

INTERACTIVE TRAVEL GUIDE

DESTINATION: *Judges 11-21*

This second part of Judges shows the fragile nature of these judges and a people who "did what was right in their own eyes." Jephthah's foolish vow, Samson's turning to his own lusts, Micah's corruption of religion and the tribe of Dan not settling in their given land. The story degenerates from there to the people of Gibeah in Benjamin losing all sense of morals and raping an innocent woman followed by the near destruction of the tribe of Benjamin at the hands of other Israelite tribes. This period of time develops into a very dark period of Jewish history.

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

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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 second part of the book of Judges continues to describe the cycles of sin and deliverance. With each cycle, Israel falls deeper into idolatry, immorality and controversy. The final chapters of Judges describes Israel in chaos and civil war.

1. Deliverance in 7 Cycles (Two are mentioned in this second section)
 - a. Jephthah – Judges 11-12
 - b. Samson – Judges 13-16
2. Discord amongst the tribes – Judges 17-21

PLACES OF INTEREST:

Fords of The Jordan - Crossing points across the Jordan River of strategic military value. They were also referred to as the "watering places."

Gilead - Located in the northern part of the territory east of the Jordan. The Gileadites were descended from a man named Gilead.

Land of Tob - An area east of Gilead.

Temple of Dagon - Dagon was the national god of the Philistines. All throughout the land cities built temples to Dagon. Samson was held prisoner in Gaza which had one of these temples (Judges 16:23-31). The temples were of simple design and supported by pillars made of mud and stone. Inside, priests sacrificed many things to Dagon including children. Samson in his dying effort, pulled down the pillars, destroying this temple, killing himself and 3,000 Philistines.

Timnah - A town on the northwest border of Judah. By Samson's day it was occupied by the Philistines.

Zorah - Located in the foothills about 15 miles west of Jerusalem, near Philistine territory. Originally this town belonged to the tribe of Dan, but they were forced north by the power of the Philistines who occupied territory to the west. The town that Samson's parents lived. Samson was probably born there.

PEOPLE OF INTEREST:

Abdon - From the tribe of Ephraim, the 11th Judge. He ruled for 8 years. He had 40 sons and 30 grandsons who rode on 70 young donkeys.

Delilah - She was a woman from the Valley of Sorek who Samson fell for when he came to the city of Gaza. She was crafty, beautiful and money hungry as she led Samson into one trap after another that led to his enslavement and death.

Elon - From the tribe of Zebulun, he was the 10th Judge. He ruled for 10 years and was buried in Ajjalon in Zebulun.

Ibzan - From either the tribe of Judah or Zebulun. He was from Bethlehem. He ruled for 7 years and was Israel's 9th judge.

Jephthah - From the tribe of Manasseh he was the son of a harlot. He was driven away from his family by his half brothers. He became the judge after 18 years of oppression and ruled for 6 years. He was a mighty warrior and he defeated the Ammorites. In the end he made a foolish vow offering up his daughter as a burnt offering. He defeated the men of Ephraim who had been complaining to him.

Manoah - Samson's father. Prayed for the return of the Man of God to direct them about the soon to be born Samson (Judges 13:2).

Micah - He was a man from the mountains of Ephraim. He was at the heart of the nations fall into apostasy. With the help of his over indulgent mother, he became an idol worshipper and led others into a similar state (Judges 17:1).

Pinchas - The one who stopped the plague at Peor. The fact that he was still alive shows that the organization of the Book of Judges is not strictly chronological.

Samson - From the tribe of Dan, the last and strongest of all Judges. Samson's birth was announced by the Angel of the Lord. He was a Nazarite from his birth. Samson was the arch enemy of the Philistines.

FUN FACTS:

Nazarite Vow - Whoever took the Nazarite vow was setting their life aside for total devotion and service to God. The vow could be taken for as little as 30 days or for a lifetime. One who took the Nazarite vow was not allowed to cut their hair or shave their beard. They were not to drink wine or any kind of strong drink and were not allowed to touch a dead body, even if it were a close relative.

Shibboleth . . . Sibboleth - This test devised by the Gileadites to catch the Ephraimites is the most famous example in the Bible of linguistic differences between the tribes. The Gileadites chose the word because the "s" sound at the beginning was pronounced "sh" by one side and "s" by the other.

Warriors - Jephthah was called a mighty warrior or a mighty man of valor. These warriors were not ordinary soldiers. These people possessed extraordinary bravery, courage and strength. They were able to demonstrate a fearless nature and great skills in battle. King David had his own group of mighty men who were so strong and so skilled that they were able to singlehandedly kill entire troops of enemy soldiers.

MAPS:

Figure 1: Palestine in the time of Judges

