

THE BOOK OF
JUDGES

The Book of Judges

Bible Series

Introduction

- The Book of Judges reads like an epic saga. That's because it IS an epic covering over 300 years after entering the Promised Land.
- It shows how utterly depraved the sinful heart of Man is after the fall. They simply continue the cycle of disobedience that started with Adam and Eve in Genesis.
- There is a lot to glean and learn from this collection of stories.



Introduction

- This book is Historical, Moral, Spiritual, Social and Generational in its scope.
- As one reads, you cannot help but reflect on the failure of Nations historically to stay true to the values and ideal of God.
- It also shows the 'forgetfulness' of a Nation between Generations and the need for ritual 'Reminders' of Festivals, Memorials, Books and Education to keep A People on track with their Destiny and Identity.



THE BOOK OF

JUDGES

IN THEIR OWN EYES

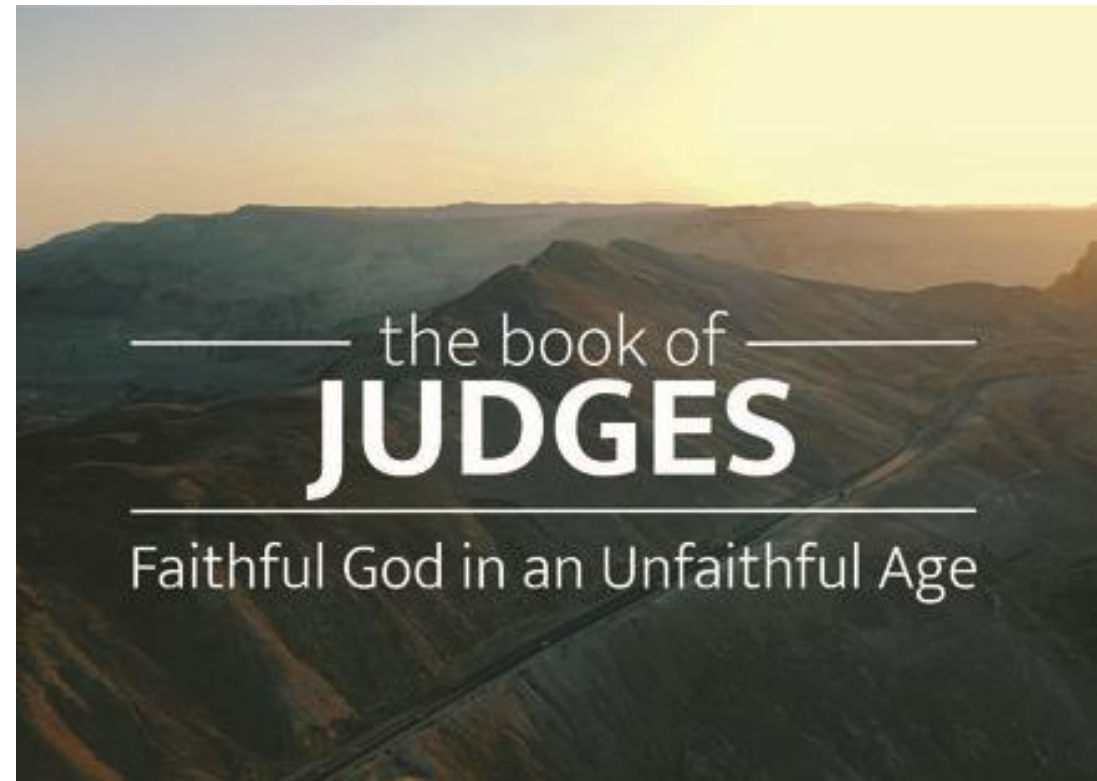
Introduction

- On a Personal level, this book firstly shows the Faithfulness of God throughout generations:
- *HE IS COMPLETELY COMMITTED TO FULFILLING THE PROMISE AND THE BLESSING FROM ADAM, THROUGH ABRAHAM TO THE NATION OF ISRAEL.*
- It also shows the severity of God who is the same yesterday, today and forever.
- We who were born and brought into the Kingdom of God during this 'dispensation of Grace' should know the God we are dealing with in both His Graciousness and His Judgements.



