

Word notes Sunday 5/10/08 Tony Hodge
Introduction to the Book of Judges

Summary

Judges tells the story of the Jews from the death of Joshua to the rise of Samuel, roughly 1220 to 1050 BC and deals with the time in between that of Moses & Joshua before and of David & Solomon thereafter. The big difference is that in contrast to the times it sits between this is a time when there is no one person obviously "in charge" – quite odd for the times in general as when if you read scripture it's not long before you can identify who is in charge and who gets the blame when it goes wrong.

Without a strong leader the nation's fortunes follow a repetitive cycle:

- Israel deserts God for heathen gods (notably Asherah and Baal)
- God allows them to suffer at the hands of their enemies (Canaanites)
- Israel cries out to God for help and God sends a deliverer (eg Gideon)
- All is OK until he dies
- Israel falls back into infidelity

The main themes of the book are:

- God's faithfulness to a lapsing people
- God uses people because of their faith, not any mortal qualifications
- God bringing strength out of human weakness

The main problem the people have is that "every man did what was right in his eyes" (Judges 17:6 & 21:25) – there is no one leader to show them the way, to make a sound judgement before the Lord. In Judges 1:1 we see they knew to enquire of God then but lost their way soon after.

The Judges were men and women of faith who could hear the Lord and tell/show the people the way.

Application:

What similarities can you see between the times of the Judges and today:

- 1, for our own society?
- 2, for Christians?

And what is different?

Discuss what the title "Judge" brings to mind for each person. How does that fit with the judges we read about.

God's answer then was to act through single persons. Do you think today's Britain/World needs judges such as these or something else – if so what?

Judges were people who heard the Lord and obeyed – even if they didn't feel fully up to the job. Who does the Lord speak to today?

Witness:

Sept-Oct task:

Organise a social event sometime over the next couple of months that Cell members can invite friends to. Examples might be a Halleluiah party for children (as opposed to Halloween) fireworks parties for families, dinner parties for adults. The aim is to have fun with non-Christians. Think ahead to the end of the year and be ready to organise Christmas or New Year events to follow-up.