

NCPC: Sunday School
Judges: The Cycle of Judges

Shorter Catechism Question 7: What are the decrees of God?

A: The decrees of God are, his eternal purpose, according to the counsel of his will, whereby, for his own glory, he hath foreordained whatsoever comes to pass.

Ephesians 1:11, Acts 4:27-28, Psalm 33:11, Ephesians 2:10, Romans 9:22-23, Romans 11:33.

I. Introduction and Background: Judges is a sad account of disobedience, idolatry, murder, unauthorized worship, unauthorized ordination of a priest, gang rape, dismemberment, war between the tribes, and mass kidnapping. And Judges 2:1-4

- A. Genre: The genre of Judges is historical.
- B. Date: from 1375-1092 BC. (approx 280 years). Most of the book was likely written by David's time (1010–970 B.C.).
- C. Author: The authorship of Judges is anonymous.
- D. These judges were nothing like we think of modern day judges.

DQ: Why do you think God sent an oppressor to oppress His people?

II. Outline

- A. The Roots of Israel's Unfaithfulness (1:1–3:6)
- B. The Downward Spiral of Israel's Unfaithfulness (3:7–16:31)
- C. The Depths of Israel's Unfaithfulness (17:1–21:25)

III. Message and Theology

- A. Warnings: Josh 1:16-18, Ex 23:23-25 and 32-33, Num 33:55, Deut 7:1-5
- B. Another summary: Judges 2:11-23
- C. The Judges: *The Downward Spiral of Israel's Unfaithfulness* (3:7–16:31)
 - 1. Cycles: Apostasy (disobedience, idolatry), Servitude (oppression), Supplication (crying out for relief), and Salvation (represented by a Judge)
 - 2. Elements:
 - A. Israel does evil in the site of the Lord
 - B. The Lord's anger is provoked; an enemy oppresses them
 - C. Israel cries out to the Lord
 - D. The Lord hears their cry and provides a savior (a judge)
 - E. The Lord chooses and empowers the savior by the Spirit

- F. The oppressor submits, followed by a period of peace under the judge
- G. The deliverer dies

3. Israel's Judges:

- A. Othniel (3:7-11)
- B. Ehud (3:12-30)
- C. Shamgar (3:31)
- D. Deborah and Barak (4:1-5:31)
- E. Gideon (6:1-8:35) 3 chapters devoted to his story

DQ: Was the fleece incident an act of faith or unbelief?

DQ: Should Christians today use similar tests in order to determine God's will or to reassure us?

- F. Abimelech (9:1-57)
- G. Tola and Jair (10:1-5)
- H. Jephthah (10:6 - 12:7) 10:6-18

DQ: It has been observed that the deeper you get into Judges that the periods of peace get short and the periods of oppression get longer. Why do you think that is? What is happening here?

- I. Three minor Judges (12:8-15)
- J. Samson (13:1 - 16:31) 4 chapters, a type of fire, type of Israel
- D. The Depths of Israel's Unfaithfulness (17:1-21:25)
 - 1. Micah and a Levite man. 17:1-6
 - 2. The Problem in Dan Ch 18
 - 3. Strife with Benjamin (Ch 19-21)

In the end, Judges teaches us two things. The first thing it teaches us is about us and the 2nd is about the character of God:

DQ What does Judges teach us about man?

DQ What does Judges teach us about God?