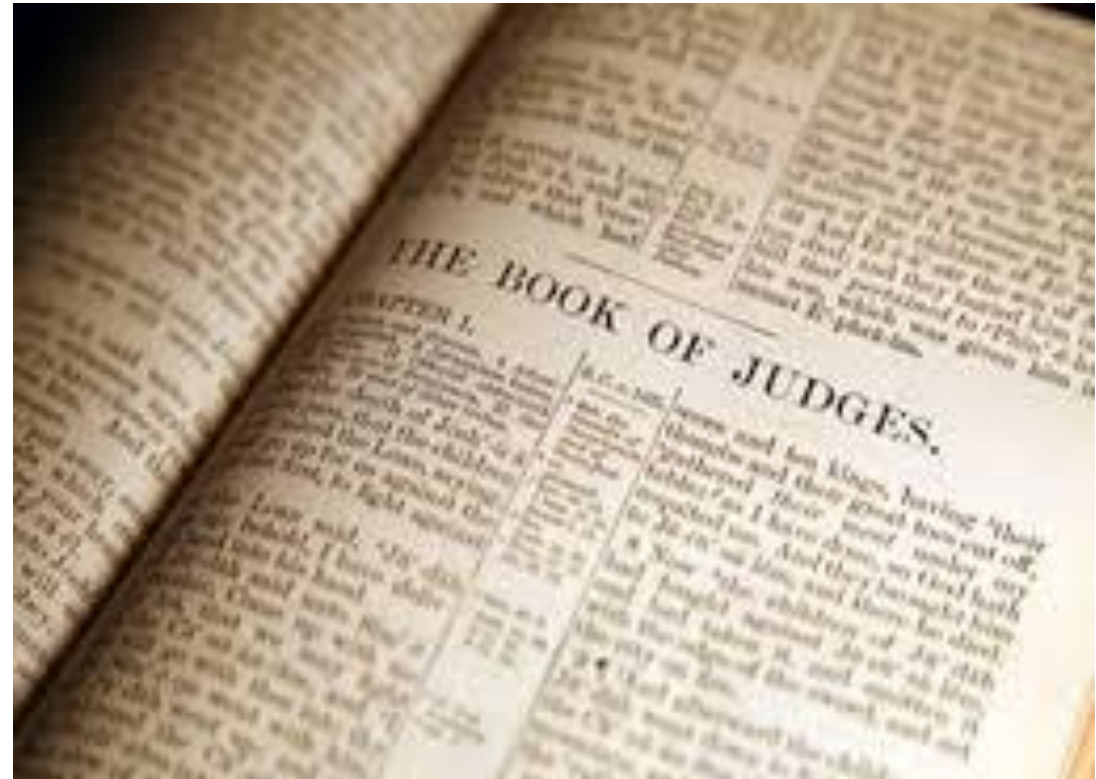
Introduction

- The author of this book is unknown, unlike the other books whose writer (for most parts) are obvious.
- The Talmud (Judaic writings and commentary compilation) ascribes the authorship to Samuel.
- Judges covers the period shortly after Joshua's death until the season that introduced the Monarchy.
- The date of writing is unknown but scripture itself identifies the timeline:
- Somewhere between Saul's coronation and David's conquest of Jerusalem. 21:25, "*in those days, there was no King in Israel*". And 1:21 "*the Jebusites dwell with the Children of Benjamin to this day*", points to a time before David conquered the city in 2 Samuel 5:6,7



Introduction...

- The book is divided into three parts
- Prologue (1:1 – 3:6) – this establishes the historical context and Israel's incomplete conquest of the land, the Lord's rebuke of her unfaithfulness and an intro to the cycle of Apostasy- Oppression – Repentance - Deliverance and then back to Apostasy.
- Main Body (3:7-16:31) – How God responded to Israel's recurring cycle by sending them Judges or Deliverers – six minor mentions and six major narratives
- Epilogue (17:1-21:25) – Two stories to illustrate the moral, religious and spiritual decline of Israel during this period.



