

The Half Hour That Changes the World

Judges

Book 7

Basic Question behind the book:

Does God have super heroes or ordinary people like you and me in whom he dwells, and through whom he works?

Summary of book:

The book of Judges falls neatly after the initial conquest of the land under the leadership of Joshua, and before the time of the ministry of Samuel and the appointment of the Kings. The map below gives you the geographical and political context into which the book is written. The judges were not judges in the sense that we would understand them. They were military leaders who came to the fore at times of national crisis, usually when an external oppressor was agitating the promised land and its people. Unfortunately, the verdict of the author was that the reason for their difficulties lay in internal reasons. The tribes were disunited for much of the time and they continually engaged in worship of the pagan gods in the area, the Baals. During the period in question we are told of 12 judges in particular: Othniel, Ehud, Shamgar, Deborah, Gideon, Tola, Jair, Jephthah, Ibzan, Elon, Abdon and Samson,

Vital Statistics:

Purpose: The book of Judges shows that God's judgment against sin is certain, and his forgiveness of sin and restoration to relationship are just as certain for those who repent.

Author and Dating: The book of Judges is anonymous but stays very close to the story of the characters of the Judges of Israel. For this reason, Samuel has been suggested as a possible author, coming as he does historically, just after the end of the period.

Setting: The geographical setting is the land of Canaan where a group of different tribes existed side by side, loosely held together by common religious beliefs and mutual treaties.

Key People: The Judges.

Other Reflections:

Every action has a consequence. When we choose to go God's way, blessings follow. When we choose our own way, life becomes difficult. The Israelites abandoned God and suffered for it. We too need to be sure that we are keeping in step with God by his Spirit.

Key text:

'In those days Israel had no king; everyone did as they saw fit.' (17:6)

