

## Kings and Leaders

### Unit 1 :I srael's Early Leaders

The first five lessons of the Summer Quarter (June, July, August) of our Sunday School material come from the book of Judges.

The book bears the fitting name "Judges" which refers to unique leaders God gave to his people for preservation against their enemies. Judges 2:16 says "*the lord raised up judges*" "A judge" or deliver was distinct from a judge in the English world today. Such leaders guided military expeditions against foes as well as arbitrated judicial matters. There was no national rule in time of the judges. , Each judge was a local deliverer, lifted up to leadership by God when the deplorable condition of Israel in the region around where the people cried out, prompted God to rescue them. The setting and times of the book of Judges is a tragic sequel to the times of Joshua, whereby the people were obedient to God in the conquest of conquering the land given to them. However later in time, In the book of Judges they were disobedient and idolatrous. When Israel backslid, God allowed their enemies to oppress them until they called out to God for deliverance. God would then send a judge to rescue them. Five things can be listed as to the " cyclical" problems in Israel's moral and spiritual decline:

- 1) disobedience in failing to drive the Canaanites out of the land (Judg 1:19) ,
- 2) idolatry ( Jjudg 2:12)
- 3) intermarriage with wicked Canaanites ( Judg 3:5-6)
- 4) not heeding the judges ( Judg 2:17)
- 5) turning away from God after the death of the judges (Judg 2:19)

In the narrative of the book of Judges, there is a repeating of a four-part rise and fall or better stated fall and rise in Israel's history:

- 1) Israel's departure from God
- 2) God's chastisement in permitting military defeat and subjugation
- 3) Israel's prayers to God, pleading for deliverance
- 4) God's raising up "judges" who led in the shaking off of the oppressors.

**Please see the chart .."The Judges of Israel"** .

Additionally, in the history related to this period, two men of special significance for contrast in spiritual leadership are 1) Eli, a judge and priest, though (not a good example), and 2) Samuel, a judge and priest, and prophet, ( a good example).

The Sunday School quarterly does not go through all the judges. The purpose of the writers, and the context of the unit was to point to a few of Israel's early leaders. A few judges and a few of the kings were selected.

EHUD was the first judge selected for the June 7<sup>th</sup> lesson.

I have chosen to look at lesson 2, 3 and possibly 4 in our two weeks time slot that we have until Pastor Sholar returns.

**Lesson 2** is... **THE CALL OF GIDEON**... **Please observe...Judges 6:11-24** , as we read the text...