

Analysis of
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 17:6; 21:25

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Prepared by James T. Bartsch
August, 1995
Updated August, 2019

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"In those days there was no king in Israel; everyone did what was right ¹ in his own eyes."
Judges 17:6; 21:25

A1 ISRAEL'S FAILURE TO CONQUER THE LAND 1

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- C1 Judah's defeat, with the aid of Simeon and Yahweh, of the Canaanites and Perizzites 1:1-7
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- C3 Judah's defeat of Debir: Caleb's offer of Achsah 1:11-16
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- C2 Yahweh's judgment: Abandonment of Israel to enemy nations 2:14-15

¹ Judges 17:6; 21:25 - right (Heb. *yashar* - [3477](#)) in his own eyes: No clearer illustration can be given of this theme than Samson. Though God had expressly forbidden association and intermarriage with the surrounding Gentiles, Samson chose for himself a Philistine woman as his wife. Twice he said of her that she was right (*yashar*) for him! (Judges 14:3b [NIV]: "Get her for me; she's the right one for me." Judges 14:7 [JTB translation] "So he went down and talked to the woman, and she looked right to Samson.")

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 - D3 Barak's call of 10,000 troops 4:10
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 - D2 Praise by Deborah 5:2-11
 - E1 The opening call to praise fearsome yahweh for the volunteer spirit in Israel 5:2-5
 - E2 The absence of security in Israel because of idolatry 5:6-8
 - E3 The instruction to all Israel to praise Yahweh for His righteous acts of deliverance 5:9-11

² Judges 5:1-21 - The Song of Deborah and Barak: The outline below adapted from F. Duane Lindsey, *The Bible Knowledge Commentary* by Dallas Theological Seminary faculty.

- D3 The song of victory 5:12-30
 - E1 The muster of the tribes 5:12-18
 - F1 The participants: Ephraim, Benjamin, Zebulun, Issachar (and Naphtali -- v. 18) 5:12-15
 - F2 The non-participants: Reuben, Dan, and Asher 5:16-18
 - E2 The victorious battle 5:19-30
 - F1 Israel aided by a heaven-sent flood 5:19-23
 - F2 Jael's execution of Sisera 5:24-27
 - F3 The discomfiture of Sisera's mother 5:28-30
- D4 The curse on all Yahweh's enemies; the forty years' rest 5:31

B5 The Servitude of Israel to Midian and the Deliverance by Gideon 6 - 8

- C1 The Midianite oppression of Israel 6:1-6
 - D1 Israel's evil 6:1a
 - D2 Yahweh's giving Israel into Midianite hands 6:1b
 - D3 Midian's agricultural desolation of Israel 6:2-6a
 - D4 Israel's cry to Yahweh 6:6b
- C2 Yahweh's response to Israel's cry 6:7-40
 - D1 His sending of a prophet to Israel to blame her for her idolatry with Amorite gods 6:7-10
 - D2 His calling of Gideon 6:11-40
 - E1 The angel of yahweh's dialogue with Gideon 6:11-24
 - F1 The angel's appointment of Gideon to deliver Israel 6:11-16
 - F2 The angel's sign of His Divine credentials 6:17-24
 - G1 Gideon's request for a sign 6:17
 - G2 Gideon's presentation of an offering 6:18-19
 - G3 The angel's consumption of the offering by fire 6:20-21

- G4 Gideon's fear at having seen the angel 6:22
- G5 Yahweh's reassurance 6:23
- G6 Gideon's altar to Yahweh 6:24
- E2 Yahweh's instruction to Gideon to strike a blow against idolatry 6:25-32
 - F1 Yahweh's instruction to tear down the altar of Baal and the Asherah and sacrifice on an altar built to Yahweh 6:25-26
 - F2 Gideon's nocturnal obedience 6:27
 - F3 Gideon's father's thwarting of his neighbors' plans to execute Gideon 6:28-32
- E3 Gideon's muster of troops against the gathered Midianites and Amalekites 6:33-35
- E4 Gideon's successful additional requests for signs 6:36-40
 - F1 Dew on the fleece only 6:36-38
 - F2 Dew on the ground only 6:39-40
- C3 Gideon's successful overthrow of Midian with Yahweh's aid 7 - 8
 - D1 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
 - E1 Yahweh's reduction of the army from 32,000 to 10,000: The departure of the fearful 7:1-3
 - E2 Yahweh's reduction of the army to 300: The retention of those only who lapped with their hands without kneeling 7:4-8
 - D2 Yahweh's gracious provision of another confidence-building sign: The Midianite's dream of Israel's triumph over Midian 7:9-14
 - D3 Gideon's plan for a nocturnal audio-visual presentation to the enemy troops: Trumpets, torches, and battle cry 7:15-18
 - D4 The demoralization of the surrounded Midianite army 7:19-22
 - D5 The summoning of Israeli help; the execution of Midianite leaders Oreb and Zeeb 7:23-25
 - D6 Gideon's placation of Ephraimite jealousy 8:1-3

