

THE JUDGES OF ISRAEL AS LISTED IN THE BOOK OF JUDGES

Judge and Tribe	Significant Events in the life of the Judge	Enemies of Israel	Period of Oppression	Period of "Rest"	Scripture reference
1. Othniel (Judah) Son of Kenaz, a Gentile Kenizzite convert of the Exodus generation and younger brother of Caleb	Othniel was the nephew and son-in-law of Caleb, and the son of Kenaz, Gentile Kenizzite converts who joined the tribe of Judah. In the conquest of Canaan, Othniel captured Debir. He became the first warrior-Judge of Israel and delivered Israel from the oppression of the Edomites. His family is listed among the clans of Judah.	Cushan-Rishathaim, King of Mesopotamia	8 Years	40 years	Josh 15:13-17; Judg 1:9-21; 3:1-11; 1Chron. 4:13
2. Ehud (Benjamin) Son of Gera	Ehud was a left-handed Benjaminite who personally killed Eglon king of Moab and ended Moabite domination of Israel.	Eglon king of Moab, Ammonites and Amalekites	18 years	80 years	Judg 3:12-30
3. Shamgar (tribe ?) His name is not Hebrew. Son of Anath (pagan name)	He killed 600 Philistines with an oxgoad. A contemporary of the Judge Deborah: the Song of Deborah refers to "in the days of Shamgar ben Anath" (Judg 5:6); possibly a convert or the son of a mixed marriage.	Philistines	Not given	Not given	Judg 3:31-5:6
4. Deborah (Ephraim)	Deborah the wife of Lappidoth was a prophetess and a judge. Deborah and her general, Barak (Naphtali), defeated Sisera, the general of the army of Canaanite King Jabin of Hazor at the Battle of Kishon near Mt Tabor. The Song of Deborah (Judg chapter 15) recounts the great victory. Barak is listed among the "Heroes of the Faith" in Heb 11:32.	Jabin, Canaanite king of Hazor, and Sisera, general and vassal of Jabin.	20 years	40 years	Judg 4:1-5:31; 1 Sam 12:11

<p>5. Gideon (Manasseh) Son of Joash of Abiezer</p>	<p>The Angel of the Lord appeared to Gideon at Ophrah. Gideon destroyed the altar of Baal. Seeking confirmation of God’s will, Gideon put out a fleece twice for a sign. On God’s command he reduced the size of his army from 32,000 to 300 and successfully routed the Midianite army. He took revenge on the men of Succoth and Penuel for not giving his army bread. He killed the Midianite kings Zebah and Zalmunna in revenge for the killing of his brothers at the battle of Mt. Tabor. Later, he made a gold ephod that led the people into idolatry. Mentioned among the “heroes of the faith” in Heb. 11:32.</p>	<p>Midianites Amalekites “People of the East”</p>	<p>7 years</p>	<p>40 years</p>	<p>Jud 6:1-8:32 Heb 11:32</p>
<p>6. Tola (Issachar) Son of Puah; grandson of Dodo</p>	<p>Tola was probably from one of the leading clans of Issachar (Gen 46:13; Num 26:23) but lived at Shamir in the territory of Ephraim.</p>			<p>23 years</p>	<p>Judg 10:1,2</p>
<p>7. Jair (Gilead-Manasseh)</p>	<p>Jair may have been a descendant of the same Jair who distinguished himself during the days of Moses and Joshua (see Num 32:41; Dt 3:14; Josh 13:30; 1 Kng 4:13; 1Chr 2:21). He had 30 sons who were itinerant judges.</p>			<p>22 years</p>	<p>Judg 10:3-5</p>
<p>8. Jephthah (Gilead-Manasseh in Transjordan) Son of Gilead by a harlot (Judges 11:1)</p>	<p>Jephthah was the son of Gilead by a harlot and was driven away by his half-brothers. The elders of Gilead brought him back and made him their chief at Mizpah. Jephthah refused to give up Gilead to the Ammonites. He fought the Ammonites and conquered some 20 cities. The swearing of a foolish vow cost him his daughter’s life. He initiated a civil war with the Israelite tribe of Ephraim. Mentioned among the “heroes of the faith in Heb 11:32.</p>	<p>Philistines and Ammonites; civil war with the tribe of Ephraim</p>	<p>18 years (Judges 10:8)</p>	<p>6 years</p>	<p>Judg 10:6-12:7; Heb 11:32</p>

9. Ibzan (Judah)	Ibzan was a socially prominent man who had 30 sons and 30 daughters for whom he arranged marriages. Jewish tradition identifies him with Boaz of Bethlehem-Judah (?).			7 years	Josh 19:15; Judg 12:8-10
10. Elon (Zebulun)	He was buried at Aijalon in Zebulun.			10 years	Judg 12:11, 12
11. Abdon (Ephraim) Son of Hillel	Abdon, the son of Hillel, was a man of wealth and prominence. He had 40 sons and 30 grandsons. He was a native of Pirathon (near Shechem) and was buried there.			8 years	Judg 12:13-15
12. Samson (Dan) Son of Manoah	An angel announced Samson's birth. He was consecrated as a Nazirite from birth (Num chapter 6). He had a fatal fondness for Philistine women. Samson was a man of immense strength: he killed a lion with his hands; he killed 30 Philistines at Ashkelon, and a "thousand" with a jawbone of an ass. Other amazing deeds included using 300 foxes to burn the grain fields of the Philistines and carrying off the city gate of Gaza. Samson was conquered by a Philistine girl, Delilah, who discovered that his uncut hair was the source of his strength. He was blinded and imprisoned at Gaza. He called out to God who allowed his strength to return. He pulled down the Temple of Dagon killing himself and about 3,000 Philistines. Mentioned among the "heroes of the faith" in Heb 11:32.	Philistines	40 years	20 years	Judg 13:1-16:31; Heb 11:32

Abimelech was not a judge but was a son of Gideon who assumed power over Manasseh and brought about a civil war within the tribes of Israel (Judg 8:33-(:57). The Prophet Samuel and his sons are listed as the last "judges" of Israel before the age of the United Monarchy (1 Sam 7:15-17; 8:1-2; Sir 46:13/16-20/23; Heb 11:32-40). Michal E. Hunt copyright © March 2004