

## The Judges

To begin with, we will start with a scripture that gives an approximate number of 450 years. This verse has many interpretations and some wanting to change it to fit the narrative. We must believe that God has preserved his word and has his reasons for inserting them. If we begin to take out or change what we do not understand, we will be left with a very thin Bible!!

### Looking at a challenging scripture first:

#### **Acts 13:17-21 KJV**

17 The God of this people of Israel chose our fathers, and exalted the people when they dwelt as strangers in the land of Egypt, and with an high arm brought he them out of it.

18 And about the time of forty years suffered he their manners in the wilderness.

19 And when he had destroyed seven nations in the land of Chanaan, he divided their land to them by lot.

20 And after that he gave unto them judges about the space of four hundred and fifty years, until Samuel the prophet.

21 And afterward they desired a king: and God gave unto them Saul the son of Cis, a man of the tribe of Benjamin, by the space of forty years.

#### **Acts 13:17-20 NIV**

17 The God of the people of Israel chose our fathers; he made the people prosper during their stay in Egypt, with mighty power he led them out of that country, 18 he endured their conduct for about forty years in the desert, 19 he overthrew seven nations in Canaan and gave their land to his people as their inheritance. 20 All this took about 450 years. "After this, God gave them judges until the time of Samuel the prophet.

#### **Acts 13:17-21 New American Standard Bible**

17 "The God of this people Israel chose our fathers and made the people great during their stay in the land of Egypt, and with an uplifted arm He led them out from it. 18 "For a period of about forty years He put up with them in the wilderness. 19 "When He had destroyed seven nations in the land of Canaan, He distributed their land as an inheritance — all of which took about four hundred and fifty years. 20 "After these things He gave them judges until Samuel the prophet.

#### **Acts 13:17-21 English Standard Version**

17 The God of this people Israel chose our fathers and made the people great during their stay in the land of Egypt, and with uplifted arm he led them out of it. 18 And for about forty years he put up with them in the wilderness. 19 And after destroying seven nations in the land of Canaan, he gave them their land as an inheritance. 20 All this took about 450 years. And after that he gave them judges until Samuel the prophet.

#### **Acts 13:17-20 Young's Literal Translation**

17 the God of this people Israel did choose our fathers, and the people He did exalt in their sojourning in the land of Egypt, and with an high arm did He bring them out of it;

18 and about a period of forty years He did suffer their manners in the wilderness,

19 and having destroyed seven nations in the land of Canaan, He did divide by lot to them their land.

20 'And after these things, about four hundred and fifty years, He gave judges — till Samuel the

prophet;

### Acts 13:17-21 New Revised Standard Version

17 The God of this people Israel chose our ancestors and made the people great during their stay in the land of Egypt, and with uplifted arm he led them out of it. 18 For about forty years he put up with them in the wilderness. 19 After he had destroyed seven nations in the land of Canaan, he gave them their land as an inheritance 20 for about four hundred fifty years. After that he gave them judges until the time of the prophet Samuel.

There are several things mentioned in these verses:

1. God chose our fathers
  2. Made the people great while in Egypt
  3. Delivered them with His uplifted arm
  4. God put up with them 40 years in the wilderness
  5. God was the one who destroyed the seven nations through his people
  6. This took about 450 years
  7. Then he gave them judges
- Verse 17 begins with God chose our Fathers. We know Abram was called out by God when he was 70 years old, but it wasn't until Gen 17, when Abram was 99 that the covenant of circumcision became the seal of that covenant as well as his name changed to Abraham (father of many nations).

See how serious this was with the Lord:

### Gen 17:13-14 ESV

13 both he who is born in your house and he who is bought with your money, shall surely be circumcised. So shall my covenant be in your flesh an everlasting covenant. 14 Any uncircumcised male who is not circumcised in the flesh of his foreskin shall be cut off from his people; he has broken my covenant."

