



LEADERSHIP: JUDGES & KINGS

St Mellitus College

FOR DISCUSSION

- Why does the Bible tell history — material we will cover in Judges & Kings?
- What makes a good leader?

WHAT WE WILL COVER

TONIGHT

- ▶ Structure of Judges
- ▶ Background to the conquest
- ▶ Theories of development of Judges
- ▶ Background to 'covenant theology'
- ▶ Women in Judges
- ▶ Judges and 'Trauma theology'
- ▶ The fall of Israel and Judah
- ▶ A study of Judges 11

HISTORY IN THE BIBLE

- Trigger warning about material
- Exodus 13:3: And Moses said to the people, 'Remember this day, on which you went free from Egypt, the house of bondage: no unleavened bread shall be eaten'
- That a future generation might know, children yet to be born, and in turn tell their children that they might put their confidence in God and not forget God's great deeds, but observe his commandments and not be like their fathers... (Ps 78:6-7)

Jewish Bible: TaNaCh

Torah

Nevi'im

Joshua

Judges

Samuel

Kings

Latter prophets: Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, the 12

Ketuvim: Psalms, Proverbs, Job, Five scrolls,

PROTESTANT BIBLE

- ▶ Pentateuch
- ▶ Historical books:
 - ▶ Joshua
 - ▶ Judges
 - ▶ Ruth
 - ▶ 1&2 Samuel
 - ▶ 1&2 Kings
 - ▶ 1&2 Chronicles
 - ▶ Ezra
 - ▶ Nehemiah
 - ▶ Esther
- ▶ Poetical books
- ▶ Prophets

JUDGES: STRUCTURE

- ▶ Judges has three parts:
 - ▶ I Chs 1 - 3:6
 - ▶ Conquest, Israelite apostasy, their crying out to God for rescue
 - ▶ II Chs 3:7 - Ch16
 - ▶ The period of the judges; their leadership and character deteriorates
 - ▶ III Chs 17 - end
 - ▶ Anarchy and lawlessness, highlighting the need for the monarchy

- ▶ Stories of men and battles; why so many stories of named and unnamed women?

JUDGES AND JOSHUA

- ▶ Bridges between the books of Joshua and 1&2 Samuel
- ▶ Opens with a similar verse to Josh 1:1:
 - ▶ ‘After the death of Moses the servant of the Lord, the Lord spoke to Joshua...’
 - ▶ ‘After the death of Joshua, the Israelites inquired of the Lord, “Who shall go up for us against the Canaanites, to fight against them?”’
- ▶ Judges tells of the period leading up to monarchy when the tribes of Israel, so Judges tells it, were settled in different tribal lands.

JUDGES: THEORIES OF DEVELOPMENT

- ▶ Judges tells the story of the conquest to the establishment of the monarchy:
 - ▶ Approx 1200 - 1000 BCE.
- ▶ In the modern period -1960s, it was assumed that a single historian (the Deut Historian) compiled the 'Deuteronomistic History' from Josh - Kings.
- ▶ Today, a more complex formation is assumed, from the Assyrian period (9th century) through the exile (6th cent), Persian period (5th cent) to 3rd cent.

JUDGES: THEMES

- ▶ Judges continues the story of conquest, but:
 - ▶ no stories about the Ark of Covenant
 - ▶ only one minor mention of the Ten Commandments
 - ▶ stories are incredibly violent, and include stories of violence against women
 - ▶ many of the stories highlight social anarchy & lawlessness in general

- ▶ What is the point of Judges?

JUDGES: COVENANT THEOLOGY

¹¹ Take care that you do not forget the Lord your God, by failing to keep his commandments, his ordinances, and his statutes, which I am commanding you today. ¹² When you have eaten your fill and have built fine houses and live in them, ¹³ and when your herds and flocks have multiplied, and your silver and gold is multiplied, and all that you have is multiplied, ¹⁴ then do not exalt yourself, forgetting the Lord your God, who brought you out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of slavery, ¹⁵ who led you through the great and terrible wilderness, an arid wasteland with poisonous snakes and scorpions... ¹⁷ **Do not say to yourself, “My power and the might of my own hand have gotten me this wealth.”** ¹⁸ **But remember the Lord your God, for it is he who gives you power to get wealth, so that he may confirm his covenant that he swore to your ancestors, as he is doing today.** ¹⁹ If you do forget the Lord your God and follow other gods to serve and worship them, I solemnly warn you today that you shall surely perish. ²⁰ Like the nations that the Lord is destroying before you, so shall you perish, because you would not obey the voice of the Lord your God.

