

INTERACTIVE TRAVEL GUIDE

DESTINATION: *Judges 1-10*

The name of the book comes from the leading characters that were of the divinely appointed office of Judge. These people were raised up from time to time to provide leadership during times of emergency between Joshua and the kingdom under Saul. The Judges had two functions: (1) To be a military leader and to deliver their people from oppression and (2) To be a civil leader, to settle disputes and maintain justice.

CALENDAR OF EVENTS:

1405-1400 b.c.

The land of Canaan is conquered

1400 - 1050 b.c.

Israel ruled by judges and not kings

1398 b.c.

Canaan is divided amongst the tribes

1380 b.c.

The death of Joshua

1370 b.c.

Othniel becomes Judge over Israel

1310 b.c.

Ehud is judge over Israel

1230 b.c.

Deborah's great victory over Sisera

1190 b.c.

Gideon leads Israel

1100 b.c.

Samson fights the Philistines.

1050 b.c.

Saul is anointed king of Israel

TRIP PLANNER:

The book of Judges can be divided into two sections describing seven cycles of deliverance. Whereas Joshua is the story of conquest, Judges describes the process of deterioration from conquest to compromise. The nation of Israel is caught in the cycle of sin and each cycle results in ever worsening conditions.

1. Deterioration – Judges 1-3
2. Deliverance in 7 Cycles (Five are mentioned in this first section)
 - a. Deborah – Judges 4-5
 - b. Gideon – Judges 6-8
 - c. Abimelech – Judges 9
 - d. Tola – Judges 10
 - e. Jair – Judges 10

PLACES OF INTEREST:

Ashdod – Sat about mid way between Gaza and Joppa about 3 miles from the Mediterranean Sea. It was the chief seat of the god Dagon. Ashdod was a part of Judah but never actually came under its control. It sat on the main highway between Egypt and Palestine and was heavily fortified. One of five major cities of the Philistine Kingdom.

Ashkelon – First mentioned in Joshua 13:3, this city was 12 miles north of Gaza on the shore of the Mediterranean Sea. Ashkelon fell back into Philistine hands by the time of Samuel. It was not fully defeated until the time of Alexander the Great. One of five major cities of the Philistine Kingdom.

City of Palms – Another name for Jericho.

Ekron – About 11 miles north of Gath, this town also was assigned to the tribe of Judah and later was assigned to Dan. However, by the time of Samuel, the town was in full possession by the Philistines. When the Philistines had captured the Ark of the Covenant, Ekron was the last city they had had possession before it was returned to Israel. One of five major cities of the Philistine Kingdom.

Gath – Gath was the birthplace of Goliath. David fled from Saul to the king of Gath and later conquered the city. The Ark of the Covenant brought calamity to this city also. One of five major cities of the Philistine Kingdom.

Gaza – It is one of the oldest cities in the world first mentioned in Genesis 10. The earliest citizens of this area were called Avims and they were conquered and replaced in the area by the Caphtorims who were a Philistine tribe. Gaza was the southernmost of five major cities of the Philistine Kingdom.

Midian – Located in the Arabian Peninsula, southeast of Israel and east of the Sinai Peninsula. The Midianites were descendants of Abraham through his wife Keturah. Midianites were considered enemies of Israel.

Mount Zalmon – The location of this mount is uncertain. Some scholars identify it with Mount Ebal, northwest of Schechem. Others identify it with Mount Gerizim. The snow covered Mount Zalmon mentioned in Psalms appears to be a different place.

PEOPLE OF INTEREST:

Abimelech – From the tribe of Manessah, he was the son of Gideon by a concubine and was a wicked Judge of the land. He murdered all of his brothers in an attempt to rule Israel. He actually ruled only the city of Shechem. He was killed by a woman who crushed his skull with a millstone. This ended a time of turmoil within the nation of Israel.

Amorites – Canaanite people living in the central hill country of Canaan. They blocked the entry of Dan into the region.

Barak – From the tribe of Naphtali. He is listed in the Hebrews as one of the "Heroes of the Faith." He served under Deborah as a military leader and was urged by Deborah to raise an army and defeat Sisera. This ended 20 years of oppression and started a 40-year period of peace.