PROLOGUE...

- **Chapter 1** — Mentioned are 9 of the 12 tribes in their failure to win a total victory in driving out the enemy. The 3 not mentioned are Reuben, Issachar, and Gad. It must be assumed that they likewise failed.
- Each tribe faced a particular enemy. At no time was the entire united nation engaged in warfare against any particular enemy.
- The weakness of the tribes is revealed in verse 3 where Judah called upon Simeon for help in their local situation.



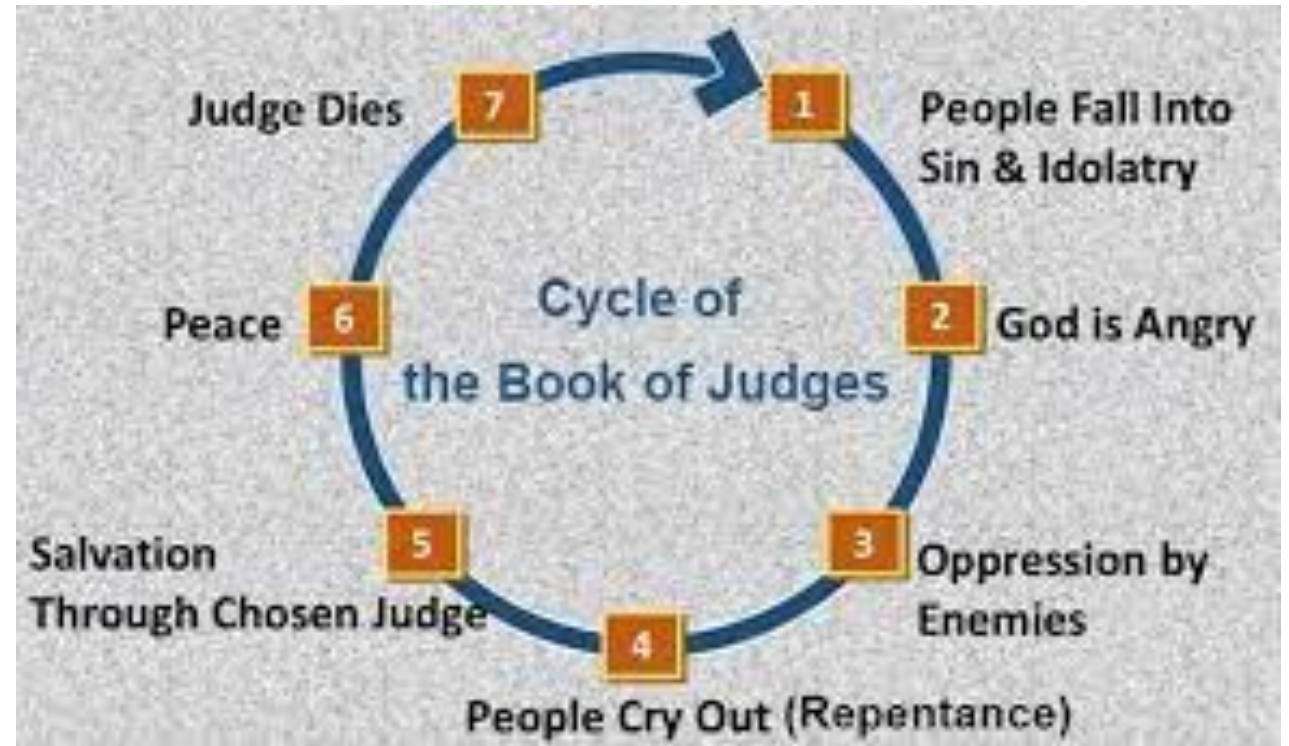
PROLOGUE...

- **Chapter 2** — A report on the sad condition of the people, that eventually required judges to be raised up to deliver them. This chapter outlines the entire book and God's philosophy of human history.
- The words for "judge," "judgment," and "judged" are used 22 times. The word "evil" occurs 14 times. The people did evil and God raised up judges (vv. 11, 16) The people did evil because they did not obey God (vv. 2, 17).
- They did not obey because they did not believe God (v. 20). The cycle of history that they followed is given in verses 11 through 16.



