

# JUDGES: SPIRITUAL WARFARE

## WORK SHEET: QUESTIONS ON THE WHOLE BOOK

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### Israel versus the Canaanites:

1. The book of Judges begins on a very positive note. Study Judges 1:1-3 and list the positive attitudes and actions of Israel. How is this a good example to us today?
2. In Judges 1:1-3 there was a change of leadership. How do you face changes in leadership in OM or your church? Compare with Acts 1:12-26. Jesus, their leader for 3 years, has left for heaven, and Judas, the betrayer, has hanged himself. How did they handle Jesus leaving them and the replacement of Judas? Any parallels between Judges 1:1-3 and Acts 1:12-26? In Acts 13 there was a change in the leadership of the missionary team from Barnabas to Saul (Paul). How did Barnabas and John Mark handle this change? What would you have done in their place?
3. Why was Judges written and included in the Bible? The purpose of the book is expressed in 3:1-6. What was the purpose or purposes?
4. Warfare is a theme of the New Testament in such places as Ephesians 6, II Corinthians 10:1-6, I Peter 2:11-12, I Timothy 1:18-19, II Timothy 2:1-4, and James 4:1-10. How does the warfare described in Judges differ from that described in the New Testament and in which we are engaged? In what way is it similar?
5. As you read through Judges, look for the following 3 phrases: 1) "They did not drive out...", 2) "They did evil in the eyes of the Lord...", and 3) "Everyone did as he saw fit." They are found in the 3 main sections of the book: 1) The Introduction, 1:1-3:6, 2) The Main Body, which includes the stories of the Judges, 3:7-16:31, and 3) The Conclusion, 17:1-21:25. If the first section and the phrase, "They did not drive out" represents a loss in the offensive against the enemy, then what do the other two phrases represent in military terms? Can these failures happen to us in our spiritual battles? Can you describe how these failures take place in our lives? What may help is to think of ourselves, in our day, as the *land*. Remember Jesus told parables about the various *grounds* and how the seed of God's word either survived or didn't and how much it grew (Matthew 13). In 1 Corinthians 3:5-9 Paul writes about planting, watering and God giving the increase, so the church is God's *field*. Originally mankind was made out of the *dust* of the earth (Genesis 2). Just as Israel had enemies in their land so we have enemies in our land, within us, represented by the old man and all his attitudes and passions. In the parables Jesus spoke of the devil stealing the seed and the world choking it out so these enemies come together with the old man or the flesh against the new man, the Spirit in us.
6. Judges 1:19 is a curious statement. Here we see the Lord's presence in battle. We see victory and defeat. How do you reconcile victory and defeat when the Lord is with you? What powerful weapon was used effectively against Israel? Was this the first time they had met this weapon? What did God teach Israel in Deuteronomy 20 about war and chariots? Notice what Joshua had said to the people of Joseph in Joshua 17:16-18 about iron chariots. Joshua had said something years before when sent as a spy into Canaan with Caleb and 10 others. He said the Canaanites were strong but with the Lord's help they could drive them out. Compare this with Ephesians 6:10ff and II Corinthians 10:4 and 5.
7. With what can we compare those iron chariots in our day? What things which in themselves can be used either by God or by the enemy in spiritual warfare are being used today against us? Notice where the enemy was entrenched with their chariots and the ground that Israel was able to take and hold. What do these areas of victory and defeat parallel in our day?

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8. In Judges 2:1-5 God speaks to Israel about covenants. How seriously did Israel take God's covenant with Him? How seriously did God take that covenant? What would happen to two allies if they respected the pact between themselves in the way God respected His covenant with Israel? If they "respected" it as Israel "respected" the covenant with God? What covenant did Jesus establish with His disciples and how do we remain faithful to that covenant? Notice how important covenants are to God in Isaiah 42:6.

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### Intermittent Idolatry:

9. Judges 2:6-11 speaks of "generations" and their spiritual attitudes. How were the generations different? Jesus spoke of "generations" in Mark 8:11-13, verse 12; 8:34-9:1, verse 38; and 9:14-29, verse 19. What evils do these generations represent? List these 3 "generations" and think of examples of who demonstrates these positions in our world today? How do we "copy" these attitudes and actions at times? What did the generations of the times of the Judges demonstrate what they believed about the Lord? How do our actions and attitudes demonstrate what we believe about God?

### Othniel versus Cushanrishathaim:

10. What social relationship was used to lead Israel into idolatry, 2:6-3:6. In what ways does this relationship affect spiritual life now? In what ways was Acsah, the wife of Othniel a good example, while the women of Samson bad examples? 3:7-11 and 14:1ff, 16:1-3, and 16:4ff. What kind of people spiritually and morally do the 3 women of Samson represent? If the first, the Philistine woman, represents the "unbeliever" then who do the other two represent? Find two scriptures, for each case, that represent "battle against" these wrong attitudes and life styles?
11. Judges 3:10 contains the strategy of Othniel. List the steps that the Lord took and then the steps that Othniel took. Notice the order in which Othniel took those steps. What do these things tell us about our spiritual warfare today? How can we apply these things to our battles in the moral and spiritual realms? Where does judgment begin, according to I Peter 4:15-18? Israel was suffering but for the wrong reasons. We can also suffer for our wrongdoing as Peter says. For what does Peter say it is time? Was it time for the same in Othniel's day? What part does the repentance and confession play in spiritual warfare and in light of Othniel's strategy?

