly after the respective events took place. The manuscripts were evidently collected and edited by someone during the reign of King Saul, after the Ark was removed from Shiloh (Judges 18:31 & 1 Sam. 4:4, 11), and before David drove the Jebusites from Jerusalem (Judges 1:21 & 1 Chron. 11:5). The expression "in those days there was no king in Israel" (Judges 17:6; etc.) indicates the work was edited after Saul became king. It is possible that **Samuel** did the work of collecting and editing these manuscripts, as tradition claims.

CENTRAL LESSON FROM THE BOOK -- "Failure through compromise" (Baxter).¹

OUTLINE

- 1A.** Chapters 1, 2 Prologue explaining the theme.
- 2A.** Chapters 3 through 16 The main narrative.
 - 1B.** 3:5 - 11 The first servitude -- to the king of Mesopotamia.
Othniel the delivering judge.
 - 2B.** 3:12 - 31 Second servitude -- to the king of Moab.
Ehud the delivering judge.
 - 3B.** 4:1 -- 5:31 The third servitude -- to the king of Canaan.
Deborah & Barak the judges.
 - 4B.** 6:1 -- 8:35 Fourth servitude -- to the Midianites.
Gideon the deliverer. (Chapter nine concerns his family)
 - 5B.** 10:6 -- 12:7 Fifth servitude -- to the Philistines.
Jephthah the deliverer. (10:1 - 5 & 12:8 - 15 give the brief story of five minor judges)
 - 6B.** 13:1 -- 16:31 Sixth servitude -- to the Philistines.
Samson the judge.
- 3A.** Chapters 17 -- 21 Epilogue illustrating the kind of ungodliness which brought about the servitudes. See 17:6 & 21:25.

RANDOM NOTES

Each servitude follows a four-step pattern: **1. Sinning** (as in 3:7) **2. Suffering** (as in

¹ "Explore the Book" by J. Sidlow Baxter was originally published in six volumes. It is now available from Zondervan Publishing House in Grand Rapids, Michigan. It is highly recommended.

3:8) **3. Supplication** (as in 3:9-a). **4. Salvation** (as in 3:9-b - 11) -- or (according to Scofield) **1. Rebellion 2. Retribution 3. Repentance 4 Restoration.** The "salvation," or "restoration," resulted in a time of rest until the Judge died -- and then the cycle started all over again. See Neh. 9:26 - 28.

1:7. The Palestinians were mercilessly destroyed -- but they richly deserved it. Like Adoni-bezek they were treated as they had treated others.

1:8. See v. 21. They could defeat the armies of Jerusalem in the field, but could not take the city itself. Setting the city on fire (with flaming arrows shot over the walls?) was one thing -- **taking it** was another. The "taking" in this verse may refer to the outskirts of the city. The city was not **totally** defeated until it was taken much later by David (2 Sam. 5:6 and following). Compare Joshua 15:63.

1:19. "Chariots of iron" -- this was an **excuse**. See 4:3 and what God did for them at that time. See Psa. 81:13, 14. (Someone has said, "An excuse is the **skin** of a reason -- stuffed with a **lie**.") However, God had a purpose in allowing this defeat. See 3:2 - 4.

1:26. Contrast this man with Rahab. Both (with their families) were lone survivors of their cities. This man went on to duplicate what he had seen God destroy. Rahab, in faith and gratitude, joined with Israel and became ancestor to David and Christ. (From The Students' Commentary -- Williams)

1:28. Israel tried "peaceful coexistence" with the nations of Canaan. It didn't work! This was their mistake. When they could have driven them out they did not. Later on, when they finally tried to drive them out, they "could not any longer stand before their enemies" (Judges 2:14). It was the secret of their later troubles. See 2:20 - 23 and Joshua 17:13. So anything short of complete victory for the believer today will cause him to be weak and ineffective. Compare 2:2 and see Psa. 81:13, 14.

2:6 - 9. Looking back to Joshua (in view of the tense in v. 6, "had let"). Perhaps vs. 1 - 5 look back to Joshua chapter 24?

