

Old Testament Survey: 7

Great Expectations [part 2]

Joshua – 1 Samuel

JUDGES

The Period of the Judges

After Joshua dies, the elders he appointed rule and govern the nation. When that generation died out the children of Israel went away from serving God, and followed after the Baals and Ashteroths – so the Lord raised up judges to rule and govern.

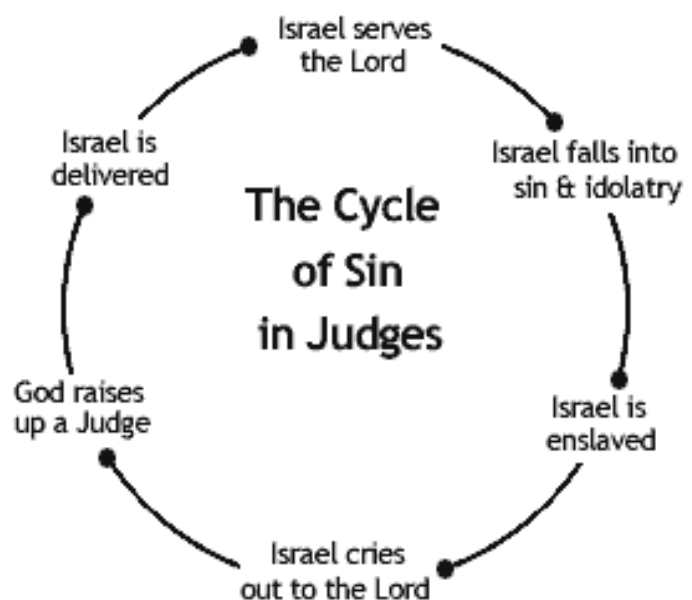
Israel had been unfaithful to God and His commandments, instead of expelling some people they had allowed them to remain – this meant that the judges had some 'clearing out' to do. However things are not so sweet during this time.

This period of the judges (from Joshua to Samuel) lasts for about 450 years (Acts 13.20) and includes an eight year period of under the Mesopotamians before God raises up the first judge.

The judges:

1. **Othniel** (Judges 3.7-11)
2. **Ehud** (Judges 3.12-30)
3. **Shamgar** (Judges 3.31)
4. **Deborah** (Judges 4.1 - 5.31)
5. **Gideon** (Judges 6.1 - 8.35)
6. **Abimelech** (Judges 9.1-57)
7. **Tola** (Judges 10.1-2)
8. **Jair** (Judges 10.3-5)
9. **Jephthah** (Judges 10.6 - 12.7)
10. **Ibzan** (Judges 12.8-10)
11. **Elon** (Judges 12.11-12)
12. **Abdon** (Judges 12.13-15)
13. **Samson** (Judges 13.1 – 16.31)

14. Eli
15. Samuel



After the reign of each judge Israel commits evil in the sight of the Lord and return to their sinful ways. As the chart above shows, while the judge is ruling things are on a high, then when the judge dies the people drop back into their sinful ways and rebel against God. The next judge is raised up and things begin to climb back to a godly state. Israel is 'playing the harlot' with other gods, they continually chase after other gods and compromise their relationship and fellowship with God.

Even the judges themselves reflect this state of affairs. By the time we reach Samson we see he compromises his allegiance to God by repeatedly seeking out foreign women. It appears that he is only interested in saving Israel when it satisfies his 'love-life'.

The rest of the book of Judges and the the book of **Ruth** give us some indication to what life was like during this period. The book of Judges closes with every man doing what he pleases, as seems right to him with no regard for God whatsoever (Judges 21.25). Things are just the same as they were in the days of Noah before the flood. This is exemplified in the words found in 1 Samuel 3.1, the word of God was rare in these days – it would appear that God had left the scene. Through the judges God temporarily delivered them - what Israel needed most of all was a saviour!

1 SAMUEL

Samuel was the last of the judges and a prophet of God. His ministry was fourfold -

1. **a prophet** –
 - a) God raised up Samuel from a very young age
 - from the time of weaning he was '**lent to the Lord**' (1 Samuel 1.28)
 - he increased in stature and favour with God and men (1 Samuel 2.26) (see Luke 2.52)
 - He was chosen by God as a faithful priest to do all that was in the heart of God (1 Samuel 2.34-36) - also another prophetic word concerning Jesus
 - at the age of twelve he had his first revelation and had to speak against the house of Eli (1 Samuel 3.11-14, 18-21).
 - b) He exercised the office of prophet until his death.
2. **intercessor** – Samuel was born in answer to prayer and his name would constantly remind him of the power of prayer (Samuel = asked of God, heard of God, 1 Samuel 1.20)
 - a) He was a man of prayer (1 Samuel 7.5-8; 8.6; 12.17-19; 15.11)
 - b) Samuel regarded it a sin not to pray for others (1 Samuel 12.23)
 - c) Jesus is our Advocate, Intercessor, the Mediator between God and men.
3. **a priest** – Samuel was only a Levite and not a priest by descent, yet the words in 1 Samuel 2.35 "**I will raise up**" imply an extraordinary office.
 - a) His priestly functions are proved in the following exercises:
 1. by intercession (1 Samuel 7.9)
 2. by offering sacrifices (1 Samuel 7.9-10)
 3. by benediction (1 Samuel 10.17,25)
 4. by anointing kings (1 Samuel 10.1, 16.13)
 - b) Again he is a type of Christ in that He is our Great High Priest.
4. **a judge** – the Bible says that Samuel judged Israel all the days of his life (1 Samuel 7.15).
 - a) Even after the government changed from a theocracy to a monarchy, he still acted as a judge going from place to place giving divine judgement on moral and spiritual issues.
 - b) Even though he was a godly man, his sons weren't. He appointed them as

judges but they did not walk in the ways of the Lord and it was because of this that Israel asked for a king to rule them (1 Samuel 8.1-5).

This request for a king was a sign that they had rejected God (1 Samuel 8.7). Their new king is wonderful at first but soon things go wrong. As we progress through 1 Samuel towards the end of the book

- we see Israel falling into a state of decay,
- they are fearful of their enemies – the Philistines in particular
- at the end of the book their king is dead.

What went wrong? Throughout this period in their history the main problem was this: Israel wanted all the blessings of God but none of the responsibility that went with them. They want everything on their own terms and not God's way – to a certain degree, very much like the Fall all over again.

Their only hope – God is merciful and faithful to His promise. He raises up a king for them who was “a man after His own heart” (1 Samuel 13.13-14)

Once again we see that the Old Testament is pointing us toward Jesus, the only hope for the world. In Jesus we can look forward to someone who is a new Joshua, a new Judge, a new Samuel and a new King. He is the solution to mankind's problems and the answer to all of God's promises.