

- I. Judges Part 1
- a. Purpose: In this session we shall survey the book of Judges by surveying its' authorship, setting, purpose and answer the question of what are judges followed by a look at the book's structure
 - b. Authorship
 - i. It is difficult to determine authorship
 1. According to Old Testament scholar Eugene Merrill "none of the historical books contains internal attestation of authorship."¹
 2. This includes the book of Judges.
 - ii. Jewish tradition says it is Samuel who is the author
 1. "According to Jewish tradition Samuel was largely responsible for the composition of the book of Judges."²
 2. From the Jewish Talmud: "Joshua wrote the book which bears his name and [the last] eight verses of the Pentateuch. Samuel wrote the book which bears his name and the Book of Judges and Ruth" (Baba Bathra 14b-15a)³
 - iii. Whoever was the author the dating of this book is something to consider
 1. The phrase "*there was no king in Israel*" in **Judges 17:6, 18:1, 19:1** indicates that it was written in a time when Israel already had a king⁴ but the memory of the time without a king was still there.
 2. According to Mark Rooker, "It seems that the contents of the book were known to other biblical writers at a very early period (**1 Sam 12: 9– 11; 2 Sam 11: 21; Pss 68: 8– 15; 83; Isa 9: 3; Hos 9: 9; 10: 1**)."⁵
 3. Given the dating of the book Samuel is a possible author of the book of Judges.
 - c. Setting
 - i. This book takes place after Israel entered into the promise land.
 - ii. By the time of the Judge Jephthah they have been in the Promise land for 300 hundred years according to **Judges 11:26**.⁶
 - d. Purpose
 - i. According to John Walton: "The purpose of Judges is to explore what happened theologically during the years between Joshua and David."⁷ Judges "show the failure of the Israelites to keep their part of the covenant."⁸

¹Eugene Merrill, "The Historical Books" in *The World and the Word: An Introduction to the Old Testament* (Nashville, B&H Publishing), Kindle Locations 9783-9784.

² Mark Rooker, "The Book of Joshua" in *The World and the Word: An Introduction to the Old Testament* (Nashville, B&H Publishing), Kindle Location 10367.

³Eugene Merrill, "The Historical Books" in *The World and the Word: An Introduction to the Old Testament* (Nashville, B&H Publishing), Kindle Locations 9788-9791.

⁴ Andrew Hill and John Walton, *A Survey of the Old Testament* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan), 236.

⁵ Mark Rooker, "The Book of Joshua" in *The World and the Word: An Introduction to the Old Testament* (Nashville, B&H Publishing), Kindle Locations 10386-10387.

⁶ Andrew Hill and John Walton, *A Survey of the Old Testament* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan), 238.

⁷ Andrew Hill and John Walton, *A Survey of the Old Testament* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan), 239.

⁸ Andrew Hill and John Walton, *A Survey of the Old Testament* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan), 235.

