

Abridged and adapted for the Pathfinder Bible Experience



Andrews Bible Commentary

JUDGES

Title and Authorship. The book takes its title from its leading characters, the six major “judges”: Othniel, Ehud, Deborah, Gideon, Jephthah, and Samson. The six minor judges are Shamgar, Tola, Jair, Ibzan, Elon, and Abdon. These judges were more than judicial administrators; they also were divinely appointed deliverers of God’s people.

Date. The internal evidence of the book of Judges seems to indicate that it was written during the early period of Saul’s or David’s reign, perhaps by Samuel, as held by Jewish tradition.

Backgrounds. The time of the Judges was a period that extended from the time of the death of all the elders who had seen the great miracles God had done for His people Israel until the time of Samuel and the beginning of the monarchy, from about 1350 to 1050 B.C.

During this time, we find periods of oppression, brought on by apostasies, alternating with peaceful times under the leadership of the judges whom God raised up to deliver Israel.

Theology and Purpose. The book of Judges describes the interaction between God and His people after they entered the land of Canaan. We move from some elements of social order to almost total chaos. At the center of the book is the covenant relation that God established with the twelve tribes and that would have ensured safety and security. The book is about the God of the covenant and the disruption of the covenant relationship and its results.

The book begins with a people who existed in union with God and with each other.

The positive picture of Israel’s obedience and faithfulness to the Lord is soon undone by portrayals of marked disobedience and apostasy.

God is not indifferent to human conduct; He reacts to it through covenant blessings or curses. The book of Judges reveals a God full of compassion and mercy toward sinners.

The book anticipates the time when the true King shall arise in Israel, One who will deliver and rule in righteousness, the messianic King.