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God-Ordained Leaders - Judges

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God-Ordained Leaders-Judges

The powers that be are ordained of God (Rom. 13:1) The Apostle Paul taught that ultimately, it is God who puts people in places of power or leadership. Some use their God-given authority wisely; some do not. Consider these examples:

A. Judges

During the days of Moses	
Jethro's Judgeship	Jethro's recommendation: Moses was to choose men who loved God, His truth and hated covetousness to judge matters to assist Moses (Exod. 18:17-23).
Aaron's Judgeship	He addressed issues during Moses' trip up the mountain of God (Exod. 24:14).
During the turbulent years following the conquest of Canaan	
<p>The individuals in the period of the judges of Israel were not judges per se but more akin to military leaders who God raised up to deliver His children from oppressors. The 350-year period of the judges was a bleak period in the nation's history. The tribes were not united and the people had succumbed to the temptations of the Canaanites and strayed from obedience to the covenant. The sin and return to God occurred in cyclical fashion a number of times during this period. It was a downward spiral, becoming worse with every iteration. These two verses indicate the pattern of Israel's behavior.</p> <p><i>¹⁸ And when the Lord raised up judges for them, the Lord was with the judge and delivered them out of the hand of their enemies all the days of the judge; for the Lord was moved to pity by their groaning because of those who oppressed them and harassed them. ¹⁹ And it came to pass, when the judge was dead, that they reverted and behaved more corruptly than their fathers, by following other gods, to serve them and bow down to them. They did not cease from their own doings nor from their stubborn way.</i> Jdg. 2:18-19</p> <p>Faithful service Sin Bondage (God punished per the covenant) Repentance (the people cried out to God) Deliverance (God raised up a person to serve as deliverer)</p> <p>A crisp summary of the book of Judges is found in 21:25, <i>In those days there was no king in Israel; every man did that which was right in his own eyes.</i></p>	
Othniel	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. First of Israel's judge-deliverers. Only judge from area of Judah. b. A son of Kenaz, and nephew of Caleb, older brother of Kenaz (Josh. 15:15-17; Jdg. 1:12-13) c. Defeated the Arameans and captured a strong Canaanite city-Kiriath-Sepher in land given to the tribe of Judah and he received Achsah, Caleb's daughter as his wife. d. The LORD chose Othniel to deliver His people from the oppressor King Chushan Rishathaim of Northwestern Mesopotamia (Jdg. 3:7-11). e. The Spirit of the LORD controlled him and he judged Israel some 40 years.

Ehud	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Second of Israel's judge-deliverers (Jdg. 3:12-30). b. The LORD raised up Ehud to defeat Eglon king of Moab who had persecuted Israel for 18 years. c. Through trickery Ehud assassinated the king and then gathered Israelites together and defeated the armies of Moab. d. Israel enjoyed 80 years of peace and rest.
Shamgar	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Third of Israel's judge-deliverers (Jdg. 3:31). b. Slaughtered 600 Philistine invaders with an ox goad
Deborah	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Fourth of Israel's judge-deliverers (Jdg. 4:1-5:31) b. A prophetess who urged Barak to lead an army that defeated Sisera and his troops (Jdg. 4:8-9). c. She held court under the Palm of Deborah between the cities of Ramah and Beth-el in the hill country of Ephraim (Jdg. 4:5). d. God revealed to her that Barak should mobilize an army of 10,000 men from the tribes of Naphtali and Zebulun from Mt. Tabor and attack the Canaanite oppressors (Jdg. 4:6-7). e. Barak refused to do this unless Deborah accompanied him (Jdg. 4:8). f. Deborah agreed, but warned him that the credit for the victory would not go to him but to a woman (Jdg. 4:9). g. At Deborah's order, Barak's army charged the Canaanites and totally routed them (Jdg. 4:14-17). h. Following the battle, she and Barak composed and sang a victory song (Jdg. 5:1-31).
Gideon	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Fifth of Israel's judge-deliverers. He was from the tribe of Manasseh. b. An angel of God appeared to him under an oak tree in the city of Ophrah as he threshed wheat in a winepress to keep it from the Midianites (Jdg. 6:11-12). c. The angel commissioned him to raise up an army and defeat the Midianites (Jdg. 6:13-16). d. Gideon offered up an animal sacrifice before the angel, who caused supernatural fire to consume it (Jdg. 6:17-23). e. He then built an altar and called it Jehovah-shalom, meaning "the Lord is Peace" (Jdg. 6:24). f. That night God instructed Gideon to tear down his father's pagan altar to Baal and replace it with an altar to God (Jdg. 6:25-27). g. The Spirit of God came upon Gideon, and he blew a trumpet, summoning an army from the tribes of Manasseh, Asher, Zebulun and Naphtali (Jdg. 6:33-35). h. Still needing God's reassurance, Gideon asked for and received two specific signs, both having to do with a wool fleece he planned to place on the threshing floor. i. He asked that the fleece be wet the next morning while the ground around it remained dry (Jdg. 6:36-38). j. He then asked that on the following day the fleece be dry and the ground around it be wet (Jdg. 6:39-40). k. Desiring that Gideon depend upon God rather than human strength for victory, God ordered him to reduce his army (Jdg. 7:1-2).