2:10 - 23. Here is a preview of the book of Judges.

2:10. See Joshua 24:31. / The older generation failed to do a good job of teaching their children. See Deut. 6:7 - 9 and Psa. 78:4 - 8.

2:18. This is God's ideal way to rule over Israel. Through the judges God was their ultimate ruler -- their King (1 Sam. 8:7; 10:19). When Christ reigns over them He will do so through judges (Isa. 1:26; Matt. 19:28). See Neh. 9:26 - 28; Obadiah 17, 21; Rev. 20:4.

2:19. "- When the judge was dead -" Compare 24:2, 14- 18. Praise the Lord our "Judge" -- who delivered us -- will **never die!** (Heb. 7:25). Christ is also our High Priest and "Wonderful Counselor" (Isa. 9:6).

2:20, 21. See Joshua 23:13 and compare Judges 1:28; 2:2, 3.

2:21, 22. Verse 22 gives one good reason for God allowing them to spare some of the Canaanites. So today the presence of the cults outside, and false teachers inside, the church tests the believer -- as to whether he will be content to follow the word of God or not.

3:2. Every generation was to have its own battles. They were not to just relax and enjoy the fruit of the battles of those before them. It is the same with us. When we start just enjoying the results of the good warfare of those before us, we **lose** what they fought to gain! "One generation fights for the truth, the next one enjoys it and takes it for granted, the third one loses it!" (Anonymous)

3:6, 7. The first step toward apostasy was marrying unbelievers!

3:8. Mesopotamia is between the Tigris and Euphrates rivers.

3:12, 13. Moab is east of the Dead Sea, between Ammon (on the north) and Edom (on the south). The Moabites and Ammonites were descendents of Esau.

3:31. It does not say here, as it does in 2 Sam. 23:8 (of Adino -- who slew 800), that he slew them all at one time.

4:2. Hazor was in Galilee, about 5 miles SW of Lake Merom. Harosheth-Hagoyim (NASB) was on the west bank of the river Kishon -- about 8 or so miles from its mouth.

4:5. Ramah and Bethel were north of Jerusalem (about 7 and 11 miles respectively) -- over 50 miles from the scene of the battle.

4:11. Was Heber sent ahead by the Lord (possibly through the instrumentality of Deborah) to be a spy in the enemy's camp? Were he and his companions the ones who lured Sisera down to the river Kishon where his chariots were to be immobilized (vs. 12, 13)? Surely Heber could not have been genuinely a friend of Jabin (vs. 7, 17), to judge by his wife's actions. If Jael was also a minor judge (Judges 5:6) there could well have been collusion between her and Deborah. (The Kenites were descendents of the father in law of Moses -- Judges 1:16. See 4:17; 5:24 also.)

4:15. Sisera fled on foot because his chariot was stuck in the mud of the flooding river, his horses rearing and out of control (5:21, 22). It was a distance of about 40 miles that he fled on foot. No wonder he was tired when he arrived at Jael's tent, and thought himself safe!

5:1. Evidently Deborah wrote the song. See v. 7.

5:2. See NASB - "- that the **leaders led** in Israel, that the **people volunteered**. Bless the Lord!" A wonderful combination! Compare v. 9.

5:4. Evidently speaking of a storm coming out of the south over the Dead Sea dropping

its rain on Mt. Gilboa, from which the river Kishon flows.

5:5. In the NASB margin it suggests as a literal translation of this verse, "The mountains **flowed** at the presence of the Lord, this Sinai, at the presence of the Lord." There may have been so much water coming down the slopes it seemed the whole mountain was "flowing." The demonstration of God's power reminded Deborah of the scene at Sinai when Israel received the Law.

5:6. Was Jael contemporary with Shamgar? If so, she may have been an older woman than Deborah -- for evidently Shamgar judged Israel before Deborah did (vs. 6, 7). See 3:31.

Is Jael mentioned here because she, too, was a minor judge, or just because she was contemporary with Shamgar and also figured in the deliverance under Deborah?

