

## Six Major Judges

They are regarded as such because they have more details written than the others. But to list the six major is certainly ambiguous. Some had nothing said of them and some were plain lousy leaders. However, their stories are told with exciting and adventurous details.

### I. Othniel (3:7-11)

The Lord empowered Othniel to be a deliverer. He was victorious and the land was at peace for 40 years. The sheer length of time of his judgeship would make Othniel a major judge.

### II. Ehud (3:12-30)

Ehud is known for his craftiness. The bravery and courage of Ehud to walk into the enemy's camp with a weapon to kill the king--this took extreme calm and nerves. Then he personally led the victory over the Moabites. The land rested for 80 years.

### III. Deborah (4-5)

Deborah was a bona fide judge in Israel. She often decided disputes in Israel. Even though she was a woman and her heart was toward mothering, she spoke the truth and knew what Israel should do. She also tried to step aside and let Barak lead. Two chapters are devoted to her and her song was magnificent. Her concern was also for the enemy's relatives as well. The land rested for 40 years.

### IV. Gideon (6-8)

Gideon was a very weak man, but we see a transformation from timidity to courage. He did not take the kingship when offered to him, but instead pointed the men to the real leader when he said, "The Lord shall rule over

you.” Gideon had many wives and children which led to a wicked son and great confusion for Israel.

V. Jephthah (10:6-12:7)

Jephthah overcame a poor start in life being the son of a harlot. He was then cast out of his family by his siblings, disinherited, and left to fend for himself. Jephthah joined himself with worthless companions. Jephthah talked with God and the Spirit of God was upon him. Jephthah walking in the flesh made a hasty vow unto God which eventually broke his daughter’s heart and left him with no joy of grandchildren. Yet Jephthah kept his vow with God. Jephthah judged Israel for six years.

VI. Samson (13-16)

Samson has two words that describe him—potentiality and degeneration. Samson goes down at the luster and failure. Samson liked strange women (unbelievers) and would eventually allow them to control his life. These women were able to get out of him the secret to his riddle and the Nazarite hair vow. He judged for a total of 20 years. Samson’s birth was announced by an angel. He was to fulfill a Nazarite vow. Samson had super human strength yet he knew not when the Spirit of God left him. He was self-indulgent and abused the strength and position God gave him. Samson did not marry, but he did visit a harlot. As with most of the major judges, he was an enigmatic figure. A terrible comment is made after losing his hair and that is “Samson knew not that the LORD was departed from him.”