

# JUDGES

## "ISRAEL'S CYCLICAL SPIRITUAL AND MORAL DECLENSION IN THE DAYS OF THE JUDGES"

"In those days there was no king in Israel; everyone did what was right in his own eyes."  
Judges 21:25

Prepared by James T. Bartsch  
May, 2008  
Updated August 15, 2019

Published Online by [WordExplain.com](http://WordExplain.com)  
Email Contact: [jbartsch@wordexplain.com](mailto:jbartsch@wordexplain.com)

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- A1 ISRAEL'S FAILURE TO CONQUER THE LAND 1
- A2 THE THEOLOGICAL ANALYSIS OF ISRAEL'S CYCLICAL  
APOSTASY AND IDOLATRY 2:1 - 3:5
- A3 A SUCCESSION OF ISRAELI LAPSES, SERVITUDES, AND DIVINE  
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- A4 HISTORICAL ILLUSTRATIONS OF ISRAEL'S ABYSMAL FAILURE  
TO ABIDE BY THE LAW 17 - 21

MAJOR DIVISIONS OF JUDGES  
Based on the ANALYSIS OF JUDGES  
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**CONDENSED OUTLINE OF JUDGES**

Based on the ANALYSIS OF JUDGES

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**B3 Shamgar's Deliverance of Israel from the Philistines 3:31**

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- C2 The commissioning of Barak 4:4-10
- C3 The location of Heber the Kenite 4:11
- C4 Yahweh's routing of Sisera by Barak and his troops 4:12-16
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- C6 Israel's destruction by the hand of God of Jabin, King of Canaan 4:23-24
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- C2 Yahweh's response to Israel's cry 6:7-40
- C3 Gideon's successful overthrow of Midian with the aid of Yahweh 7 - 8
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- B6 The False Reign of Abimelech 9**
  - C1 Abimelech's murderous acquisition of the throne 9:1-6
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  - B3 Israel's sorrowful rebuilding of the tribe of Benjamin 21**

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C 2 Ehud's decisive action against Eglon 3:15-25

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C 3 The location of Heber the Kenite 4:11

C 4 Yahweh's routing of Sisera by Barak and his troops 4:12-16

C 5 Jael's execution of Sisera 4:17-22

C 6 Israel's destruction by the hand of God of Jabin, King of Canaan 4:23-24

C 7 Deborah and Barak's song 5<sup>1</sup>

D 1 The heading of the hymn 5:1

D 2 Praise by Deborah 5:2-11

D 3 The song of victory 5:12-30

D 4 The curse on all Yahweh's enemies; the forty years' rest 5:31

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<sup>1</sup> Judges 5 - Deborah and Barak's song: The outline for chapter 5 adapted from *The Bible Knowledge Commentary* by Dallas Theological Seminary faculty.

**B 5 The Servitude of Israel to Midian and the Deliverance by Gideon 6 - 8**

- C 1 The Midianite oppression of Israel 6:1-6
- C 2 Yahweh's response to Israel's cry 6:7-40
  - D 1 His sending of a prophet to Israel to blame her for her idolatry with Amorite gods 6:7-10
  - D 2 His calling of Gideon 6:11-40
    - E 1 The angel of Yahweh's dialogue with Gideon 6:11-24
    - E 2 Yahweh's instruction to Gideon to strike a blow against idolatry 6:25-32
    - E 3 Gideon's muster of troops against the gathered Midianites and Amalekites 6:33-35
    - E 4 Gideon's successful additional requests for signs 6:36-40
- C 3 Gideon's successful overthrow of Midian with the aid of Yahweh 7 - 8
  - D 1 Yahweh's paring down the army to such a small size that all would know a successful battle would be Yahweh's doing, not Israel's 7:1-8
  - D 2 Yahweh's gracious provision of another confidence-building sign: The Midianite's dream of Israel's triumph over Midian 7:9-14
  - D 3 Gideon's plan for a nocturnal audio-visual presentation to the enemy troops: Trumpets, torches, and battle cry 7:15-18
  - D 4 The demoralization of the surrounded Midianite army 7:19-22
  - D 5 The summoning of Israeli help; the execution of Midianite leaders Oreb and Zeeb 7:23-25
  - D 6 Gideon's placation of Ephraimite jealousy 8:1-3
  - D 7 The refusal of Succoth to aid Gideon's 300; Gideon's threat 8:4-7
  - D 8 The refusal of Peniel; Gideon's threat 8:8-9
  - D 9 Gideon's successful ambush of 15,000 Midianite troops; his capture of Zebah and Zalmunna, Midianite kings 8:10-12
  - D 10 Gideon's retaliation against Succoth and Peniel 8:13-17
  - D 11 Gideon's execution of Zebah and Zalmunna 8:18-21