5:9. See NASB, "My heart goes out to the **commanders** of Israel, the **volunteers** among the people." See v. 2.

5:10. See the NASB, "You who ride on **white donkeys**, and you who sit on **rich carpets**, and you who travel on the **road** [cp. v. 6] -- sing!" Deborah's deliverance had brought them prosperity and safety.

5:12. Compare Psa. 68:18 and **Eph. 4:8**. These verses all have to do with the expression "led captivity captive."

5:13 - 18. Only Judah, Simeon (far to the south), and Gad (across the Jordan) are not mentioned. The tribes which were most active are those which encircle Mt. Tabor (Issachar, Zebulun, Naphtali).

5:14. See the NASB, "From Ephraim those whose root is in Amalek came down, following you, Benjamin, with your people."

5:15. See the NASB on this verse, "And the princes of Issachar were with Deborah; as was Issachar, so was Barak; into the valley they rushed at his heels -."

5:15 - 17-a. For Reuben there were great resolves (NASB) and searchings of heart, but no **action**. Being across the Jordan, they evidently hesitated to become involved. see Gen. 49:3, 4.

5:17. "Gilead" was the land occupied by the two and a half tribes (Reuben, Gad and half of Manasseh).

5:17-b. For Dan and Asher there seem not to have been even the resolves and searchings of heart experienced by Reuben.

5:18. Zebulun and Naphtali were the **doers**. They hazarded their lives **on the battlefield**. Compare Acts 15:26; Rom. 16:4; Phil. 2:29, 30; 2 Tim. 2:3, 4. This whole section (verses 14 - 18) is instructive in regard to service for the Lord today.

5:19. This battle was fought in the valley of Armageddon -- where the world's last great battle will take place (Rev. 16:16 and context). The last part of this verse (NASB) says, "- they took no plunder in silver." Contrast v. 30.

5:21. Compare the note at 4:7. Evidently the Lord caused a flash flood of the river and Sisera was caught in the torrent -- his heavy chariots mired down, horses rearing out of control, and his men "sitting ducks" for the armies of Israel.

5:24. Compare Luke 1:42. What do the Catholics do with this verse? They make so much of the thought that Mary was blessed **among** women -- here Jael was blessed **above** women!

5:25. See the NASB, "- in a magnificent bowl she brought him curds." Sisera thought he was really getting a warm and royal reception -- the "red carpet" treatment.

5:28 - 30. It is evident that when Sisera left on this expedition no one thought it would take long. After all, he had 900 chariots of iron and there were almost no weapons among the Israelites (5:8). He little thought a tent stake in the hands of a woman would kill him before the battle was done! Compare 1 Cor. 1:27, 28. (Can't you just hear Sisera boasting to his men before the battle? "They will have to fight with hammers and tent stakes, for they have no swords; their soldiers will be no more effective than women, for they have no military training. **We have chariots of iron!**" So, today, better a **hammer** and **tent stake WITH GOD** than **hydrogen bombs** with a **Sisera!**)

6:1. These Midianites were descendents of Abraham through Keturah. See Gen. 25:3 and 1 Chron. 1:32.

6:1, 8 - 10. Here is the reason for their suffering at this time.

6:11. Gideon was of the tribe of Manasseh (v. 15) of the family of Abiezer (Josh. 17:2).

6:11, 12, 14, 20 - 24. The "Angel of the Lord" was a Christophany -- a pre-incarnation appearance of Christ. He is called "the Angel of Jehovah" in verses 12, 21, 22; "the Angel of Elohim" in v. 20; and "Jehovah" in vs. 14, 15, 16, 23, 24.

6:13. "Where are all His miracles?" This is the line of thinking that leads people to seek tongues and the gift of healing today.

6:14, 16. "Go ... have I not sent thee? ... I will be with thee." This is a good missionary challenge.

6:15, 16. "I have no strength" -- God's answer, in effect, was, "**Good!** Now go in **MY** strength!" Compare 1 Cor. 2:16-b; 3:5; 12:9, 10; Phil. 4:13.

