

THE STORY... HIS STORY

Chapter 8

A Few Good Men...and Women

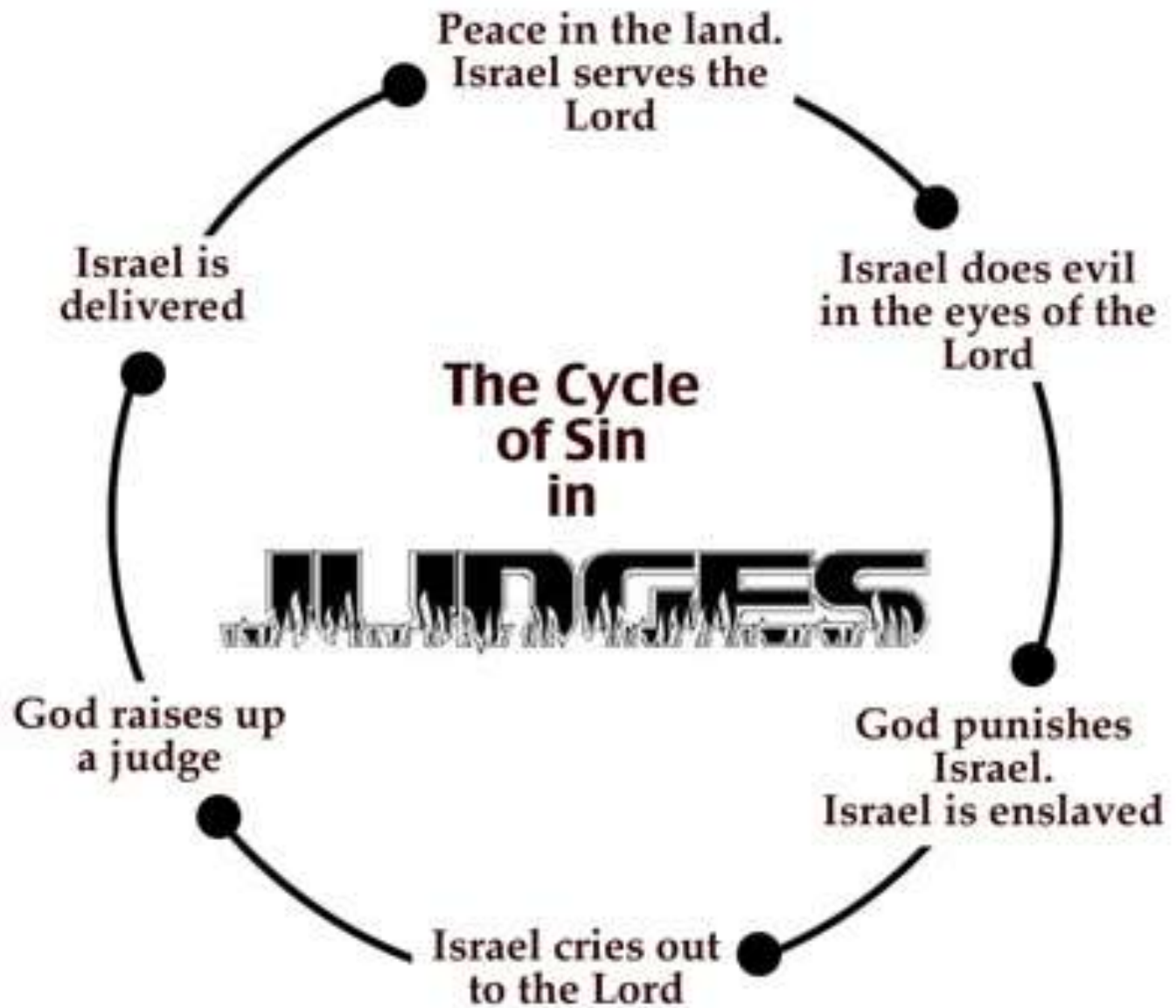


THE STORY

Plot Points

- Israel's failure to fully drive out the Canaanites led them into compromise and gross idolatry.
- God's people are constantly caught up in a four stage cycle:
 - Sin
 - Oppression
 - Repentance
 - Deliverance

