

Judges Series

Lesson #91

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Dean Bible Ministries

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**The Paganization of the People**  
**Introduction to**  
**Judges 17–18**



**JUDGES**  
**2021**

**When Chaos Was King**

**One year ago:**

**The 2022 Worldview Inventory discovered that most Christians have a worldview called Syncretism – “a blending of multiple worldviews in which no single life philosophy is dominant” – and only a sparse 2% of parents of pre-teens actually possess a biblical worldview.**

**“It seems that most pre-teen parents are unaware – or certainly unfazed – by the contradiction between calling themselves ‘Christian,’ but living in ways that repudiate the teachings of Jesus and the principles in the Bible,”**

**Barna said.**

**“The polling reveals that not only are a majority of today’s parents Millennials (the adult generation in America least likely to possess a biblical worldview), but that 94% of parents of pre-teens possess a worldview known as Syncretism ...”**

**“Everyone has a worldview. Typically, it’s fully developed and operational before they reach their teen years. Parents, of course, play a hugely significant role in shaping it. And therein lies the issue—at least for those hoping for a resurgence in the number of Americans whose worldview is biblical.”**

**The COVID-19 lockdowns and lifestyle changes that began in early 2020 provided Americans with an opportunity to spend more time doing things their hectic, on-the-go lives precluded, such as reading the Bible. But it appears that as people's lives were substantially altered by the virus and government policies, Americans were not spending the extra time devoting energy to spiritual matters and worldview enhancement.**

<https://www.arizonachristian.edu/culturalresearchcenter/research/>

## The Shift in Biblical Worldview Incidence

		National Incidence of Adults with a Biblical Worldview	
Worldview Segment	Segment Description	2020	2023
Integrated Disciples	Possess a biblical worldview based on scores related to beliefs and behavior	6%	4%
Emergent Followers	Possess a significant portion of a biblical worldview based on scores related to beliefs and behaviors, but not enough to qualify as having a biblical worldview	25%	14%
World Citizens	Possess a worldview other than a biblical worldview, but might have a few beliefs and behaviors that are consistent with biblical principles	69%	82%

Source: *American Worldview Inventory*, conducted in 2020 and 2023, by the Cultural Research Center at Arizona Christian University. Each study is based on a national sample of 2,000 adults, interviewed by telephone and online in January.

**Most Americans (68%) consider themselves to be Christians. Among these self-defined Christians, though, only 6% have a biblical worldview. Less than half of the self-defined Christians can be classified as born-again, defined as believing that they will go to Heaven after they die but only because they have confessed their sins and accepted Jesus Christ as their savior. Within the born-again population (just 33% of the adult population), a shockingly small proportion (13%) hold a biblical worldview.**



**Among adults who are consistently conservative on political matters, 12% are Integrated Disciples. In contrast, just 2% who are consistently moderate on political issues and 1% of political liberals and progressives have a biblical worldview.**

**“People do not develop a biblical worldview randomly or by default,” he continued. “The impact of arts and entertainment, government, and public schools is clearly apparent in the shift away from biblical perspectives to a more experiential and emotional form of decision-making.”**

**“It will require parents, in particular, and cultural leaders who care about this matter, to energetically and creatively persuade children and their influencers to embrace biblical principles as the foundation for personal decision-making,” he said.**

## **The Period of the Judges (approximately 1360 BC to 1050 BC)**

**Judg. 2:7, “So the people served the Lord all the days of Joshua, and all the days of the elders who outlived Joshua, who had seen all the great works of the Lord which He had done for Israel.” [NKJV]**

**Judg. 2:10, “When all that generation had been gathered to their fathers, another generation arose after them who did not know the Lord nor the work which He had done for Israel. [NKJV]**

**Judg. 2:11, “Then the children of Israel did evil in the eyes of the Lord, and enslaved themselves to the Baals; [RD]**

**Judg. 2:12, “and they abandoned the Lord God of their fathers, who had brought them out of the land of Egypt; and they followed other gods from among the gods of the people who were all around them, and they bowed down to them; and they provoked the Lord to anger.” [NKJV]**

