

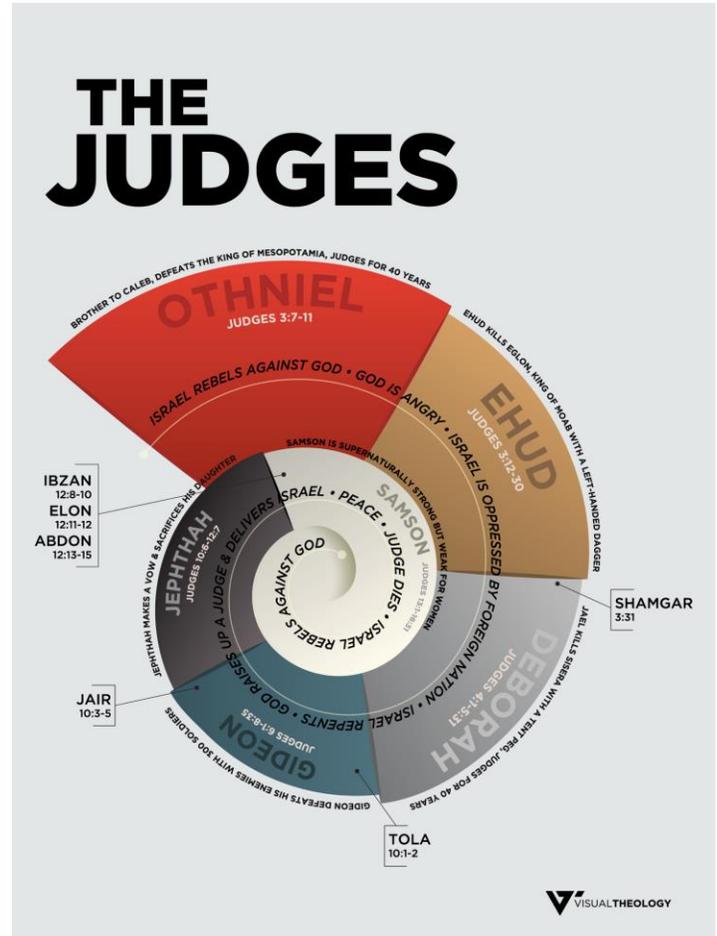
Walking with God Session Five

Chapter Five: Conquest and Judges

Reflect:

- Thinking of your soul, which sins or imperfections need to be conquered so that you can enter into the Promised Land of Paradise?
- Do you judge yourself too harshly or too leniently? Are you a good judge of your character? Remember that Israel lived in peace when their judge was good, and Israel suffered when their judge was bad.

Recollection: God calls everyone to come into covenantal relationship with Him. He seeks to give us a share in His Divine life. Do you accept His invitation daily? Are you faithful to Him?



Act One: Joshua

- Joshua leads the Israelites across the Jordan. The Ark of the Covenant is carried by Levites, who stand in the river. The people cross over dryshod. What is the significance of this?
- What is the explanation for *herem* warfare (also called “the ban”)?
- How did the Israelites mark the transition from wilderness to conquest?
- Who helped the spies and thus gained a spot in Jesus’ genealogy?
- Why are Achan and his family stoned to death? What is meant by the rare word “*achor*” and when is the word used? What lessons can we take from this?
- Against which cities did Israel execute *herem*, “the ban”?