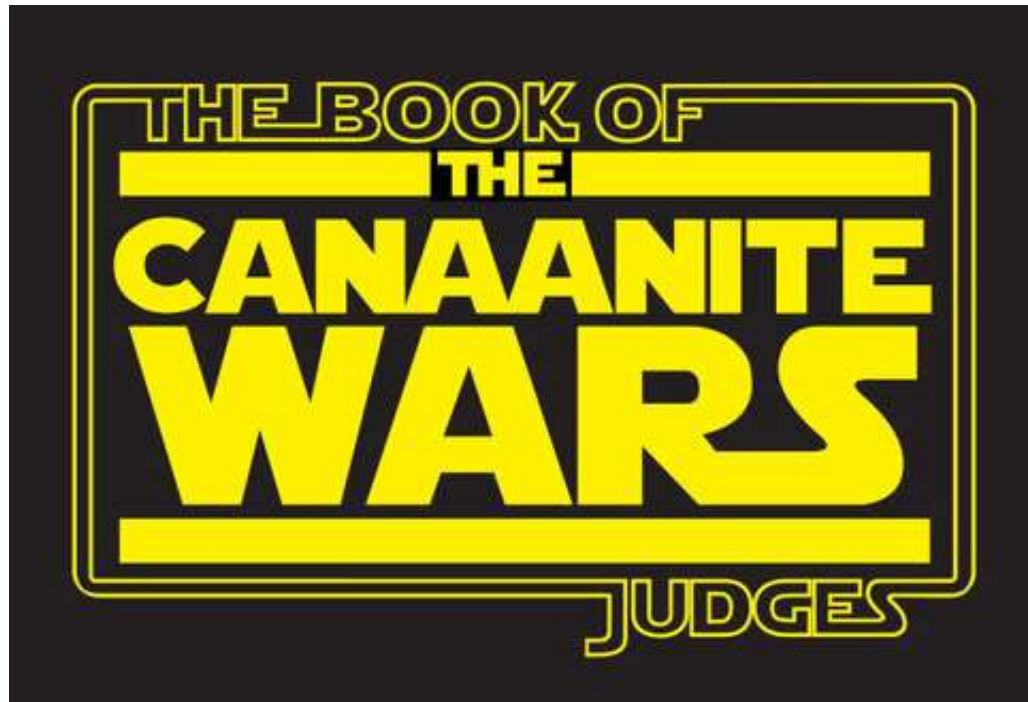




THE STORY

Plot Points

- The Lord uses people to bring about deliverance.



Cast of Characters (Judges)

- Ehud
 - Clever, left-handed, daring, brave man who assassinated Eglon and led Israel against the Moabites.
- Deborah
 - Only woman judge, a prophet of God, name means “bee.”



Cast of Characters (Judges)

- Gideon
 - From an insignificant clan, led Israel over Midian, overcoming incredible odds in stunning fashion.
- Samson
 - A miracle baby, was a Nazirite, lived and died fighting the Philistines.



Cast of Characters (Others)

- Eglon
 - King of Moab
- Barak
 - Commander of Israel's army
- Sisera
 - Commander of Canaanite army



Cast of Characters (Others)

- Jael
 - Woman who killed Sisera.
- Delilah
 - Samson's lover, succeeded in convincing Samson to divulge the secret of his strength, undoing him in the process.



My Encounter With Judges...



THE STORY

What is this chapter all about?

- It is NOT about blood and guts.
- It IS about God who has mercy on his people and shows his love to them by sending a judge. Not a judge that comes to condemn, but one that comes to save.
- Sounds kind of like Jesus doesn't it?
 - THAT IS THE POINT!



A continuing problem

- In the first two chapters of Judges we have the story of how each tribe tried to get rid of the people in the land without much success.