- From the sealing of the covenant (1892 BC) to the end of the 7 years wars (1444 BC), was 448 years.
- Many have added the numbers 450 years as the number of years for the judges with the 40 years for the Exodus and come up with 490 years. Some also add in Saul's years for a total of 530 years. Many are the ideas that people have come up with including typos, scribal errors, and difficulty in understanding this passage of scripture.

I believe that the 450 years began with Abraham's circumcision at 99 years old-Gen 17:24 (the choosing of our fathers) and ended with the dividing of the land after they defeated the 7 nations. As we look at the graph, you will see that from Abraham at age 99 to the year that the nations were conquered is 448 years. This meets the about 450 years that Paul was talking about.

- If you count back 450 years from the death of Samuel trying to count the judges, you come to Moses in his 60th year while he was still in Midian. It doesn't seem to add up any other way.
- Another consideration is that the Old Testament saints did not have the New Testament scripture to help them understand when their Messiah was coming. God gave them their chronology in His word to enable them to grasp His timing in the scripture that they had.
- The New Testament verse must be understood in the light of the Old Testament scripture, not

the other way around.

### Beginning the Graph

1491 BC- The Exodus

1490 BC- The 12 spies sent from wilderness of Paran. This is a shorter distance than the 11 days from Horeb to Kadesh-Barnea as mentioned in Deut 1:2. It was in the 2nd year that they went (Num 10:11-12, 13:17-20, 14:45, Deut 2:14)

1452 BC- Hesbon conquered- Deut 1:3, Deut 2:14, Deut 34:7

1451 BC- Joshua leads them into the promised land

- Joshua and Caleb's ages at that time:

#### Joshua

- Josh 24:29, Judges 2:8-Joshua dies at 110 years old
- Ex 19:1, Ex 17:8-16, Deut 25:17-19 Joshua installed as commander of army (had to be of age), led the army against the Amalekites
- Ex 33:11, Ex 40:17 Joshua was considered a young man (2nd year after Exodus). 20 years of age was what Num 1:1-3 shows for the age of service. The Levites were to work in the tabernacle from age 30-50. It may be inferred that Joshua could have been thirty or more at this time.
- 1 Sam 21:4 the men who were with David were considered young men, but 1 Sam 30: 22 shows that they had wives and children
- 2 Chron 13:7, 1 Kings 14:21 show that Rehoboam was 41 years old and considered young
- Joshua seems to be of the same age and generation as Caleb.
- Num 13:1-15 All the men sent to spy out the land were leaders. Sent out in the 2nd year after the Exodus.
- Josh 14:7 Caleb was forty years old when he went to spy out the land.  $40-2=38$  years old at the Exodus
- Num 1:3-10 Elishama (the father of Non), grandfather of Joshua was the head of the house of Ephraim
- Num 13:2-8 Joshua was a ruler at the time they went to spy the land.
- Joshua had to be at the age where he was considered young at the Exodus and yet old enough that at the division of the promised land he was considered old and stricken in years.
- Josh 14:7-11 shows Caleb being 85 at the time of the division of the land and he obviously had been sustained by God to be as fit for war now as he was at forty
- Josh 13:1 Joshua was considered old and stricken at the time Caleb was strong
- 1 Kings 1:1, 2 Sam 5:4-5 shows David old and stricken at the age of 70
- Joshua was probably 5 years older than Caleb which would make him 90 at the time Caleb was 85. He would have been 43 at the Exodus. The Exodus took place in 1491 BC plus 43 would make his birth at 1534 BC.
- Since Joshua lived to be 110 years old his death would have taken place approximately at 1424 BC.
- This would leave time for the other events to take place before Cushan-Rishathaim

1444 BC- Division of the land finished

- Josh 11 Joshua made war a long time with all those kings. Joshua took the whole land and the

land rested from war.

- Josh 14:10 Caleb was 85 at the dividing of the land. He was 38 at the Exodus plus 40 years of wandering, making him 78 when they crossed the Jordan and began to conquer their enemies.  $85-78=7$  **years of war**

### **The elders after Joshua-1405 BC**

Josh 24:31 Israelites served the Lord all the days of Joshua and the elders that outlived him, who had seen all the great works that the Lord did for Israel.

