

# Better Watch Out, Cuz...

---

## The Book of Judges

Detailed outline from the Sermon on October 28, 2007

The problem with **Joshua** (Judges 1:1)

How do we fill the shoes of such a great leader?

The role of **Shophet** (Judges 2:10-16)

<u>Judge</u>	<u>Deliverer</u>	<u>Leader</u>
The common translation but only a few court references.	Spiritual, political, military	Someone that people follow Someone who steps up Someone God raises up

The problem with Israel:

1. The lack of centrality. (Shiloh, Gilgal, Bethel and Dan are all separate *high places*).
2. The challenge of sustainability. (Judges 2:18-19)
3. No clear succession plan.
4. It gets so bad that the people finally cry out for a king (1 Samuel 8:4-9); someone authoritative; someone anointed; some sustainable chain of kings in a family line.

The **major figures** of that season:

**Deborah** (Judges 4-5)

- A prophetess and leader (4:4): more spiritual attributes assigned to her than most. She “held court” (4:5)
- The crisis (4:1-3) King Jabin of the Canaanites has 900 iron chariots and has cruelly oppressed the Israelites.
- A reality check (4:8-9): Barak says, “I’m not going to battle without Deborah.” Deborah answered, “I’ll go with you, but all the honor will go to a woman.”
- Something to sing about (5:1-31): a song of victory and praise.

**Gideon** (Judges 6-8)

- 7 years of oppression by the Midianites and Amalekites (6:1-6)
- The root issue (6:7-10): you have worshiped the gods of the Amorites.

- Testing God (6:11-40) Gideon hesitates – “my clan is the smallest, I’m the least. If you really mean this, then prove yourself.” So an angel of God negotiates with Gideon and offers some tests and proofs...the best known is the fleece. (6:36-38)
- Our Israelite version of the Spartans – 300 warriors, 300 trumpets (7:1-22) triumph over many
- (8:22) “I will not rule over you, nor will my sons. The Lord will rule over you.”

### **Jephthah** (Judges 10-12)

- The Philistines and Ammonites roll in (10:7)
- 18 bad years (10:8) foisted on Israel
- Root cause? Foreign gods...God says, “Cry out to the gods you have chosen.” (10:14)
- An unlikely leader (11:1-11) rises up; great warrior but a child of a prostitute and an outcast.
- Jephthah gives the Ammonite King a history lesson about God’s dealings. (11:14-27)
- A solemn vow (11:30-39) “If you give the Ammonites into my hands, I’ll sacrifice whatever comes out of my door when I come home.” It was his daughter. There is no evidence that God asked him to do this, but he followed through.

### **Samson** (Judges 13-16)

- A miraculous birth (13:1-25)
- The lion, the Philistine woman and other strange stories (14-15)
- Twenty years of leadership (15:20) without much detail to know how or how well he led.
- Delilah and Samson’s hair (16): Delilah conspires to undermine Samson; eventually she has his head shaved. Whether his hair holds his power or whether he believes it does, he loses his super power.

### **Naomi and Ruth** (Ruth 1-4)

- Naomi’s circumstances (1:1-10): Naomi’s husband and both her sons die. She wants to return to her people, Israel.
- Ruth’s devotion (1:16-18) Ruth, one of Naomi’s son’s widow, is willing to go with Naomi even though she’d be an alien among Israel.
- A love story (2-4) with Boaz
- Their son, Obed, is the grandfather of King David (4:13-22)

### **Samuel** (1Samuel 1-6)

- Hannah’s vow (1:11): “If you give me a son, I’ll dedicate him to you.”

- A promise kept (1:26-28) Samuel given to the service of God.
- Hannah's prayer (2:1-10) praising God.
- "None of Samuel's words fell to the ground. (3:19) Lots of good things said of Samuel.
- Philistines attack – the "Ark" gets passed around. (4-6)
- Samuel's battle plan (7:5-17) prayer, fasting, confession instead of battle. God's voice thunders and scatters the enemy.

The clear **messages** and takeaways

1. "The Lord gave them over." (Judges 2:14, 3:8, 3:12, 4:2, 6:1, 10:7, 13:1, 1 Timothy 1:20)
2. "Cry out to the gods you have chosen." Facetious, but realistic.
3. "The Lord had compassion on them as they groaned under those who oppressed and afflicted them." (Judges 2:18)
4. Sometimes sustaining is more difficult than winning.
5. Keeping the faith among a host of influences. There's nothing quite like good leadership.
  - a) These are not perfect leaders, but...
  - b) God uses people who will step up.
  - c) The best seasons in almost any culture of people are best because someone or many step up.