

May 25-31, 2026

Judges 2–4; 6–8; 13–16

“THE LORD RAISED UP A DELIVERER”

Summary: *Judges 2. An angel rebukes Israel for not serving the Lord—As a pattern of future events, a new generation arises that forsakes the Lord and serves Baal and Ashtaroth—The Lord is angry with the children of Israel and ceases to preserve them—He raises up judges to guide and lead them—The Canaanites are left in the land to test Israel.*

Judges 3. The children of Israel intermarry with the Canaanites, worship false gods, and are cursed—Othniel judges the Israelites—They serve Moab and are delivered by Ehud, who slays Eglon.

Judges 4. Deborah, a prophetess, judges Israel—She and Barak deliver Israel from the Canaanites—Jael, a woman, slays Sisera, the Canaanite.

Judges 5. Deborah, a prophetess, judges Israel—She and Barak deliver Israel from the Canaanites—Jael, a woman, slays Sisera, the Canaanite.

Judges 6. Israel is in bondage to the Midianites—An angel appears to Gideon and calls him to deliver Israel—He overthrows the altar of Baal, the Spirit of the Lord rests upon him, and the Lord gives him a sign to show he is called to deliver Israel.

Judges 7. Gideon’s army is reduced to 300—They frighten the Midianite armies with trumpets and lights—The Midianites fight among themselves, flee, and are defeated by Israel.

Judges 8. Gideon pursues and destroys the Midianites—He frees the children of Israel but refuses their invitation to reign as king over them—Gideon dies, and Israel returns to idolatry.

Judges 13. Israel is in Philistine bondage for forty years—An angel comes to Manoah’s wife and promises a son who will begin to deliver Israel—The angel comes again; he ascends in a flame from the altar—Samson is born, and the Spirit of the Lord moves upon him.

Judges 14. Samson slays a young lion with his bare hands—He marries a Philistine wife, propounds a riddle, is deceived by his wife, and slays thirty Philistines.

Judges 15. Samson burns the grain of the Philistines—They burn his wife and father-in-law—Samson slays a thousand Philistines at Lehi with the jawbone of an ass.

Judges 16. Samson carries away the doors of the gate of Gaza—He loves Delilah, who delivers him to the Philistines—He destroys a building, killing himself and 3,000 others.

Supplemental Jewish and Holy Land Insights

How can I explain the term “Prophetess?”

In examining the
scriptures, we speak

of “Kings and Queens, Priests and Priestesses.” The Jerusalem temple even had a separate door or gate designated for women priestesses who must have functioned in the women’s section of the temple. Extending that priestess responsibility could include: (1.) Miriam, the sister of Moses and Aaron, (**Exodus 15:20**) the Lord spoke directly to her and Aaron when they took pleasure in their prophetic gifts. She is later mentioned as one of the three who helped lead the children of Israel out of Egypt: “I brought thee up out of the land of Egypt, and redeemed thee out of the house of servants; and I sent before thee Moses, Aaron, and Miriam” (**Micah 6:4**; see also **Exodus 15:20**). (2.) Deborah, the fourth judge in Israel, who was directed by the Lord to know when to go to battle and assist in freeing the kingdom from being subject to a foreign king. (3.) Huldah living at the time of the righteous king Josiah (640 B.C.). She prophesied that the wicked people of Judah would feel the wrath of God, and that Josiah would be blessed (**2 Kings 22:14-20**). (4.) Isaiah’s wife, although little is known of her than the fact that Isaiah calls her “the prophetess.” (**Isaiah 8:3**). (5.) Anna was the 84-year-old widow who was preserved to live to see the Messiah and was at the temple when Jesus was brought to be circumcised when she “gave thanks . . . unto the Lord, and spake of him to all that looked for redemption in Jerusalem” (**Luke 2:36-38**).

What were some of the duties of “Judges of Israel?”

The information about the Judges of Israel may be, at best, incomplete. Their

positions were generally considered local and did not seem to be responsible to or for the entire nation of Israel.

Jewish sources identify them more as military leaders who were God-inspired. “These Judges were not judges in the legal sense, but heroes upon whom “rested the spirit of God” and who led single tribes or groups of tribes in military campaigns to free Israel from periodic foreign oppression. The rule of each judge was temporary and in no case did these leaders receive the allegiance of all the tribes. Only in the case of Deborah is there any hint of a judicial function among the activities of a Judge-savior.” (**Encyclopedia Judaica Jr.**)

The most famous story of Deborah is the conquering of the Canaanites. *Barak* (‘lightning’ in Hebrew), the military leader of Israel, was hesitant to follow her prophetic instruction to engage the enemy. He acquiesced after she agreed to accompany him. (There may have been fewer wars if presidents and prime ministers had accompanied their young soldiers to battle). There were other peoples who were aware of and agreeable to Israel’s God-given inheritance in the land. The *Kenites* seem to have been one of those groups. Modern archaeology has discovered Kenite temples that are identical to Israelite temples. Heber, Jael’s *Kenite* husband, apparently was a descendant of Jethro, the father-in-law of Moses. Jethro taught and ordained Moses. “And the sons of Moses, according to the Holy Priesthood which he received under the hand of his father-in-law, Jethro;” (**Doctrine & Covenants 84:6**) “Jael, wife of Heber the Kenite, slew the Canaanite general Sisera in the war of Deborah and Barak against the Canaanite king Jabin of Hazor (**Judges 4-**

5). Sisera had fled to Jael's tent after the rout of his army by the Israelites; she offered him comfort and hospitality but killed him while he slept, using a hammer and a tent pin rather than a sword, in accordance with the biblical command prohibiting the use of weapons by women (**Deuteronomy 22:5**). The murder thus fulfilled Deborah's prophecy to Barak that God would "sell Sisera into the hand of a woman" (**Judges 4:9**). Heber was descended from Jethro, the father-in-law of Moses; his wife's slaying of Sisera apparently signified a switch of loyalties back to Israel on the part of his clan, which had previously been allied to Israel's enemy Jabin." (**Encyclopedia Judaica Jr.**) "According to the *Aggadah* (Jewish legends), Jael's action teaches that a sin performed with good intention is better than a command obeyed with indifference. Jael was blessed by Deborah (**Judges 5:24-27**) and was considered even greater than the matriarchs Sarah, Rebekah, Rachel and Leah." (**Encyclopedia Judaica Jr.**)

What is a case of a "blinded" Judge in Israel?

