



Putting the Puzzle Pieces Together

Second Series: “The Bottom Edge” Old Testament: History

Lesson #8: Joshua, Judges and Ruth

I. Introduction

A. The historical books (12: from Joshua through 2 Chronicles) can be divided into three sections:

1. The Theocratic Books - Joshua, Judges & Ruth
2. Monarchical Books - Samuel, Kings & Chronicles
3. Restoration Books - Ezra, Nehemiah & Esther

The theocratic books cover the conquest and settlement of Canaan and life as it was during the period of Judges. During this time (approx. 1405-1043 BC) Israel was a nation ruled by God (a theocracy).

B. Authors

Joshua: Likely Joshua himself (24:26). It was written soon after the events (Rahab was still alive – 6:25). Some portions were added after his death.

Judges: May have been written by Samuel from oral and written source material

Ruth: Anonymous source. Probably written during David’s reign (4:17, 22).

II. Joshua

A. “Through three military campaigns involving more than 39 armies, the people of Israel learn a crucial lesson under Joshua’s capable leadership – victory comes through faith in God and obedience to His words, rather than military might or numerical superiority” (Talk thru the Bible, p. 51).

B. Key Verse: 1:8 “Do not let this Book of the Law depart from your mouth; meditate on it day and night, so that you may be careful to do everything written in it. Then you will be prosperous and successful.”

C. Timing

1 month to prepare (March – April 1405 BC)

7 years of conquest (April 1405 – 1398 BC) See Caleb’s age 14:7, 14:10.

8 years of settlement (1398 – 1390 BC) 2 ½ tribes – east Jordan, 9 ½ tribes – west Jordan.

D. Three campaigns (see map p. 6)

Central (Chap. 6-8)

Southern (Chap. 9-10)

Northern (Chap. 11-12)

E. An outline of Joshua

1. Jordan River: entrance into the Land (1-5)

Crossing Jordan on dry land

2. Canaan: conquest narratives

a. The Commander of the Lord's Army (5:13-15)

Walls of Jericho fall

b. Jericho (6)

c. Ai (7-8)

Defeat at Ai

d. Southern Coalition (9-10)

e. Northern Coalition (11)

The longest day – the sun stood still

f. List of Conquests (12)

3. Situated on both sides of the Jordan: description of allotment of Land

a. Settlement of Prior Claims (13-17)

1) Reuben, Gad, and Half-Manasseh in Transjordan (13)

2) Caleb (14)

3) Judah (15)

4) Manasseh and Ephraim (16-17)

b. Remainder of the Tribes (18-19)

c. Cities of refuge established (20)

d. Levitical cities allocated (21)

4. Covenant matters

F. Tribal Territories See Chart, p. 7

III. Judges (might be entitled the “Book of Failure”)

- A. Thematically: In Joshua, the people respond in faith and God blesses them. In Judges, the people are disobedient and are frequently defeated. Note the contrast:

Joshua	Judges
Freedom	Bondage
Progress	Decline
Conquest through belief	Defeat through disbelief
“Far be it from us that should forsake the Lord to serve other gods” (24:16)	“So the children of Israel did evil in the sight of the Lord. They forgot the Lord their God, and served the Baals and Asherahs” (3:7)
Israel served God (24:31)	Israel served self (21:25)
Israel knew the person of God and the power of God (24:16-18,31)	Israel knew neither the person of God nor the power of God (2:10)
Objective morality	Subjective morality
Israel pressing onward	Israel spiraling downward
Sin judged	Sin tolerated
Faith and obedience	Lack of both

(Talk thru the Bible, p. 61)

- B. Timing – the book covers about 350 years.

- C. Cycles of sin

There are 7 cycles – during which “every man did what was right in his own eyes (Judges 17:6, 21:25)

Cycle	Oppressor	Years of Oppression	Deliverer	Years of Peace
1 (3:7-11)	Mesopotamians	8	Othniel	40
2 (3:12-30)	Moabites	18	Ehud	80
Parenthesis (3:31)	Philistines	---	Shagmar	---
3 (4:1-5:31)	Canaanites	20	Deborah/Barak	40
4 (6:1 – 8:32)	Midianites	7	Gideon	40
5 (8:33-10:5)	Abimelech	3	Tola/Jair	45
6 (10:6-12:15)	Ammonites	18	Jepthah/Ibzan/Elon/Abdon	6, 7, 10, 8
7 (13:1 – 16:31)	Philistines	40	Samson	20

(Talk thru the Bible, p. 62)

- D. The Judges: a regional leader whom God uses to throw off the yoke of bondage and help restore Israel’s worship of Yahweh. Including Samuel, 17 are mentioned.

Some are warrior-rulers (Othniel, Gideon)

One is a priest (Elijah)

One is a prophet (Samuel)

E. Outline

1. Deterioration 1:1-3:4

Israel's failure to complete the conquest

2. Deliverance 3:5 – 16:31

The events recorded in the Book of Judges are closely related to the developments in Joshua's day. Since the Canaanites had not been fully dislodged, and the occupation by Israel was not complete, similar conditions continued into the period of the judges. Consequently warfare continued as local areas or cities were reoccupied in the course of time.