- D7 The refusal of Succoth to aid Gideon's 300; Gideon's threat 8:4-7
- D8 The refusal of Peniel; Gideon's threat 8:8-9
- D9 Gideon's successful ambush of 15,000 Midianite troops; his capture of Zebah and Zalmunna, Midianite kings 8:10-12
- D10 Gideon's retaliation against Succoth and Peniel 8:13-17
- D11 Gideon's execution of Zebah and Zalmunna 8:18-21
- C4 The course of events following Gideon's victory 8:22-35
 - D1 Gideon's refusal to rule Israel as king³ 8:22-23
 - D2 Gideon's unfortunate construction of an ephod; Israel's forty years' peace 8:24-28
 - D3 Gideon's seventy sons and Abimelech by a Shechemite concubine; his death 8:29-32
 - D4 Israel's idolatry with Baals after Gideon's death 8:33-35

B6 The False Reign of Abimelech 9

- C1 Abimelech's murderous acquisition of the throne 9:1-6
 - D1 His kingly aspirations 9:1-3
 - D2 His massacre of 69 brothers 9:4-5
 - D3 His coronation as king at Shechem 9:6
- C2 The prophetic curse of Jotham, sole survivor, against Abimelech, Shechem and Beth-millo 9:7-21
 - D1 The allegory of the trees 9:7-15
 - D2 The curse and escape of Jotham 9:16-21
- C3 The demise of Abimelech: The fulfillment of Jotham's curse 9:22-57
 - D1 The God-sent rift between Shechem and Abimelech 9:22-25
 - D2 The insurrectionist speech of Gaal ben Ebed in Shechem 9:26-29

³ Judges 8:22-23 - 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.

- D3 Lt. Zebul's message to Abimelech to ambush Gaal and his Shechemite followers 9:30-33
- D4 Abimelech's successful attack against Gaal and his followers 9:34-41
- D5 Abimelech's surprise massacre of all the Shechemites working in the fields 9:42-45
- D6 Abimelech's arsonous murder of the refugee Shechemites in the city tower 9:46-49
- D7 Abimelech's death at the hands of a woman during his attempted sack of the tower of Thebez 9:50-55
- D8 The summary statement of Elohim's avenging Abimelech and the Shechemites in their murder of the seventy sons of Jerubaal (Gideon) 9:56-57

B7 Tola's 23-Year Tenure as Judge 10:1-2

B8 Jair's 22-Year Tenure as Judge 10:3-5

B9 The Servitude of Israel to Ammon and the Deliverance of Jephthah 10:6 - 12:7

- C1 The servitude 10:6-16
 - D1 Yahweh's delivering of again-idolatrous Israel into occupation by Philistines and Ammonites 10:6-9
 - D2 Israel's turning back from idols to Yahweh 10:10-16
- C2 The search for a leader 10:17 - 11:11
 - D1 Gilead's query for a leader against the invading Ammonites 10:17-18
 - D2 The account of the warrior Jephthah's banishment from Gilead 11:1-3
 - D3 The Gileadite elders' successful request for jephthah to lead them in battle and rule them 11:4-11
- C3 Jephthah's marred victory 11:12 - 12:6
 - D1 His fruitless negotiations with the king of Ammon 11:12-28
 - D2 Jephthah's impetuous vow of burnt offering to Yahweh if granted success in battle 11:29-31
 - D3 His great victory 11:32-33