### Ehud versus Eglon (Moab):

12. Notice Ehud's tactics of going for the king and then his army, 3:12-31. Is there any wisdom in this particular sequence of tactics for us today? What was the secret message from God? Do we have a secret message from God to plunge into our hearts and that of others in our spiritual warfare? What is that message? How did Ehud prepare the "message"? How is it described? Hint: one reference is made in Hebrews and another in Ephesians to the secret message we have.
13. How did Ehud use the trumpet? Any parallels between his recruiting and ours today for various outreaches and missions? Are enough workers hearing the bugle call for the Buddhist, Hindu, Muslim, tribal, and secular worlds today? What can we do about it? What if Ehud had killed the king of Moab and then refused to recruit an army? What might have been the outcome?

### Jael, Deborah and Barak versus Sisera:

14. The story of the Lord's victory over Sisera and his iron chariots, the most powerful army they met in those days, is told two times over in chapters 4 and 5. What two literary forms are used? Are these two forms of writing used for variety? Is there another reason for using these 2 forms? Compare these chapters with Exodus 14 and 15, another victory over chariots in a body of water. How do the 2 chapters differ and what is repeated? Notice the two themes of "the strong" and "the weak", "wisdom and foolishness" and compare this with I Corinthians 1:18-2:5. In light of what Muslims say about the crucifixion of Jesus how can these passages be of help and encouragement? Does Genesis 3:15 relate to the head of a powerful spiritual enemy being crushed?

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## Gideon versus Midian:

15. God took some very important initiatives in the story of Gideon. First he sent the Midianites against Israel to pressure them into returning to the Lord (6:1-6). To what animal are the Midianites compared? What destruction do they cause? In spiritual terms for us, to what enemy or enemies can we compare the Midianites? What was the second initiative the Lord took, 6:7-10? Would you have done the same in order to conquer such a huge army? Does the Lord do the same for us today? When we are in spiritual and moral difficulties and we recognize our plight, how does He often help us?
16. In the story of Gideon the two sides that are in fierce conflict are described through two scenes and two names, 6:11-24 and 6:25-32. What are those names and what do they mean? How do they describe the side we are to take in the spiritual war?
17. What do you think was the real purpose of Gideon's fleece? Was it for guidance or for some other purpose (6:36-40)? Have you ever done something similar? Explain.
18. Why did God reduce Gideon's army? The reason is stated in 7:1-8. In spiritual warfare and victory has this ever happened to you? What was the state of mind of Israel before the battle and how would this differ greatly after the battle if they had an army the size it was before the reduction? Can you think of other references in Scripture to the relative unimportance of the size of the army if God is with that army? For those laboring in the Muslim world, with only 2-3% of the evangelical missionary force working amongst Muslims, how can this story help them in their work?
19. Compare Gideon's warfare in chapters 6-8:32, with 2Corinthians chapter 4. Are there any parallels? Notice the images of light and darkness, the broken vessels, the treasure within, the images of Baal, whose altar Gideon broke down, and that of Jesus Christ, who is the image of God.
20. The element of surprise was key in Gideon's attack on the Midianite camp. When did he attack and what were the elements that threw the enemy into confusion? The Midianites, Amalekites and other eastern peoples of that army actually turned on each other with their swords. Were these three groups allies of convenience? How can we use these same tactics in today's spiritual battles? How did Paul use a tactic at his trial by the Sanhedrin, which made his enemies "fight" each other (Acts 23:6-11)?
21. At the beginning of his ministry Gideon tore down an altar and an image. After his victory over the Midianites he set up another image. How did these images differ in appearance? In what way were they the same in their spiritual influence? Any parallels to spiritual realities today, especially when we look out across what is known as Christendom? What does this warn us about winning the war and losing the peace? Do we have any personal experiences of idolatry that line up with Gideon's experience? What did Paul call idolatry in Colossians 3:5?
22. Gideon persevered through thick and thin! List the various difficulties, fears and setbacks he had to face in his long drawn out preparation and battle with Midian. How do perseverance and patience play a part in what you face in your ministry?
23. What can we learn from Gideon's handling of Ephraim's criticism, 7:24-8:3? What is the difference between this altercation and that which he had with Succoth and Penuel, 8:5-9 & 14-17?