The chronology of this period is difficult to ascertain.

	Approximate Years	Scripture	
Mesopotamian oppression	8	3:8	
Othniel – deliverance and rest	40	3:11	
Moab oppression	18	3:14	
Ehud – deliverance and rest	80	3:30	
Canaanite oppression – Jabin	20	4:3	
Deborah and Barak – deliverance and rest	40	5:31	Deborah's victory
Midianite oppression	7	6:1	
Gideon – deliverance and rest	40	8:28	Gideon's test with the fleece
Abimelech – puppet king	3	9:22	
Tola – period of judgeship	23	10:2	
Jair – period of judgeship	22	10:3	
Ammonite oppression	18	10:8	
Jephthah – deliverance and rest	6	12:7	
Ibzan – judgeship	7	12:9	
Elon – judgeship	19	12:11	
Abdon – judgeship	8	12:14	
Philistine oppression	40	13:1	
Samson – exploits and judgeship	20	15:20	Samson and his hair
Total	335-410 years	(approximately 1380 BC – 1045 BC)	

3. Depravity (17:1 – 21:25)

IV. Ruth

A. Timing – covers approximately 30 years during the period of the Judges.

B. Locations

1:1-1:18 Country of Moab – east of the Southern part of the Dead Sea (Gen. 19:30-38)

1:19 – 2:23 A Bethlehem field

3:1-18 A Bethlehem threshing field

4:1-22 Bethlehem

C. Major Theme: the function of the “goel”

1. The redeemer kinsman principle – Deut. 25:5-10
2. The Kinsman must be willing to redeem (payoff debt, marry the widow, raise the children, etc.)
3. Christ is our “goel”

Related by blood: John 1:14, Rom. 1:3, Heb. 2:14-15

Able to pay the price: 1 Pet. 1:18-19

Willing to redeem: Matt. 20:28, Jn. 10:15-18, Heb. 10:7

V. So What?

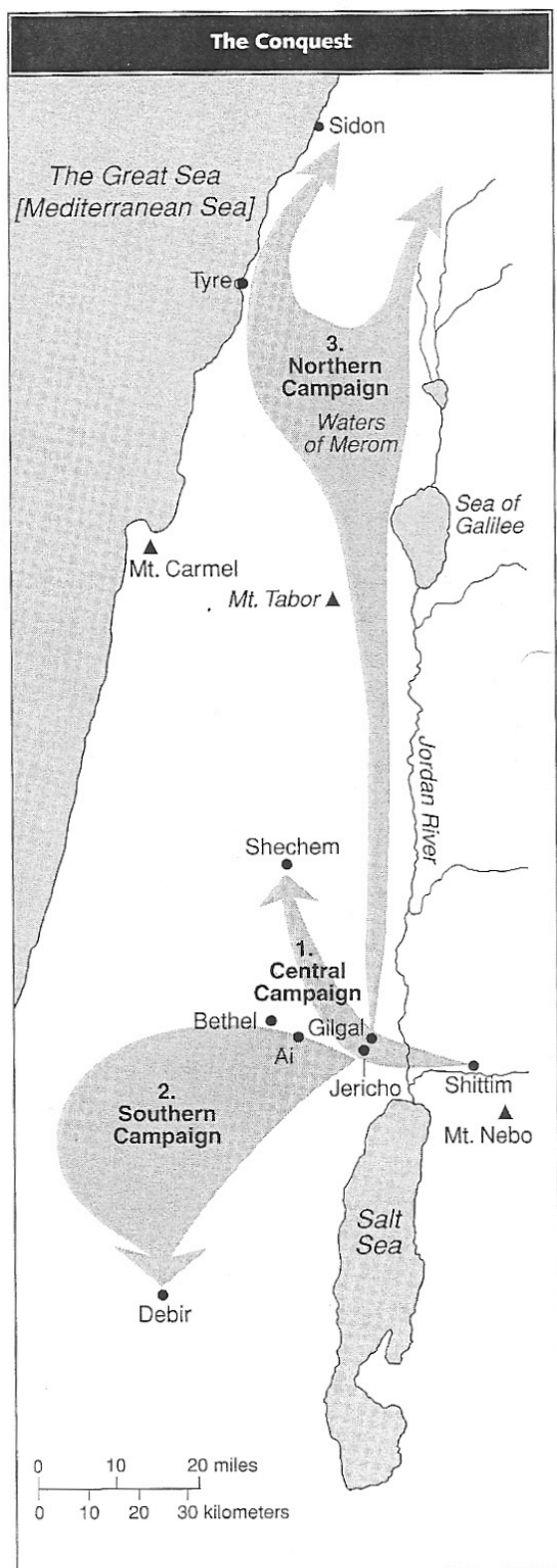
The history books record “selective portions” of the historical account. They were written in order to focus attention on a life ruled by faith.