There is a striking contrast between Gideon and Samson:

-- Gideon was a timid (6:11), doubting (6:13, 36 - 40), and weak (6:15) man -- but able

to lead his men to complete victory as he obeyed God step by step.

-- Samson was a strong (14:5, 6), daring (14:12, 19), confident (15:12 - 14), clever (14:14), and resourceful (15:15) man -- who lost his power and suffered a great defeat because he could not stay away from women who "pleased him well."

6:16. "As **one man**" -- Did God intend, originally, to use Gideon **all by himself** to save Israel? See 7:2, 4.

6:18, 20, 21. The Lord waited for the "offering" (v. 18 - NASB), it was presented (v. 20) and accepted (v. 21). It must have been a **sacrificial** gift under their hard circumstances (6:4). Compare the sacrificial gifts sent to Pharaoh by Jacob during their time of famine (Gen. 43:11).

6:21. "Fire out of the rock." Here Gideon has his first "sign." For other things out of the "rock" see Deut. 32:13. Compare Judges 13:19, 20. "That rock was Christ" (1 Cor. 10:4).

6:27. Gideon was **afraid**, but he **obeyed**. There are other indications of his obedience in spite of fear (7:10, 11 for instance). Courage is not freedom from fear, but the willingness to go on in spite of it!

6:31. "Will **you** save **him** (Baal)? What a good question! Compare 2 Sam. 6:7 where God defended His own Ark. What a challenge to idolatry!

6:33. "Then" -- was their attack a retaliation for the destruction of their god by Gideon? If so, the battle is clearly centered around which god is the true God. Gideon not only had to face his fellow Israelites, but the whole army of Midian, in his stand for the Lord.

7:2, 3. "Too many" -- surely not man's way of looking at things! He started out with 32,000 men -- not really enough in Gideon's sight, but over 100 times too many in God's sight. Even after sending 22,000 frightened men home he still had about 33 times too many. Gideon ended up with only 300 men.

7:4 - 7. We have the sovereignty of God revealed in verses 4, 5, 7, but the responsibility ("free will") of man is displayed in verse 6. In God's thinking neither of these in any way compromises the other.

7:10. He had sent 22,000 fearful men home. Now we see that Gideon himself is fearful. See v. 11. He **did** go down to the host as God had suggested, so he **was** fearful. See note at 6:27.

7:12. "As sand by the sea shore" is a figure of speech, and not to be taken literally either here or in other places where it is found. See Josh. 11:4; 1 Sam. 13:5; 2 Sam. 17:11; 1 Kings 4:20; Jer. 33:22; etc.

7:13. A "cake of barley bread" pictures the strength of Gideon and his men **in themselves**. Barley was the lowliest of food -- as near nothing as anything could be. Notice that the bread Christ used to feed the 5,000 was barley loaves also (John 6:9). -- Timothy Heath

7:16. What a way to arm soldiers!

7:17. He didn't ask them to do anything he had not done first. So in Second Corinthians four we are to allow the breaking of our "vessels of fragile clay" (2 Cor. 4:7 -- Conybeare translation) -- but **His** vessel was broken first, at Calvary. A careful study of 2 Cor. 4:6 - 13 will indicate Paul must have had the story of Gideon in mind when he wrote that great passage. The light in the vessel of clay is found in 2 Cor. 4:6, 7. The vessel is broken in verses 8, 9 resulting in light shining forth (vs. 10 - 12). Even the "sword of the Lord" is found in v. 13.

7:17. See Eph. 5:1, 2.

7:18, 20. In verse 14 the people of Midian feared the sword of **Gideon**. But Gideon has them shout, "The sword of the **LORD** -- and of Gideon." It was God's sword in Gideon's hand. So it is today with God's word in our hands (Eph. 6:17).

7:19. Those going on watch were hardly awake yet -- those coming off were just getting to sleep. What an ideal time for Gideon to spring his surprise attack!

7:22. See Haggai 2:22.

7:23, 24. Now Gideon needs help and gets it.