# Outline of “Judges” (Chieftains, Tribal Rulers, Leaders)

**1:1–3:6**

## **Introduction**

**How Israel went from  
spiritual victory  
to being worse than  
the Canaanites**

**Incomplete obedience**

**Compromise**

**Failure**

**Cycles of discipline**

**3:7–16:31**

## **Paganization of the Leadership**

**Othniel (the best)**

**Ehud**

**Shamgar**

**Deborah**

**Gideon**

**Tola, Jair**

**Jephthah**

**Ibzan, Elon, Abdon**

**Samson (the worst)**

**17:1–21:25**

## **Paganization of the Priests**

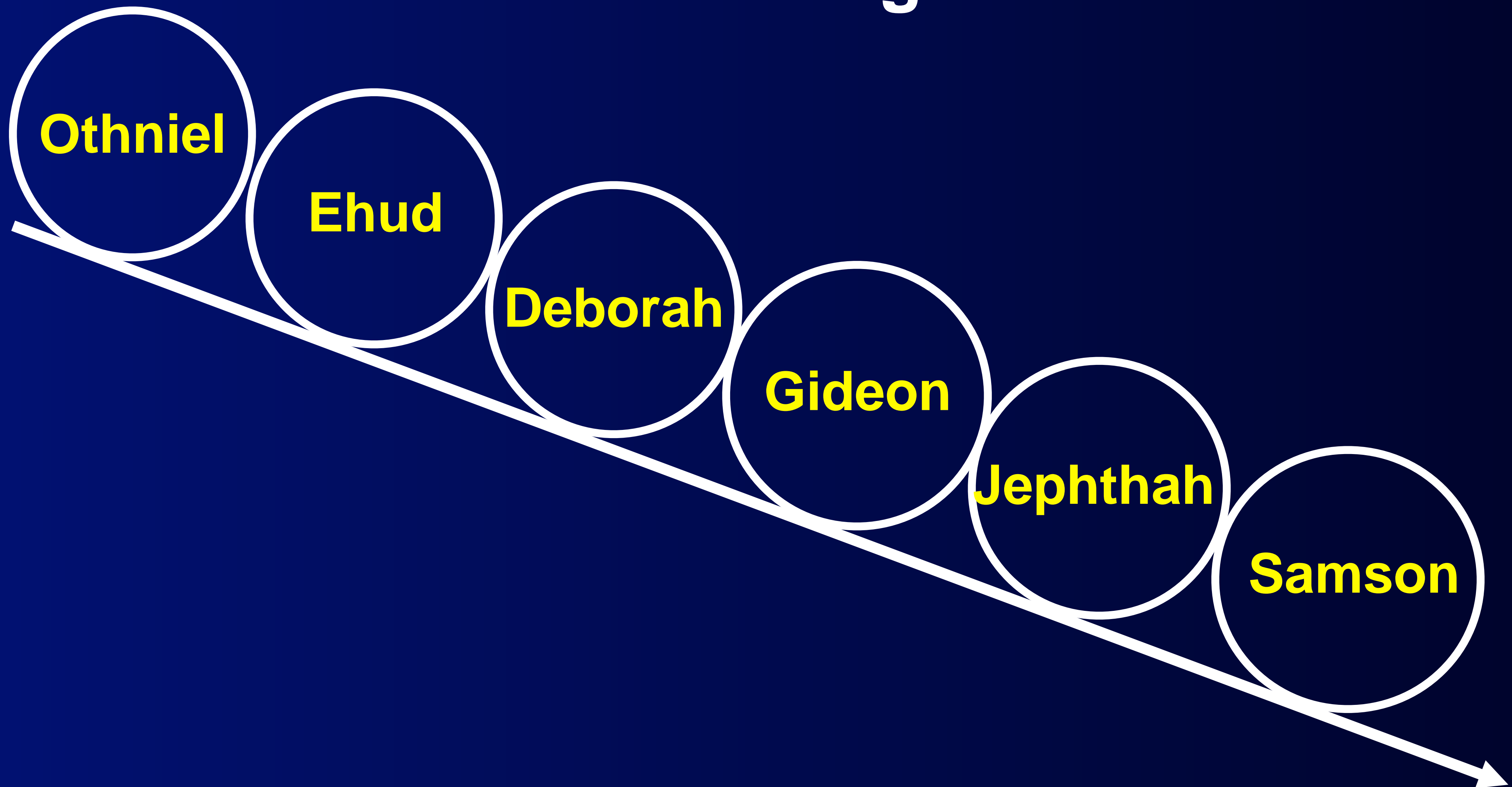
**Chap. 17–18**

**and the**

**People**

**Chap. 19–21**

# Deterioration of Positive Volition in the Judges



# **Understanding the Background to Judges**

## **1. The Foundation: Creation, Fall, Flood**

**The first four Divine Institutions: Personal responsibility, Marriage, Family, then Government.**

## **2. The Failure of the Gentiles at Babel**

**The fifth Divine Institution (DI): Nations.**

## **3. The Gracious Selection of Abraham, Gen. 12:1–3**

**The sixth DI: Israel. “I will bless those who bless you, and harshly judge those who treat you lightly; In you all the the families of the earth will be blessed,” Gen. 12:3**

# **Understanding the Background to Judges**

## **4. The Mosaic Law: The Constitution of the Theocratic Nation.**

**Loyalty to God, Love toward your neighbor.**



**Deut. 12:1, “These are the statutes and judgments which you shall be careful to observe in the land which the Lord God of your fathers is giving you to possess, all the days that you live on the earth.**

