

A painting of a barren tree in a desolate landscape under a cloudy sky. The tree is on the left, with its branches reaching across the top. The background shows a valley with mountains in the distance. The sky is filled with soft, grey clouds.

PARTIAL VICTORIES

& THE FAITHFULNESS OF GOD

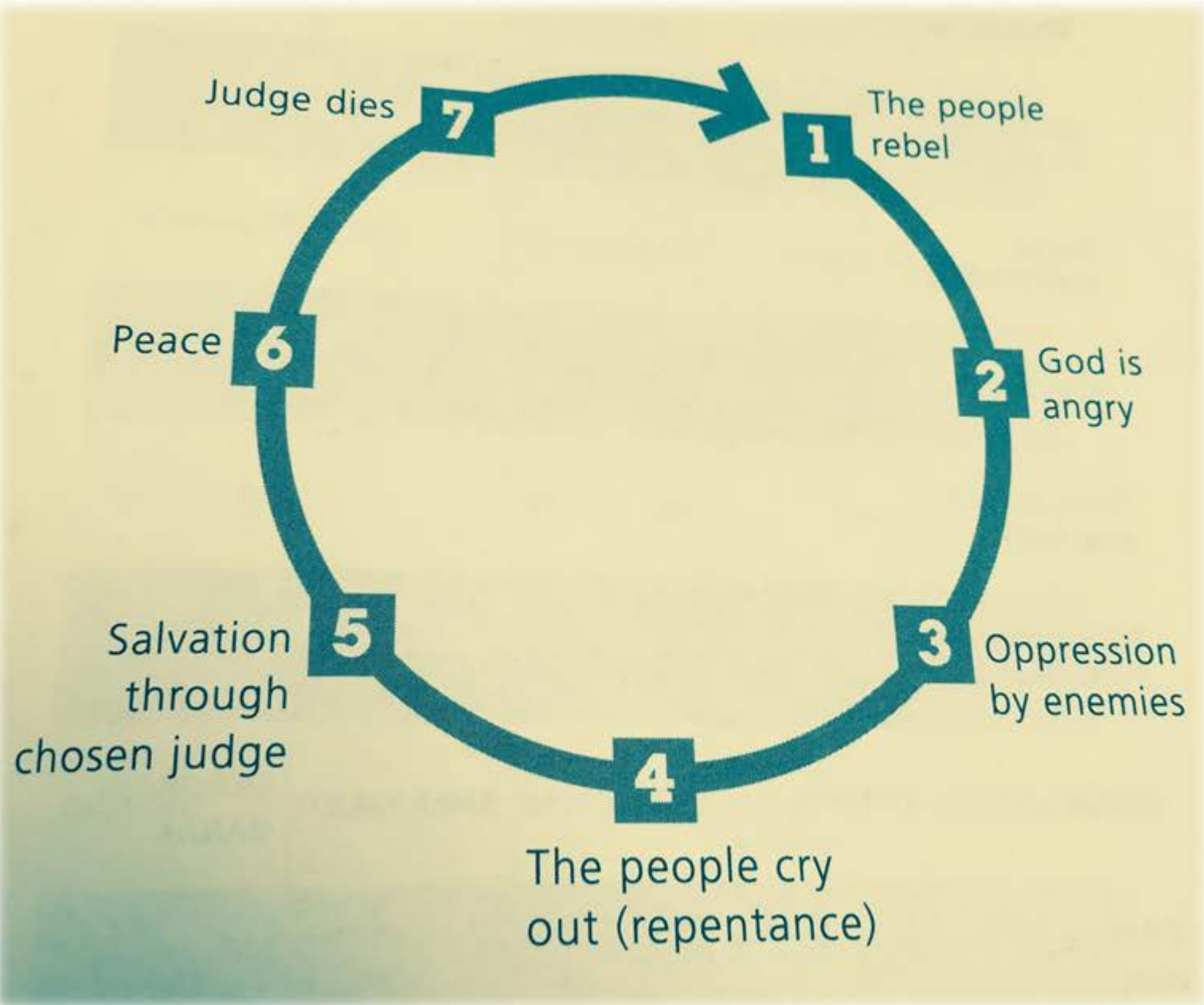
ENTERING THE LAND OF THE JUDGES

— JUDGES 1:1-2:5

And so Judges can be described as “despicable people doing deplorable things” and as “trashy tales about dysfunctional characters.” As the history unfolds even the “heroes,” the judges, become increasingly flawed and failing. They do many appalling things, and their efforts have less and less redemptive effect. It is a dismal story – and it is all history. So the reader will be led to ask, again and again: what in the world is this doing in the Bible? The answer is an important one – it is the gospel!

Tim Keller,
Judges for You, 9.





According to Judges, they need a King – from Judah. By providing mixed accounts of the judges – faith and failure – with the repeated refrain in the closing chapters “in those days Israel had no king; everyone did as he saw fit” (17:6; 18:1; 19:1; 21:25) – judges is arguing that a king is a better kind of leader. Not just any King would accomplish this, of course. It is essential that he be a God-fearing, covenant-keeping King, who would help the people themselves keep covenant.

Alan Groves, “Judges” in Kevin J. Vanhoozer et al., *Dictionary for Theological Interpretation of the Bible*, 413.