8:1. There are always those not courageous enough to start the battle, but who want to be in on all the glory. (Like missionaries ignoring fields where there are no workers and rushing to a field where the pioneer work has all been done, not necessarily because God directs them there, but because "God is working") See Isa. 11:13; Judges 12:1; 2 Sam. 2:8; 1 Kings 12:16. This spirit of envy eventually resulted in the division of the kingdom in the days of Rehoboam.

8:2, 3. Here is a good example of the proverb, "A soft answer turneth away wrath" (Prov. 15:1), and also of Phil. 2:3, 4.

8:6. Compare the note at v. 1. Others are not even willing to lend support to a cause until the victory is already won. They are not for one side or the other -- they are for the victors, whoever they might turn out to be. They are opportunists (like folks who look for a big church -- already built and a success -- to attend).

8:10. 120,000 had died and 15,000 are left. Evidently they originally had 135,000 men. They were defeated by Gideon's 300! That is a ratio of 450 Midianites to every Israelite!

8:13. The battle hadn't taken long!

8:14. The young man probably didn't describe each of the seventy seven men individually, but described the distinctive dress of the leaders as a group.

8:22. Here is Israel's first request for a king. Gideon, a true man of God, turned down

their offer. He told them that God was already their King (v. 23 -- compare 17:6 and note at 21:25). See John 6:15, where the Israelites of Christ's day had the right King in mind, but not at the right time (before Calvary), nor for the right reason (they just wanted Him to feed them and deliver them from the Roman oppression).

In chapter nine of Judges they received a demonstration of the truth that having a king does not solve all their problems! In the New Testament Christ refused (for the time) their demand that He be their king. The time will come when a wicked man of the flesh will make himself their king -- much to their eventual sorrow. He will be the Anti-Christ.

When Israel demanded a king again, in First Samuel, they were rebuked for rejecting God's rule over them and, in His wrath, God gave them a king who was to **their** liking (Hosea 13:11). In reality, the only king they could have who would not constitute a rejection of God's sovereign rule would be Christ (who was God as well as man). After King Saul, God gave them a man (David) who was after **HIS** heart and who was a **type** of the **real King of Israel**.

9:2 - 4. Abimelech got the job because those who were worthy of the office refused it. See vs. 8 - 14. His only "qualifications" were relationship and money.

9:5. What a high price to pay for taking a concubine!

9:8 - 14. The "olive tree" probably represents Gideon; the other trees and the vine his legitimate sons (see 8:22). The bramble, of course, represents Abimelech.

9:22. God never recognized Abimelech as a true king of Israel. He was no more than a usurper to the throne.

11:1, 2. They have "gone a whoring after other gods" yet are very self-righteous about physical harlotry.

11:7. Jephthah reacted just as God had in the last chapter (10:10 - 14, verse 14 specially).

11:9. So God must have thought in 10:14 - 16. Will they just put away their idols until they are out of trouble, or will they truly make **Him** their **Head**?

11:13. Jephthah's answer to the Ammonites:

-- They could have kept their land when the Exodus took place. Both Edom and Moab refused to let Israel go through their land, but they did not **fight** Israel, and Israel did not fight them (vs. 17, 18). The Ammonites **did** fight against Israel. The loss of their land was their own fault.

-- It was **GOD** who gave the land to Israel. Let them be satisfied with what **their god** gave to **them** (vs. 23, 24).

-- Their claims are being filed too late! Why have they waited 300 years to get their land back? This was a "statute of limitations" argument (v. 26. See Num. 21:21 - 31).

11:26. A time marker. The time is probably not exact, but "rounded out."

11:31. According to Lev. 27:2 the daughter would not die, but a price set by the priest would be paid instead: ten shekels if she was under twenty (27:5) and 30 if she was over 20 (27:4).

He **could not** plan to offer as a burnt offering **anything** which came forth to meet him, for the burnt offering had to be a **clean** animal. What if a **dog** had come forth?