	<p>l. God reduced the army first from 32,000 to 10,000 and then from 10,000 to 300. He was assured of victory with these 300 men, despite the fact that his enemy possessed 135,000 troops (Jdg. 7:7; 8:10).</p> <p>m. Gideon attacked the enemy with his 300 men. At a given signal each man blew his trumpet, smashed the jar he was carrying, which revealed a burning torch, and shouted out, "The sword of the LORD and of Gideon (Jdg. 7:16-20).</p> <p>n. The Midianites fled in panic and 120,000 were slain by the sword (Jdg. 7:22; 8:10).</p> <p>o. There were three sad aspects to this glorious victory. (1) The hostility of the tribe of Ephraim was aroused against Gideon. They accused him of not involving them in the battle (Jdg. 8:1-3). (2) The punishment was imposed by Gideon upon the Israelite city of Succoth because of its refusal to feed his famished troops (Jdg. 8:4-8, 13,-17). (3) Gideon's brothers were killed by the Midianites (Jdg. 8:18-20).</p> <p>p. Following the battle, Gideon refused the invitation of the men of Israel to reign over them but he did request that he be given gold for an ephod (Jdg. 8:22-27).</p> <p>r. This request was granted, but with tragic results. <i>Gideon...put it in his city...and all Israel went thither a whoring after it: which thing became a snare unto Gideon, and to his house (Jdg. 8:27).</i></p>
Tola	<p>a. Sixth of Israel's judge-deliverers</p> <p>b. He lived his life at Shamir, mount Ephraim.</p> <p>c. He was from the tribe of Issachar and judged Israel 23 years.</p>
Jair	<p>a. Seventh of Israel's judge-deliverers. He was a Gileadite.</p> <p>b. With his he sons delivered 30 Israelite cities from their enemies (Jdg. 10:3-5).</p> <p>c. He was a wealthy individual and judged God's people 22 years.</p>
Jephthah	<p>a. Eighth of Israel's judge-deliverers</p> <p>b. He was raised up in Gilead and his mother was a prostitute (Jdg. 11:1).</p> <p>c. He was driven from his home by his own half-brothers because of his harlot mother (Jdg. 11:2).</p> <p>d. He settled in the land of Tob (located in northeast Syria) where he gathered a group of mercenary troops (Jdg. 11:3).</p> <p>e. The elders of Gilead convinced Jephthah to fight the Ammonites (Jdg. 11:4-29).</p> <p>f. The Holy Spirit then rested upon Jephthah (Jdg. 11:29).</p> <p>g. But on the eve of the battle he a made a rash vow promising that if God gave him the victory, upon his return to Mizpeh he would offer up the first thing that come out of his door as a burnt sacrifice (Jdg. 11:30-31).</p> <p>h. Jephthah defeated the Ammonites, devastating 20 of their towns (Jdg. 11:32-33).</p> <p>i. Upon his return, the first person to greet him was his only daughter. The heartbroken Jephthah determined to keep his vow regardless which he did two months later (Jdg. 11:34-39).</p> <p>j. Jephthah led the tribes for six years.</p>
Ibzan	<p>a. Ninth of Israel's judge-deliverers (Jdg. 12:8-10)</p> <p>b. He ruled over a portion of the tribes of Israel for seven years.</p>

	c. Ibzan was a wealthy individual and had 30 sons and 30 daughters. He acquired wives for his sons from outside the tribe (12:9 rendered as “foreigners” by some).
Elon	a. Tenth of Israel’s judge-deliverers (Jdg. 12:11-12) b. He was from Zebulun and judged the people for ten years.
Abdon	a. Eleventh of Israel’s judge-deliverers (Jdg. 12:13-15). b. He was the son of Hillel, a Pirathonite, of the tribe of Ephraim. c. He had a large family of 40 sons and 30 nephews. d. He was wealthy for the times (owned 70 donkeys). e. He ruled for eight years.
Samson	a. Twelfth of Israel’s judge-deliverers (Jdg. 13-16). b. Samson was the son of Manoah, of Zorah, of the tribe of Dan. Samson’s mother was visited by the angel of the Lord who told her of his future birth. This heavenly messenger instructed the parents that their child was to be raised a Nazarite that is, he was not to touch wine or any other product of the vine; his hair must never be cut; and he must never touch a dead body (Jdg. 13:2-5, 14). c. Samson was born and empowered by the Holy Spirit even as he grew up (Jdg. 13:24-25). d. His marriage. Samson determined to marry an unbelieving Philistine girl, to the dismay of his parents. Already Samson’s carnal nature was coming to the surface. In spite of his sensuality, he was still used for God’s glory (Jdg. 14:1-15:5). d. His miracles (Jdg. 15:8-19). e. His misconduct (Jdg. 16:1-20). Samson was finally done in by a Philistine woman named Delilah, who discovered the source of his great strength. f. His misery (Jdg. 16:21-30). Samson now learned the high cost of low living. He was blinded and put in a prison house in the Philistine town of Gaza. He was allowed by God to destroy thousands of Philistines who had gathered in their heathen temple for a drunken orgy. In the following destruction Samson himself perished g. Samson was the first of three famous biblical Nazarites. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Samson (Jdg. 13:4-5) • Samuel (1 Sam. 1:11-28) • John the Baptist (Luke 1:13-17) h. His faith is referred to in Heb. 11:32. i. He judged in Israel 20 years.

