

## Lesson #10

**PREPARATION FOR LESSON:** read Judges 2, 3:1-6; chapters 6, 7, 13, 14, 15, 16

### BACKGROUND

**Author and Date:** Levite historians wrote down events over a 300 year period 1325-1050 BC.

Levite scribes compiled this book from the historical records c. 1030 BC in the days of King Saul.  
Jews believe that Samuel was the final editor.

**Theme:** 300 years of failure

**Purposes:** To have a permanent record about the 300 years of failure in Jewish history and why it happened.

To show that when God's people disobey, there are always consequences.

To show that when they ignore His commands, they make foolish choices that bring chaos.

To show that when God's people repent, in mercy He will forgive and restore them.

To show why the Canaanites **had** to be destroyed.

God knew that to live *with* the Canaanites was to live *like* the Canaanites.

**Main Persons:** Gideon, Samson

### OUTLINE 300 Years of Failure

- I. Reason: Disobedience 1:1 - 3:6
- II. Examples 3:7 - 16:31
- III. Result: Chaos 17 - 21  
there was religious, moral and political chaos

### DEFINITIONS

**Judge:** A leader who delivers the people thru warfare.

These judges were occasional leaders God raised up after Joshua, in order to rescue the Jews from their enemies.

They did not automatically succeed each other or rule nationally; some ruled at the same time but in different areas.

**Baal** was the male god of fertility; he gave fertility to the womb and rain to the ground; represented by a bull.

**Asherahs** were a grove of trees where Baal was worshipped thru prostitution.

**Asherah pole** was a sex symbol to encourage the people in prostitution.

**Asherah** was the goddess mother of Baal.

**Ashteroth** was the goddess wife of Baal; the fertility goddess.

When people wanted a baby, a good harvest or wanted their animals to reproduce they went to Baal and Ashteroth, the fertility gods. According to their thinking, until the gods had a sexual relationship, they could not give fertility to the people. So the people went to the grove of trees to worship these 2 gods thru prostitution. There were male and female prostitutes set aside for that purpose. They were called priests and priestesses or "holy ones". They called their action religious prostitution. They believed this form of "worship" was the only way their gods would have a relationship with each other and then give them fertility for their land, animals or families. This was the emphasis and focus of the Canaanite religions.

### KEY PHRASES

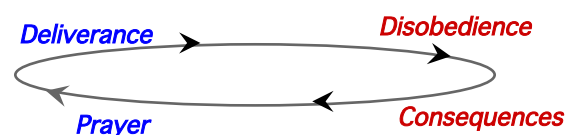
- *Everyone did as he saw fit* (used 2 times in the book)
- *They forsook Yahweh* (4 times)
- *They did evil in the sight of Yahweh* (6 times)
- *They did not drive out* \_\_\_\_\_ (9 times)

### KEY IDEAS

**The chapters** are not in chronological order. They are arranged by *topic*

Each division of the outline is a different viewpoint of the same 300 years

**The book** describes **6 cycles** of disobedience, consequences, prayer and deliverance



### EXPLANATIONS

**Chapter 6** **Gideon** is judge c. 1179-1139 BC

#### Preparation of Gideon

God **guides** him as he is doing the mundane;

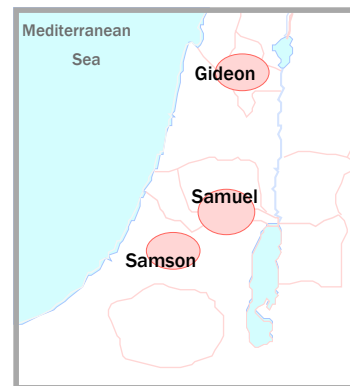
He tells him he is the next leader/judge.

God **commands** him to separate himself from his family's idolatry.

God **assures** him thru the "fleece tests";

According to Hebrews 11, Gideon is a "hero of faith".

**Preparation of the army:** God limits their size and battle plans so they know the victory is from Him.



**Chapters 13 - 16** **Samson** is judge some 100 years after Gideon c. 1080-1060 BC

**His beginning:** a Nazirite; he was dedicated to God for life 13:4-5 *nazir* means *consecrated person*

The outward signs were: ...not to eat or drink any form of the grape

...not to cut his hair

...not to touch any dead body or carcass

**His Life:** He had super-human strength, a violent temper that was out of control and a weakness for women.

*Samson, when strong and brave, strangled a lion; but he could not strangle his own love. He burst the fetters of his foes, but not the cords of his own lusts. He burned up the crops of others and lost the fruit of his own virtue when burning with the flame enkindled by a single woman.* St. Ambrose c. 375 AD.

Samson lost his eyesight because...

even as spiritual leader, he persisted in doing what was right in his own **eyes**.

when his parents corrected him about his first wife, he said, *She is right in my eyes*.

it was his physical eyes that continually led him away from God.

Think of the man Samson might have been if only he had followed God's ways.

Are we missing out in what God has for us because we refuse to obey His commands?

**Chapter 21:25** The reason for the religious, moral and political chaos

God's people were unwilling to follow God and to live by His commands.

God's judgment was to let them experience the results of their choices; they had chaos.

**APPLICATION:** God brings judgment on a nation when the majority insists on doing what is right in their own eyes.

**1<sup>st</sup> Stage** He sends problems to awaken the conscience, to show people they need Him.

It is to draw the nation back to God. If the majority does not listen, there is a second stage.

**2<sup>nd</sup> Stage** God lets a nation do what it wants. He steps aside and takes His hands off of society Romans 1:18-32

His judgment is to let people have the results of their choices. **It will always be chaos.**

The nation will have political, religious and moral chaos.

If the nation still does not respond, He sends the third stage.

**3<sup>rd</sup> Stage** God makes the nation insignificant and irrelevant.

God no longer uses it for good in the lives of its people or with other nations.

The United States is in the 2<sup>nd</sup> stage of judgment. We are experiencing political, religious and moral chaos.

As individuals, we cannot change the nation, the government or society in general.

But we can let God change **us**. **We** can be committed to follow God and His ways.

*Where sin increases, grace increases all the more.* Rom. 5:20

When darkness is the greatest, God's light is all the brighter.

God is in control and is still actively working in the lives of individuals.

Are we letting Him work in **our** life?