JUDGES: THEOLOGY

| <u>Judge</u> | Othniel | Ehud | Deborah | Gideon | Jephthah | Samson |
|-----------------------|--------------------|-----------------|---------------------------|--|---|---------------------------------|
| <u>Apostasy</u> | Baals and Asherahs | did evil' | did evil' | did evil' | Baals and Astartes and gods of Aram, Sidon, Moab, etc.. | did evil' |
| <u>Punishment</u> | 8 years | 18 years | 20 years | 7 years (6.1-1) | 18 years | 40 years |
| <u>God's response</u> | Immediate | Immediate | Immediate | Prophetic rebuke (6.7-10) | God's rebuke (10.10-16) | No outcry |
| <u>Deliverance</u> | All Israel | Through Ephraim | Through Naphtali, Zebulun | Through Manasseh, Asher, Zebulun, Naphtali | Through Gilead | Samson fights alone for revenge |
| <u>Rest</u> | 40 years | 80 years | 40 years | 40 years (see 8.24-27) | No rest, judged 6 years | No rest, judged 20 years |

JUDGES: THEOLOGY

Israelite Women

Portrayal

Achsah (1.11-15)

- Daughter of Caleb, wife of Othniel (model judge)
- Assertively seeks and receives a gift/blessing

Deborah (4-5)

- Wife of Lappidoth
- Judge, Prophet and Mother
- Exercises authority in judging disputes
- Calls and instructs Barak
- Leads Israelite army to war with Barak
- Leads victory praises of Israel

Jephthah's daughter (11)

- Unnamed daughter and virgin
- Remembered among Israelite women

Manoah's wife (13.1-14.9)

- Unnamed wife (once barren)
- Receives divine instruction about son
- Her testimony disregarded by husband
- Her vow broken by Samson, her son

Micah's mother (17.1-4)

- Unnamed mother
- Robbed by her son
- Commissioned an idol to be made

Levite's concubine (19.1-

- Unnamed daughter and concubine

JUDGES: THEOLOGY

- ▶ What is 'faithfulness' in the context of Judges?
 - ▶ **Communal:** Israel
 - ▶ **Covenantal:** Grace-filled as well as obedient
 - ▶ **Cultural**
 - ▶ It's about being faithful to one's culture, traditions and ethnic identity
 - ▶ It's not just about 'God' or faith in a creed
 - ▶ **What are analogues of this kind of faith today?**

KINGS & HISTORY

- ▶ Endings, exile, new beginnings?

Solomon, the
Split Between
Israel and
Judah,
And the fall of
both kingdoms

- United Kingdom ends in 1 Kgs 11; Rehoboam king in Judah and Jeroboam in Israel.
- Beginning of the end for Israel according to Kings with Jeroboam's Golden Calves (1 Kgs 12.25-33)
- 'Original sin' of Bible: not Gen 3 but Exodus 32

Assyrian Invasion of Judah, 701 BC

⁷ The Lord was with [Hezekiah]; wherever he went, he prospered. He rebelled against the king of Assyria and would not serve him.

2 Kgs 18:7

Assyrian Account:

‘Because Hezekiah, King of Judah, would not submit to my yoke, I came up against him, and by force of arms and by the might of my power I took 46 of his strong-fenced cities; and of the smaller towns which were scattered about, I took and plundered a countless number. From these places I took and carried off 200,156 persons, old and young, male and female, together with horses and mules and camels, oxen and sheep, a countless multitude.’

JUDGES: THEOLOGY

- Israel, apostasy, and sin: a trauma perspective:
- '[The exile] was a trauma experienced on multiple levels: not just bricks and mortar or forced relocation, but shame — including and particularly the perceived taunting of the nations, both of Israel and its God...also, there was growing...self-blame...typical of trauma (both individual and collective)'
- David Carr, *Formation of the Hebrew Bible: A New Reconstruction* (2011)

JUDGES: THEOLOGY

- Bear one another's burdens, and in this way you will fulfil the law of Christ. (Gal 6:2)
- How does the relationship (and its breakdown!) between the tribes of Israel in Judges help indicate the importance of Christian unity?

THE END OF HISTORY: ZEDEKIAH AND JEHOIACHIN

- Read 2 Kings 24:8-25:7 and 25:27-30
- What is the tone at the end of Kings?
- **‘Judges and Kings are mirror images of each other...In Judges, the land is held but *might* be lost, in Kings, the land is lost, but some measure of restoration is a possibility’**
- G. McConville, *Biblica*, 1989 (70:1), pp 31-49.

READING JUDGES 11:

JEPHTHAH'S VOW

- Discuss **Judges 11:1-11, 29-40** in small groups (10 minutes)
 - What is the 'point' of the story?
 - What do you make of Jephthah's bargain with the Lord?
 - Why include the details about Jephthah's daughter at the end?
 - Does the story support traditional gender roles like Jephthah's, or challenge them, or do something different?

READING JUDGES 16

- Discuss Judges 16 in small groups (10 min)
 - Samson is strong, but never has military victories like Gideon or Jephthah
 - Is the figure of Samson:
 - A hero?
 - A fool?
 - A cautionary tale?
 - A tragic figure?
 - An example of conflicting desires?