PROLOGUE...

- The cycle of Israel's
- Disobedience and Defeat, leads to a
- Deliverer and Deliverance before falling back into
- Disappointment and Disobedience and
- Despondency



THE JUDGES...

- **Chapter 3** — The children of Israel intermarried with Canaanites, Hittites, Amorites, Perizzites, Hivites, and Jebusites among whom they lived. Israel did evil, forgot God, and served Baalim. God delivered them into slavery.
- **Othniel**, the first judge, was raised up to deliver them. His only qualification seems to be that he was the nephew of Caleb and married his daughter.
- **Ehud**, the second judge, was raised up to deliver Israel from the servitude of Eglon, king of Moab. His qualification was his being left-handed, which enabled him to gain the presence of the king without his concealed dagger being discovered.
- **Shamgar** was the third judge, who was an expert with an ox goad. He used it as an instrument of war against the Philistines and delivered Israel. All of the judges had some defect, odd characteristic or handicap that God used. The judges reveal that God can use any man or woman who is willing to be used.



THE JUDGES...

- **Chapter 4** — **Deborah**, the fourth judge, was a remarkable person and a great mother whom God raised up to deliver Israel from Jabin, king of Canaan.
- Deborah probably was the only judge, recorded in the Book of Judges, to rule over all of Israel.
- (Eli, as well as Samuel, did rule over all of Israel as judges, see 1 Samuel 2:29-3:21.)
Because no man was willing to take the lead, Deborah did (v. 8).
- She pointed out to Barak (the fifth judge) that she would go but it would not be to his honor. Jael, a woman, slew Sisera, the captain of Canaan's forces.
- **Chapter 5** — Contains the song of victory of Deborah and Barak. The lawlessness of the day caused Deborah to take the lead as a mother for the sake of her children (vv. 6, 7). There are remarkable features in this song (vv. 19, 20, 23).



THE JUDGES...

- **Chapter 6** — “Children of Israel did evil” (v. 1) is the reason for their being delivered into the hands of the Midianites. **Gideon, the sixth judge**, was raised up to deliver Israel. The Angel, called him, “Thou mighty man of valour.” Gideon pleads his weakness and littleness as an excuse. God equips him and encourages him in his first exploit.
- **Chapter 7** — Here is where the choosing of the 300 takes place. He had an original army of 32,000. This was reduced by ferreting out the fearful and indifferent. Gideon equipped the 300 with pitchers, lamps and trumpets. The tactics of Gideon produced a riot in the army of the Midianites. Victory was Gideon’s.
- **Chapter 8** — Israel wanted to make Gideon king, which he refused. Gideon’s answer is notable (v. 23). Gideon died, after which Israel went again into base idolatry.



THE JUDGES...

- **Chapter 9**— In most records **Abimelech**, the wicked son of Gideon, is not rated a judge. James M. Gray wrote, “The usurped rule of Abimelech, the fratricide, is not usually counted.”
- He did rule 3 years after slaying 70 other sons of Gideon. He made himself king. His abortive reign reveals the truth of Daniel 4:17 — “...the Most High rules in the kingdom of men...and sets up over it the basest of men.”
- God judged not only Abimelech but also the men of Shechem for making him king (vv. 56, 57).
- **Chapter 10**— **Tola, the seventh judge**, did nothing worthy to record during his tenure in office of 23 years. **Jair, the eighth judge**, provided 30 donkeys for his 30 sons to ride upon. If he had lived in our day, they would have driven Bentleys!





THE JUDGES...