- D4 His tragic offering of his only child as a burnt offering to Yahweh in fulfillment of his vow 11:34-40
- D5 His victorious civil war against the proud, invading Ephraimites 12:1-6
- C4 Jephthah's six-year tenure as judge of Israel 12:7
- B10 Ibzan's Seven-Year Tenure as Judge of Israel 12:8-10**
- B11 Elon's Twelve-Year Tenure as Judge of Israel 12:11-12**
- B12 Abdon's Eight-Year Tenure as Judge of Israel 12:13-15**
- B13 The Servitude of Israel to Philistia and Samson's Partial Deliverance through His Strong But Irreverent Career 13 - 16**
- C1 The preparation for Samson 13
 - D1 Yahweh's deliverance of evil Israel into Philistine domination 13:1
 - D2 The announcement of Samson's impending birth to Manoah and his wife 13:2-23
 - E1 The promise of the angel of Yahweh to Manoah's barren wife of a Nazirite son to begin the deliverance of Israel from Philistia 13:2-7
 - E2 The reappearance of the angel at Manoah's request 13:8-14
 - E3 The miraculous ascent of the angel in the flame of Manoah's sacrifice 13:15-23
 - D3 The arrival of Samson 13:24-25
 - E1 Samson's birth 13:24a
 - E2 Yahweh's blessing 13:24b
 - E3 The movement of Yahweh's Spirit upon Samson 13:25
- C2 The heroics of Samson centering around three Philistine women 14 - 16
 - D1 Samson and his abortive marriage to a woman of Timnah 14 - 15
 - E1 Samson's illegal request for marriage to a Philistine woman of Timnah 14:1-4
 - F1 The trip to Timnah 14:1
 - F2 The request for a wife 14:2

- F3 The parental demurral 14:3
- F4 The international strategy of Yahweh 14:4
- E2 Incidents surrounding the wedding 14:5-20
 - F1 Samson's killing of a lion on the way to Timnah; his eating honey from the carcass 14:5-9
 - F2 Samson's gambling riddle about the lion carcass at his wedding feast 14:10-14
 - F3 The Philistines' extortion of the riddle's solution from Samson's intended 14:15-18
 - F4 Samson's Spirit-empowered assassination of 30 Philistines to obtain clothing to fulfill his wager 14:19
 - F5 Samson's intended given to another in his sullen absence 14:20
- E3 An escalating series of retaliations 15:1-19
 - F1 Samson's setting afire the Philistine grain fields in retaliation for his wife's being given to another 15:1-5
 - F2 The Philistine retaliation: murder of the man of Timnah and his daughter 15:6
 - F3 Samson's ruthless slaughter of a great number of Philistines 15:7-8
 - F4 Judah's agreement with Samson to hand him over to the Philistine encampment 15:9-13
 - F5 Samson's slaughter of 1000 Philistines at Lehi 15:14-19
- E4 Historical note: Samson's judging of Israel for twenty years 15:20
- D2 Samson and his excursion to a prostitute of Gaza 16:1-3
 - E1 The trip to the prostitute 16:1
 - E2 The trap of the Philistines 16:2
 - E3 The midnight escape of Samson by uprooting the whole city gate and depositing it on a mountain 16:3

- D3 The demise of Samson with Delilah 16:4-31
 - E1 The Philistines' bribery of Delilah with 1100 pieces of silver to find her lover Samson's strength 16:4-5
 - E2 Delilah's fruitless attempts to find Samson's strength and render him powerless for the Philistines 16:6-14
 - F1 Her binding him with seven fresh un-dried cords 16:6-9
 - F2 Her binding him with new ropes 16:10-12
 - F3 Her weaving his hair into seven locks with a weaver's pin 16:13-14
 - E3 Samson's downfall 16:15-22
 - F1 Samson's revelation of his Nazirite vow to Delilah: cutting his hair would make him weak 16:15-17
 - F2 Delilah's betrayal: cutting Samson's hair 16:18-19
 - F3 The Philistines' capture, blinding, and imprisonment of Samson at Gaza 16:20-22
 - E4 Samson's death 16:23-31
 - F1 The assembling of the Philistines to praise Dagon and to mock Samson for his demise 16:23-27
 - F2 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
 - F3 His death along with thousands of upper echelon Philistines 16:30-31

A4 HISTORICAL ILLUSTRATIONS OF ISRAEL'S ABYSMAL FAILURE TO ABIDE BY THE LAW 17 - 21

B1 Spiritual Declension: The Account of Micah, the Migrating Danites, and Syncretistic Worship 17 - 18