- The 300 year gap from Heshbon to Jephthah-  $1452-300=1152$  is the key to the book of Judges. As we work backwards from Jephthah by beginning at the tenth chapter of Judges and using the historical data from Jair back to the third chapter of Judges where the story of Cushan and Othniel is recorded, we see that Cushan began at 1400 BC.  $1444\text{ BC}-1400\text{ BC}=44$  years, this places the Joshua-Judges chasm at 44 years.
- This 44 year gap must then be the time allotted for the remainder of Joshua's life after the division of the land to his death at age 110, the rule of the elders that outlived him, and the forsaking of the Lord by the generation that followed them

### **Levite-priest to tribe of Dan-approx. 1405 BC**

Judges 17-18 Jonathan the son of Gershom the son of Manasseh (Moses).

- The letter "nun" was suspended and squeezed in above the line in the Hebrew text changing it from Moses to Manasseh. Supposedly done by the scribes to spare the name and reputation of the great lawgiver.
- If Jonathan is the grandson of Moses, which seems likely, it places the story after the death of Joshua, and near the time of Cushan.
- An irrefutable chronological key is Judges 18:1 In those days there was no king in Israel: and in those days the tribe of the Danites sought them an inheritance to dwell in; for unto that day all their inheritance had not fallen unto them among the tribes of Israel.

When you compare this verse with Josh 19:47-48 and Judges 1:34, the fact that the Danites had not yet obtained mastery over the Amorites shows the fact that only a relatively short span of years had passed from the 1444 BC distribution of the land until this occasion, not a century or so as many would have it.

- Judges 19-21 shows the near annihilation of the tribe of Benjamin incident after Joshua's death, before the rise of Cushan, hence very near to time of the demise of the elders who outlived Joshua. As the story of Micah, Jonathan, and the Danites precedes this, it may be somewhat safely inferred that it also antedates it.
- Judges 18:30 The Danites had Jonathan and his sons as priests until the captivity of the land. The corruption of the morals had an ungodly influence for a long time.
- Judges 13 shows that Samson was a Danite. Is it any wonder that he was weak in character?

### **The Levite and his concubine-approx. 1403 BC**

Judges 19-21

- Phineas, the grandson of Aaron, had become the high priest upon the death of Eleazar, a contemporary of Joshua, who seems to have died soon after the passing of Joshua (Josh 24:29-33).
- Phineas, a young warrior priest at the conquest of Heshbon, noted for his zeal with the Midianite woman and man who walked through the midst of the camp (Num 25:1-13),

sufficient of age that after the 1444 BC division of the land that Joshua placed the leadership of the army in the matter of the altar "Ed" (Josh 22) into his hand.

- This places Phineas' priesthood as beginning during the rule of the elders and extending reasonably close to the Cushan-Othniel period.
- Judges 19:1 and Judges 21:25 show that the Israelites were corrupted not long after the death of the strong, godly leaders.