In the account of Samson, "a judge in Israel twenty years," (**Judges 16:31**) we are reminded of the blessing and to some the "cursing" of blindness. Samson was "blind" to his gift from the Lord—his strength. The scripture writer called his gift "The Spirit of the Lord," which Samson abused to seek selfish revenge. Samson, a Nazarite, covenanted to abstain from anything that would draw him away from the Spirit of the Lord. A Nazarite would have nothing to do with the dead other than the firstborn, unblemished sacrifices at the temple or appointed altar of the Lord. Samson, blind to his covenant, slew an unclean animal (a carnivorous

lion—not kosher) with his bare hands but did not tell his parents. He later ate honey from the carcass of that lion and gave it to his priestly parents. Samson was in that account triple non-kosher! In other Biblical accounts, physical blindness actually aided spiritual vision. Paul was struck blind and was told that he would open the eyes of the Jews and Gentiles. "To open their eyes, and to turn them from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan unto God, that they may receive forgiveness of sins, and inheritance among them which are sanctified by faith that is in me." (**Acts 26:18**)

How can I realize this time of miracles?

To some, modern miracles can be equated to Biblical ones. Blindness is a good example. "Because Israel is a country whose inhabitants have immigrated from all parts of the world, including many backward nations, there is a larger percentage of blind people in Israel than in other Western countries. Nevertheless, in Israel today, blind people can lead a normal life thanks to the fine educational institutions and numerous agencies and associations which aid in their job placement, training and rehabilitation. In addition they can enjoy a vast amount of literature, biblical, secular, Hebrew and foreign, which has been printed in Hebrew Braille. (Strangely, Hebrew Braille is written from left to right, like English writing)." "Moreover, Israel has developed two machines to further aid blind people. The Transicon is a type of computer that electronically photographs printed material, and converts it into Braille script. Thus, a blind man does not have to wait for a particular book to be printed in Braille, but can read whatever he pleases. The

second machine, the Philapbraille, is a typewriter which produces whatever is typed both in ordinary script and Braille, so the blind person typing may check his own work.” (**Encyclopedia Judaica Jr.**)

How does God interpose in making miracles?

Not all Jews accept miracles at their face value. The following excerpt explains their perspective. “. . . Judaism believes that after creating the world God is very interested in what happens in the world and particularly in how people conduct themselves . . . God not only follows the course of human events, but He also interferes in them and in the natural world, over and above the fact that it was He who originally laid down the laws of nature. This means that God on occasion changes the normal course of the world for some specific purpose. From this derives the whole theory of miracles.” (**Encyclopedia Judaica Jr.**) “The rabbis of the *Talmud* unquestionably accepted the biblical miracles as related, but they were troubled by the fact that they seemed to imply a lack of perfection in the very act of Creation. They solved this theological problem by postulating that miracles were, so to speak, provided for already at the time of creation. Thus, although they were “extraordinary” they were still manifestations of the natural order. Many rabbis reversed this perspective and emphasized that the very regularity and harmony of the natural world were in fact “miraculous.” It is this thought which is vocalized in the thanksgiving prayer which is part of the daily *Amidah*:

“We thank You for Your miracles which are daily with us, and for Your wonders and benefits, which are wrought at all times, evening, morning and night.”

What causes some people to object to “miracles?”

The rabbis rejected, however, the belief in “miracle performers” as bearers of religious truth. Once the *Torah* had been revealed to man, it was no longer “in heaven.” It could not be altered by extraordinary means, but only by a natural process of development which was purely in the hands of ordinary human beings. And although the rabbis emphasized the miraculous aspect of the story of *Hanukkah*, they generally believed that by their time the age of miracles had ceased, since only in biblical times were people “willing to sacrifice themselves for the sanctification of the Name of God.” “In the Middle Ages, the biblical miracles posed a great problem for Jewish philosophers. They could not be explained in terms of contemporary science and they flew in the face of the philosophers’ strong belief in the existence of an unchanging order to the universe. As a solution, many of the medieval philosophers adopted the *Talmudic* position outlined above which attempted to “naturalize” the miracles by seeing them as having been woven into the order of nature from the very beginning; their miraculous nature stemmed from the fact that they were expressed at the key moment in history when they were most needed.” “In

modern times, some people have attempted to offer scientific explanations for several of the biblical miracles, such as the parting of the Red Sea. Others have “relativized” them by viewing them as natural occurrences which were recorded as if extraordinary and supernatural, because of the crucial role they played at the particular time.” “Having been created by God, the universe is also totally subject to His

control. As a result, God can impose His will upon the workings of the natural world as He pleases (the miracles of the Bible) but He can also transfer some of His controlling power to others. This God did when He created and blessed man. Although part of the natural world, man was given dominion over it, and told that the natural world was to serve his greater interests.” (**Encyclopedia Judaica Jr.**)