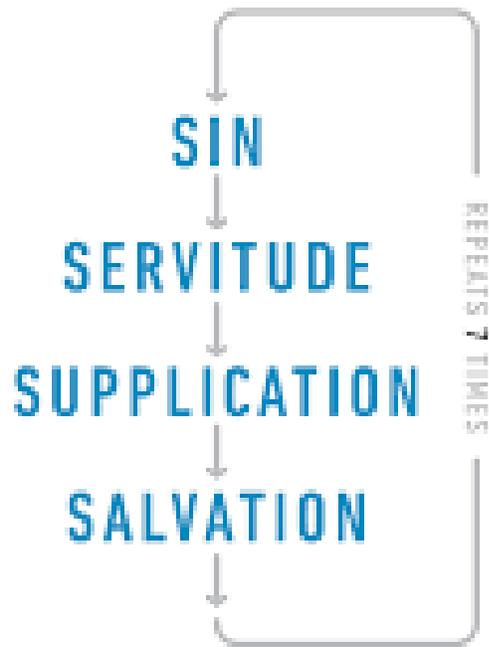
Act Two: Judges

- Why does the generation after the initial conquest of the Promised Land fall so often into sin and idolatry?
- What is the ordering of the twelve judges illustrating?
- Consider the judges and their interesting tales:
 - ✓ Othniel, nephew of Caleb, is a good judge in Judah
 - ✓ Ehud, of the tribe of Benjamin, is a good judge – these two tribes eventually make up the “Southern Tribe” of Judah – the faithful tribe, the survivor of the Chosen People
 - ✓ Shamgar, whose name means “a stranger,” killed 600 Philistines with an oxgoad.
What do we learn from him?
 - ✓ Deborah, who with Barak, judged the people. She was wise; Barak was afraid to go into battle without her. Her name is remembered more than his. Barak was so timid in battle that God uses another woman, Jael, to kill the general, Sisera, with a tent peg through his head. Jael prefigures the Blessed Virgin Mary, who will “crush the head” of the serpent.
 - ✓ Gideon, a good judge gone bad as he takes the spoils of war – rightfully the Lord’s – and fashions for himself a golden *ephod*, a priestly garment. He and those he leads worship the golden ephod. Beginning with an army of 10,000, God tells those who are afraid or those who are needed in their families to leave; God further reduces the number of men fighting by having them drink from the stream. Those who drink with their hands go home. Those who lap the water like dogs remain and fight – an army now of about 300. **Why did God reduce the army?**
 - ✓ Tola, of the tribe of Issachar, was a good judge for 23 years. The judge before him, Abimelech, was an unprincipled and ambitious ruler who often warred with his own subjects.
 - ✓ Jair, of the tribe of Manasseh, judged in Gilead for 22 years as a good judge.
 - ✓ Jephthah, the son of a harlot, made a rash vow to God. If he won the battle with the Ammonites, he would offer as a human sacrifice the first person who came out of his house upon his return. He expected that a servant would be the first out, but it was his only daughter. He kept his rash vow. **What do we learn from him?**
 - ✓ Ibzan ruled in Bethlehem for only 7 years. His name means “father of coldness.” He sent his thirty daughters away and took in thirty foreign women to marry his thirty sons. **How should we judge Ibzan?**
 - ✓ Elon of the tribe of Zebulun, whose name means “Oak Tree,” ruled in Israel for ten years.



- ✓ Abdon, son of Hillel, ruled for eight years. He was buried in the land of Ephraim, also referred to in the Bible as the “hill country of the Amalekites.” This is land that Israel failed to fully possess.
- ✓ Samson, of the tribe of Dan, a Nazirite from birth. Nazirites are to abstain from wine; avoid contact with dead bodies; and never cut their hair. The Nazirites are consecrated to God and ought, therefore, to live holy lives. **What did Samson do wrong? Is he a good judge (ruler) or a bad one?**
- The next two narratives detail the downward spiral of Israel’s idolatry. What can we learn from these Levites?
- What do we learn from the narrative of Ruth?
- What do we learn from the book of Judges?





1 OTHNIEL vs. EDOMITES
Judges 1:1-21

2 EHUD & SHAMGAR vs. MOABITES
Judges 3:12-31

3 DEBORAH vs. CANAANITES
Judges 4:1-24

4 GIDEON vs. MIDIANITES
Judges 6:1-35

5 TOLA & JAIR vs. MIDIANITES
Judges 10:1-16

6 JEPHTHAH vs. AMMONITES
Judges 10:6-12

7 SAMSON vs. PHILISTINES
Judges 13:1-16