- ii. According to Walter Kaiser: “The purpose of the book of Judges (about 1380 to 1050 BC) is to demonstrate that ‘in those days Israel had no king; everyone did as he saw fit’ (Judges 17:6; 21:25; cf. 18:1; 19:1).”⁹
 - iii. According to Mark Rooker: “The reason the book of Judges was written can be determined from the two major refrains of the book: "The Israelites did what was evil in the Lord's sight" (Judg 2: 11; 3: 7,12; 4: 1; 6: 1; 10: 6; 13: 1) and "In those days there was no king in Israel; everyone did whatever he wanted" (17: 6; 21: 25). Taking these two statements together shows that the book is concerned with describing Israel's relationship to God between the period of Joshua and the monarchy.”¹⁰
 - iv. My own statement: The book of Judges cover the years between Joshua and David before Israel had a king in which Israel living in the promise land failed to be faithful to God and yet God still delivered them from the plights of their enemies through imperfect judges in anticipation of God’s Messianic King.
- e. What are judges?
- i. They are not court judges as it is evident in the story since there is not much court scenes in the book.
 - ii. Description of Judges can be seen in this verse: “*Then the Lord raised up judges who delivered them from the hands of those who plundered them.*” (Judges 2:16)
 - 1. In the context the previous verse, Judges 2:15 notes that “*the hand of the Lord*” was against Israel.
 - 2. But here we see God also being gracious towards Israel by raising up deliverers.
 - iii. According to John Walton: “The judges were not elected, nor did they inherit their office. They were not appointed in any official way, nor were they anointed. They are referred to as charismatic leaders because they spontaneously took leadership roles when the need arose....The most prominent roles undertaken by the judges were military in nature. In this sense the judge was establishing justice for the Israelites who were oppressed by other peoples.”¹¹
- f. Structure
- i. Outline¹²
 - 1. Israel's Failure in the Holy War (Judges 1:1-3:6)
 - a. Failure to Remove the Canaanites (1:1-2:5)
 - b. Introduction to Cycles of Apostasy (2:6-3:6)
 - 2. Cycles of Apostasy and Deliverance (3:7-16:31)
 - a. Othniel (3:7– 11)
 - b. Ehud (3:12– 31)

⁹ Walter Kaiser, *The Promise-Plan of God* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan), 102.

¹⁰ Mark Rooker, “The Book of Joshua” in *The World and the Word: An Introduction to the Old Testament* (Nashville, B&H Publishing), Kindle Locations 10453-10456.

¹¹ Andrew Hill and John Walton, *A Survey of the Old Testament* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan), 242.

¹² Mark Rooker, “The Book of Joshua” in *The World and the Word: An Introduction to the Old Testament* (Nashville, B&H Publishing), Kindle Locations 10465-10479.

- c. Deborah (4– 5)
 - d. Gideon (6– 8)
 - e. Abimelech (9)
 - f. Tola and Jair (10:1-5)
 - g. Jephthah (10:6-12:7)
 - h. Ibzan (12:8-10)
 - i. Elon (12:11-12)
 - j. Abdon (12:13-15)
 - k. Samson (13-16)
3. Depths of the Failure of Israel (17-21)
 - a. Breakdown of Religious Life (17-18)
 - b. Breakdown of Social Order (19-21)
- ii. Observation of the bookends of the book of Judges
1. Judges has two editorial introductions in Judges 1:1-2:5 and Judges 2:6-3:6 and ends with two conclusion in Judges 17:1-18:31 and Judges 19:1-21:25 that serves as book ends for the main portion of the book that feature narratives of the cycles of judges.¹³
 2. There are also contrasts between the beginning and end of the book¹⁴
 - a. In the prologue Judah is mentioned as being militarily successful (1:1-2) but in the epilogue in Judges 20:18 the same question is asked “*Who shall go up first for us to battle against the sons of Benjamin?*” with the Lord answering “*Judah shall go up first*” but without God assuring victory and a different result: Judah is defeated.
 - b. There is a unity among the tribes of Israel in the opening of the book but in the epilogue the tribes attack Benjamin.
 3. The two introduction and two conclusions have an interesting Hebrew parallel structure:¹⁵
 - a. A Foreign wars of subjugation with the *erem* (Hebrew word for destruction) being applied (1:1-2:5)
 - i. B Difficulties with religious idols (2:6-3:6)
 - ii. B1 Difficulties with religious idols (17-18)
 - b. A1 Civil wars with the *erem* (Hebrew word for destruction) being applied (20-21)
 4. There is of course a sense of things being cyclical in light of the parallel structure of the bookend of Judges but also within the main section of the book.

¹³ Walter Kaiser, *The Promise-Plan of God* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan), 103.

¹⁴ Mark Rooker, “The Book of Joshua” in *The World and the Word: An Introduction to the Old Testament* (Nashville, B&H Publishing), Kindle Locations 10491-10492.

¹⁵ Mark Rooker, “The Book of Joshua” in *The World and the Word: An Introduction to the Old Testament* (Nashville, B&H Publishing), Kindle Locations 10487-10490.