- C1 The syncretism of Micah the Ephraimite and his mother 17
 - D1 Micah's confession to his mother of his theft from her of 1100 pieces of silver 17:1-2
 - D2 His mother's dedication of the entire amount ⁴ to Yahweh to make a graven and a molten image for Micah 17:3-4
 - D3 Micah's shrine: his making an ephod and household idols and consecrating a son to be priest 17:5
 - D4 The refrain: There was no king in Israel, and each man did what was right in his own eyes 17:6
 - D5 Micah's acquisition of a Bethlehemite Levite to be his family priest 17:7-13
- C2 The syncretism and the theft by force of the migrating Danites 18
 - D1 The refrain: "No king in Israel" 18:1a
 - D2 The search of five Danites for a tribal residence; their lodging with Micah 18:1b-2
 - D3 Their espionage of and favorable report about Laish following the Levite's blessing of their search 18:3-10
 - D4 The travel of 600 armed Danites from Zorah and Eshtaol to Micah's house 18:11-13
 - D5 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
 - D6 The attempt by Micah's neighbors to retrieve the stolen good rebuffed by the Danites' threat of murder 18:21-26
 - D7 The Danites' successful conquering of Laish 18:27-28

⁴ Judges 17:3-4 - I wholly the silver from my hand to the LORD for my son to make a graven image and a molten image: However, she used only 200 pieces out of the 1100 he had returned!

- D8 Epilogue 18:29-31
 - E1 The renaming of Laish as Dan 18:29
 - E2 The tenure of Jonathan ben Gershom ben Manasseh and sons as priests of Dan until the captivity 18:30
 - E3 The Danites' setting up of Micah's graven image 18:31
- B2 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**
 - C1 The tragic abuse of the Levite's concubine 19
 - D1 A Levite's re-wooing of his unfaithful, AWOL concubine 19:1-9
 - D2 The Levite's arrival in Gibeah of Benjamin, seeking traveling refuge 19:10-15
 - D3 The Levite's acceptance of hospitality from an old man of Gibeah 19:16-21
 - D4 The demand of men of the city to have homosexual relations with the old man's Levite guest 19:22-23
 - D5 The Levite's forcing his concubine out to the mob; their abuse of her through the night⁵ 19:24-26
 - D6 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
 - C2 Israel's discipline of the tribe of Benjamin 20
 - D1 The build-up of hostilities 20:1-16
 - E1 The assembling of 400,000 foot soldiers of all Israel at Mizpah to hear the Levite's evil tale 20:1-7
 - E2 The gathering of one tenth of the forces against Gibeah of Benjamin 20:8-11
 - E3 The refusal of Benjamin to turn over the evil men of Gibeah 20:12-13
 - E4 The gathering for war of 26,000 Benjamites 20:14-16

⁵ Judges 19:25 - 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 in the first place!

- D2 Israel's civil war against Benjamin 20:17-48
 - E1 Yahweh's indication to Israel at Bethel that Judah should fight first 20:17-18
 - E2 The falling in battle of 22,000 of Israel; Yahweh's instructions to the sorrowful Israelites to battle again 20:19-23
 - E3 The falling in battle of 18,000 of Israel; weeping and fasting at Bethel; Yahweh's promise of victory the next day 20:24-28
 - E4 Israel's eventual victory over Benjamin 20:29-48
 - F1 The setting of the ambush 20:29-30
 - F2 The initial success of Benjamin 20:31-32
 - F3 The synopsis of the retreat and successful counterattack and ambush by Israel: Yahweh's killing of 25,100 Benjamites 20:32-36
 - F4 The success of the ambush 20:37-41
 - F5 The tally of the slain Benjamites; the escape of 600 20:42-47
 - F6 The sacking of all the Benjamite cities 20:48
- C3 Israel's sorrowful rebuilding of the tribe of Benjamin 21
 - D1 The sorrow of Israel 21:1-7
 - E1 The sorrow of Israel over the loss of the tribe of Benjamin 21:1-4
 - E2 The sorrow of Israel compounded by their oath not to give wives to Benjamin 21:5-7
 - D2 The strategy to provide wives for the surviving Benjamites 21:8-24
 - E1 The destruction of non-participating Jabesh-gilead; the sparing of 400 virgins 21:8-12
 - E2 Israel's declaration of peace to Benjamin; the provision of 400 virgins 21:13-15
 - E3 The concern of the elders to provide wives for the remaining Benjamite survivors without violating their oath not to give daughters as wives 21:16-18
 - E4 The pre-planned abductions of virgins at Shiloh 21:19-24

- D3 The closing valiative refrain 21:25
 - E1 In those days there was no king in Israel;
 - E2 Everyone did what was right ⁶ in his own eyes.

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Updated, August, 2019

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⁶ Judges 21:25 - right in his own eyes: See note on the theme verse at the beginning of the outline.