## The Woman of Thebez versus Abimelech:

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24. What did the name “Abimelech” mean and why do you think Gideon gave his son in Shechem that name, 8:28-32? How did Abimelech respond to his name, 9:1-6, and how did that differ from the response of Gideon to an earlier offer made by Israel to Gideon, 8:22-23?
25. How many options did Abimelech offer through his relatives to the men of Shechem? Were there other options to these? Did he really want them to consider other options to those he gave? How does this compare to the options the devil offers people today? When you are tempted with evil do you consider all the options, especially God’s options, for example those given in I Corinthians 10:13?
26. What aspect of God's character is demonstrated towards Abimelech and the men of Shechem in 9:22? How do you respond to those who wrong you? How long do you wait for them to repent?
27. How did the Lord deal with Abimelech and the men of Shechem, chapter 9? Compare Judges 9:23-25 and 9:56-57 with Romans 12:17-21. Compare the death of Abimelech in 9:50-55 with the destruction of God's enemies in the other stories of the Judges. Again, does the crushing of his head by a woman relate at all with Genesis 3:15? Othniel-Israelite judged, Ehud-pierced with sword, Deborah, Barak and Jael-head crushed, Gideon-enemy killed each other, Jephthah-20 cities destroyed as was Shechem (11:33), Samson-crushed.
28. As you study through Judges, how are the judges a picture of Christ, and in Sisera and Abimelech a picture of Satan? How might the crushing of Abimelech’s and Sisera’s heads relate to Genesis 3:15 and Matthew 21:43-44? Who is behind evil, cruel and murderous leadership in our world (Compare Isaiah 14:4-21; Ezekiel 28:1-19; John 8:44)?

### **Jephthah versus the Ammonites:**

29. The theme of inheritance is of prime importance in the account of Jephthah, 10:6-12:7. What did Jephthah's brothers say to him about inheritance? What did he say to the king of Ammon in his letter to him about Israel's inheritance on the east side of the Jordan? Who would be the final arbitrator in these things? What does Ephesians 1:3ff say about our blessings and inheritance? Why do we have to fight for our inheritance and which inheritance are we to fight for?
30. Jephthah wrote a letter! Paul wrote letters and so did others amongst the apostles. How did Jephthah use his letter to fight, and how can we use letters in spiritual warfare? But what was the content of the letter Jephthah wrote to the king of Ammon? What style and genre of literature did it take? Jephthah took the spiritual and moral upper ground when he wrote. That is where he won the spiritual battle. How can we win spiritual battles using history or narrative? Is this a way of speaking the Gospel to our postmodern world? (Mitsuo Fuchida’s story; World views: Traditional, Modern and Postmodern)
31. I Peter 3:8-12 would have been a good sermon to preach to both Jephthah and Ephraim the day they threatened Jephthah and he retaliated against them. Notice what happened at the fords of the Jordan, 12:1-6. How is this battle different from the battle at the fords of the Jordan in Ehud's day, 3:26-30? Who was fighting whom in each case? Which example should we follow and why?

### **Samson Versus the Philistines:**

32. Samson's story is the longest of all the Judges, chapters 13-16. Various animals are mentioned throughout the account. Of what could the lion, the bees, the foxes, the donkey and the ox all be symbolic in the life and ministry of Samson? How was he like an animal in his relationships

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with women? How does this parallel the way people, both unbelievers and carnal Christians, behave in sexual matters today? How should we battle this problem today?

33. Every army has its secrets. How did Samson get into trouble by giving away secrets? What things should we keep secret?

### **Institutionalized Idolatry: Micah and the Danites:**

34. The Conclusion of Judges tells two stories. It illustrates what was happening in Israel during those dark days. The first account is about Micah's idolatry, chapters 17 and 18. How did that idolatry start, become more entrenched and then spread? What was wrong in Israel that a Levite should go around looking for employment? What does this say about where some of our "silver" should be used? Who won when it came to who would have the idols and priest: the owner, the religious or the strong? Why was it wrong for the tribe of Dan to leave its allotted area and go north to slaughter an "unsuspecting and peaceful" people?
35. Ephesians 5:5 and Colossians 3:5 teach us that greed is idolatry. What part does greed play in this story of Micah's idolatry? How did the apostle Paul recognize greed or covetousness (Romans 7:7)? How was Timothy to exhort the church in Ephesus about covetousness (I Timothy 6:9-10, 17-19)? What part does it play in our lives?

### **Benjamin's Immorality:**

36. The second story of the conclusion in chapters 19 through 21 relates the immorality of Benjamin. When the rest of Israel decided to discipline Benjamin, who was told to go up first? Why did God allow the rest of Israel to suffer defeat at the hands of Benjamin twice before Benjamin was defeated and nearly obliterated? How does this help us understand what discipline is like, in the family, church, and business? Why is discipline not easy?
37. The testimony of a fighter pilot with the US Air Force "Aggressor Squadrons" is that knowing your enemy is extremely important to victory in aerial warfare. In the days of the "cold war" they went to the extent of having a whole squadron of Russian planes at their base. This squadron was flown by US Air Force pilots who mimicked the Soviet Air Force in every way possible to be just like them. The other squadrons "fought" them in mock battles to learn exactly how to fight them. Knowing your enemy in spiritual battle is also very important. How did Othniel, Ehud and others show an understanding of their enemies?

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