- **Chapter 11** — **Jephthah, the ninth judge**, was an illegitimate son of a harlot. He was an outcast until Israel was at war with Ammon and needed a military leader. Jephthah had become a leader of a band of desperados. He was a sort of Robin Hood (v. 3). God used him to deliver and rule over Israel in order to humble them.
- The problem in this chapter is one of human sacrifice. Did Jephthah offer his daughter as a human sacrifice? Jephthah made a rash and unnecessary vow — his cause was just (v. 27).
- God had called him, and the Spirit of the Lord came upon him (v. 29). However, Scripture never finds fault with him (Hebrews 11:32)..
- Verse 31 offers the solution. The better translation of the last part of the verse should be “shall surely be the Lord’s or I will offer a burnt offering.” His vow was that she should never marry, which was worse than death for a Hebrew woman. With this in mind read vv. 37, 39 40
- **Chapter 12** — **Ibzan, the tenth judge**, spent his 7 years as judge making marriages for his 30 sons and 30 daughters.
- **Elon, the eleventh judge**, did nothing worthy to record in his tenure of 10 years.
- **Abdon, the twelfth judge**, got 70 donkeys for his 40 sons and 30 nephews during his 8 years as judge.

THE JUDGES...

- **Chapters 13-16** — The monotonous repetition of “And the children of Israel did evil again in the sight of the LORD” opens chapter 13, and this is the last time it occurs.
- The birth of **Samson** was miraculous (vv. 2-5). Samson had a golden opportunity to deliver Israel. He never did.
- He was a Nazarite, and long hair was the badge of his office.
- The exploits of Samson as a Judge of Israel, illustrate how God in His Mercy and Grace, uses human vessels that are flawed in His grand agenda for humanity.



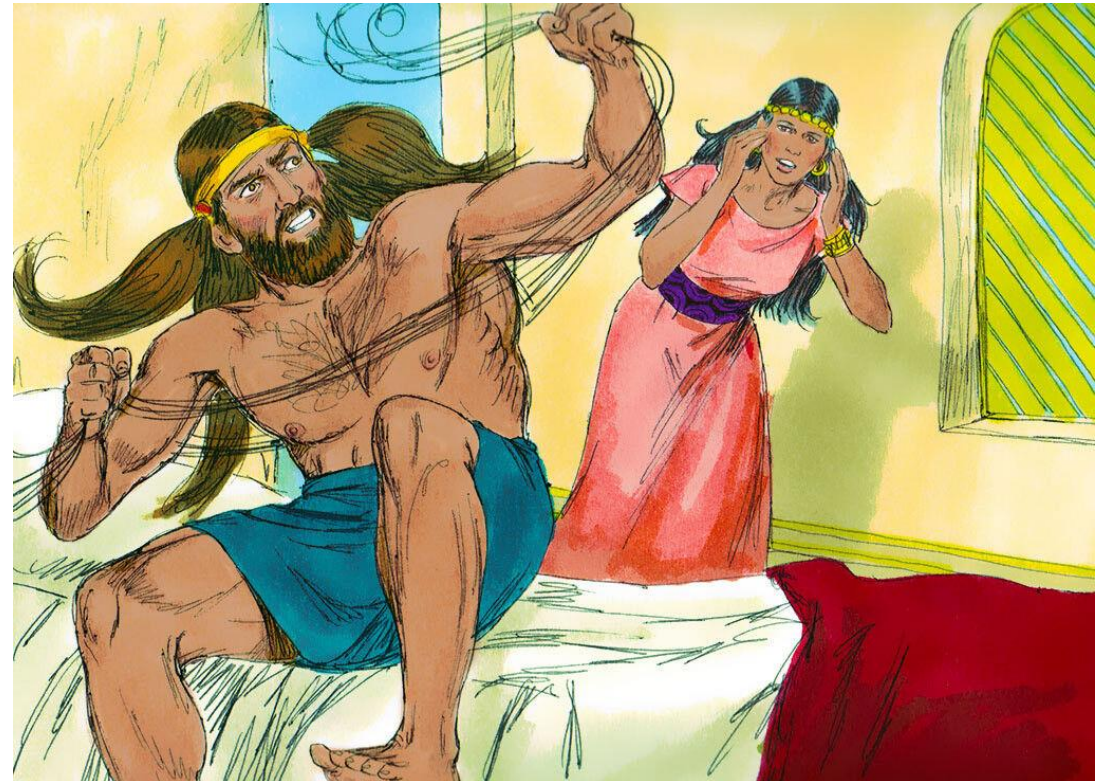
THE JUDGES...