- C 4 The course of events following Gideon's victory 8:22-35
  - D 1 Gideon's refusal to rule Israel as king<sup>2</sup> 8:22-23
  - D 2 Gideon's unfortunate construction of an ephod; Israel's forty years' peace 8:24-28
  - D 3 Gideon's seventy sons and Abimelech by a Shechemite concubine; his death 8:29-32
  - D 4 Israel's idolatry with Baals after Gideon's death 8:33-35

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- C 1 Abimelech's murderous acquisition of the throne 9:1-6
- C 2 The prophetic curse of Jotham, sole survivor, against Abimelech, Shechem and Beth-millo 9:7-21
- C 3 The demise of Abimelech: The fulfillment of Jotham's curse 9:22-57
  - D 1 The God-sent rift between Shechem and Abimelech 9:22-25
  - D 2 The insurrectionist speech of Gaal ben Ebed in Shechem 9:26-29
  - D 3 Lt. Zebul's message to Abimelech to ambush Gaal and his Shechemite followers 9:30-33
  - D 4 Abimelech's successful attack against Gaal and his followers 9:34-41
  - D 5 Abimelech's surprise massacre of all the Shechemites working in the fields 9:42-45
  - D 6 Abimelech's arsonous murder of the refugee Shechemites in the city tower 9:46-49
  - D 7 Abimelech's death at the hands of a woman during his attempted sack of the tower of Thebez 9:50-55
  - D 8 The summary statement of Elohim's avenging Abimelech and the Shechemites in their murder of the seventy sons of Jerubaal (Gideon) 9:56-57

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<sup>2</sup> Judges 8:23 - I will not rule over you: Though Gideon declined the throne, he must have had kingly aspirations. His son by a Shechemite concubine he named "Abimelech" – "My father – king." In chapter 9, the apparently outcast Abimelech murders his brothers and has himself crowned king of the small city-states of Shechem and Beth-millo.

**B 7 Tola's 23-Year Tenure as Judge 10:1-2**

**B 8 Jair's 22-Year Tenure as Judge 10:3-5**

**B 9 The Servitude of Israel to Ammon and the Deliverance of Jephthah 10:6 - 12:7**

C 1 The servitude 10:6-16

D 1 Yahweh's delivering of again-idolatrous Israel into occupation by Philistines and Ammonites 10:6-9

D 2 Israel's turning back from idols to Yahweh 10:10-16

C 2 The search for a leader 10:17 - 11:11

D 1 Gilead's query for a leader against the invading Ammonites 10:17-18

D 2 The account of the warrior Jephthah's banishment from Gilead 11:1-3

D 3 The Gileadite elders' successful request for Jephthah to lead them in battle and rule them 11:4-11

C 3 Jephthah's marred victory 11:12 - 12:6

D 1 His fruitless negotiations with the king of Ammon 11:12-28

D 2 Jephthah's impetuous vow of burnt offering to Yahweh if granted success in battle 11:29-31

D 3 His great victory 11:32-33

D 4 His tragic offering of his only child as a burnt offering to Yahweh in fulfillment of his vow 11:34-40

D 5 His victorious civil war against the proud, invading Ephraimites 12:1-6

C 4 Jephthah's six-year tenure as judge of Israel 12:7

**B 10 Ibzan's Seven-Year Tenure as Judge of Israel 12:8-10**

**B 11 Elon's Twelve-Year Tenure as Judge of Israel 12:11-12**

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- C 1 The preparation for Samson 13
  - D 1 Yahweh's deliverance of evil Israel into Philistine domination 13:1
  - D 2 The announcement of Samson's impending birth to Manoah and his wife 13:2-23
  - D 3 The arrival of Samson 13:24-25
- C 2 The heroics of Samson centering around three Philistine women 14 - 16
  - D 1 Samson and his abortive marriage to a woman of Timnah 14 - 15
    - E 1 Samson's illegal request for marriage to a Philistine woman of Timnah 14:1-4
    - E 2 Incidents surrounding the wedding 14:5-20
      - G 1 Samson's killing of a lion on the way to Timnah; his eating honey from the carcass 14:5-9
      - G 2 Samson's gambling riddle about the lion carcass at his wedding feast 14:10-14
      - G 3 The Philistines' extortion of the riddle's solution from Samson's intended 14:15-18
      - G 4 Samson's Spirit-empowered assassination of 30 Philistines to obtain clothing to fulfill his wager 14:19
      - G 5 Samson's intended given to another in his sullen absence 14:20
    - E 3 An escalating series of retaliations 15:1-19
      - G 1 Samson's setting afire the Philistine grain fields in retaliation for his wife's being given to another 15:1-5
      - G 2 The Philistine retaliation: murder of the man of Timnah and his daughter 15:6
      - G 3 Samson's ruthless slaughter of a great number of Philistines 15:7-8