Deborah – From the tribe of Ephraim, she became the 4th Judge. She was both a prophetess and a Judge and the wife of Lapidoth. Deborah along with Barak defeated Sisera's forces at the battle of Mt. Tabor. She also predicted Sisera's death at the hands of a woman. The Song of Deborah tells the story.

Eglon – The very fat Moabite king who was fatally stabbed by Ehud the Judge.

Ehud – From the tribe of Benjamin. The 2nd Judge who was left handed. He killed Eglon, the fat Moabite king. Under his jurisdiction Israel had peace for 80 years. Afterwards they were in servitude for 18 years.

Gideon – From the tribe of Manasseh, the son of Joash, he became the 5th Judge. The Angel of the Lord found him in a wine press threshing wheat. He led an army of 300 men chosen by God to defeat a massive Midianite army. Tactics used were; torch showing, pitcher breaking, trumpet blowing and a loud battle cry. Also listed in the Hall of Faith in Hebrews.

Jair – The 7th Judge of Israel and the third minor judge. He judged Israel for 22 years and lived in Gilead.

Joash – Gideon's father. He gave wise answers to a mob of angry idol worshippers and saved his son's life.

Othniel - From the tribe of Judah. He was the nephew of Caleb and later became his son-in-law. He was the first Judge after he liberated Israel from the reign of the King of Mesopotamia. Under his jurisdiction Israel had peace for 40 years.

Shagmar - He killed 600 Philistines with an ox goad and delivered Israel. He is the 3rd Judge of Israel and the 1st minor judge. His name is not Hebrew, but his father had a Hebrew name. It is possible that he was a foreigner that God used to deliver Israel.

Sisera - While Jabin was king of the Canaanites, Sisera was the commander in chief of the army. His 900 chariots were used to keep the Israelites oppressed for 20 years. He was later defeated in battle by Deborah and Barak. Eventually he was killed in his sleep by a woman named Jael.

Tola - The 6th Judge of Israel and the second of the minor judges. He arose to save Israel after the reign of Abimelech.

FUN FACTS:

Angel of the LORD - During the accounts of the Book of Judges, the Angel Of The Lord appears at least 4 times. Many think that this is a bodily appearance of the Lord Jesus Christ.

Ashtoreth - A female fertility goddess of love and war. This false god was closely associated with Baal. Also referred to as Ishtar in Mesopotamia. The Canaanites built shrines to Ashtoreth.

Baal - The Canaanite storm-god. He was the most powerful deity in Canaanite cosmology. A storm represented power, but also life giving rain. Baal-Berith means Baal of the Covenant in contrast to the covenant God of Israel.

House Of Joseph - Ephraim and Manasseh who split the inheritance of Joseph their father. Each received equal portions of land to the other tribes of Israel. Combined, their portions of land would make Joseph's allotment the largest of all the tribes of Israel, thus fulfilling God's promise to bless Joseph above His brothers.

Tent Pegs - Tent pegs were used to fasten a tent to the ground. Because of the hard rocky soil in Palestine, they had to be sharp. The tents had leather cords fastened to the side walls that were pulled out to give more room on the inside. These leather straps were also held in the ground with a tent peg.

Threshing out the Wheat - The process of separating the grain from the wheat. This is also called "beating out the wheat." This was done by trampling on it or by pounding it with a heavy club. Usually animals were used to trample the wheat. After the grain was separated from the stalks, it was strained through a sieve to remove the dirt and then thrown up into the wind where the lighter useless chaff was blown away and the heavier grain fell to the ground. The grain was ground into flour and used to bake bread.

Watchtowers - Towers that were used as fortification for a city and to watch for the approaching enemy. Some of these towers could hold hundreds of people. Many vineyards would build watchtowers of mud and stones to watch for thieves who would try to steal their crop.

Winepress - A winepress was usually built on the edge of a vineyard. The grapes were picked by women. They would carry the grapes in large baskets to the winepress which looked like a large tub made of stone. Emptied into the tub, the grapes were stomped on by men and their bare feet. The men would keep their balance by hanging onto ropes that were tied to a crossbeam above the tub. The juice was then stored in wineskins and clay jars.

MAPS:

Figure 1: Limits of Israelite Settlement and The Land Yet To Be Conquered