It is also hard to believe that the God who stopped Abraham from offering Isaac would allow Jephthah to offer his daughter. She could, however, "be the Lord's" and hence remain a virgin (see v. 39). It was her **virginity** she bewailed, not a coming **death** (v. 38). See Lev. 27:2, 4 (NASB). That this kind of a situation is in view (in Leviticus) is clear from Lev. 27:9. When it is an animal that can be offered (a clean one) it is offered. If unclean, then, like the man or woman earlier, he is to value it and offer the **price** of it to the Lord. Since she was his only child, to have her never marry meant that he would have no one to continue his family -- which would, indeed, bring him "very low" (v. 35).

12:1 - 3. Here is the second instance of the jealousy of Ephraim. See 8:1. They have a belated zeal. They wouldn't venture anything for the Lord, but **after** the venture of another proves **successful, then** they want in on it! They didn't really want to take part in the battle, they just wanted to share the **victory**.

Actually their protest was invalid. Jephthah **had** called them, but they did not come. They had had their chance to have a part in the battle and had missed it.

They were slow to fight the **enemy** (vs. 2, 3), but were "Johnnie on the spot" to fight their brethren: they were unwilling to deliver their brethren ("ye **would** not-" -- v. 3 NASB), but zealous to burn their houses upon them with fire! There are too many like this in the churches today!

12:6. The expression "shibboleths of the faith" is used to describe minute and inconsequential differences of doctrine which are used to divide believers. Here, however, the value of the "shibboleth" was not the mere inability to pronounce a word (which would, indeed, be incidental), but the fact that this inability indicated who they were -- the enemies of Gilead! There are some things in doctrine which may be incidental in themselves, but which have great importance because they indicate that the ones in question do not really believe the word of God and are, indeed, the enemies of the Cross!

12:9. Here, as in verse 14, is proof that these men, as others during this time and later, had many wives.

Chapters 13 through 16. There are a number of interesting comparisons between Samson and the apostle Paul:

-- **Samson** was a Nazarite from his mother's womb (13:5). **Paul** was separated from his mother's womb (Gal. 1:15) and took a voluntary Nazarite vow as a believer (Acts 18:18).

-- **Samson's** first recorded words were, "I have seen a woman ... get her for me" (14:2). He continued, "She is right in my eyes" (14:3 -- NASB). He saw a *woman* and manifested **self** will. **Paul's** first recorded words were, "Who art Thou ... what wilt Thou have me to do?" (Acts 9:5, 6). He saw *Christ* and yielded to **HIS** will.

-- **Samson** told a riddle involving sweetness out of the death of the king of the beasts (14:12: - 14). **Paul** revealed a secret involving blessing out of the death of Christ, the King of

kings.

-- **Samson** brought death and destruction to Philistines, who were Gentiles (14:19; 15:8, 15; 16:30). **Paul** brought grace and life to Gentiles.

-- **Samson** revealed the secret of his strength (16:17) and lost it (16:19). **Paul** revealed the secret of his strength (2 Cor. 12:9, 10) that He might share it with us.

-- **Samson** **BEGAN** to deliver Israel (13:5). **Paul finished** his course and fought a good fight (Acts 20:24; 2 Tim. 4:7).

-- **Samson** yielded to lusts of the flesh, his body was brought into bondage, and he was disqualified. **Paul** kept his body in bondage to Christ so he would not be disqualified (1 Cor. 9:26, 27).

-- **Samson** spent the last part of his life in prison -- entertaining the Philistines (16:25). **Paul** spent the last years of his life in prison also, but during that time he led many of his guards to Christ and wrote the most important letters ever written.

-- **Samson** was more effective in death than he was in life (16:30). **Paul** was more effective in life because he had already died, and died daily (1 Cor. 15:31; 2 Cor. 4:8 - 12).

13:8. We also need God's direction in raising and training our children. See v. 12. See also Deut. 6:7 - 9; Psa. 78:4 - 6.

13:12. "And Manoah said, 'Now **when** your words come to pass -'" (NASB). He did not say "**IF**" -- this is faith. See v. 17 also.