See Ps. 33:16-18

Discussion Questions

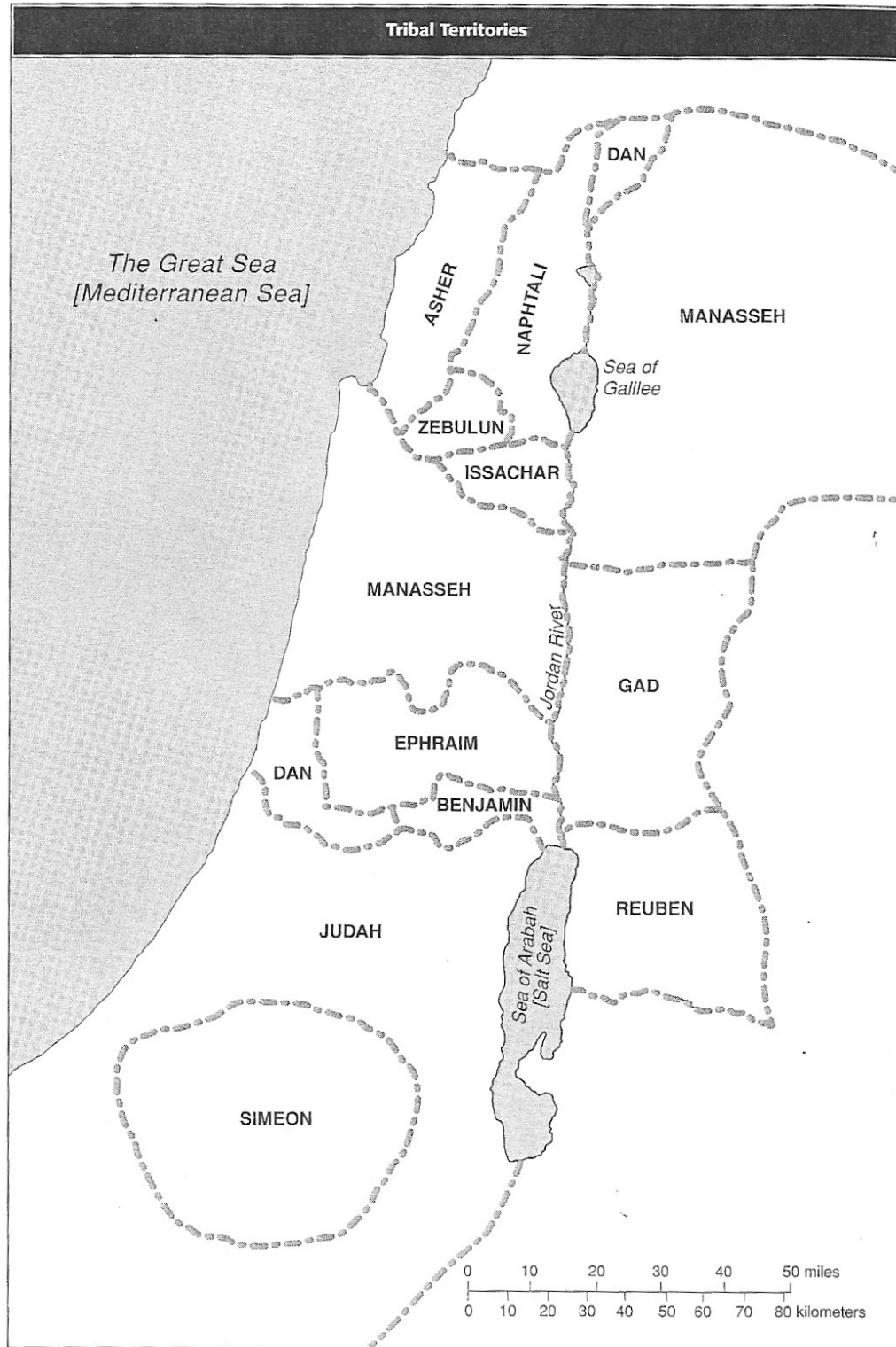
1. Why did the Israelites “win” at Jericho and “lose” at Ai? What can we learn from those two battles?
2. Why can the book of Judges be called the “book of failure”? What was Israel’s cycle?
3. What is a redeemer kinsman? Why do we need one?

Map from Section II D



(A Survey of the Old Testament, p. 186)

Chart from Section II F



(A Survey of the Old Testament, p. 188)

Reconciling the Number of Tribes with Tribal Inheritance

	12 Sons of Jacob (Gen. 49)	13 Moses blesses the tribes (Deut. 33)	12 Tribes that received an inheritance (Josh. 15-19)	12 Tribes listed in Ezekiel's vision (Eze. 48)	12 Tribes listed a remnant (Rev. 7)
Simeon	✓	---	✓	✓	✓
Judah	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Benjamin	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Reuben	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Gad	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Dan	✓	✓	✓	✓	---
Issachar	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Zebulun	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Asher	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Naphtali	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Levi	✓	✓	See Joshua 21	✓	✓
Joseph	✓	✓	---	---	✓
Joseph's Sons					
Manasseh	---	✓	✓	✓	✓
Ephraim	---	✓	✓	✓	---