

## God Delivers Through Judges

### Introduction

The book of Judges records the death of Joshua and the elders who led in his day and just after his day. After all these had died, however, God's people often went astray. God would allow and even cause their enemies to harass and defeat them as a disciplinary action. Usually, the people would then cry out to God for help, and God would send a judge to save or deliver them. (Note that the judges at this time were military leaders as well as judges in the modern sense.) The language of saving or delivering is used in these contexts and includes the two primary senses of salvation: 1) from physical danger and harm and 2) from sin.

### Repeated Pattern

Over and over again in the book of Judges, 1) the people sin, 2) God sends enemies to oppress them, 3) they cry out to God for help, and 4) God sends a judge to save or deliver them. The pattern is described generally in 2:10-23, followed by specific examples as the book unfolds. The people would usually remain faithful to God as long as the judge who delivered them was alive, but once that judge passed on, the people would repeat the cycle. Not every account that is recorded has every aspect of the repeated pattern, but most of them do. As you read, remember these events took place over a period of many years.

### Questions and Applications

1. For what purpose did God leave some of the pagan nations in the midst of Israel (Judges 2:20 - 3:6)? How do you feel about God doing this? Do you think he does similar things today?
2. Read the story of Othniel in 3:7-11. Can you find all four ingredients of the repeated pattern mentioned above in this story?
3. Read the more extended story of Ehud in 3:12-31? Can you find all four ingredients?
4. New cycles are introduced in 4:1; 6:1; 10:6; and 13:1 as well. These accounts are longer but still seem to follow the same general pattern. If you want more detail, read these sections as well and see how the cycle is described.
5. Apparently the primary sin that kept ensnaring the people in the book of Judges was idolatry (3:7; 6:10; 10:6). We don't worship idols in the same way they did, but you don't have to literally bow down to an idol to be guilty of idolatry (Colossians 3:5). How would you define idolatry as we might practice it today? Do you have any idols (tangible or intangible)?

6. Do you believe God still turns people over to forces that afflict them? Why would he do such a thing? What kinds of people or things do you think God uses today? Do you think he would use viruses? Do you think he is doing any such thing in your life?

7. Why do you think the people in the book of Judges always reverted to their sinful ways when the judge died? (3:7 has one clue). Have you ever been disciplined by God and repented, only to find yourself right back where you were a while later? What could help prevent this?

8. What can you learn about salvation from the book of Judges?