

# God's Providence in God's People

Contra Costa Gospel Church  
Adult Sunday School

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## THE JUDGES

Moses, as leader of Israel, was to resemble the coming Messiah. He did that indeed, but also fell short of being "just" like the Messiah, which should have caused the people to long for someone better. Joshua, as leader of Israel, was also to resemble the Messiah. He also did that, but upon his death, Israel was left again to long for someone better. This leads us to the Period of the Judges.

This was a time in Israel, as the author states, in which there was no king in place (17:6; 18:1; 19:1; 21:25). No king meant no leader; no leader meant no direction and guidance; no guidance meant no faithfulness. This was the prevailing attitude during this time, that Israel was faithless to her God, and according to the author it was because she did not have a king. What do you think the author's point of saying this is?

However, they did have judges - military leaders who were raised up by the Lord to lead Israel during battle-time. Perhaps these leaders would be individuals who would be exemplary in their faiths and lead Israel to be equally faithful. We shall see...

- 1) When we look at the Period of the Judges, there is a recurring cycle the nation of Israel repeats over and over again. Read the following passages and identify the parts of this cycle:

Judges 2:11-13	
Judges 2:14-15	
Judges 2:16-18	
Judges 2:19	

Whenever the Israelites sinned against the Lord and did not follow the commands of the Lord, the Lord sent the nations to invade them and attack them. Why is it that Israel should have known this was going to happen to them each time?

- 2) There are 12 judges mentioned in this book, but not all are handled with the same amount of detail. This is an interpretive clue from the author that this isn't book about the judges "in general," but more so it's a book about the specific judges he wants to mention. Take a look at this list of judges and jot down how many verses each judge gets about him/her.

Judge	Verses
<u>Othniel</u> (starting at 3:9)	
<u>Ehud</u> (starting at 3:15)	
<u>Shamgar</u> (starting at 3:31)	
<u>Deborah and Barak</u> (starting at 4:4)	
<u>Gideon</u> (starting at 6:11)	
<u>Tola</u> (starting at 10:1)	
<u>Jair</u> (starting at 10:3)	
<u>Jephthah</u> (starting at 11:1)	
<u>Ibzan</u> (starting at 12:8)	
<u>Elon</u> (starting at 12:11)	
<u>Abdon</u> (starting at 12:13)	
<u>Samson</u> (starting at 13:24)	

What we're going to find in this book is that each prominent judge led Israel for a time, defeating her enemies, but because he/she was not the spiritual leader that Israel needed, Israel always returned to her ways of faithlessness after the passing of every judge. Not only this, but despite the resounding success of each of these judges in their military conquests, every one of them had a glaring weakness (like Moses and other prominent Israelite heroes), prompting Israel time and again to long for a time when their leader would be someone they could look up to, someone they could revere and be proud of, someone honorable they could serve.