- **(1) Secret of Samson's success** —
- *For, lo, thou shalt conceive, and bear a son; and no razor shall come on his head; for the child shall be a Nazirite unto God from the womb. And he shall begin to deliver Israel out of the hand of the Philistines.* (Judges 13:5)
- **(2) Secret of Samson's strength** —
- *And the Spirit of the LORD began to move him at times in the camp of Dan between Zorah and Eshtaol.* (Judges 13:25)
- **(3) Secret of Samson's failure** —
- *And she said, The Philistines are upon thee, Samson. And he awoke out of his sleep, and said, I will go out as at other times before, and shake myself. And he knew not that the LORD was departed from him.* (Judges 16:20)



THE JUDGES...

- Note the parallel between the life of Samson and that of Jesus Christ:
- **Comparison:**
 - 1. Both births were foretold by an angel.
 - 2. Both were separated to God from the womb.
 - 3. Both were Nazarites.
 - 4. Both went in the power of the Holy Spirit.
 - 5. Both were rejected by their people.
 - 6. Both destroyed (or will destroy) their enemies.
- **Contrast:**
 - 1. Samson lived a life of sin; Jesus' life was sinless.
 - 2. Samson at the time of death prayed, "...O God, that I may be at once avenged of the Philistines for my two eyes" (Judges 16:28). Jesus prayed, "...Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do" (Luke 23:34).
 - 3. In death Samson's arms were outstretched in wrath; in death Jesus' arms were outstretched in love.
 - 4. Samson died; Jesus Christ lives!



**IN THOSE DAYS THERE
WAS NO KING IN
ISRAEL; EVERYONE
DID WHAT WAS RIGHT
IN HIS OWN EYES.**

JUDGES 21:25

EPILOGUE...

- **Chapters 17, 18** — This period of apostasy began in the tribe of Dan in their desire to enlarge their borders. It was another lapse into idolatry.
- It all can be traced to the home of Micah and his mother who motivated him (Jdg 17:2).
- The priest, hired by Micah to tend his idols, advised Dan to proceed with a selfish plan. This was the sweet talk of a hired preacher (Jdg 18:6).

EPILOGUE...

- **Chapters 19-21** — This period is similar to the former in that it reveals compromise, corruption and confusion. This episode centers about the tribe of Benjamin.
- This tribe engaged in gross immorality which led to civil war. It began with the men of Benjamin abusing and finally murdering a Levite's wife.
- The other tribes try to exterminate the tribe of Benjamin. This period ends in total national corruption and confusion, and with this the Book of Judges concludes:
- *In those days there was no king in Israel; every man did that which was right in his own eyes.* (Judges 21:25)
- *Notes in this session were culled from the Blue Letter Bible*