**Deut. 12:2, “You shall utterly destroy all the places where the nations which you shall dispossess served their gods, on the high mountains and on the hills and under every green tree.**

**Deut. 12:3, “And you shall destroy their altars, break their sacred pillars, and burn their wooden images with fire; you shall cut down the carved images of their gods and destroy their names from that place.**

**Deut. 12:4, “You shall not worship the Lord your God with such things.” [NKJV]**

**Deut. 12:5, “But you shall seek the place where the Lord your God chooses, out of all your tribes, to put His name for His dwelling place; and there you shall go.**

**Deut. 12:6, “There you shall take your burnt offerings, your sacrifices, your tithes, the heave offerings of your hand, your vowed offerings, your freewill offerings, and the firstborn of your herds and flocks.” [NKJV]**

**Deut. 12:8, “You shall not at all do as we are doing here today—every man doing whatever is right in his own eyes —**

**Deut. 12:9, “for as yet you have not come to the rest and the inheritance which the Lord your God is giving you.”  
[NKJV]**

**Deut. 12:11, “then there will be the place where the Lord your God chooses to make His name abide. There you shall bring all that I command you: your burnt offerings, your sacrifices, your tithes, the heave offerings of your hand, and all your choice offerings which you vow to the Lord.**

**Deut. 12:12, “And you shall rejoice before the Lord your God, you and your sons and your daughters, your male and female servants, and the Levite who is within your gates, since he has no portion nor inheritance with you.**

**Deut. 12:13, “Take heed to yourself that you do not offer your burnt offerings in every place that you see;**

**Deut. 12:14, “but in the place which the Lord chooses, in one of your tribes, there you shall offer your burnt offerings, and there you shall do all that I command you.” [NKJV]**

**Deut. 12:29, “When the Lord your God cuts off from before you the nations which you go to dispossess, and you displace them and dwell in their land,**

**Deut. 12:30, “take heed to yourself that you are not ensnared to follow them, after they are destroyed from before you, and that you do not inquire after their gods, saying, ‘How did these nations serve their gods? I also will do likewise.’ ” [NKJV]**

**Deut. 12:31, “You shall not worship the Lord your God in that way; for every abomination to the Lord which He hates they have done to their gods; for they burn even their sons and daughters in the fire to their gods.**

**Deut. 12:32, “Whatever I command you, be careful to observe it; you shall not add to it nor take away from it.”  
[NKJV]**

# Outline of “Judges” (Chieftains, Tribal Rulers, Leaders)

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## **Paganization of the Leadership**

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## **Paganization of the Priests**

**Chap. 17–18**

**and the**

**People**

**Chap. 19–21**

**Judg. 2:6, “And when Joshua had dismissed the people, the children of Israel went each to his own inheritance to possess the land.**

**Judg. 2:7, “So the people served the Lord all the days of Joshua, and all the days of the elders who outlived Joshua, who had seen all the great works of the Lord which He had done for Israel.**

**Judg. 2:8, “Now Joshua the son of Nun, the servant of the Lord, died when he was one hundred and ten years old.**

**Judg. 2:9, “And they buried him within the border of his inheritance at Timnath Heres, in the mountains of Ephraim, on the north side of Mount Gaash.” [NKJV]**



**Judg. 2:10, “When all that generation had been gathered to their fathers, another generation arose after them who did not know the Lord nor the work which He had done for Israel. [NKJV]**

**Judg. 2:11, “Then the children of Israel did evil in the sight of the Lord, and enslaved themselves to the Baals; [RD]**

**Judg. 2:12, “and they abandoned the Lord God of their fathers, who had brought them out of the land of Egypt; and they followed other gods from among the gods of the people who were all around them, and they bowed down to them; and they provoked the Lord to anger. [RD]**

**Judg 2:13, “They abandoned the Lord and enslaved themselves to Baal and the Ashtoreths.” [RD]**

## **Overview of Chapters 17–21**

- **The same time as ch. 3–16 and explain what is going on culturally, with the people.**
- **Ch. 17–18 describe how the religious apostasy began.**
- **Ch. 19–21 describe the gross immorality, the viciousness, violence, and abusiveness of the people.**
- **N.B. Religious apostasy always precedes cultural collapse. Apostasy precedes rampant immorality and violence. It was not an atheistic culture, but a religious culture.**

**Judg. 17:6, “In those days there was no king in Israel; everyone did what was right in his own eyes.” [NKJV]**

**Deut. 33:5, “And He [*Yhwh*] was King in Jeshurun, when the leaders of the people were gathered, all the tribes of Israel together.” [NKJV]**