#### 1400 BC-1360 BC Cushan-rishathaim and Othniel

- Judges 3:1-11 The Israelites mingled with the other nations and forgot God. The Lord sold them into the hand of the king of Mesopotamia for 8 years.
- Israel cried out to the Lord and in his grace and mercy he gave them Othniel, the son of Caleb's younger brother as a deliverer.
- The wording in verse 11 of this chapter says the land had rest 40 years. Was this after Othniel delivered the Israelites or does the time overlap with Cushan?
- In the Hebrew there is no punctuation. The verse should read and the land had rest, then a pause, meaning a total of 40 years inclusive.
- What would show that this principle is true? Judges 4:1-4 shows Deborah being judge while they were under the hand of Jabin, who oppressed them 20 years. She judged, but they were servants to Jabin. Judges 5:31 says and the land had rest-40 years inclusive.
- Judges 13:1 says the children of Israel were delivered into the hand of the Philistines for 40 years. Judges 14:4 shows that at the time Samson wanted a wife of the Philistines, Israel was under the dominion of the Philistines. Judges 15:20 says that Samson judged Israel 20 years in the days of the Philistines.
- Judges 13:5 says that Samson would begin to deliver Israel from the Philistines. This would have been during the vexation and oppression of Ammon and the Philistines 1170-1152 BC, otherwise it would not have meant much to Samson's parents.
- 1 Sam 7:3-13 shows how Samuel prayed at Mizpeh and the Lord discomfited the Philistines, Israel smote them, and were subdued and came no more into the coast of Israel.
- The 40 year dominion of the Philistines was from 1141 BC to 1101 BC. Samson began to deliver Israel and it ended with Samuel.
- Going back to Cushan, if we see the years of servitude included in the total number of years with all the judges, the 300 years that Jephthah mentions in Judges 11:26 fits perfectly without having to inject "scribal errors" or any other explanation. God said he would preserve his word and we should believe him!

#### 1360 BC-1280 BC Eglon and Ehud

- Judges 3:12-31 Israel served Eglon 18 yrs., the land had rest- 80 yrs inclusive of the oppression and freedom

#### 1280 BC-1240 BC Jabin and Deborah and Barak

- Judges 4:1-5:31 They were under Jabin for 20 years while Deborah was a judge until she got a word from the Lord and called Barak.
- And the land had rest- 40 years inclusive

#### 1240 BC-1200 BC Midian and Gideon

- Judges 6:1-8:35 Under the hand of Midian 7 years and the land had rest-40 yrs inclusive
- Eli the priest that Samuel served was born in 1220 BC during Gideon's time

1200 BC-1197 BC Abimelech

- Judges 9 Abimelech reigned 3 years

1197 BC-1174 BC Tola

- Judges 10:1-2 Judged Israel 23 years

1174 BC-1152 BC Jair

- Judges 10:3-18 Jair judged Israel 22 years
- The last 18 years they were vexed and oppressed by the Philistines and Ammonites, mostly on the other side of Jordan until they came across Jordan to fight against Judah, Benjamin, and Ephraim.
- Jair died and the Israelites cried to the Lord but he told them to call on the gods they had chosen. The Israelites repented and the Lord brought another deliverer.

1152 BC-1146 BC Jephthah

- Judges 11:1-12:7 Jephthah judged Israel 6 years
- He ended the 18 years of oppression
- In verse 26 of chapter 11, he claims it has been 300 years since Israel took Heshbon. Many critics call this a 'scribal error' or some such thing. It is actually the key to putting the figures in the book of Judges together. This verse along with 1 Kings 6:1 which gives the figure of 480 years since the Exodus to the beginning of the temple by Solomon dovetail together timewise instead of being errors. As we continue with the graph, this will become apparent.

1146 BC-1139 BC Izban

- Judges 12:8-10 He judged Israel for 7 years
- During the last 2 years of his judging, the 40 year Philistine dominion began-1141 BC

1139 BC-1129 BC Elon

- Judges 12:11-12 He judged 10 years

1129 BC-1121 BC Abdon

- Judges 12:13-15 He judged 8 years

1122 BC Eli the priest dies when the ark is taken by the Philistines

- 1 Sam 4:15-18 He was 98 when he died
- 30 years old when becoming a priest, serving for 28 years before becoming the high priest.
- He had judged Israel for 40 years, i.e. as the high priest Deut 17:9
- The ark was in the hands of the Philistines for 7 months 1 Sam 6:1 and returned in wheat harvest which takes place in May/June. Therefore Eli died around Nov or Dec of the previous year, which would be 1122 BC. Working back 98 yrs we find the date of his birth.

1121 BC-1101 BC Samson

- Judges 13:1-5 Israel was delivered into the hands of the Philistines 40 years. Samson would

begin to deliver Israel. The word begin is a key factor.