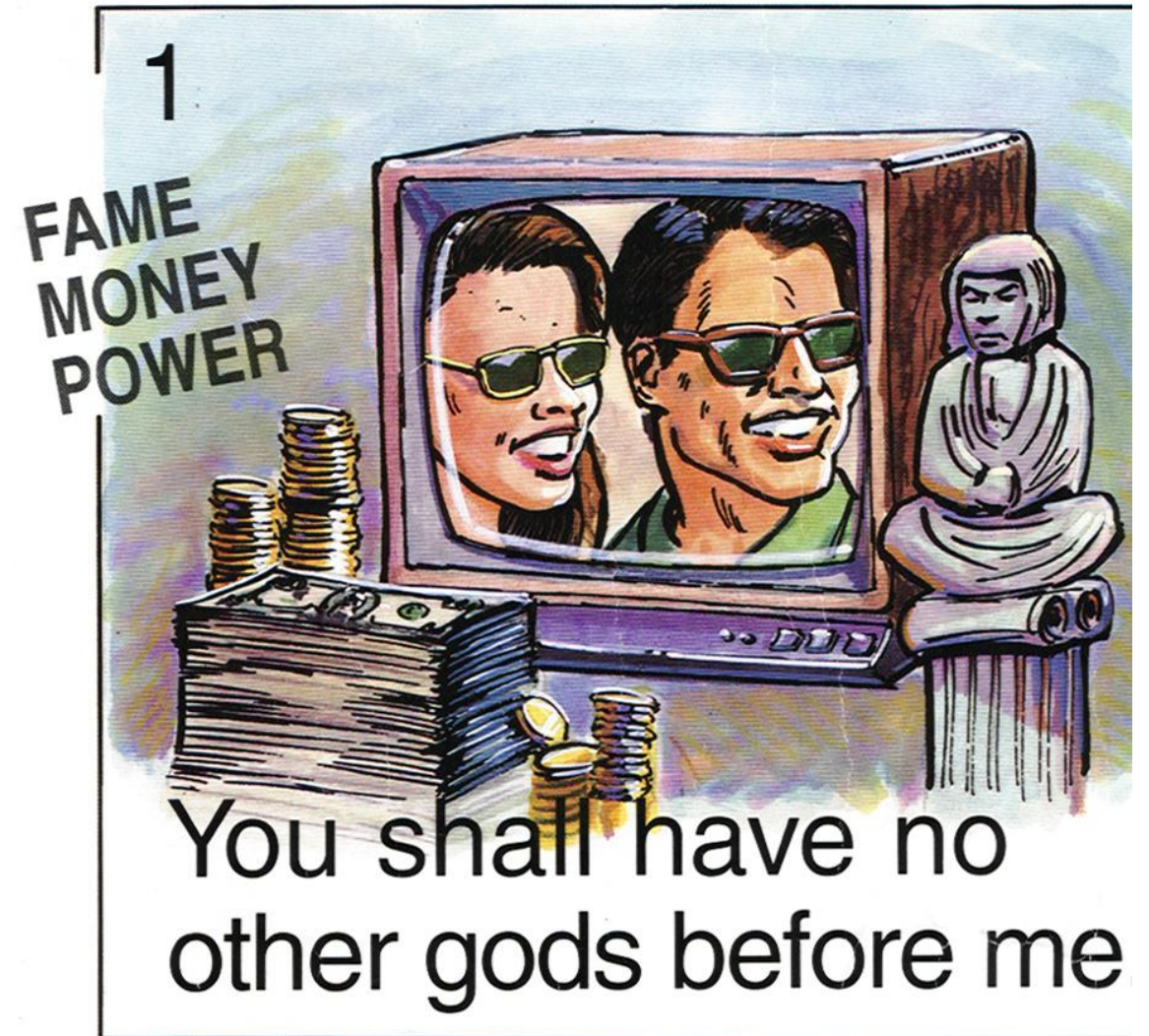
In Summary...

- Obey Your Father!
- When the Israelites did not drive out the people who lived in Canaan, they lost the privileges that went with God's promises to them.
- They could no longer be sure of victories against their enemies. And living so close to the Canaanites would constantly tempt God's people to become like the people who had little or no love for God.
- These consequences can happen to us if we do not completely obey God's commands. If we don't stand against the devil by saying no to evil things, we cannot expect God to drive evil out of our lives. We are fooling ourselves when we want to be friends with people who are enemies of God.



In Summary...

- Keep Your Eyes on Jesus!
- Once Gideon had defeated the Midianites, the people wanted him to be their king, but Gideon refused. He reminded the people that their king was God. Yet after resisting the temptation of power, Gideon gave in to the temptation of gold.
- It may seem correct to think that Gideon deserved a reward for his faithful service, but when Gideon used the gold to make a statue, he did a very foolish thing. People began worshiping the statue instead of God.
- There are many things we encounter today that may seem at first to be acceptable. But we, too, face the same temptations the Israelites faced. We tend to place too much importance on things - house, money, cars - and pay less attention to God. We must always be sensitive to focusing on god, not things



In Summary...

- Everything Rises & Falls on Leadership!
- This book could also be called the Book of Leaders
- It depicts good and bad leadership and the importance of leading yourself, family, community and nation towards God and not man or the evil one.
- Everyone of us is called to lead in one capacity or the other. So make sure you make the 'Good List' and not the 'Bad List' of Leadership.