13:16. He must **not** offer it to one who is not **known by him** to be the Lord. In view of v. 22, the angel of the Lord **was** the Lord (Jehovah) in **manifestation** (as is Christ today and forever in **incarnation**) but Manoah did not **know it at that time**. The "angel of the Lord" in the OT is usually a pre-incarnation appearance of God the Son (John 1:18).

13:18. "Secret" is the same Hebrew word translated "Wonderful" in Isa. 9:6.

13:19, 20. See 6:21.

13:21. "**An** angel of the Lord" is translated "**The** angel of the Lord" in the NASB.

13:21 - 23. The **vision** or **initial experience** does not linger or recur, but the **responsibility it brings** continues. "Do not doubt in the darkness what God has shown you in the light."

14:2. The first recorded words of Samson give us a key to his character. His great problem was his preoccupation with women. Paul went to the other extreme and did not have a wife (during the time of his ministry at least).

4:15. "Seventh day" is "fourth day" in the NASB. Compare 15:6. What she feared happened anyway.

14:16. How many women have used this approach with great success! Compare 16:15, 16.

14:17. Perhaps "the seven days" is a semi-technical expression for the set period, not meaning that she wept each of the seven. Or, perhaps, she had been trying to find out the secret, due to pure curiosity, even before the men put the pressure on her.

14:19. He evidently left in anger and did not take his new wife with him at this time, so the bride was given to the "Best Man" (v. 20). See 15:1 where he is finally ready for the "honeymoon."

15:11. They failed to recognize the deliverer God had sent and were willing to sacrifice him to keep peace with their oppressors. Compare John 11:48 - 53. Samson finally gave his life to help deliver his people. So the Jews delivered Christ over to Pilate, and He gave His life for His people (and US!).

15:15. See Numbers 6:9. Why didn't Samson shave his head when 1,000 Philistines died very suddenly by him (because he was the one who had killed them)? Does the fact that he was a Nazirite from birth and by God's appointment, rather than by his own choice and as a vow, make the difference?

See Joshua 23:8, **10!**

A **new** jawbone -- probably with rotting flesh still clinging to it -- could be one of the "base things" which "God hath chosen" (1 Cor. 1:28).

15:18, 19. Here is Samson's first recorded prayer.

The hollow place from which the water came was in the **hill** that was named "En-hak-kor-e" (meaning "the hill of the **jawbone**"), not from the jawbone itself.

16:16, 17. She didn't bother to hide her purpose, and he had had three demonstrations that she wasn't kidding! How blind love is! Samson may have not really believed he would lose his power, he had had it so long. This seems to be borne out by verse 20.

Here is a demonstration of the power of "nagging." He would rather be dead than to continue to endure it.

16:19. Now he is helpless, even against a woman.

16:21. See the results of his loss of separation to God: loss of power; blindness; bondage; drudgery. Praise the Lord, his hair began to grow again!

16:23, 24. Their boasting about **their** god was a fatal mistake. Now Israel's God will defend His own name!

16:27. This "roof" must have been a balcony. "While Samson made sport" is translated "While Samson was amusing them" by the NASB.

16:28. Here is Samson's second and last recorded prayer.

Chapters 17 - 21.

These chapters are meant to illustrate the kind of things that were happening in Israel, which caused God to give them into the hands of their enemies. The passage begins and ends with the statement, "**Every man did that which was right -- in his own eyes.**" What terrible things were "right" **in their own eyes!** This is the humanist approach to morals! See Deut. 12:8.

Also, if Samuel was the human author of this book (at least a possibility), these chapters could be a justification for Israel demanding a king. These things were happening when, and by implication because, **they had no king.** The book of Ruth gives us a glimpse into what was going on during this very time in the lives of those who knew that they **did** have a king -- **GOD.** The book of Esther gives us a glimpse of the situation faced by Israel when, after they had had many kings, they had continued doing what was right in their own eyes -- **kings and all.** See Class Notes on the book of Ruth.