- G 4 Judah's agreement with Samson to hand him over to the Philistine encampment 15:9-13
- G 5 Samson's slaughter of 1000 Philistines at Lehi 15:14-19
- E 4 Historical note: Samson's judging of Israel for twenty years 15:20
- D 2 Samson and his excursion to a prostitute of Gaza 16:1-3
- D 3 The demise of Samson with Delilah 16:4-31
  - E 1 The Philistines' bribery of Delilah with 1100 pieces of silver to find her lover Samson's strength 16:4-5
  - E 2 Delilah's fruitless attempts to find Samson's strength and render him powerless for the Philistines 16:6-14
  - E 3 Samson's downfall 16:15-22
    - G 1 Samson's revelation of his Nazirite vow to Delilah: cutting his hair would make him weak 16:15-17
    - G 2 Delilah's betrayal: cutting Samson's hair 16:18-19
    - G 3 The Philistines' capture, blinding, and imprisonment of Samson at Gaza 16:20-22
  - E 4 Samson's death 16:23-31
    - G 1 The assembling of the Philistines to praise Dagon and to mock Samson for his demise 16:23-27
    - G 2 Samson's successful final prayer to Yahweh for strength to avenge his eyes by toppling the supports to the vast assembly hall 16:28-29
    - G 3 His death along with thousands of upper echelon Philistines 16:30-31

**A 4 HISTORICAL ILLUSTRATIONS OF ISRAEL'S ABYSMAL FAILURE TO ABIDE BY THE LAW 17 - 21**

**B 1 Spiritual Declension: The Account of Micah, the Migrating Danites, and Syncretistic Worship 17 - 18**

- C 1 The syncretism of Micah the Ephraimite and his mother 17
  - D 1 Micah's confession to his mother of his theft from her of 1100 pieces of silver 17:1-2
  - D 2 His mother's dedication of the entire amount <sup>3</sup> to Yahweh to make a graven and a molten image for Micah 17:3-4
  - D 3 Micah's shrine: his making an ephod and household idols and consecrating a son to be priest 17:5
  - D 4 The refrain: There was no king in Israel, and each man did what was right in his own eyes 17:6
  - D 5 Micah's acquisition of a Bethlehemite Levite to be his family priest 17:7-13
- C 2 The syncretism and the theft by force of the migrating Danites 18
  - D 1 The refrain: "No king in Israel" 18:1a
  - D 2 The search of five Danites for a tribal residence; their lodging with Micah 18:1b-2
  - D 3 Their espionage of and favorable report about Laish following the Levite's blessing of their search 18:3-10
  - D 4 The travel of 600 armed Danites from Zorah and Eshtaol to Micah's house 18:11-13
  - D 5 The theft by the 600 Danites of Micah's images, household idols, ephod, and priest; the priest's joyful acceptance of the promotion 18:14-20
  - D 6 The attempt by Micah's neighbors to retrieve the stolen good rebuffed by the Danites' threat of murder 18:21-26
  - D 7 The Danites' successful conquering of Laish 18:27-28
  - D 8 Epilogue 18:29-31

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<sup>3</sup> Judges 17:3 - I wholly dedicate the silver from my hand to the LORD for my son to make a graven image and a molten image: She used only 200 pieces of the 1100!



**B 2 Moral Declension: The Account of the Sexual Abuse of a Levite's Concubine and Resultant Disciplinary Near Extermination of the Clan of Benjamin 19 - 21**

- C 1 The tragic abuse of the Levite's concubine 19
  - D 1 A Levite's re-wooing of his unfaithful, estranged concubine 19:1-9
  - D 2 The Levite's arrival in Gibeah of Benjamin, seeking traveling refuge 19:10-15
  - D 3 The Levite's acceptance of hospitality from an old man of Gibeah 19:16-21
  - D 4 The demand of men of the city to have homosexual relations with the old man's Levite guest 19:22-23
  - D 5 The Levite's forcing his concubine out to the mob; their abuse of her through the night <sup>4</sup> 19:24-26
  - D 6 The Levite's taking home his dead concubine, his cutting her body into twelve pieces and his distribution of her body parts to all Israel 19:27-30
- C 2 Israel's discipline of the tribe of Benjamin 20
  - D 1 The build-up of hostilities 20:1-16
  - D 2 Israel's civil war against Benjamin 20:17-48
- C 3 Israel's sorrowful rebuilding of the tribe of Benjamin 21
  - D 1 The sorrow of Israel 21:1-7
  - D 2 The strategy to provide wives for the surviving Benjamites 21:8-24
  - D 3 The closing evaluative refrain 21:25

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<sup>4</sup> Judges 19:24-26 - So the man seized his concubine and brought her out to them: With brutal insensitivity like this, it is no wonder the Levite's concubine had fled him!

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