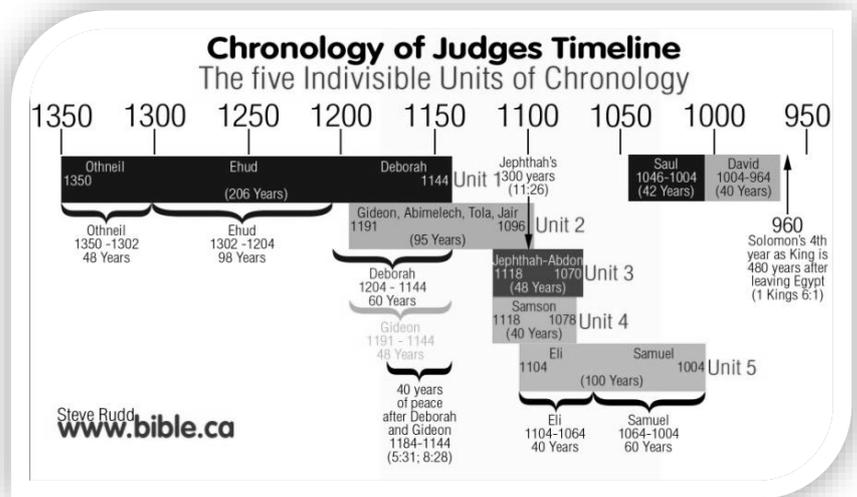


## JUDGEMENT IN THE LAND OF PROMISE

God is faithful and keeps His promise. The occupation of the Promised Land was subject to Israel’s loyalty to God who had promised them a land of milk and honey. God has always kept His part of any contract with His people. Israel was under the curse of defeat, captivity and dispersion, due to them breaking the contract. He told them plainly what He would do if they failed to keep His covenant. The legacy of the Judges of Israel is testimony to the fact that although Israel occupied the land of Canaan, through their disobedience they did not obtain the abundant life that God had promised.

### The period of the Judges

For 440 years God led the Nation of Israel under 14 various judges. This excludes Eli and Samuel who were the 15<sup>th</sup> and 16<sup>th</sup> Judges. The Nation of Israel entered into apostasy nine times under the rule of the Judges. The exploits and rulership of the Judges over Israel is of particular interest to us as we consider the Omega Code.



The Hebrew name for the Book of Judges is Shophetim. In the Septuagint which is a Greek translation of the Old Testament, the word is rendered “kritai” from which we get the English word criticism. This term is not quite appropriate for the Judges of Israel because their primary role was military and political. They were raised up by God to deliver Israel from the oppression of its enemies and they governed Israel for some time after Joshua had led them into Canaan. The Book of Judges was written at a time when Israel had no king. This is indicated by the repeated statement “in those days there was no king in Israel and every man did what was right in his own sight” – Judges 17:6, 18:1, 21:25. This means that for a period of 440 years there was no king ruling Israel (theocracy).

### The enemies and tormentors of Israel

The enemies of Israel were numerous, notwithstanding the dominant enemy of the Canaanites and the Philistines. Whenever Israel lost focus and refused to serve God according to the Mosaic Law they were judged and oppressed by their enemies. Many of the Jewish people failed to drive out the Canaanites and war continued against them for

long periods of time without them conquering the inhabitants of Canaan. In some cases they began to dwell among the Canaanites and inter-marriage occurred. The tribe of Judah conquered the hill country of Southern Canaan but was not able to drive out the inhabitants of the coastal plain. The tribe of Ephraim could not conquer the city of Gezer. The Danites were pushed by the Amorites from the plain to the hill country in Canaan. This situation led to the Israelites compromising their position in order to accommodate the enemy and they lived side by side. This resulted in the Israelites being open to temptations to follow these pagans in their idolatry and immorality. Archaeologists claim that through their excavations of the ruins of this area there is evidence that some sacred sites were used by the pagans as well as the Israelites. The cycle of lapsing in their commitment to serve God continued over the period of the rulership of the Judges. In every case they had to turn to the Judges to deliver them from oppression.

### Samson as Judge

Samson, a Danite from Zorah in the neighbourhood of a Philistine district, was called to deliver Israel from the oppression of the Philistines. He had extraordinary strength which was connected to his being a Nazarite who was not allowed to cut his hair. His wanton attitude towards women led to ruin. He married a Philistine woman and at his wedding feast got into a conflict with the Philistines on account of a riddle. His wife enticed him to reveal its solution. He killed 30 Philistine men at Ashkelon and gave their festal garments to his Philistine wedding companions. He then caught 300 foxes, bound them in pairs and attached torches to their tails, letting them go into the grain fields and orchards of the Philistines to burn them. At this place meant "jawbone"). thousand Philistine men with an ass. Having become the Lord, and He split a so that water came out of other versions translate *clave a hollow place that there came water out of* opened a spring at the



Lehi (the name of Samson slew a a fresh jawbone of thirsty, he called to hollow place at Lehi it. The AV and many Judges 15:19: *"God was in the jaw, and it."* In reality God place called Lehi.