- Samson was born somewhere in the time of Jair as was Samuel.
- Samson was of the tribe of Dan. The Danites had the sons of Jonathan, the idolatrous Levite posing as a priest, influencing the people until the captivity of the land (Judges 18:30). It seems that their lack of character rubbed off on him.
- Judges 16:23-30 Samuel became a judge after the death of Samson, who killed more in his death at the temple than he had slain in his life, taking out many of the leaders of the Philistines who had gathered together at that time. This began the deliverance of Israel.
- Samson judged for 20 years

#### 1152-1060 Samuel

- For approx 30 yrs, Samuel was known as a prophet and a Levite-priest, 1 Sam 1:1, 1 Chron 6:22-28, 1 Sam 3:20
- 1 Sam 7:3-13 Samuel gets the children of Israel to repent at Mizpeh. The Philistines hear of it and are wanting to get revenge for the death of their lords by Samson. God delivers them and the Philistines are subdued and don't come into the coasts of Israel again, thus ending the 40 yr dominion of the Philistines.
- 1 Sam 7:15 Now Samuel is seen as a judge, not just a Levite or prophet, and he judged Israel for 41 yrs. Most of this time took place while Saul was king. This is another reason that the portion of scripture in Acts 13 doesn't add up, Saul and Samuel were in the same time period and you cannot add both of their years separately.
- 1095 B.C.-the Israelites want a king, Samuel and his sons are judging. Saul is selected king. 1 Sam 8:1-7
- Samuel died near the end of Saul's wars on David 1 Sam 25:1, 1 Sam 27:7 but more than 1 yr and 4 mos. before Saul is slain

#### 1095 BC-Saul as king

- 1 Sam 13 Saul was king for 2 yrs and then rejected. Jonathan old enough to be in command of part of the army Num 1:3.
- Acts 13:21 Saul reigned for 40 yrs.

#### 1055 BC- David made king over Judah

- 2 Sam 5:4-5 David is 30 when he begins to reign. If David is 30 when Saul is killed, what was Jonathan's age?
- 1 Sam 13:1-2 shows that Jonathan is at least the minimum age of 20 to be able to serve in the army, that event took place in the second year of Saul's reign in 1093 BC. David killed Goliath around 1067 BC at about the age of 18. 1093 BC-1067 BC=26 years. It was the second year of Saul's reign so Jonathan was between 26-28 years older than David.
- What reasoning for David to be 18 at the time?
  - 1.) Num 1:3 all 20 yr olds were to serve in the army
  - 2.) 1 Sam 17:14-15 David returned home from being a musician and armor-bearer in training to tend the sheep rather than going to battle- must have been less than 20
  - 3.) Eliab's remarks about why David had come, "to see the battle". If David had been 20 or older, he should have been with the soldiers.
  - 4.) 1 Sam 17:33,38, 18:3 said to be a youth but adult enough to try on Saul's armor and

Jonathan's clothing.

- 5.) 1 Sam 18:51 Disdained by Goliath but able to wield Goliath's sword
- 6.) 1 Sam 16:21, 17:55-56 referred to by Saul as a youth and a stripling, yet of sufficient age to be in training as Saul's armor-bearer
- 7.) 1 Sam 17:32-37 David was old enough that though called a youth, his father allowed him to tend sheep in an area where bears and lions were known to roam
- 8.) Num 1:3 David was old enough to marry Saul's daughter shortly after killing Goliath but not of sufficient age to go to war

1048 BC-David made king over all Israel

- 1 Kings 2:11 David reigned over Israel 40 years.

1015 BC- Solomon becomes king

- 2 Chron 9:30 Solomon reigned 40 years.
- 1 Kings 6:1 This is a controversial scripture, yet it is a key to understanding the chronology of the book of Judges. In the fourth year of Solomon's reign, 480 years after the exodus, he began to build the house of the Lord.
- 1011 BC + 480 years = 1491 BC which is the year of the exodus!!!

975 BC- The death of Solomon and the beginning of the divided kingdom

- The next set of charts will cover the kings of Judah and Israel the northern kingdom.