Notice that this section (chapters 17 - 21), where we have such a portrayal of life in Israel when there was "no king," begins with a man named Jonathan (18:30). "Jonathan" means "Whom Jehovah gave." He was from Bethlehem-Judah (the place where David and Christ were to be born). See the mention of Bethlehem-Judah in Judges 17:7, 8, 9; 19:1, 2, 18. "Bethlehem" is mentioned also in the book of Ruth (Ruth 1:1, 2, 19, 22; 2:4; 4:11). Both Judges and Ruth form a background and justification for David being chosen as king of Israel.

17:2, 3. She is happy, not because he took the silver, but because he confessed and, evidently, returned it. In v. 3 (NASB) "I wholly dedicate the silver from my hand to the **Lord** [Jehovah] for my son to make a **graven image** -." She is surely "using the name of the Lord in vain" as well as becoming involved in idolatry.

17:6. "No king in Israel" -- Compare 8:23; 18:1; 19:1; 21:25. Compare Numbers 23:21, 22 with 1 Sam. 8:7 and see the meaning of the name "Elimelech" ("My God is King") in Ruth 1:2, 3.

17:7. The Levites were scattered among the other tribes. Evidently this Levite was one who had been put in Judah to minister to them. He was of the family of Judah much as in 17:11 he became part of the house of Micah. Compare 19:1.

17:10 - 13. "Father Jonathan" was to be "as one of his sons" (vs. 10, 11). This sounds like the Catholic Church, and like the **boyish** "Elders" of the Mormon Church. He was a hireling. His ministry was for sale, and he was willing to minister to idols! He was "content" (v. 11), so all this must have been "right" in his eyes! Micah was not trusting in the Lord, he was trusting in the priest. It didn't work (18:24)!

18:3. "What makest thou?" I.e. "What is your salary?" / "What hast thou here?" I.e. "What are the fringe benefits?" / "They **knew the voice.**" Either they knew him personally, or (more likely) they recognized his accent as being that of his home in Judah.

18:7. The people of Laish were "isolationists." Their isolation gave them a false sense of security.

18:20. Jonathan was a true hireling. What really interested him was that he would have

a larger congregation (like a "church" today) and a higher salary.

18:21. They were expecting an attack from the rear, so they put their families and belongings in front of them for safety.

18:24. When Micah's religious equipment was gone he had **nothing**. Contrast Naomi who had lost everything -- but had the All Sufficient God ("Almighty" means "All sufficient" in the Hebrew), a loving daughter in law, and a Kinsman Redeemer (Ruth 1:21). Man-made gods cannot even protect themselves! See Judges 6:31.

19:23, 24. Compare Genesis 19:7, 8.

20:16. "Not miss" is from a Hebrew word for "sin." I.e. sin is "missing the mark."

20:18. The woman who had been so mistreated was from Judah.

21:3. They should have thought of this problem before!

21:7. Evidently they had killed the women in the cities.

21:17. It was necessary to have **all twelve** tribes intact. Compare Ezra 6:17 and Acts 1:22 (with Matt. 19:28). It is unthinkable that, after the emphasis in the OT on **all** the tribes coming to Jerusalem for the feasts, one tribe should lack an official representative at the **fulfillment** of the feast of Pentecost! It **was** necessary, as Peter wisely pointed out, for the one replacing Judas to be appointed before Pentecost! Peter was not merely acting in the flesh and getting ahead of the Lord, he was following Scripture as led by the Spirit.

21:17. It was well that this tribe did not perish, for from Benjamin came their first king, Saul, and Paul, the Apostle to the Gentiles.

21:25. Contrast the meaning of the name "Elimelech" ("My God is King" -- Ruth 1:2) and compare 1 Sam. 8:7. For Israel as a whole there was **no king** and no one to restrain their actions. The believing remnant recognized **God** as King -- hence the contrast between Judges 17 -- 21 and the book of Ruth (both portraying the same era in Palestine). See also 1 Sam. 12:12; Judges 8:23; Deut. 23:21; 33:5.

--- William P Heath

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