Samson was travelling in a downward course. At Gaza he took the gates of the city and carried them to the top of a mountain. In Sorek he fell in love with a woman whose name was Delilah. At the demand of the Philistines, she enticed him to reveal the secret of his strength, his long hair connected with his being a Nazarite. While he slept, a Philistine man shaved off his hair. When he awoke *"he did not know that the Lord had departed from him."* The Philistines seized him, gouged out his eyes, bound him with chains and he was a grinder in their prison. Gradually his hair grew, and his strength returned. As the Philistines had a feast and Samson was taken from his prison to entertain them, he broke two pillars of

the building. The house fell on the Philistines, and a number of them were killed. Samson, too, lost his life. This is a story of a man of God in whose life in biblical words came true: *“If you live according to the flesh you will die”* – Romans 8:13.

### **Gideon as Judge**

Israel was delivered from oppression of the Midianites, Amalekites, etc., through Gideon and his 300 men with trumpets and torches in pitchers (From this the emblem of the modern “Gideons”). There was peace for 40 years, as long as Gideon lived.



### **The Tormentors**

In Matthew 18:34 Jesus shares a very pertinent concept and lesson with the people of Israel. In this passage Jesus likened the Kingdom of Heaven to a certain king who would take account of his servants’ behaviour. He addressed a man who owed him ten thousand talents. (The talent was the largest measurement of money in those days. Since a talent was actually a measurement of weight, it did not have a constant value. A talent of gold, for example, would be worth a whole lot more than a talent of bronze. While commentators differ somewhat over the approximate value of a talent in today’s economy, all would agree that it was a large amount of money. Some say that it was the equivalent to 20 years’ wages for a common labourer.) The king demanded that if the man did not pay him the debt, his wife and children and all that he had would be taken in lieu of the debt. The servant appealed to the king to have patience with him. The king showed compassion and forgave him the debt but the same man went out and found one of his fellow servants who had owed him a hundred denarii (100 days wages), and he demanded that the man pay him the debt. His fellow servant requested that he show him patience and that he promised to clear the debt in due time, but he would not heed the man’s call for mercy but rather cast him into prison until the debt was cleared. The community were in uproar that a man who had been forgiven by the king would demonstrate a lack of mercy to another person who was in need. This story then concludes that the king or the lord of that region called the wicked servant to whom he had forgiven and he said “Should you not have shown compassion on the servant who owed you the debt? I showed you pity but you refused to show the other man the same compassion.” The king was infuriated and he delivered him to the tormentors (the jailors whose responsibility it was to torture prisoners when ordered to do so).

### **Modern day Tormentors**

There are many people who like the Nation of Israel still compromise with the enemies of their soul. Just like Israel, some believers should be experiencing the abundant life but find themselves tormented by their enemies of the past and the present. Just like the parable of the king and the ungrateful servant we need to guard against the same sin of living a life

that is tarnished by grudges and unforgiveness of those who have harmed us. In these modern days many people are troubled because of their lifestyle. The modern tormentors have made many Christians prisoners and just like the jailers in the parable tortured the prisoner, so they live under the torture of thoughts and the bitterness of unforgiveness that torments our spirit. Not all disorders or depressions are due to chemical imbalances. Often the cause of this malady is the result of holding grudges against those who have harmed us. This does not imply that forgiveness means reconciliation (becoming pals of those who were once our enemies) but rather it means forgiving those who have hurt us as Christ has forgiven us for hurting Him. Restitution is necessary for forgiveness and reconciliation to occur. Unbelievers are people who have rejected God's means of reconciliation and forgiveness by refusing to repent or to make restitution. Our forgiveness from Christ is not based on our ability or inability to forgive others but in terms of our emotional and spiritual walk we should purge our minds and souls of the spirit of bitterness against others. We give our tormentors power over our lives when we refuse to leave the past behind and move forward into God's blessing of the abundant life.

### **Strongholds of the Mind**

Israel, through faith in God, brought down the walls of Jericho. They should have continued to conquer the cities of the Canaanites in the same manner that they conquered Jericho. Their failure to do so led to them becoming oppressed by the occupants of the land. To illustrate the point many Christians have conquered Jericho (ego) but now seem to have problems in conquering the other challenges of thoughts and behaviour that rob them of the abundant life. We are reminded in John 10:10 that the thief comes to steal, to kill and to destroy so that we might not have the abundant life. As Israel needed to bring down the strongholds and fortresses of the enemy, so we are told that as Christians we should cast down the strongholds of our mind and the imaginations of our heart and bring everything into captivity through faith and obedience to Christ.



Consider 2 Corinthians 10:1-5.

***“The weapons we fight with are not the weapons of the world. On the contrary, they have divine power to demolish strongholds” – 2 Cor. 10:4***