Samuel	<p>a. Samuel was the last of Israel's judge-deliverers, a priest and a prophet.</p> <p>b. He was born as a result of God answering his mother Hannah's prayer and touching her barren womb (1 Sam. 1:2, 19-20).</p> <p>c. He became the second of two famous Old Testament Nazarites (1 Sam. 1:11).</p> <p>d. He came to Shiloh to serve the Lord under the mentorship of Eli the priest (1 Sam. 2:11).</p> <p>e. Samuel and God (1 Sam. 2:26-3:21).</p> <p>f. Samuel and the tribes of Israel (1 Sam. 7:1-13).</p> <p>g. Samuel and Saul (1 Sam. 8:1-15:35).</p> <p>h. Samuel and David (1 Sam. 16:1-19:18).</p> <p>i. Theological Summary</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Samuel probably wrote most of the material found in 1 Samuel and 1 Chronicles (1 Chron. 29:29-30). • The psalmist mentioned Samuel along with Moses and Aaron as three examples of God's faithfulness (Psa. 99:6). • Jeremiah referred to Samuel along with Moses to emphasize Israel's tragic sinful condition (Jer. 15:1). • Simon Peter used Samuel as a source of authority concerning the Messiah during his sermon by the temple gate called Beautiful (Acts 3:24). • Paul referred to Samuel during his message to the Jews in Pisidian Antioch (Acts 13:20). • The author of Hebrews referred to the great faith of Samuel (Heb. 11:32). <p>j. Samuel appointed his corrupt sons Joel and Abijah as judges (1 Sam. 8:1-3).</p>
During the days of Jesus	
Kings	<p>The power of judgeship became the domain of Israel's kings after the period of the judges. During the days of Jesus Israel's high court was the Sanhedrin. Localities also had those who served as judges (Luke 18:2).</p> <p>Following the exile from Babylon King Artaxerxes gave Ezra the priest the authority to appoint judges in Judea (Ezra 7:25)</p>
Sanhedrin	<p>The Sanhedrin was the high judicial court or council of Israel comprised of some 70 members and was centered in Jerusalem. It was governed by the powerful high priests and specialized in arbitrating matters of Jewish law. Its procedures were set up to work for fair judgments. This was certainly not the case in the blasphemy trial against Jesus.</p>

Pilate	<p>Pontius Pilate was the Roman governor (prefect)¹ of Judea. He was appointed by Tiberius as the fifth prefect and served from AD 26-36. The Jews brought trumped up charges against Jesus before Pilate (1) They accused Jesus of subverting the nation (Lk. 23:2a); (2) They accused Jesus of opposing payment of taxes to Caesar (Lk. 23:2b); (3) They accused Jesus of claiming to be the Messiah and King (Lk. 23:2c). Pilate questioned Jesus and found no fault with him as a threat to Rome (Jn. 18:38). Pilate learned that Jesus was from Galilee, so he sent Jesus to Herod Antipas of Galilee who was then in Jerusalem (Luke 23:6-12)</p> <p>¹ Prefects were military men.</p>
Herod	<p>Herod Antipater (colloquially, Antipas) was ruler of Galilee and Perea for the Roman Empire. Pilate sent Jesus to him but he got little information from him. Determining that Jesus was no threat to Rome he sent him back to Pilate's court.</p>
During the days of the apostle Paul	
Felix	<p>Marcus Antonius Felix was a Roman procurator² of Judea from AD 52-58. He was a cruel and licentious ruler given over to receiving bribes. When Paul was accused by the Jews of sedition (Acts 24:10-21) he came before Felix (Acts 24:22-27). He was imprisoned by Felix for two years in hopes of a bribe.</p> <p>² Procurators ruled over a province.</p>
Festus	<p>Porcius Festus was procurator of Judea from AD 59 to 62 (Acts 24:27); He succeeded Antonius Felix. Paul the apostle appealed to Porcius Festus going before Caesar and Festus granted that request (Acts 25:12).</p>
At the end of days	
Jesus	<p>31 <i>"When the Son of Man comes in His glory, and all the holy angels with Him, then He will sit on the throne of His glory. 32 All the nations will be gathered before Him, and He will separate them one from another, as a shepherd divides his sheep from the goats. 33 And He will set the sheep on His right hand, but the goats on the left. (Matt. 25:31-33)</i></p>