

A person's feet, wearing dark pants and sandals, are shown walking on a dusty, brown path. The path is marked with footprints. The background is a textured, brown surface with faint, dark, swirling patterns. The text 'GOD'S PATH' and 'GOD'S PEOPLE' is overlaid in large, white, bold, sans-serif font. The text is slightly shadowed and appears to be resting on the path. Below the main text, the subtitle 'Walking in the Book of Judges' is written in a smaller, white, sans-serif font.

GOD'S PATH

GOD'S PEOPLE

Walking in the Book of Judges

Background

The Book of Judges is a historical narrative that contrasts God's faithfulness with Israel's apostasy. Despite the repeated falling away of His people, God provided deliverers—namely, the judges—time and again.

- Radmacher, E. D., Allen, R. B., & House, H. W. (1997). *The Nelson study Bible : New King James Version* (Jdg 1:1). Nashville: T. Nelson Publishers.

Background

- **The book of Judges covers a sad and complex era of Israel's history. It begins where the book of Joshua leaves off with the death of Joshua and then moves into the life of those who followed after him. This book will teach one that he or she must start fresh everyday in their walk with God.**

Background

- **The Book of Judges picks up where the book of Joshua leaves off. The people are in the land, and the land is divided up among the tribes. They were organized politically by tribal structure. That is, they had no central government, no king, no army, etc. In fact, civil war broke out during this time between the tribe of Benjamin and the other tribes.**

Title

Hebrew - *sophetim* - "to judge" or "to rule"

A. God is the Great Judge is the main idea of the book (11:27).

B. nine men an one woman are called *sophetim* in the book

C. there are 12 people who serve the role of the judge in the book

Place in the Canon

- A. Hebrew - the Former Prophets
- B. English - Historical section

Authorship

A. Three Approaches

1. Jewish tradition - Samuel, he is a well known writer that helps validate the book.
2. Documentary historian
 - a. Deuteronomic historian incorporated a collection of teaching stories, which were passed down, into his 7th c. work
 - b. final Deut. edition was produced in the period of the exile
3. Combination
 - a. there is indeed a collecting of material which a collector had done
 - b. Deut. prospective is seen in Judges
 - c. initial collection of material can be dated before the 7th c.

B. Conclusion: Authorship unknown

The Judges

- A. Basic function was to be a deliverer or savior who set things right**
- B. Roles of the judge**
 - 1. primarily a military champion**
 - 2. somewhat a political leader**
 - 3. occasionally settled legal disputes (4:5; 10:1-3)**
- C. Chosen by God to fulfill a specific task. Divine election by the "Spirit of God coming upon them."**
- D. Human perspective - charismatic individual who could elicit support because of personality**

Setting

A. Ancient Near East

- 1. no real power nation**
- 2. the "Sea People" are along on the coast and competing for territory**

B. In Canaan

1. Political situation

- a. the process of settling the land is ongoing**
- b. pockets of native resistance remains for centuries**
- c. Israel wars mostly with surrounding nations rather than the Canaanites**

Setting

Socially: they are in a transition from being nomadic to an agrarian society

Religions:

a. Canaanites - temptation of Israel to be drawn into Canaanite religion: Baal worship

- (1) cycle of nature**
- (2) Baal major deity of rain and storm**
- (3) most active in fall and spring**
- (4) every year battle Mot and saved by Anat ending in the fall enthronement ceremony**

Problem: showed that God was weak and could be manipulated and degraded sex and destroyed the family

Setting

Religions (cont)

- (1) central shrine -- where ever Ark was moved to - Shechem, Shiloh, Bethel to Shiloh again a time of testing to see if Israel will live by the Torah and its ideals
- (3) Israelites fail and apostasy or syncretism begins, pull in some ideas from Canaanite religion

Conclusion: **Dark Age of Israelite history**

1. political anarchy
2. moral anarchy - "everyone did what was right in their own eyes" 21:25.

GOD'S PATH GOD'S PEOPLE

- God is sovereign.
- God is free to use whomever he chooses to help carry out his purposes.
 - He used pagan nations to chastise His people.
 - He used these Judges, even with their moral failures.
- Human sinfulness requires governments to enforce morality. But even laws cannot change hearts. Only God can do that.