THE STORY

“After that whole generation had been gathered to their fathers, another generation grew up, who knew neither the LORD nor what he had done for Israel. 11 Then the Israelites did evil in the eyes of the LORD and served the Baals. They forsook the LORD, the God of their fathers, who had brought them out of Egypt. They followed and worshiped various gods of the peoples around them. They provoked the LORD to anger because they forsook him and served Baal and the Ashtoreths. In his anger against Israel the LORD handed them over to raiders who plundered them. He sold them to their enemies all around, whom they were no longer able to resist...



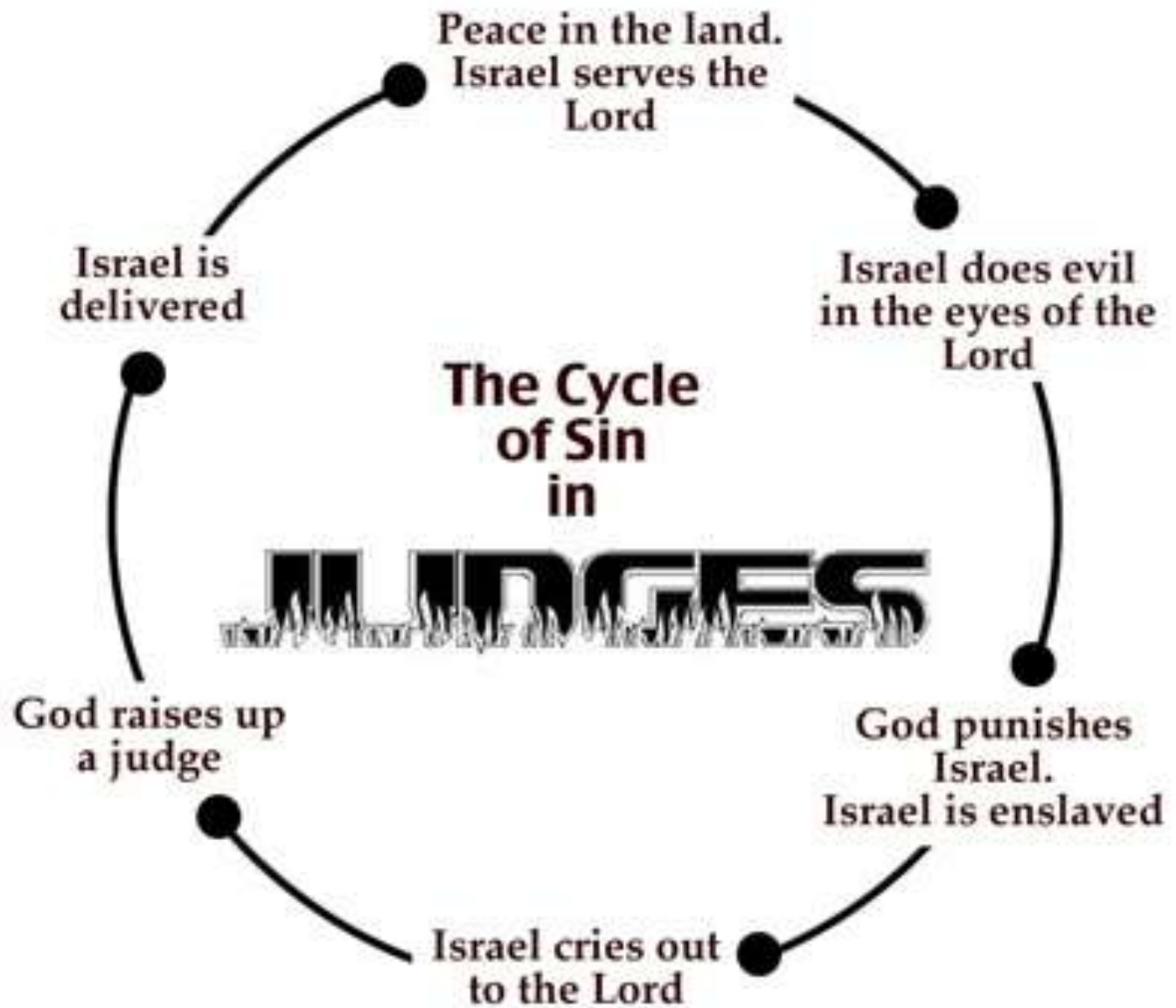
...Whenever Israel went out to fight, the hand of the LORD was against them to defeat them, just as he had sworn to them. They were in great distress. Then the LORD raised up judges, who saved them out of the hands of these raiders. Yet they would not listen to their judges but prostituted themselves to other gods and worshiped them. Unlike their fathers, they quickly turned from the way in which their fathers had walked, the way of obedience to the LORD's commands.” Judges 2:10-17



