

Smoky Mountain Bible Institute

History 116 Judges 1406 to 1049BC

Break out your maps and histories as we travel again in our time machine to examine history & geography through a Biblical worldview. Let's visit the new nation of Israel under the leadership of Joshua in 1406 BC.

After crossing the Jordan on dry ground, the young nation of Israel sets up camp on the plain just outside Jericho. In accordance with God's instructions, they conquer Jericho and the rest of the Promised Land. They are not as thorough as they are told to be (which causes much idolatry and pain in future generations), but in less than six years they have conquered, taken control of, and divided up the Promised Land. A good map that covers the conquest and division of the land can be found on pages 357 and 365 of your Lutheran Study Bible. Or, just google images of "Joshua's conquest of Canaan" and many good images will come up, just be sure to check the source of the image for its trustworthiness.

Joshua dies at the ripe old age of 110, by this time they are settled in, and we move into the period of the Judges. This was a time when people did what they thought was right in their own minds. They were supposed to be functioning as a theocracy with God as king, but with people judging for themselves what was right and wrong, the people were in essence making themselves god. The period of time covered by the Book of Judges is approximately 1380 to 1049 BC. This book contains a painful repetitive cycle: sin and rebellion against God; punishment and persecution; repentance; and redemption. If one were to add up the years of the 12 judges, one would come up with 410 years, but many of the judges' times are not identified clearly, and they were all regional. Few of the judges ruled over the whole land of Israel as Moses and Joshua did, so we need to realize that these were localized events, and some overlapped in time or were even concurrent. There were times in this window between Joshua and Saul where Israel may have had no earthly leader or judge at all. Below is my summary of the tables found on pages 92, 93, 106, & 107 of Dr. Steinmann's book, *From Abraham to Paul*. The judges are presented in 6 cycles following the cycle of oppression, repentance, deliverance, and rebellion. The dates following the names are well researched estimates found in Dr. Steinmann's book.

Cycle	Oppressor	Judge / Translation or meaning of name
1. Judges 3:7-11	Cushan-Rishathaim, 1378-1371 BC	Othneil / The lion of God, 1371-1332 BC
2. Judges 3:12-31	Eglon, 1332-1315 BC	Ehud / Selfless love, 1315-1236 BC Shamgar / The sword, 1315-1236 BC
3. Judges 4:1-5:31	Jaabin, 1236-1217 BC	Deborah / The busy bee, 1217-1178 BC
4. Judges 6:1-10:6	Midianites, 1178-1172 BC	Gideon / The feller, bruiser, breaker or destroyer 1172-1133 BC Tola / The worm, 1131-1109 BC Jair / The enlightener, 1109-1088 BC
5. Judges 10:7-12:15	Amorites, 1088-1071 BC Philistines, 1088-1049 BC	Jephthah / He will open, 1088-1083 BC Ibzan / Illustrious 1083-1077 BC Elon / Oak, 1077-1068 BC Abdon / Ruin or Destruction, 1068-1061 BC
6. Judges 13:1-16:31	Philistines, 1088-1049 BC	Sampson / Son, 1371-1332 BC

I've included the translation of the judges' names because I found it interesting how aptly they were named, in most cases, with regard to the turn of events surrounding their lives. As we come to the end of Judges it is worth noting that many count the prophets Eli and Samuel among the judges. With the help of Josephus and 1st Samuel we can date Eli's priesthood / judgeship from 1109-1069 BC and Samuel's priesthood / judgeship from 1060 to 1049 BC. This leads us into the beginning of the Jewish monarchy which is estimated to have begun with the anointing of Saul as king in approximately 1049 BC.

Till next month,
Pastor Portier