A Continuing Cycle:

- Apostasy: The people sin
- Battered: The Lord disciplines His people
- Cry: The people cry to the Lord for help
- Deliverance: The Lord raises up a judge to rescue His people from their oppressors
- A → B → C → D





THE STORY

A Few Good Men...And Women

- We see this same pattern when Jesus is sent as the final Judge.
- Why was it necessary for the Judges to come anyway?
- Didn't the people promise that they would be faithful to God?
- What happened to the promises they made?



A Few Good Men...And Women

- In the first part of Judges we get the answer.
 - *“The LORD was with the men of Judah. They took possession of the hill country, but they were unable to drive the people from the plains, because they had iron chariots.”* (Judges 1:19 NIV)
- The story was the same with the other tribes.
 - *“The tribe of Manasseah failed to drive out the people....”*
- Then the tribe of Ephraim failed, then Zebulun failed, then Asher failed, then Naphtali.



A Few Good Men...And Women

- Then Yahweh (LORD in all caps) sent his angel to talk to the people. Judgment was to be upon the people.
 - *“Now therefore I tell you that I will not drive them out before you; they will be thorns in your sides and their gods will be a snare to you.”* (Judges 2:3 NIV)
- This sums up the problems that the people will encounter the rest of the Old Testament.



A Few Good Men...And Women

- But the LORD (Yahweh) in his infinite mercy shows love to the people and sends help.
- The account of each Judge has a similar pattern.
 - The Israelites did evil in the eyes of the LORD
 - He turned them over to their enemies for so many years.
 - Then the LORD raised up a Judge.
 - The people followed this Judge and were saved.
 - The land had peace for so many years.
 - The Judge dies and the people return to their old ways and do evil in the eyes of the LORD.



“...evil in the eyes of the LORD...”

- This phrase occurs 5x in “The Story” (7x in the NIV)
- Some people get depressed when they read the book because it looks as if the people just don’t get it.
- They always seem to do evil and they get handed over to some group and they suffer.
- But I don’t think that is the point.
- The point of the book is that God takes care of his people. He loves them so much and he will do anything to save them.
- We still don’t get the point today. Thank God for sending Jesus to save us.



Deborah & Jael = Girl Power



THE STORY

Gideon

- An angel seeks out Gideon, who was in hiding.
- How do I know?
- He is in the bottom of a winepress (think big barrel) threshing wheat to hide it from the Midianites.
- The angel comes to him and calls him a “Mighty Hero”.
 - Of course Gideon tries to talk his way out of it (sounds like Moses).



Gideon

- Gideon asks for a sign and he hurries home to get an offering.
- The angel then burns up the offering and Gideon believes that it was an angel from the Lord.
- End of story right? ...not so fast.



Gideon

- Gideon seems to be convinced but he tests his appointment two more times with God.
- Again the point here is not to show how untrusting Gideon was, but to show how patient God is, he patient with us in all things.
- God delivers the people with only 300 men so the people would not brag that they did it all themselves.



Samson

- Good Sunday school stories.
- His great strength makes him a good hero. But as you read the story you find out that Samson has some personality issues.
 - He has problems with women and his temper
- Eventually he is humbled and matures and God uses him to exact some judgment on the Philistines.



Samson

- At the center, these stories are about the mercy of God.
- He continued to show the people mercy when they did not deserve it.
- He shows it to us today as well.



THE STORY

The Point of the Chapter

- The book of Judges ends just as it began,
- *“In those days Israel had no king; everyone did as he saw fit.”* (Judges 21:25 NIV)
- Remember the point of the book is that God loves his people and will find ways to save them. Even after some good stories, the problems still remain.
- People still sin, but God still loves them

